

DR. ARUN GULANI HAS A VISION: 20/10 FOR 2010

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20/10 vision for 2010, envisions Dr. Arun Gulani, founder and medical director of Gulani Vision Institute in Jacksonville. With 20/10 vision, a person can read a letter at 20 feet. But someone with normal vision would have to come up to 10 feet to read.

"Nobody should be wearing glasses or contact lens in future," says Gulani, who was selected by Goldline Research as one of the leading laser eye surgeons in the United States for 2009. The list of leading Laser Eye Surgeons was published in the Nov. 30 issue of Forbes Magazine.

The backbone of work performed by the 'daVinci of eye surgery', LASIK specialist, author, inventor (of LASIK surgical instruments) and teacher is vision corrective surgery, laser vision techniques and LASIK.

Originally from Bombay, Gulani earned a gold medal from KEM Hospital. "Even as a resident, I would question the way eye surgery was done," says the 40-year-old as we chat in his spacious and stylishly decorated office. "To me, it was a question of taking it to the next level. Why not 20/10 vision? I've never stopped chasing limits or believed that 20/20 is perfect. For the last six years, I have been teaching my students (fellow eye surgeons) precisely this. Ten years ago, 20/40 was the Holy Grail. It's a disservice if you don't strive toward 20/10 vision for everybody."



Dr. Arun Gulani with wife, Suparna, daughter Aisha and son, Yash.

Back in India, Gulani was convinced that his visionary concepts for eye surgery would pay off one day. And it did when he received an encouraging reply from renowned people in the field. "That instilled confidence in me," he says. "I've always said that glasses are crutches."

In 1995, Gulani arrived in the United States for a fellowship, followed by a four-year residency in downstate New York. He also served as chief of the Cornea service and assistant professor at University of Florida, School of Medicine, in Jacksonville. In 2004, he founded Gulani Vision Institute.

"The lesson is to never give up on your principles. If you are good, people will come," he says. Jacksonville is a good place to raise a family, he feels. "Till today, not many people in Jacksonville knew me. I don't advertise my services at all. I just make sure that I step up to the plate to keep the patient relaxed."

According to Gulani, everyone is a candidate. All the cataract patients he has don't need to wear glasses anymore. "There is nobody who cannot be helped. I always keep the patient's safety in mind. I read about all sorts of deals for the weekend for vision corrective surgery. But blindness at any discount isn't a good bargain."

The Jacksonville innovator is proud that he is one of the few eye surgeons who meets with the patient for an hour. "I tell my staff to treat my patients like family," he reveals. "I personally go out to the patient in the waiting area, shake their hands and guide them in. The patient doesn't have to wait for more than five minutes." (Gulani built his current office in 2006)

And whenever you meet the good ole doctor, you will find him dressed to the nines. He designs his own suits and wears one to work every day to greet patients. No wonder, Gulani is known as "Dr. GQ" for his fashion sense.



The personal touch has meant patients from all over the world dropping in to what could one day be known as the Vision Capital of the World! "I hope never to change," says Gulani, who has founded Gulani Vision Foundation. Through the charity, he devotes his time and services during visits to India for eye camps to help the poor.

If are legally blind, i.e. have some vision in the eye (corneal scarring) or for the majority of patients with LASIK complications, Gulani can take care of them with laser corneoplastique, a super specialty that he invented. Anybody with astigmatism, complications from surgery or cataracts (from 1990 LASIK surgery) can be treated. "Age is no bar for vision correction as long as the patient is over 18 and doesn't have a disease such as retina, glaucoma, optic nerve damage," he says. In recent times, he has noticed numerous patients, mostly women, want to fix Pinguicula, which results in a red look to the eye.

Sounding philosophical, Gulani says, "We are all too busy doing things in our lives till we lose it, like health. But one must be confident in their work and honestly care for the patient. Do what you are comfortable with but don't shortchange work for your patient. Dare to be different and then dare to stand by your difference."

Gulani is married to Suparna, a family practice physician who specializes in women's health. The couple has two children, Aisha, 13, and Yash, 8.

"I am thankful to God for the opportunities he's given me. My wife is my stability, my anchor factor. She believes in my vision."

And so do we, doc.

The Gulani Vision Institute is at 8075 Gate Parkway W., Suite 102, in Jacksonville. For more information, call (904) 296-7393 or visit www.gulanivision.com

