



In celebration of World Sight Day 2021, the Trinidad & Tobago Optometrists Association would like to use this opportunity to highlight some of our phenomenal pioneers, whose love for the profession of Optometry will help you to keep **loving your eyes!**

Let's celebrate our rich history by meeting another one of our phenomenal pioneers:

MEET
BARBARA
WEST-MARSHALL
(B.Sc. Optometry)



**TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF- WHERE DID YOU GROW UP,
EDUCATION, FAMILY LIFE.**

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I grew up in San Fernando and had 5 siblings, 2 sisters and 3 brothers. I attended St. Joseph's Convent in San Fernando and was part of the second batch of students to go through the school from Form 1 to Form 6.

WHERE DID YOU STUDY OPTOMETRY?

WHAT/ WHO INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME AN OPTOMETRIST?

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I studied for my B.Sc. Optometry at the Northampton Polytechnic in London from 1952 to 1955 after which I worked for 1 year and did exams to obtain certification. This is now known as City University London.

Upon qualifying I started to work at Bateman's in London in 1956.

I married Lenville Marshall in 1957 and returned to Trinidad in 1959.

My father was a friend of Cynthia Patrick, an Optometrist and she may have had some influence over my going to study Optometry.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU PRACTICED OPTOMETRY?

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I have been in practice approximately 50 years.

DID YOU HOLD ANY PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS?

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I held the position on Vice-President of the TTOA as well as being a committee member over the years.

WHAT WAS OPTOMETRY LIKE WHEN YOU WERE A STUDENT AND THEN AS A QUALIFIED OPTOMETRIST IN TRINIDAD?

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There were not many optical practices when I qualified and returned to Trinidad in 1959. Persons did not openly advertise their services and products.

I did not work upon returning to Trinidad in 1959. I started to work at Northern Optical when their Optometrist Florrie Kelshall needed someone to fill in for her while she was on leave. Northern Optical was located opposite to Plimmers Optical, another well known optical company at that time.

After that I opened my own practice at the corner of “Bobby’s Building” on High Street, San Fernando and spent 2 years there.

My husband who worked at TTEC was transferred to Tobago in 1963 so the family moved there. I had my own office and was the only Optometrist in Tobago at that time. Dr. Armstrong a General Practitioner also did eye exams in Tobago at that time.

My husband was transferred to Trinidad 9 years later in 1972. I opened my practice in Tunupuna and worked there until 2002 when I closed the practice. I also worked at Ferreira Optical Limited for 2 days a week in the 1990’s.

WHAT/ WHO ENCOURAGED YOU TO SET UP YOUR PRACTICE?

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It was automatic for a newly qualified Optometrist to set up their own practice as there were very few Optical companies. Some of the companies of the time were Plimmers, Northern Optical and Imperial Optical.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN OVER THE DECADES?

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- There are a lot more Optometry practices today when compared to the 1960's, both multiple and independent practices.
- Ophthalmologists and businesspersons are now heavily involved in the business, placing the focus on the retail aspects of the business instead of the clinical aspects.
- There is a lot of advertising on all media platforms
- The focus appears to have shifted away from the clinical side of optometry to retail with the emphasis being on sales.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN NOT PRACTICING OPTOMETRY?

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I was busy raising 4 boys and looking after their needs.

For many years I was a Lady Lion as my husband was very involved with Lions. I was even part of the Electrical Association for Women (EAW) which was an association formed by the wives of TTEC employees. I enjoyed baking which was a useful skill when raising 4 boys who are now grown men with families of their own. I also enjoy gardening.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO PERSONS INTERESTED IN OPTOMETRY?

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I would advise them to keep it professional and to hold to the clinical standards and values of the profession and not to focus solely on the retail aspect of the business.