

NC State Board of Opticians – 2024 Election Nominees
(presented in alphabetical order)

Christopher ‘Chris’ Berg - Since his father retired from the Army in 1992, Chris has been a resident of the Cumberland County area. His journey began at LensCrafters in 1997, where he worked part-time as a lab technician while pursuing his studies at Fayetteville State University. As time went on, he transitioned to full-time work and completed his degree in Mathematics with a minor in Physics in 2002. His educational journey continued at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, where he earned an MBA in 2005. During this period his passion for opticianry blossomed, leading him to pursue a degree in opticianry from Durham Technical Community College in 2012.

In 2013, he obtained his license and continued his tenure at LensCrafters, holding various positions until his retirement in late 2021 as a lab manager—an invaluable 24-year journey. Subsequently, he embarked on a new chapter as a licensed optician with National Vision, later transitioning to Walmart, where he currently works. Throughout this time, he was privileged to serve our community through Luxottica’s Onesight program, participating in multiple vision vans. He also enjoyed mentoring many associates as they pursued their careers in opticianry.

Beyond his professional life, community involvement has been Chris’s guiding principle as he’s volunteered with local churches, assisting in various capacities. From constructing access ramps for seniors through a carpentry ministry to serving meals with Ways to Love, Berg has witnessed the impact of collective efforts. Additionally, he’s served as Den Leader and Cubmaster for Scouts of America, fostering growth and leadership among young individuals. His participation in the HOPE health clinic further reinforces the importance of meeting local needs.

Above all, Chris Berg cherishes his role as a father to a remarkable twelve-year-old boy—a source of immense joy and inspiration in his life.

Walter Burke – A native of Brooklyn, NY Walter’s journeyed career in the optical field has been rich and rewarding. His entry position was in 1972 as an apprentice, with one of the premier optical labs in New Jersey. He received his license as an optician there in 1979. His diverse experience set the course for opticianry practice, managing single to multi-unit businesses in no less than six markets. This experience became the motivation to launch his own full-service eyewear boutique *Eye Classique* in Cedar Grove, NJ in 1985. In 1988 he launched his second optical dispensary in Irvington, NJ. His practice in NJ continued until his relocation to North Carolina in 2004.

In 2006 he became a licensed NC Realtor but felt pulled in 2008 to resume his journey in the optical profession and in 2010, he feels privileged to have received his NC optician’s license. He has been employed by Sam’s Club Optical since 2011. He truly enjoys delivering service as an optician while upholding the gold standards of NC licensure. Burke states that he aspires to work to maintain the legacy of the opticianry profession.

Walter is active in church-life which has provided him the opportunity to serve on medical mission teams, providing vision services to communities in Guyana, Jamaica and Haiti. His wife and he are proud of their four children and four grandchildren and enjoy the rich offerings that living North Carolina provides.

Robert Key – Robert attended (what was then) Durham Community College and graduated with a degree in Opticianry in 1981. He recognizes his fortune to have worked for corporations and private practice and appreciates the environment and differences they both provided. Over the past 42 years, he’s worked for varied eyecare providers: Pearle Vision, Lenscrafters, Sears Optical and Eye Care Associates. For the most recent 8+ years, Robert has been employed by VSP and works at LifeConnections Vision Center in Research Triangle Park.

Robert is originally from Winston-Salem and now lives in Wake Forest, married for 24 years to wife TJ. They have two sons (Adam and Austin) and three grandchildren (Nolan, Stella and Rowen). And he always includes his beautiful Golden Retriever Bella in the family listing.

Over the span of Key’s career he’s had the pleasure, he says, of getting to meet, learn from and work with many talented and caring opticians. Given the opportunity, he would appreciate giving back to the profession by supporting the opticians in service on the State Board.