

# SAY ANYTHING

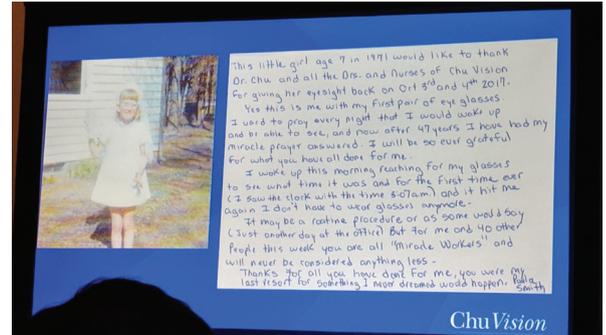
## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE "THANK YOU" THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED FROM A PATIENT?



**Y. RALPH CHU, MD**

■ Chu Vision Institute, Bloomington, Minnesota

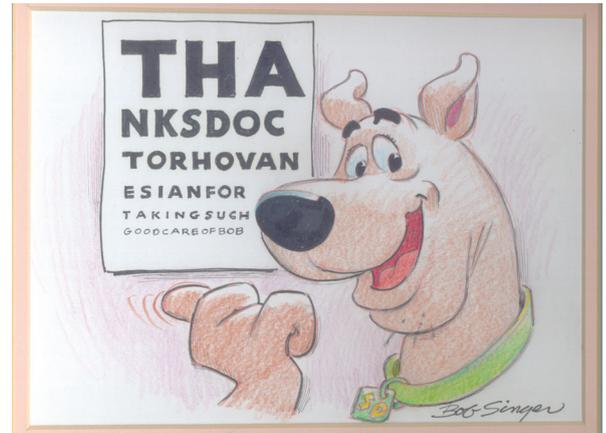
“ I recently received a thank you note from the 7-year-old version of the 53-year-old woman on whom I had performed surgery. This note included a photo of a little girl wearing her first pair of glasses in 1971. In the note, she explained how she used to pray every night that she would be able to see without glasses, and she thanked my staff and I for answering those prayers 46 years later.”



**JOHN A. HOVANESIAN, MD, FACS**

■ Harvard Eye Associates, Orange County, California

“ In 20 years of practicing, my favorite gift I received from a patient was from a very unassuming gentleman named Bob Singer. Shortly after his cataract surgery in 2002, Bob asked me an odd but thought-provoking question: Who was my favorite Hanna-Barbera character from the cartoon television shows in the 1970s? It was a tough question because there were so many (Fred Flintstone, Yogi Bear, The Jetsons, Tom and Jerry), but it didn't take me long to recall that my favorite of all time was Scooby Doo—the snack-loving, mystery-solving Great Dane. Just a few days after Bob asked me this peculiar question, he showed up at my office carrying a gift-wrapped, framed, hand-drawn picture of Scooby Doo, thanking me for taking care of him. It wasn't until then that I realized I had the honor of taking care of a legend in Hollywood: Bob was the original lead cartoonist for most of the original Hanna-Barbera cartoon series I grew up watching. I still treasure the picture, and it hangs proudly in my office.”



**AYLIN KILIÇ, MD**

■ Medipol University, Istanbul, Turkey

“ One of the most interesting thank you notes I have ever received was from a man who wrote me a poem after surgery. Each line of the poem began with my name, and it included a very heartwarming message about how I helped him see his grandchild.”



**TOBIAS H. NEUHANN, MD**

■ AaM Augenklinik am Marienplatz, Munich, Germany

“ One thank you story I remember is about a couple from the United States who came to Germany for toric implantable contact lenses (Visian ICL; STAAR Surgical). At the time, toric ICLs were not yet approved for use in their home country, so these patients found me on the internet and saw that I was the first surgeon to implant this type of ICL. Following surgery, both patients were so pleased with the results that they invited my son and I to a sensational dinner. They were both amazed at their instant visual improvement.”



**GREGORY D. PARKHURST, MD, FACS**

■ Parkhurst NuVision, San Antonio, Texas

“ I had performed cataract surgery on a woman named Myrna who was a very talented artist. At her 1-week follow-up appointment, Myrna presented me with a wonderful hand-drawn portrait. She told me how she found a photograph of me as a child and took a little bit of what she called artistic license to show me seeing for the first time—the moment I put on my first pair of glasses. After Myrna’s refractive cataract surgery, she said she experienced a similar moment where she was able to see for seemingly the first time—without her glasses!”



**GEORGE O. WARING IV, MD**

■ Waring Vision Institute, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

“ I once received a very moving and descriptive letter from a patient. It encompassed everything she was thankful for after her surgery—from life-changing experiences to smaller details like the ability to spot the cap of her shampoo bottle on the shower floor. Reading stories like these always resonate with me in a big way. In this same letter, the patient referred to her glasses as her *visual crutch*, and she thanked me for liberating her of a limitation she had lived with for more than 50 years. What follows is a short excerpt from the letter.”

*Having worn glasses for over 50 years, this recent transformation can be described as a true miracle. How do you explain this life-altering change to someone? It is beyond verbal description. It is not unlike the first time you walk to the edge of the Grand Canyon or see the massive amount of water flowing over Niagara Falls. You realize that pictures and words cannot effectively describe the reality of what you are seeing, both literally and figuratively.*



**WILLIAM F. WILEY, MD**

■ Cleveland Eye Clinic, Ohio  
■ Clear Choice LASIK, Ohio

“ My father, who is also an ophthalmologist, gave me great advice about receiving thank you cards from patients. He said to keep a file with you at all times, and whenever you are having a tough day, go back and look at them. One of the more memorable stories in my file is from early in my career. I had performed very challenging cataract surgery on an older gentleman right before the Christmas holiday. On the day I was supposed to see this patient for his 1-day postoperative visit, Cleveland was hit with a bad snowstorm and patients and staff couldn’t make it to the practice. Given the complexity of this case, it was imperative that I see this patient. I went with one of my technicians to the man’s house, shoveled his driveway so we could get my Jeep up to his door, and took him in for his examination. Six months later, I received a case of very nice wine and a letter from the man’s son. Unfortunately, the patient passed away from other causes, but the son was so thankful at the effort our practice made to ensure the best care for his father and that we were able to provide improved visual acuity for his remaining months.”



**BLAKE K. WILLIAMSON, MD, MPH, MS**

■ Williamson Eye Center, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

“ There are two encounters with patients that have really stuck with me. The first is about a children’s book author and illustrator who needed refractive cataract surgery. Following the procedure, she was then able to write and illustrate without the need for glasses or contacts. She was so thankful that she dedicated her next book to me, saying she was excited she could see colors more vividly and write more clearly. In another encounter, I performed laser cataract surgery on Louisiana State University baseball coach Paul Mainieri, who is a big celebrity in Louisiana. After the surgery, he brought my staff and I autographed baseballs as a way of saying thanks.” ■

