

Heed Ophthalmic Foundation Residents Retreat Personal Statement

When I was five years old, I immigrated with my parents—recent medical graduates—to Toronto, Canada. The move was financially straining, and without North American medical training, my parents were unable to practice medicine. For the first few months, we lived house-to-house with friends and family until my parents secured their first jobs. Unable to afford childcare, my father worked night shifts at a plastic bag factory while my mother worked day shifts at a Tim Hortons coffee shop. At home, we watched English television to learn the language.

Two years later, my life drastically changed. My brother was born, and two weeks later my family was forced to move apart. My father moved to Michigan on a single-entry visa to train as an ophthalmologist, while my newborn brother and I moved with our mother to an underserved town in Newfoundland, where she trained to be a family physician. There were days when my brother and I would never see our mother, and with my father 2000 miles away, I took on more responsibilities than the average seven-year-old. I vividly remember feeding and bathing my brother, teaching him the alphabet, and reading him stories; I became his mentor. I also became the house handyman, quickly learning to assemble furniture, set up home electronics, and troubleshoot computer issues with an attentive eye. Altogether, my time in Newfoundland played a tremendous role in shaping me into a meticulous and well-rounded individual with a strong work-ethic, while simultaneously sparking my interests in teaching and technology. After three formative years there, we moved to Windsor, Ontario to reunite with my father, before settling in the suburbs of Toronto.

Over the years, it became clear how my upbringing inspired my adulthood. While I found various teaching experiences to be gratifying, I quickly realized that I could marry my desire to educate with my background in technology. After creating an educational YouTube channel as a teenager, I went on to spearhead a weekly iPad tutorial program at a senior home during college, and more recently, *Ophthalminute*, a digital platform designed to distill landmark trials in Ophthalmology in a series of easily accessible one-minute educational videos.

As a resident at Wills Eye Hospital, I aim to continue to develop my commitment to patient advocacy and academic leadership. My early research utilized AI to assess readability of patient education materials to improve the accessibility and impact of such materials. More recently, my research focus has transitioned to ophthalmic trauma, specifically injuries related to intraocular foreign bodies, pickleball, bungee cords, baseball, and *Orbeez*, with the goal of mandating eye protection in high-risk populations. I am currently collaborating with Wolters Kluwer to publish a Clinical Photos Atlas based on cases from the Wills Eye Emergency Room. In 2025, I was honored to receive the Luo Family Distinguished Service Award, which is awarded to a resident with exceptional work ethic, clinical acumen, and dedication to patient care.

Now, as a co-Chief Resident, I am preparing for a career in Academic Ophthalmology. While the clinical and surgical experience is fulfilling, teaching medical students and junior residents has been an exceptionally rewarding cornerstone of my residency. A career in academic ophthalmology will allow me to integrate this passion with a focus on innovation of medical education. While pursuing a fellowship is my next step, my ultimate goal is to serve as a

Program Director. In this role, I aim to be a mentor to medical students and residents, just as I was a mentor to my younger brother since my early childhood.