Q: Where are you located?
A: Dallas, Texas, United States

Q: What year did you earn your Fellowship?
A: 2012

Q: Where did you earn your doctorate?
A: Pennsylvania College of Optometry

Q: What inspired you to pursue optometry as a profession?
A: My late paternal grandmother changed my career goals the day she told me I would “go to hell for lying” if I pursued becoming a lawyer. Having a friend in middle school whose father was an optometrist and going to a career day presentation where I met a black female optometrist and admissions officer put the possibility of optometry as a profession before my eyes.

Q: What is your most rewarding patient or professional experience?
A: I began working for the Dallas County Health and Hospital system in 2014 and every day I examine the eyes of thousands of predominantly African American and Hispanic patients. I often spend 90 percent of my day performing exams and communicating diagnosis and treatment plans in Spanish. How can we say that our profession is “saturated,” when most days I am 100 percent of my patients’ very first eye exam? There are patients young and old who have never had their eyes examined, and I get the daily opportunity to be their first — a black female optometrist.

Q: How did you become involved with the Academy?
A: Completing a residency in Ocular Disease at Omni Eye Services of Atlanta was only the beginning of my continued commitment to lifelong learning and the value of professional development. It was a natural transition after residency to complete the remaining requirements to become a Fellow in the American Academy of Optometry and also a Diplomate with the American Board of Optometry.

Q: What has your involvement meant to your career?
A: It is an honor to have been bestowed such a distinction and to be a part of such an esteemed group of colleagues. But “to whom much is given, much is required” and being a Fellow is my constant reminder to be an advocate, increase awareness and a catalyst of change in my profession.

Q: What is the best part of being an OD?
A: The diversity in options and opportunities we have in our profession. I love seeing (thanks to social media) how myself and my colleagues are able to infuse our other passions and skills with our personal and professional interests.

Q: Tell us a fun fact about you or an interesting hobby you have?
A: I’m redefining the color of the eyecare industry one percent at a time as Chief Visionary Officer of Black EyeCare Perspective and an advisor and co-founder of the Black EyeCare Perspective Pre-Optometry Club, the first nationally recognized pre-optometry club established to ensure not a single, potential Black or African American student or optometrist is ignored, discouraged or disadvantaged.