

The Long Road To 20/20

Patient sees clearly again after vision odyssey through an eye floater, LASIK and a cataract

BY ROY CUMMINGS

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Many have experienced love at first sight. Kimberly Hagan experienced something similar. We'll call it *love at first grade* because that is when she first professed love for her future husband.

"I have a drawing I did when I was in the first grade that my sister found in the attic of our old house after my father passed away," shares Kimberly, 59. "It's a drawing of a tree that I signed, and on it I wrote, *I love Kip. He is my boyfriend.*"

Except that Kip wasn't really Kimberly's boyfriend at the time. Close friends throughout their childhood, Kimberly and Kip didn't even date until nearly 40 years later. It wasn't long after that, though, that they joined hands in marriage.

"We reconnected at a 70th birthday party for his father," Kimberly says. "By then we had each been through another marriage, but we started dating shortly after that party and got married about four months later, in April 2002."

Kimberly and Kip will soon celebrate their 22nd wedding anniversary. At the same time, the couple will also celebrate Kimberly's delivery from a nearly two-year ordeal with vision issues that started nearly four years ago with the development of an *eye floater*.

Eye floaters are spots in a person's vision that look like specs of dust, strings or cobwebs, and they often dissolve on their own. When the floater in Kimberly's eye did not dissolve, she had it removed through a *vitrectomy*, where the *vitreous*, or gel-like material inside the eye, is drained.

"After the surgery, the doctor told me everything would be all right; except that it wasn't," Kimberly states. "The day after the surgery, I woke up and had double vision in my right eye. The worst thing is, it stayed that way for six months."

"Those six months were a very dark time in my life, but my vision eventually cleared and for six months after that my vision was great. But then – and I knew this was going to happen because the doctor told me it would – a *cataract* developed in that eye."

Cataracts are a clouding of the lenses caused by a buildup of protein deposits. As with Kimberly, they typically result in blurred vision, an increased sensitivity to light, a diminishing of colors and the appearance of halos around lights, especially at night.

The only treatment for cataracts is surgical removal, which is typically performed on one eye at a time, with a week or two between procedures. After the clouded lens is removed, it is typically replaced with an artificial *intraocular lens*, or *IOL*.

IOLs are typically made of a flexible plastic such as acrylic or silicone and are coated with a material to help protect the eyes from the sun's ultraviolet rays. IOLs come in different focusing powers, which correct a variety of refractive issues.

"I was told I needed surgery, but after all I'd been through with my eye, I was very apprehensive," Kimberly confirms. "Then my aesthetician said, *Kim, you're a special case; you need to see a doctor who will love you and treat you like family, and that is Dr. Khodadadeh.*"

Up to the Challenge

Sarah S. Khodadadeh, MD, is the founder of Panacea Eye Center. One of her field's most



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Kimberly's eye history presented complications for her cataract procedure, but she "was in a good place" due to Dr. Khodadadeh's experience and personal approach.

accomplished surgeons, she has specialized in cataract and *glaucoma* procedures for more than 10 years and is the only Ivy League fellowship-trained ophthalmologist on the Treasure Coast.

In addition to providing care for cataract and glaucoma patients, Dr. Khodadadeh also performs comprehensive general eye exams and treats eye disorders such as *diabetic retinopathy*, *meibomian gland dysfunction* and *dry eye disease*.

Dr. Khodadadeh reports that Kimberly presented with *anisometropia* (pronounced a-nuh-so-muh-TROW-pe-uh), which is an unequal focus between the eyes due to a difference in refraction.

"That's a condition where the difference in the vision in each eye is so great that the images are presented to the brain differently," the doctor explains. "It's almost like the images coming into one eye are presented to your brain smaller while the images coming into the other eye are presented to your brain bigger, so you feel off balance or dizzy."

In Kimberly's case, the condition was caused by the rapid development of the cataract. The only solution was to remove the cataract, but Kimberly's previous surgeries presented some hurdles.

"The challenge with patients who've had a vitrectomy stem from the fact that during that procedure the natural jelly of the eye, or *vitreous*, is replaced with a balanced water-salt solution that is not as thick as the *vitreous*," Dr. Khodadadeh educates.

"That makes the eye softer, and that can lead to complications. But we use advanced equipment, and I have a lot of experience performing cataract surgery on glaucoma patients who have had a vitrectomy, so Kimberly was in a good place."

Dr. Khodadadeh also had to account for Kimberly previously undergoing *LASIK* (*laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis*), a common procedure to correct refractive issues by reshaping the cornea. That change

makes it difficult to precisely measure for IOL prescriptions and predict visual outcomes following cataract surgery.

"People get LASIK because they don't want to wear glasses," Dr. Khodadadeh reasons. "And standard replacement lenses for cataracts provide crisp clear vision at two of the three distances, be it distant, intermediate or near, so they may have to wear glasses again."

"Now, there are some advanced technology lenses such as the *extended depth-of-focus* and *multifocal lenses* that correct for all three distances, but again, in patients who have had LASIK surgery, it's quite challenging to predict the visual outcome."

"So, for Kimberly, I recommended a traditional replacement lens that corrected her right eye for distance and intermediate vision. As a result, she can now see clearly in the distance and perform some intermediate activities such as eating or putting on makeup without glasses. She only needs glasses for something up close or reading a book."

Singing Her Praises

Kimberly doesn't mind that at all. She says she is "extremely happy" with her cataract surgery, which left her with 20/20 vision in her right eye and erased a great deal of anxiety.

"Before I went to see Dr. Sarah, I was just a mess, physically and emotionally," Kimberly offers. "To focus on anything, I had to look out of my left eye, which was bad enough. But on top of that there was another issue."

"My husband and I had already planned a trip to Israel. It was going to be the trip of a lifetime for us, in part because we had plans to get baptized again in the Jordan River, and I was just so worried that I would not be able to enjoy the trip with the eye issue I had."

"But when I first went to see Dr. Sarah and told her about the trip, she said, *Well, we can arrange to have a special contact lens put in your eye to correct your vision temporarily until you have your cataract surgery.* And she did just that."

Meet the DOCTOR

Sarah S. Khodadadeh, MD



is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology. She received her undergraduate degree in microbiology from the University

of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and her master's in medical science and medical degree from Wayne State University in Detroit. Following a one-year internship at Oakwood Hospital and Medical Center (now Beaumont Hospital-Dearborn) in suburban Detroit, where she served as chief resident, Dr. Khodadadeh completed her ophthalmology residency at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. After completing her residency training, she developed her cataract surgery skills in private practice for two years before completing a glaucoma fellowship at Yale University in Connecticut. At Yale, she also taught at the residency program. She later moved to Vero Beach, where she opened her practice in 2022. Dr. Khodadadeh serves on the American Academy of Ophthalmology Self-Assessment Committee nationally for the glaucoma division and treats patients as a comprehensive ophthalmologist and glaucoma specialist.



To Learn MORE

See The Difference

At Panacea Eye Center, Dr. Sarah Khodadadeh offers a range of eye care treatment options and strives to provide the best quality service possible. For information or to schedule a consultation, call or visit the office.

» **Where:** 1000 37th Place, Suite 101, Vero Beach, FL

» **Phone:** (772) 758-1000

» **Website:** panaceaeye.com

"She helped make that trip everything I hoped it would be, and then I had the cataract surgery, and everything turned out great. So, I literally cannot sing Dr. Sarah's praises enough. She truly is exceptional."

"And that's why I've recommended her to some friends who have already booked appointments with her. She's just great, and she was just what I needed at what was a very difficult time in my life." ■