



JFP Person of the Day: Connie McCaa

by Lacey McLaughlin
October 9, 2009

[Dr. Connie McCaa](#) has set her professional bar high. This week she was again ranked by Best Doctors, an international, independent medical resource, as one of the leading doctors in Mississippi. This is McCaa's 12th consecutive time on the list.

"We have 45,000 doctors in the U.S., so it is exceptional for Dr. McCaa to achieve such long recognition from her peers," said Beverly Jackson, media and communications liaison for Best Doctors Inc., in a statement.



Best Doctors listed 409 doctors in the state for the 2009-2010 rankings. Fellow physicians select those included through peer reviews as the best in their fields. Included are numerous other Jackson area physicians.

McCaa, an ophthalmologist practicing in Jackson and Flowood, received a doctorate in biochemistry and, in 1983, her medical degree from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine. She is one of the first surgeons to perform LASIK eye surgery in the country.

"It's always an honor to be included among the Best Doctors," McCaa said a statement "I know the patients are very aware of that list. I am especially honored that other physicians chose me."

For more information, call 601-713-0038 or go to <http://www.ConnieMcCaa.com>.

Do you know a Jacksonian who should be the JFP Person of the Day? Briefly tell us his or her story, sending it to news@jacksonfreepress.com. Include contact information and a picture, if possible.

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I Can See Clearly Now

by Andi Agnew
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"Don't put those on, they'll give you a headache," my mother would tell me when I was little. She was referring to her coke-bottle glasses that she only wore at night after taking off her contacts. I wanted to know what the world looked like through those spectacles, but when I did sneak a peek, it felt as if my eyeballs were going to be pulled right through the lenses, and I couldn't see a thing. I hoped then that I would never have to wear glasses.



COURTESY DR. CONNIE MCCAA

When I was about 13, though, I began squinting a lot more than I used to, and my mom took me for an eye exam. I thought I could see just fine, but the optometrist said otherwise and wrote out a prescription for glasses that I should use only to see the chalkboard at school and, eventually, for driving. My vision was pretty good at that point, but I noticed a marked difference when I put on the glasses. The optometrist warned that if I wore them all the time I'd become more dependent on them.

We took a family trip to New Orleans shortly after I got my glasses. I had not planned on wearing them, but this was my first trip to the Big Easy, and there was so much to see. When I put on my glasses and looked around at the beautiful colors and architecture in the French Quarter, it was like looking at a world I didn't know existed. I thought trees and people far away were supposed to be fuzzy!

That was 19 years ago, and I've been wearing glasses or contacts ever since. I have astigmatism in my left eye, making it much worse than the right.

So what is astigmatism? Why do some people need glasses at an early age, while others are blessed with 20/20 vision until old age? Do guys really not make passes at girls who wear glasses? I asked Dr. Connie McCaa, M.D., Ph.D. and LASIK (laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis) specialist, those questions and more.

"Myopia (near-sightedness) is the most common visual problem," McCaa says. It can develop early if a child grows faster than his or her corneas can handle. Astigmatism can occur along with myopia. "If you can imagine a normal cornea as being shaped like a basketball, astigmatism is where the cornea is shaped like a football," she explains. The good news is that a person with astigmatism can still benefit

from LASIK surgery.

For people a bit squeamish about surgery—especially surgery of the eyeball—McCaa would like to set your mind at ease.

"It is a strictly outpatient procedure that is done in two steps using two different lasers. The first step prepares a thin flap on the front of the cornea which is pulled back, and in the second step we shape the cornea," McCaa says, adding that vision is improved almost immediately, and the entire process takes about 15 minutes.

If you are interested in LASIK, you will need to be examined first to make sure that you are eligible. People with certain prescriptions (more than -12) or someone with thin or weak corneas would not qualify. Someone who needs reading glasses will likely still need them after the surgery, but in some cases one eye can be shaped for reading and the other for seeing at a distance. Most insurance companies do not cover LASIK, however, but McCaa says that doctors make payment plans available to make the procedure more affordable.

Maybe LASIK is not your thing, or maybe you are just saving your pennies for something else right now. Contacts are always an option, and there are many different types on the market that are comfortable and disposable. But many people are embracing their excuse for another accessory, and there's no reason why you should settle for a boring pair of specs.

I used to go with conservative wire frames, but I switched to plastic frames a few years ago and have been trying my best to emulate Lisa Loeb ever since. There are so many funky options out there these days, and you can even find cool prescription sunglasses. Try a pair with geometric frames in a color to match your hair. Go for a glamorous, Sweet Potato Queen look with rhinestones. Or get a few different pairs and change them to suit your mood. Even men's eyewear has gotten a fashionable facelift, thanks to designers for Polo, Tommy Hilfiger and up-and-comers like John Varvatos.

I have grown to accept my genetic fate, and I visit my eye doctor regularly. Still, anyone who tries on my glasses these days is likely to leave with a headache much like the one I used to get from my mother's specs. But at least my frames are cute!

Where 2 Shop

Custom Optical
661 Duling Ave.
601-362-6675

Odom's Optical
1461 Canton Mart Road, Suite A
601-977-0272

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