

Coward, Dr. Bruce

## Strong sense of community

What started as a one-man practice in a small office over a downtown drug store has thrived, moving into a modern clinic at 447 Dundas St. West in 1989, and expanding with branch offices in both Belleville (corner of North Front and College) and Brighton (Elizabeth Street, across from the public school.)

The practice has also become intergenerational, with one of Dr. Coward's sons, Dr. Bruce Coward, now the principle owner of the practice, who joined his father's practice in 1983.

Dr. Len is "supposed to be" retired, or at least semi-retired, but still spends three-and-a-half to four days a week in the offices, a reflection that, like doctors and nurses, there is a shortage of optometrists.

Dr. Bruce Coward followed in his father's footsteps as an optometrist almost by osmosis. "I always hung

around Dad's office," he recalled. "But it was not until I was in first year university that I really got interested."

He explained that Dr. Lenoard had undertaken to help train a number of optometrist students. Being exposed along with other young people to what the profession actually involves really aroused his interest.

"I had always been interested in health care and had considered being a doctor," he said. "The requirements are the same for studies- sciences, physics, biology and so on." Getting into a Canadian university for an optometrist degree also requires an A-plus average. There is only one English-speaking school serving Canada and only one out of 10 applications is accepted per year.

But even before his final career casting, he had leaned on his father's expertise in optics and prisms for school science projects, making his own telescopes and related activities. Since joining the practice in 1983, Dr. Bruce has been part of an expansion from one to the current three offices, the maximum allowed under professional guidelines laid down by the College of Optometry.



Intelligencer - May 13/00 p 23