



WHITESELL OPTOMETRY

As many of you know, I am retiring at the end of 2025. While I've been talking about retirement for several years now (and some of you may have thought I already had!), this time it really is happening—though I do plan to occasionally fill in for my daughter, Dr. Bloodgood.

I first thought of becoming an optometrist in my 2nd year of college. The only thing I really knew about optometry was that I had worn glasses since I was about 6 years old, and I liked my eye doctor. I wanted to help people see. I didn't understand the full extent of this profession. Sometimes I have to tell patients they may go blind, or that they may have a serious condition that requires immediate medical attention. It's been surprising how many patients have told me I saved their life, just through an eye exam. But still my absolute favorite has been helping children see clearly for the first time. Seeing the expressions on their face, the improvement in school performance and maybe even behavior.

I've been truly blessed with so many amazing, loyal patients. Some have been with me since I started practicing in Leawood in 1990. When I decided to start a practice in Spring Hill in 1997, I never could have imagined what it would become. I wanted to be closer to home and to be able to spend more time with my children. Long after selling the Leawood office in 2002, many of you continue to make the trek down to see me in Spring Hill. I have never taken that for granted. When my daughter joined me in 2014, she continued to build the practice into what it is today. The support from this community has meant more to me than I can put into words. Thank you all, truly.

I also want to thank the many people who have worked alongside me over the years. My wife Katie, who was my long-term office/business manager, helped get everything in motion, and held down the fort at home so I could put my energy into the business. Gay, my first employee, who got everything started. My sister Sharon served as office manager at the Leawood location, and I will always appreciate the foundation she helped us build. Julia and Tina helped us through some early lean years. Both are no longer with us and are greatly missed. I'm also grateful for the part-time staff who helped us out over the years, including summers while in school, and of course Gretta—our memorable Texan. Laura K who became our office manager and has kept things running smoothly for almost 20 years. Amy and Rechelle who put up with me day in and day out and do an amazing job. My son Jordan, who has done anything and everything we ever asked and more. Laura G, our newest addition, has helped bring the staff together and into what I truly believe is one of the best in the area.

Having my daughter as my fellow optometrist and business partner has made the past 10+ years especially meaningful. She is a wonderful doctor. For those of you who have only seen me, you will see a lot of similarities in our personalities and our approach to eyecare. You'll love her.

As for what's next...I look forward to spending more time with my 8 grandkids, traveling and fishing. I'll be spending more time at the lake and on the pickleball court, giving back to the community and really just enjoying life.

Thank you for trusting me with your eyecare over the years. It has truly been an honor to serve this community.

Bill Whitesell