

Margene's New Eyes

By the time she reached her late 50s, the hereditary bags beneath Margene's eyes were taking a toll on her self-esteem. She assumed we couldn't afford cosmetic surgery to remedy the problem. (She'd been lobbying for a tanzanite ring to match the one her sister had been given, and I told her our budget wouldn't allow it.) In June 2002, and without her knowing it, I made an appointment for her with one of Atlanta's top cosmetic surgeons. In an operation at Northside Hospital, Dr. Brian Beagle removed the fatty deposits under her eyes. When the post-operative swelling went away, she looked ten years younger. Getting her eyes fixed made a tremendous difference in the way she felt about herself. With illness having prevented me from earning much during nine of what should have been my prime earning years, I watched our money like a hawk, realizing that every dollar we spent was one less dollar Margene would have to live on when I was gone. The surgery for her eyes was nearly as much at the \$7,500 ring she wanted. My thinking was that few people would notice an expensive ring on her finger, but everyone would instantly see on how much better she looked if her eyes were fixed. I've never regretted the decision I made to forego getting a ring she wanted in favor of the surgery that made her feel good about herself every time she looked in a mirror. By early 2010, eight years after the operation on her eyes, the puffiness had returned. I planned to surprise her again that summer with another appointment with Dr. Beagle, but it wasn't to be.

When she came out of the OR with a lot more bandaging than I expected, I thought something had gone horribly wrong.

