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Priceless

'Of Eyes & Elegance'—Dr. Ming Wang

At age 21 with \$50 he had borrowed, a Chinese-English dictionary in his pocket and a dream for a better life, a young man came to America in 1982 knowing no one.

on the street corners as he enviously watched other students as they went off to school. Through the heart-touching and melancholy music of the er-hu, Ming expressed his longing for the opportunity to study again and have a better life.

A visit by an American professor helped to change Ming's life. Ming wanted an answer to a question. The professor had a difficult time understanding him. Ming refused to stop trying to get him to understand. He just kept on asking over and over. The professor finally understood and was so impressed by Ming's persistence and determination he helped him get to America.

Here, Ming excelled professionally by graduating *magna cum laude* from Harvard University and MIT and became one of the few LASIK surgeons in the world who holds a doctorate degree in laser physics.

He also learned the English language and western culture, and specifically, he fell in love with a fine European and American tradition, ballroom dancing.

Ballroom dancing started in Europe and was further developed in Great Britain. In America, it has a rich tradition from the days of Glenn Miller and the Big Band. In 1987, Ming was admitted to Harvard Medical School and MIT. At a Harvard ball, he found that most of the students hadn't a clue what to do when the waltz music began. Resolved to change that fact and to learn the fine human art, Ming got together with several fellow Harvard students and formed the Harvard Ballroom Dance Team. They wanted to change the stereotype of Harvard students being bookworms and wanted to excel in ballroom dancing both for enjoyment and to prove their point. They met their goal by winning the US national collegiate championships.

Over the years, Ming continued his training in ballroom dancing. He describes ballroom dancing as having two

separate and distinctly different categories. The first is international standard ballroom, in which men wear tails and women wear ball gowns. The dance style includes the waltz, foxtrot, tango, Viennese Waltz and quickstep.

"Standard classical ballroom is my favorite," Ming said. "In ballroom style dance, you express elegant and supremely beautiful music; it exalts the sublime in life". In contrast, the second ballroom dance style is Latin American dance, which consists of the cha-cha, rumba, samba, paso doble and jive, and which Ming describes as "rhythmic, powerful, sensual and romantic. It embodies the vital and dynamic aspects of our lives".

According to Ming, learning ballroom dancing improves our lives in many ways. It is not only about music, movement and exercise, but also, and perhaps more importantly, it nurtures one's sensitivity and awareness of another human being, not only his/her physical position, but also his/her emotional position. Only a perfectly synchronized and moving-in-unison ballroom couple can create truly breathtaking beauty and musicality in its most perfect form.

Ballroom dancing also helped in Dr. Wang's LASIK and corneal surgeries. He said that by being involved in ballroom dancing, he has learned how to feel what a patient feels, how to communicate with his patients better, and how to be more sensitive and aware of their feelings.

Dr. Wang has been involved in research and development of innovative eye reconstructive surgeries. He performed the world's first laser artificial cornea implantation, a new technology designed to restore vision in the terminally corneal blind patients, and to date, his patients have come from over 40 states in the US and from over 55 countries in the world.

He established a sight restoration foundation to help terminally corneal blind patients who come from around the world to Nashville to undergo these novel surgeries which he performs free of charge.

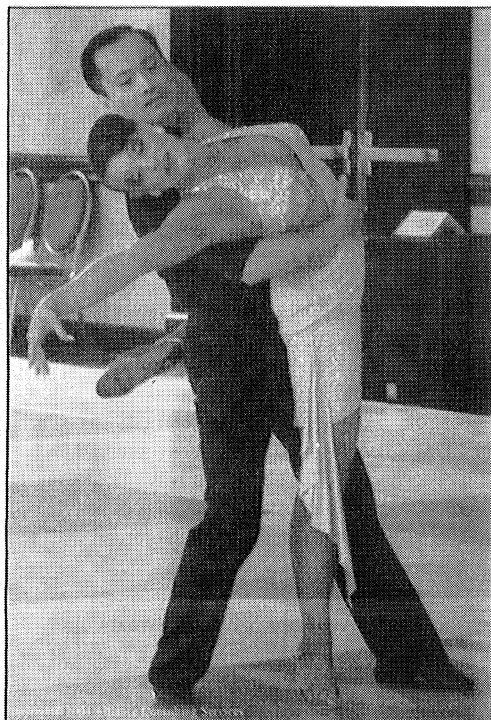
Crediting ballroom dancing for making him a better listener, Dr. Wang says it has also made him more sensitive to the desperate needs of these patients,

and overall, a better doctor.

Dr. Wang dances and practices 3 or 4 nights each week, with his professional partner Shalene Ermis. They compete regionally and nationally each month, and are currently one of the top pro-am ballroom couples in the US.

Today, Dr. Wang is the president of the Music City Chapter of the United States Amateur Ballroom Dancers Association (USABDA, or USA Dance), a non-profit national organization that promotes amateur ballroom dancing. On a regular basis, he organizes dance lessons and parties.

"I have sort of taken this up as a personal crusade. I want to help people learn ballroom dancing, particularly the youth who can benefit from it so much.



Performing the Rumba.

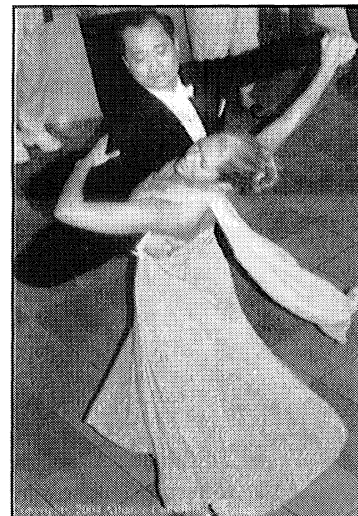
Amazingly, today, he is the 'epitome of a modern-day Renaissance man' — Ming Wang, M.D., Ph.D.

Notables said it best in its June-July issue with this description of this multi-faceted, multi-talented unique man who not only is a sight-saving surgeon, a laser-physics scientist, a high-tech inventor, a generous philanthropist, but, also, an accomplished musician and a champion ballroom dancer.

And, it all began with the soul of dance - music!

At age 14, in communist China, a young Ming Wang faced the devastating fate of being deported by the government to remote provinces to endure hard labor for life. The only way he could avoid his fate and a lifetime of poverty was to develop a skill, such as playing a musical instrument which the government could deem useful for its propaganda troops.

Forced to quit school and become a traditional Chinese violinist (er-hu), Ming practiced the er-hu for 15 hours a day



Ming and partner perform the Cheekwood Godfather dance.

They can learn how to be gentlemen and ladies, to be aware of and sensitive to others, and to work together as a team, something our modern individualistic society is sorely lacking," he said.

A personal crusade from an eye professional, who is passionate about this fine human art form, Dr. Ming Wang is truly an ambassador of medicine, of music, of dance, and of the belief that there is something good in all of us.

Dr. Wang is the founding director of the renowned Wang Vision Institute in Nashville, having performed over 25,000 LASIK vision-correction procedures (including 3,000 physicians). He is one of the highest profile ophthalmologists in America.