

Publication: The Dominion Post; Date: May 4, 2008; Section: 100 Most Influential; Page Number: 117

Raju helps Morgantown and the world to see more clearly

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The Dominion Post

Dr. V.K. Raju sees the world clearly — and through his work in Morgantown as well as overseas, he is making sure others see it clearly too.

Raju, an ophthalmologist, has lived in Morgantown for 30 years and has an extensive professional background. He has received numerous awards and is a member of many professional societies. Raju's main interest is corneal transplants.

He earned his medical degree in India, and did his residency and fellowship at the University of London. After passing the Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons exam, he came to Morgantown to join the WVU Department of Ophthalmology in 1977.

In 1984, Raju went into private practice and founded the Monongalia

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Eye Clinic, which offers general eye care as well as cataract, corneal and laser surgery.

"I trust him implicitly with the care that he gives," said Deborah Miller, a patient at the Monongalia Eye Clinic. "His staff has that same caring viewpoint. He wants you to preserve your vision since that's so important."

Dr. John Linberg, a professor at the WVU Eye Institute, said a gift by Raju helped the Department of Ophthalmology create a surgical teaching laboratory. Raju also established an endowed lectureship at WVU devoted to issues of ethics and history in ophthalmology.



V.K. Raju

"He's a very friendly, highly competent physician who cares about and is concerned about ethical issues of ophthalmology," said Linberg, who worked with Raju in the WVU Department of Ophthalmology and continues to interact with him professionally. "He's a very warm and caring person who is committed to helping individual patients and his community."

Raju's ophthalmology work extends beyond Morgantown.

He has traveled to eight African countries and Afghanistan for his work. He also goes to India twice a year for the Eye Relief Project, where he teaches and volunteers his services.

"I'm very impressed with his inter-

est in the community and in our world," Miller said. "He has the big-picture view that lots of us don't necessarily have."

Raju established the Eye Foundation of America in 1979 to make eye care available to people who cannot afford it, especially children. The foundation created the Srikan Eye Institute in 1993, which has provided medical care to more than 400,000 patients, and the Goutami Eye Institute, in 2006. Both are in India.

According to the Eye Foundation of America Web site, 13 million people are blind in India, and 81 percent of this blindness is caused by cataracts. Raju's main focus is the prevention of blindness in children and reaching them early with the latest technology.

"Today, just a 30-minute operation can cure blindness for 70-plus years," Raju said. "Thirty years ago, nothing existed like that. All of this should

be done very early, within the first year or two of [a child's] life. Most modern technology won't help if you don't reach them in time."

Raju said that sometimes if a vitamin A capsule, which costs only a few cents, is not available to children, they can become blind very early in life.

"If it doesn't reach in time, the child is already blind or dead," he said.

The Eye Foundation is working to provide this vitamin to kids in 15 countries.

To pursue his ongoing goals, Raju said it is necessary to "keep learning and get involved in research and writing."

Raju has had many papers on ophthalmology published and continues to submit his work. Most recently, he finished two chapters on corneal diseases in two books, he said. He remains a clinical professor at WVU and keeps

V.K. Raju

PROFESSION: Ophthalmologist

RESIDENCE: Morgantown

FAMILY: Married with two children

HOBBIES: Playing tennis, going to the gym

QUOTE: "Yesterday is a canceled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Today is the cash. The best day of our life is today."

doing research.

"You keep teaching because you have to keep learning, and learning is my true love," Raju said. "If you do research and keep learning, you give the best clinical care to the patients."