

ESSENCE

Growing up with a complexion that "needed to be revamped," Jeanine B. Downie, M.D., learned firsthand about the importance of having a good self-image. She knew from an early age that she wanted to be a doctor, so she decided to become an expert in the field of dermatology.



Now, four years after opening Image Dermatology in Montclair, New Jersey, Downie and her staff of four juggle appointments, television appearances on *The View* and *Good Day New York*, and calls from publications like *InStyle*, *Cosmopolitan* and *O*.

She also coauthored the best-selling book *Beautiful Skin of Color: A Comprehensive Guide to Asian, Olive and Dark Skin* (HarperCollins). Today her practice has revenues in six figures and recently relocated into an 1870's Victorian home in Montclair.

IMAGE CONTROL: "My skin was a mess when I was younger. I had eczema and acne and didn't always feel good about my appearance. My grandfather was a dentist, and my mother is a practicing pediatrician, so it was a foregone conclusion that I would become a doctor. After earning an undergraduate degree in biology and psychology from Tufts University, I chose dermatology to help others put their best face forward."

FACING IMPEDIMENTS: "I was turned down by the first bank I approached for start-up capital, despite my thorough business plan and experience from my previous practice. I finally secured a loan and put up a significant chunk of my own money to buy equipment and furnish my office."

STRETCHING OUT: "I see young and old patients, male and female, and all ethnicities. I perform surgeries as well as medical treatments. And I love working with lasers. Today more African-Americans are requesting BOTOX® Cosmetic treatments, chemical peels, laser hair removal and treatment for men with razor bumps. I also created an over-the-counter skin-care line with Sheryl Lee Ralph called Skin Salon Gold (skinsalongold.com)."

DOCTOR'S ORDERS: "I advise all patients, but particularly African-Americans, to wear sunblock daily and get annual head-to-toe checkups for superficial skin cancers. My biggest compliments are referrals from patients pleased by how we've helped them feel and look better."

— [Sherri A. McGee](#)