



Humanitarian Award

R. Samuel Cady, MD '99

R. Samuel Cady, MD '99 is a board certified, fellowship trained ophthalmologist who specializes in the diagnosis, management, and surgical treatment of glaucoma and cataracts at Maine Eye Center in Portland, Maine. He has also used his expertise to restore sight to hundreds of people and train ophthalmic surgical techniques to physicians in under-resourced countries.

A native of Central New York, Dr. Cady attended Duke University, where he majored in environmental science and played Division I lacrosse, graduating cum laude. Admitted to Upstate Medical University as a senior, he took a year deferral and spent seven months traveling the world on \$20 a day. "That year allowed me to experience other places and see how other people lived and got me thinking about how I could help others moving forward," he says.

Cady came to Upstate interested in pursuing a procedure-based specialty. His father, Robert Cady, MD '71, was a pediatric orthopedic surgeon, so orthopedics was one consideration. Ultimately, he says he most enjoyed his experiences in ophthalmology, particularly the mentorship of Tom Bersani, MD '82, who did volunteer surgical treatment in Honduras in addition to his practice in Central New York. Cady's interest was cemented during a rotation at Wills Eye Hospital in

Philadelphia working with Gary Brown, MD '75.

Following a medical internship at the Maine Medical Center, Cady completed an ophthalmology residency at the University of Washington Medical Center in Seattle. He then served as a clinical glaucoma fellow at the New York Eye & Ear Infirmary in New York City. He returned to Portland, where he has practiced for 20 years as a partner at Maine Eye, focusing on providing high quality, compassionate care to patients, while also creating a great environment for employees to work and advance.

Cady is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the Maine Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons, where he served as president from 2012 to 2014. He is a former clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School and an assistant clinical professor at the Tufts University School of Medicine.

For the past 15 years, Cady has also been an affiliated ophthalmologist with Cure Blindness Project, a large NGO dedicated to eradicating blindness in under-resourced areas of the world by helping people regain and retain their sight. The



Dr. Cady with his youngest daughter, Chloe, at a clinic in Rwanda

vast majority of the more than 40 million blind people in the world have lost their sight secondary to untreated cataracts and live in countries with limited resources. The goal is not only to perform surgeries, but to assist developing host countries in having the skilled professionals, supplies, and financing to deliver eye care independently.

Cady's volunteer work with Cure Blindness has taken him many places, including Haiti, Honduras, East Timor, and principally, Ethiopia and Rwanda. "These two countries are generally secure and both have residency programs in ophthalmology. The local physicians have the opportunity to have a good



Dr. Cady with a thankful patient

quality of life and are motivated to improve and to serve their own people," he says.

The need is great. In Sub-Saharan Africa, cataracts and glaucoma are extremely common due to altitude, sun exposure, and nutritional deprivation. And with roughly one ophthalmologist for every million people, the backlog for care is substantial.

During a week-long medical trip, Cady and his team will perform between 100 and 500 surgeries. "Typically, we have two to four people operating at a time, a mix of experienced surgeons and African residents. I might be at one table with a resident and a Rwandan surgeon will be supervising a resident at the other and then we'll switch," he explains. "It's kind of a balance to make sure that people get the care they need, but also making sure the residents get the training."

Cady says the work provides the pure sense of helping people that spurred him to attend medical school in the first place. "It's incredibly satisfying," he says. "These are people who couldn't see anything and now they're back to being independent. They can work and care for their families."

His objective is to donate a full year of work in service internationally in one- or two-week increments. "I'm halfway there," he says.

Voluntarism is clearly a family value. Cady has traveled with his father on mission trips to Haiti, where Dr. Cady Sr. performs club foot surgeries.

In recent years, Cady has shared his travels with his wife, Lucia, who is an optometrist and able to participate in the work. On their last trip to



Dr. Cady with daughters Hope and Chloe and his wife, Lucia

Rwanda, they were also joined by the youngest of Cady's two daughters. "To watch her experience something so completely different, I could tell the trip made a big impression," he says.

That's not incidental. Cady says each trip provides a valuable reset. "I find that the perspective I get from going there, when I come back, my usual reaction is, 'I don't have anything to complain about,'" he says. "Everyone in the United States should spend four days in Ethiopia."

Cady also recharges by spending time with his family, fly fishing, and playing "old man" lacrosse. He played on the Duke Over-50 team at a tournament in Lake Placid this summer.