

The News
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Business

QUOTABLE

'Information technology and business are becoming inextricably interwoven. I don't think anybody can talk meaningfully about one without the talking about the other.'

Bill Gates
Microsoft Founder
(1955 -)



Local eye doctor performs high-tech implant

BY AARON DUDENHEFER
THE NEWS

DENHAM SPRINGS—The Williamson Eye Center in Baton Rouge held its first public demonstration of a Crystalens HD implanting procedure on Tuesday.

The Williamson Eye Center is one part of several branches for cosmetic surgery with the Williamson Centers. A Best Vision center is located in Denham Springs, which provides eye exams, glasses, and contacts to patients in need of visual aids. Patients with cataracts can also go there to have their vision checked by doctors that are at the location several times a week.

Crystalens HD is the first and only FDA approved naturally focusing corrective lens replacement for adults that have cataracts. It improves near vision through an enhanced accommodative optic that increases depth of focus. The elongated anterior surface produces improved near vision without compromising distance and intermediate vision. Through the use of the eye's natural muscles, patients are able to see at all distances, stated Rachel Dunn, Director of Marketing.

Approval was made on June 30 for the marketing of the product.

"The Crystalens provides a full range of focus for the far and near sighted," said Dunn.

Charles H. Williamson, MD, FACS of the Williamson Eye Center, has implanted

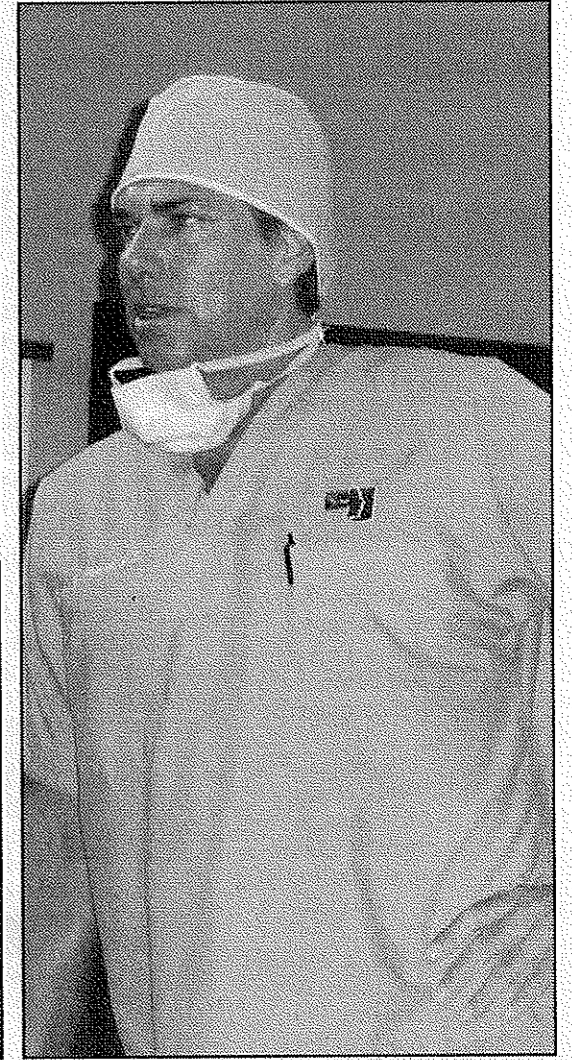
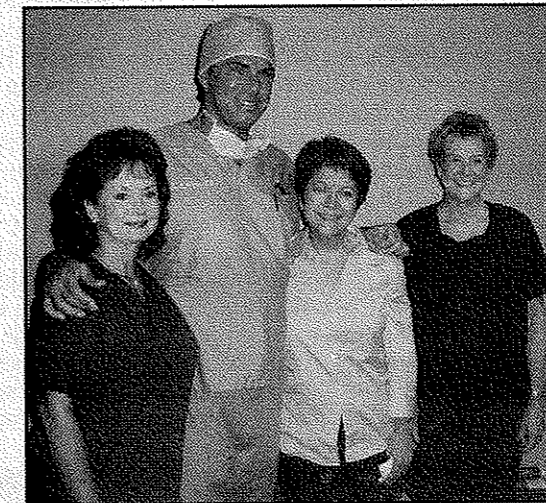
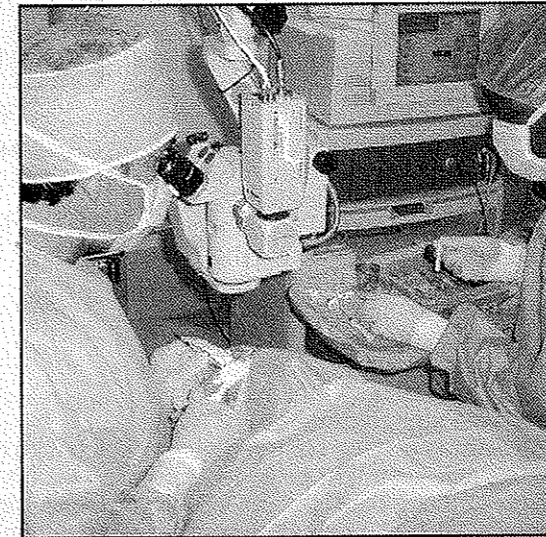
over 40,000 lenses in the past 27 years. Williamson is also the only ophthalmic and refractive surgeon in Baton Rouge authorized to perform this procedure. He is also the first surgeon in Louisiana to surgically implant the new Crystalense HD.

The implanting of the Crystalens is fairly simple. It requires mild sedatives to the eye, and the patient remains conscious throughout the procedure. A small incision is done just under the bottom area of the patient's iris. The cataract material is then removed, making way for the Crystalens, which is then inserted to replace the removed lens. The entire procedure is accomplished within a 20 minute period, as was shown in the demonstration.

The average cost for a Crystalens procedure costs around \$4500. Patients with cataracts are eligible to have their insurance pay half of that number.

"This procedure can be done for individuals that just use reading glasses," said Dunn. "However, it is recommended that they wait until the procedure is necessary, which usually means the patient will be over 50. Our center averages about 20-25 patients a month for Crystalens alone."

"This type of lens is definitely the wave of the future," said Williamson. "It is for patients that want to get rid of their reading glasses. This is the only pro-



AARON DUDENHEFER/THE NEWS

Doctor Charles Williamson stands with several of his patients, including Susan Falcon (first left) who had the procedure done only minutes before.

cedure that allow the eyes to restore their ability to focus clearly so that patients can regain their ability to read without glasses."

The patient that took part in the demonstration implantation spoke to the assembled

group just minutes after her surgery had ended.

"It's wonderful to be able to see so much without glasses," said Susan Falcon. "I've never had the ability to see such bright colors, not even when I was younger."

A test was conducted in which 125 patients with significant cataracts were implanted with Crystalens HD. Of the patients, 80 percent reported that their vision had improved within four months.

