

Dr. Ming Wang Came Looking for Hope and Found Community



Ophthalmologist Ming Wang, 55, is a Chinese-American who specializes in cataract and Lasik surgeries.

During his early teenage years, Ming fought to escape China's Cultural Revolution, a period when dictator Mao Zedong shut down hundreds of Chinese colleges and deported millions of innocent youth to remote areas to face lifetime sentences of poverty and hard labor.

To avoid deportation, Ming picked up the Chinese violin, the er-hu, and even posing at a medical student at the age of 14 at a local active university.

When China's Cultural Revolution was over in 1976 and all colleges reopened, Ming studied intensely for many hours each day and was eventually accepted into the Chinese University of Science of Technology (the "MIT of China").

While in college, Ming met American professor Dr. James McNesby, who helped him leave China by arranging a teaching assistant position at the University of Maryland.

In 1982, at the age of 21, he arrived in the United States with \$50, a Chinese-English dictionary

and a pocket full of hope and ambition.

Ming completed his doctorate in laser physics and finished postdoctoral training at MIT before going on to receive his second doctoral degree in medicine from Harvard Medical School in 1991.

To NASHVILLE and into PRIVATE PRACTICE

"In 1997, I got an offer I could not refuse from Vanderbilt University," Ming said, who at the time was training on the east coast at the University of Miami.

That year, Ming moved to Nashville and became the founding director of the Vanderbilt Laser Sight Center. He said he had job offers from many other top ten school but Vanderbilt gave him the best option.

"I'm a classical music kind of guy. I'm an opera, ballet, and classical music teacher, so country music was new to me, but I grew to like it over time," he said remembering his first experiences with country music and the culture of Nashville.

After five years at Vanderbilt, Ming established his own practice in 2002, Wang Vision 3D Cataract and Lasik Center.

"I felt like I could have more freedom in private practice to do things I wanted to do," he said. "For example, in 2003, I established the Wang Foundation of Sight Restoration as an organization to help the impoverished undergo cataract or Lasik surgery that they could otherwise not afford."

Ming was the first in the world and is currently the only ophthalmologist in Tennessee to perform 3D Lasik surgery. According to his website, "Three-D Lasik is a term referring to a three-dimensional, image-guided, bladeless all-laser Lasik using a 3D high-definition, stereoscopic microsurgical system."

He said the difference between 3D Lasik and non-3D is the use of digital imaging technology. He explained 3D Lasik is more precise, safer, and have yielded better results in sight with his patients.

▮ "The future of medicine is in digital technology."

At Wang Vision 3D Cataract and Lasik Center, Ming offers the entire spectrum of eye surgeries for people of all age groups.

"It was not clear to me why God wanted me to go through all that studying, training, and thirty-seven years of schooling, but now, looking back, I realized God's plan," he said. "He wanted me to learn both medicine and laser technology, so I can deliver the best laser eye surgery to my patients."

In the future, Ming said he sees himself continually dedicating his time and attention to the well-

being of his patients, developing new technologies in Lasik and cataract surgeries and in new surgeries to treat presbyopia.

“I see myself continuing to push the envelope in technology, to take care of my patients and to continue to build our foundation for sight restoration to help those who need it.”

Ming has performed over 55,000 eye procedures and has treated patients from nearly every state as well as over 55 countries.

COMMUNITY and CONCERNS

“When I arrived, Nashville wasn’t a cosmopolitan like New York or Chicago, but it has grown tremendously, and I’m proud of its growth.”

Ming said Latin -Americans, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans constitute 44 percent of the country’s population and are projected to be the collective majority. He said Nashville is going through similar changes with an increasing amount of cultural diversity.

“A community can be defined in a global sense,” he said.

“It’s paramount that we recognize that we are all different in culture, religion, background, and sometimes language, but we should all respect each other and love each other. We should learn how to accept each other rather than wanting someone to be who we want them to be.”

Ming said tolerance, acceptance, and unconditional love are much needed around the world and in Nashville. He said three main themes helped define modern Nashville – healthcare, music, and religion.

“This is why we’re exciting,” he said. “This is what Nashville has to offer to the rest of the world.

Ming compared Nashville to being on the first floor of constructing a ten-story building, whereas places like New York and Los Angeles are already on the 8th or 9th floor.

“We’ve got so much room to grow and so much potential here. That’s what I love most about this place.”

He said he sees Nashville continually growing in the future and becoming the healthcare capital of the world, the music capital of the world, and the Christian religion capital of the world.

Outside of work, Ming also leads the Tennessee Chinese Chamber of Commerce (TCCC) as president and is the co-founder of the Tennessee Immigrant and Minority Business Group (TIMBG).

He said the aim of the TIMBG is to help immigrant and minority business leaders learn from each

other and build businesses here in the U.S.

As president of the TCCC, Ming works to help Tennessee businesses learn about the history and culture of China so the U.S. can increase exportations. He said the first step to selling U.S. made products is understanding the customer.

“The U.S. is currently buying too many goods from China and not selling enough. Our country cannot be strong unless we’re able to sell our products,” he said.

Ming also shared some of his concerns with Neat Nashville. He said one concern, in particular, is a notion held by some that people should keep building walls, physical and mental, to separate people from different cultural ethnicities and religions.

“I want to do what I can to help break down walls, physical or mental. I want to do what I can to help America become strong by incorporating different cultures and ethnicities, not excluding them. America can only be strong if we break down walls and learn to live with everyone else.”

Ming said since he first arrived, he’s seen Nashville grow and develop in the right direction with an increasing amount of cultural diversity. He said he hopes the city continues to move that in direction.

Thanks for reading Nashville! Every Thursday at noon Neat Nashville embraces the community by highlighting an individual in a feature article that tells their story and voices their concerns about the city moving forward. It is our hope to inspire good change locally, to be a force of unity, and support the people we all call neighbors. It starts with **community**. It starts where **you** are.