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Dr. Paul Ernest, Jackson Ophthalmologist and TLC Eye Care of Michigan Founder Celebrates 25 Years of Restoring Sight

By Scott Lorenz

Some people might celebrate the silver anniversary of their work life with a huge party, but that's not Dr. Paul Ernest's style.

Although one of the most prominent ophthalmologists in the United States, renowned here and around the world, Dr. Ernest plans to celebrate quietly, by thanking those who helped him get his start.

The founder of TLC Eye Care of Michigan will invite to dinner the three optometrists who helped him by referring patients to him early in his career, and two physicians who also helped him in the early stages of his practice.

Will he celebrate being named One of the Top Doctors in America four times or his notoriety for developing the single stitch closure and then suture-less self-sealing operation for cataract surgery? Not likely. He is equally unlikely to give but a passing mention of his extensive traveling speech circuit throughout the states or teaching episodes in Bermuda (UK), Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Austria, New Zealand, England, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, Japan, Egypt, Australia and Thailand. He is just as unlikely to speak about his charitable work in Thailand, or thriving business practice.

In his mind, Dr. Ernest is celebrating 25 years of having met great patients, and gratitude for his ability to make a difference in the lives of so many. Since the inception of his practice, he has performed more than 40,000 cataract surgeries.

Although he initially planned to practice engineering, he quickly found that choice of careers was not right. But he has used his engineering background to work with a company developing products for patients, and has never regretted his decision to choose medicine. As for his choice of medical specialty, "I wanted happy endings," Dr. Ernest

explains. Were he starting over, he would undoubtedly select ophthalmology again. There have been many, many happy endings.

"I love the work," he says. "Even a slight improvement means a lot to certain people." Dr. Ernest has many reasons to celebrate this 25th year, including his vision for the future. He thinks that in a few years, people will have access to multi-focal lenses, a lens that provides help to see far as well as near. He also hopes to continue to travel, to teach, and to operate, helping more people see well.

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