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*Ensuring Vital Needs Are Met—
Andria and Paul Heafy Are Passionate
in Their Support for DMEI and Its Mission*



• DMEI •
inVIsion
A PUBLICATION OF THE DEAN MCGEE EYE INSTITUTE

patient care
education
vision research
leadership
service

DMEI clinical directory

Oklahoma Health Center

DMEI Acers and Parke Pavilions
608 Stanton L. Young Blvd. ■ Oklahoma City, OK 73104
405.271.6060

Comprehensive Ophthalmology/ Cataract and Ophthalmic Surgery/ Premium Cataract Surgery

405.271.1090 ■ 800.787.9012
John M. Bell, MD*
Victoria A. Bugg, MD*
Matthew S. Chorost, MD*
Layne E. Goetzinger, MD*
Carolyn E. Kloek, MD
Andrew T. Melson, MD*
Deana S. Watts, MD

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405.271.6084 ■ 800.787.9012
Rachel M. Caywood, OD, FFAO
Scott Samples, FCLSA, NCLE-M, CPOT

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405.271.1095 ■ 800.787.9017
Kamran M. Riaz, MD*
Rhea L. Siatkowski, MD*

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Andrew K. Bailey, MD*
Ben J. Harvey, MD*
Gregory L. Skuta, MD

LASIK and Refractive Surgery

405.271.2500 ■ 877.406.4193
Kamran M. Riaz, MD*

Low Vision Rehabilitation

405.271.1793 ■ 800.787.9012
Rebecca K. Morgan, MD

Neuro-Ophthalmology/Adult Strabismus

405.271.1091 ■ 800.787.9013
Andrew T. Melson, MD*
Anil D. Patel, MD, FRCSC, FACS

405.271.1094 ■ 800.787.9016
R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA

Ocular Oncology/Ophthalmic Pathology

405.271.7825 ■ 800.787.9012
Brian K. Firestone, MD*

Ocular Prosthetics

405.271.3391 ■ 800.787.9012
Donnie R. Franklin, BCO, BADO

Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

405.271.1096 ■ 800.787.9018
Thai Do, MD
Annie Moreau, MD, FACS
Jeremy F. Tan, MD

Optical Services

405.271.6174 ■ 800.787.9012

Optometry

405.271.1090 ■ 800.787.9012
Rachel M. Caywood, OD, FFAO
Laura A. Kahn, OD
Brandalyn D. Loyko, OD
Jessica L. Lucas, OD, FFAO
Stacie Newton, OD

Pediatric Ophthalmology/Strabismus

405.271.1094 ■ 800.787.9016
Maria E. Lim, MD**
R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA
Tammy L. Yanovitch, MD, MHSc

Kristen A. Anderson, CO (Orthoptist)
Laurie A. Hahn-Parrott, CO, COT, MBA
(Orthoptist)

Retina/Vitreous

405.271.1092 ■ 800.787.9014
Reagan H. Bradford Jr., MD
Razek G. Coussa, MD, FRCSC
Ronald M. Kingsley, MD
Jila Noori, MD

Stephenson Refractive Surgery/Laser Center

405.271.2500 ■ 877.406.4193

Trauma/Emergency

405.271.6060 ■ 800.787.9012

Uveitis

405.271.1092 ■ 800.787.9014
Jila Noori, MD

Dean McGee Eye Institute Satellite Locations

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3500 N.W. 56th, #100, Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405.271.9500

Comprehensive Ophthalmology/Cataract and Ophthalmic Surgery/Premium Cataract Surgery

Ralph B. Hester III, MD*
Victoria A. Bugg, MD*
Matthew S. Chorost, MD*

Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Thai Do, MD
Jeremy F. Tan, MD

Optometry

Tasha J. Schellenberg, OD
Laura A. Kahn, OD

Optical Services

405.271.9506

OKLAHOMA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OU HEALTH

1200 N. Children's Ave., Suite 8-A, Oklahoma City, OK 73104
405.271.7887, option 2

Pediatric Ophthalmology/Strabismus

Maria E. Lim, MD**
R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA
Tammy L. Yanovitch, MD, MHSc

Optical Services

405.271.7887

EDMOND

1005 Medical Park Blvd., Edmond, OK 73013
405.271.0913

Comprehensive Ophthalmology/Cataract and Ophthalmic Surgery

John M. Bell, MD*

Glaucoma/Comprehensive Ophthalmology/Cataract and Ophthalmic Surgery

Andrew K. Bailey, MD*

Neuro-Ophthalmology/Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Anil D. Patel, MD, FRCSC, FACS

Optometry

Angela M. Plant, OD, FFAO
Jessica L. Lucas, OD, FFAO

Optical Services

405.271.0909

LAWTON

3201 W. Gore Blvd., #200, Lawton, OK 73505
580.250.5855

Comprehensive Ophthalmology/Cataract and Ophthalmic Surgery/Premium Cataract Surgery

Ann Acers-Warn, MD, MBA*
Matthew S. Chorost, MD*

Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Thai Do, MD

Optical Services

580.585.5425

*DMEI Ophthalmologist Performing Cataract Surgery in Adults

**DMEI Ophthalmologist Performing Cataract Surgery in Children

McGee Eye Surgery Center

Harold Hamm Diabetes Center
1000 N. Lincoln Blvd., Suite 150, Oklahoma City, OK 73104
405.271.3363
Medical Director: Robert J. Christensen, MD

Dean McGee Eye Institute

Home to the Department
of Ophthalmology of the
University of Oklahoma
College of Medicine

R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA
DMEI Chief Executive Officer
Edward L. Gaylord Professor and Chair
David Ross Boyd Professor

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Vice Chair for Quality and Innovation
Clinical Associate Professor

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Vice Chair for Clinical Research
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Administrator, Department of Ophthalmology

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The Dean McGee Eye Institute is dedicated to serving
all Oklahomans and the global community through
excellence and leadership in patient care, education,
and vision research.



• DMEI • inVision

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PICTURED ON FRONT COVER:

Paul and Andria Heafy and DMEI programs supported by their generosity.



The Preferred Eye Care Provider of the OKC Thunder



R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA

A Noble Secret

DEAR FRIENDS,

I RECENTLY WATCHED THE FILM “OPPENHEIMER.” IT’S A GREAT MOVIE, WITH EXCELLENT CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND GREAT DRAMA AROUND A CRUCIAL TIME IN OUR NATION’S HISTORY. This story stimulated me to think about the keeping of secrets. Secret keeping is often difficult, and there are many motives behind it.

While the Manhattan Project was a justifiably kept secret, it all eventually became public. There are, of course, many secrets that have persisted for decades (recipes for Coca-Cola and Hershey’s chocolate bars), centuries (the identity of Jack the Ripper and how *The New York Times* “Best Sellers List” is composed), or millennia (whatever happened to the Ark of the Covenant).

Most of us have our first foray into secret keeping in childhood, by not disclosing something we did that we know was wrong. This temptation unfortunately persists throughout life, and the secrets can become increasingly more powerful; think of the maltreatment of the Tuskegee Study or the crimes of Watergate. Sometimes the motive to keep a secret is embarrassment. Every emergency room doctor has stories of a teenage girl showing up at the hospital in labor, while the family has been unaware of the pregnancy.

*“Time sees and hears all things,
and discloses all.”*

—Sophocles

*“Man is not what he thinks he is,
he is what he hides.”*

—Andre Malraux

There are also very noble reasons to keep secrets. Promoting a greater good (such as when the British broke the Germans' Enigma code in World War II) is an obvious one. Sometimes we have temporary secrets because we don't know how things will turn out, such as the early stages of a romance or a pregnancy. And in the right context of human relationships, secret keeping can promote trust, evoke comradery, and develop intimacy.

One of the noblest reasons to keep secrets is humility. Humble people prefer the focus to be on others and would rather highlight the accomplishments of their friends and colleagues, even if theirs are more notable. Our feature story in this issue is about a couple who have kept a secret of doing good to help others. They have chosen now to tell their story solely for the purpose of encouraging others to support the Eye Institute.

Andria and Paul Heafy met and married in mid-life, after they had both established families and careers. Each of them individually is highly accomplished, and they have been blessed with financial success, which they have shared generously with the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) and many other organizations. But their giving comprises much more than

“
**But their giving
comprises much
more than
the financial
component.**”

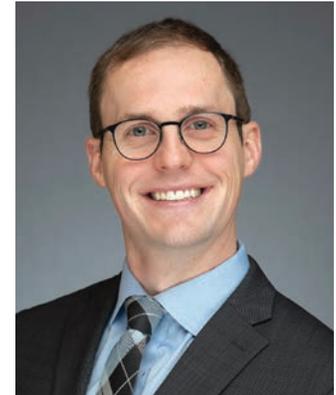
the financial component. In their capacity as donors, they have queried me extensively about my goals for the Institute and have helped me grow by sharing their philosophy on what is important to them. As a board member of DMEI, Andria has discussed with me at length important issues regarding quality, safety, and transparency. They have made me a better person and I'm grateful for that.

We may not all achieve the same level of financial success as the Heafys. But like all of us, they have faced their own set of very difficult challenges, and have done so bravely, in large part because they have experienced the joy of giving of their time, their energy, their wisdom, and their resources to help make life better for all Oklahomans. In this regard, all of us at the Dean McGee Eye Institute are humbled, honored, and excited to be part of their vision.



R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA
Chief Executive Officer
Dean McGee Eye Institute
Edward L. Gaylord Professor and Chair
David Ross Boyd Professor
Department of Ophthalmology
University of Oklahoma College of Medicine

ANDREW T. MELSON, MD, Named to *Oklahoma Magazine's* "40 Under 40"



Andrew T. Melson, MD
Assistant Professor
Residency Program Director

IN THE MARCH 2024 ISSUE OF OKLAHOMA MAGAZINE, DR. ANDREW T. MELSON WAS INCLUDED AMONG THE STATE'S "40 UNDER 40" recognized as "influential young leaders (who) drive the state forward." He is the fifth member of the faculty at the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) and in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology to be honored in this way.

A native of the Cincinnati, Ohio area, Dr. Melson earned his undergraduate (*summa cum laude*) and medical (Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society, Gold Humanism Honor Society) degrees from Saint Louis University and completed his internship at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana. He then served as a resident in ophthalmology at DMEI/OU and was chief resident during the 2017-2018 academic year. Dr. Melson also completed his neuro-ophthalmology fellowship at DMEI/OU in 2019 and joined the Institute/Department as faculty thereafter.

Dr. Melson's numerous honors and awards at DMEI/OU include the Dr. and Mrs. T.E. Acers Resident Honor Award in 2018, the Annie Moreau Fellow Teaching Award in 2019, the M. Dewayne Andrews, MD Excellence in Teaching Award in Graduate Medical Education in 2021, and the Edward and Thelma Gaylord Faculty Honor Award in 2021. For more news about Dr. Melson, please see page 19.

Dr. Melson and his wife Danielle, who is a physical therapist, have two sons, Oliver (age 3) and Miles (9 months).

Past recipients of this "40 Under 40" recognition among DMEI/OU faculty include Drs. Ben J. Harvey, Kamran M. Riaz, James C. O'Brien, and Jeremy F. Tan. ■



DMEI "Best of the 405" Winner

405 Magazine staff created 173 different award categories in its 2024 "Best of the 405" competition. With 266,611 votes tallied, the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) was honored in May with "Best Eye Surgery" and "Best Optometrist." All of us at DMEI are grateful for this recognition of DMEI excellence! ■



Nancy A. Lambert, BCO

Nancy A. Lambert, BCO, *Retires from DMEI*

IN APRIL 2024, NANCY A. LAMBERT, BCO, RETIRED from her ocular prosthetics practice after more than two decades of devoted service to her patients and the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI).

Lambert served as a board-certified ocularist and director of the Ocular Prosthetic Service at DMEI for almost 26 years, after having first established a very busy and successful private practice in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She very quickly established a similarly busy practice in Oklahoma at DMEI, creating ocular prostheses for everyone from neonates to the very elderly. Lambert is well recognized both regionally and nationally for the high quality of her work, as well as her amazing artistry and efficiency. She has served extensively on the National Examining Board of Ocularists for over a decade and has presented at many national and international meetings.

Although Lambert's shoes can never truly be filled (there are only about 300 board certified ocularists worldwide), DMEI is fortunate that Donnie R. Franklin, BCO, BADO, joined DMEI in May as a board-certified ocularist. Franklin has had a private practice with several offices in

the Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex/north Texas since 1993, and is excited to now join DMEI. His training and technique are similar to Lambert's, with experience in all age groups and diseases. He has been on staff at both Texas Tech and Cook Children's Hospital since 2006, has served on the Board of Directors for the American Society of Ocularists, and is currently on the Board of Trustees of the International Academy of Ocularistry. His work is outstanding, and his colleagues—including Lambert—all speak of him in truly glowing terms. ■



Donnie R. Franklin, BCO, BADO



A retirement reception honoring Nancy A. Lambert, BCO, was held on April 10 at DMEI. Pictured (left to right): Nancy Lambert and husband Glen Lambert with her caricature cutout.

2024 CASTLE CONNOLLY EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN IN MEDICINE

IN MARCH, CASTLE CONNOLLY ANNOUNCED six Dean McGee Eye Institute female physicians as exceptional women in the field of ophthalmology. The list included over 8,400 female *Castle Connolly Top Doctors* who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, expertise, and dedication in their respective fields. Congratulations to Drs. Cynthia A. Bradford, Carolyn E. Kloek, Rebecca K. Morgan, Rhea L. Siatkowski, Deana S. Watts, and Tammy L. Yanovitch!



Cynthia A. Bradford, MD
Clinical Professor
Presbyterian Health Foundation
Presidential Professor



Carolyn E. Kloek, MD
Clinical Associate Professor
Vice Chair for Quality and Innovation
Chief Medical Officer, OU Health



Rebecca K. Morgan, MD
Thomas E. Acers, MD Clinical Professor



Rhea L. Siatkowski, MD
Clinical Professor
Cornea Fellowship Director



Deana S. Watts, MD
Clinical Associate Professor



Tammy L. Yanovitch, MD, MHSc
Clinical Professor
Director of Medical Student Education

CYNTHIA A. BRADFORD, MD, RETIRED FROM THE DEAN MCGEE EYE INSTITUTE/UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA ON AUGUST 30 AFTER 37 YEARS OF ESTEEMED SERVICE. Dr. Bradford maintained a very busy clinical and surgical practice as a comprehensive ophthalmologist and was a highly accomplished cataract surgeon. Her patient population ranged from the poorest and humblest undocumented citizen to decorated veterans, prominent leaders in the state, and the most influential members of Oklahoma society. For more than 30 years, Dr. Bradford was the mainstay of teaching cataract surgery to all of our beginning residents, and leaves a true legacy of excellence in patient care that was imparted to her many former trainees across the country. In addition, she was a state and national leader who served as president of the Oklahoma Academy of Ophthalmology and American Academy of Ophthalmology. More to come in the next issue of DMEI *InVision*. ■



Technician Clinical Rotations Conducted at Dean McGee Eye Institute

STUDENTS FROM THE VISION CARE TECHNICIAN PROGRAM AT CANADIAN VALLEY TECHNOLOGY (CV TECH) CENTER recently finished clinical rotations at the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) as part of their 10-month training program. Their DMEI experience was overseen by Jeremy Cooper, COMT. While at the Institute, students also worked alongside Dean McGee's highly skilled team of technicians.

After completing training, students will be eligible to sit for the Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA) Examination through the International Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (IJCAHPO). Some of them will likely become permanent members of the DMEI team!

Beginning in August 2024, CV Tech's Vision Care Technician Program will become a registered apprenticeship program with the US Department of Labor and in partnership with DMEI. Apprentices will be employed by the Institute while they learn at CV Tech. The 12-month program is open to high school graduates ages 18 and over and will feature a mix of classroom learning, laboratory simulation, and on-the-job training.

CV Tech's Cowan Campus is located on Czech Hall Road in Yukon, Oklahoma. A traditional 10-month Vision Care Technician Program for high school seniors is also offered at this campus. For enrollment information, please call 405.345.3333. ■



Vision care technician trainee, Abigail Farley, is shown conducting an examination.



Kaylee Calhoun, another vision care technician trainee, performs a glasses prescription check.

New Appointment to DMEI/OU Clinical Faculty

MATTHEW S. CHOROST, MD, WHO IS FROM MOORE/NORMAN, OKLAHOMA, joined the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI)/University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology on June 3 as a comprehensive ophthalmologist and clinical assistant professor. He will be seeing patients predominantly at the Oklahoma Health Center location but will also have a presence at the Northwest Oklahoma City and Lawton satellite offices. Dr. Chorost will offer cataract surgery as well as refractive surgery/LASIK as part of his practice.



*Matthew S. Chorost, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor*

Dr. Chorost earned his undergraduate degree (microbiology) as well as his medical degree from the University of Oklahoma, followed by an internship and ophthalmology residency at the National Capital Consortium/Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, from 2016 to 2020.

An Army major, he had been Chief of Ophthalmology at Carl R. Darnall Medical Center in Fort Hood, Texas, since 2023. Dr. Chorost has taught ocular trauma surgery to residents at the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda and has precepted medical students from military programs as well as from Texas A&M University.

Dr. Chorost, his wife, and their two young daughters are enjoying their relocation to Oklahoma City/Edmond and are delighted to be part of the DMEI family. ■

DMEI WELCOMES NEW OPTOMETRIST



Stacie Newton, OD

STACIE NEWTON, OD, WHO JOINED THE DEAN MCGEE EYE INSTITUTE (DMEI) ON AUGUST 1, will begin her training as a neuro-optometrist and also will work in comprehensive optometry. She will be seeing patients at the DMEI Oklahoma Health Center location.

Dr. Newton grew up in Cherokee, Oklahoma, earning her undergraduate degree in chemistry from Oklahoma Baptist University and her master of science degree in organic chemistry from Colorado State University. In the spring of 2024, she earned her doctor of optometry degree from Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry (NSUOCO.) During her time at NSUOCO, she was the inaugural recipient of the Mary Stratton Optometry Scholarship, which is awarded to an optometry student with one or more children living at home. In 2021, Dr. Newton received the Class of 2024 Outstanding Student Award from NSUOCO. ■

Drs. Kamran M. Riaz and Jeremy F. Tan Recognized by *Castle Connolly*

KAMRAN M. RIAZ, MD, AND JEREMY F. TAN, MD, HAVE BEEN HONORED AS TOP ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER (AAPI) DOCTORS BY CASTLE CONNOLLY. This diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative is designed to honor top clinicians who represent the pinnacle of medical excellence, compassion, and cultural diversity, and enable patients to find *Castle Connolly Top Doctors* with backgrounds similar to theirs. Studies show that patient outcomes and satisfaction in minority populations are higher when patients are able to choose doctors with shared backgrounds and experiences. ■



Jeremy F. Tan, MD
Clinical Associate Professor
Tolbert Family Endowed Chair in
Ophthalmology
Director of Global Ophthalmology



Kamran M. Riaz, MD
Clinical Professor
Thelma Gaylord Endowed Chair in
Ophthalmology
Vice Chair for Clinical Research

Congratulations to Dean McGee Eye Institute's Ophthalmology Coding Specialists!

The Ophthalmic Coding Specialist Examination is a 100-question, multiple-choice assessment that covers all aspects of coding for ophthalmology. It is designed to educate and assess comprehensive coding knowledge of physicians as well as ophthalmic professionals.

- Travis Arthurs
- Julie Cook
- Yaluv Cornish
- LaTanya Flowers
- Alisha Harris
- Shannon Highsmith
- Kerri Luna
- Wendy Madewell
- Kerri McKee
- Nicole Mitchell
- Eben Orellana
- Nan Perkins
- Amy Pratt
- Julie White



In the July 2024 issue of *Oklahoma Magazine*, the Dean McGee Eye Institute was listed among "The Best of the Best" ophthalmologists in Oklahoma City. Thank you to all who voted in the publication's 25th annual poll!

GLOBAL EYE CARE UPD

IN LATE MAY 2024, RESIDENT OPHTHALMOLOGISTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS from the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) traveled to Eswatini in southeastern Africa to serve, teach, and learn.

The DMEI team members coordinated their efforts with Dr. Jonathan J. Pons, who served as a visiting professor at DMEI on July 29 (please see page 51). Dr. Pons lives and is based in Siteki, Eswatini, but provides ophthalmologic care throughout the country of 1.2 million people as well as the greater African continent. The team assisted Dr. Pons and his colleagues, spanning several aspects of medical outreach in various clinics and operating theaters while

directly refining many of the skills valuable in international work. Ophthalmologists from DMEI have been traveling to Eswatini since 2011.

On this trip, Drs. Elizabeth A. “Libby” Fairless (PGY4 and chief resident), Jessica Hsueh (PGY4 resident), Kyle J. Royalty (PGY4 resident), Andrew T. Melson (neuro-ophthalmology/comprehensive ophthalmology faculty and residency program director), and Aman Mittal (cornea and external disease faculty) provided broad subspecialty clinical and surgical expertise, facilitating 15 corneal transplants along with several complex strabismus surgeries. These surgeries were performed both in



Dr. Jessica Hsueh (left) teaching Ryan Hadaway (right), a South African medical trainee, how to perform strabismus surgery.



Drs. Aman Mittal (front, far left), Andrew Melson (back, far left), Elizabeth “Libby” Fairless (front center), Kyle Royalty (back center), and Jessica Hsueh (right center) observing a clinical procedure performed by Ryan Hadaway (seated), a South African medical trainee.



Drs. Jonathan Pons (left) and Andrew Melson (right) with donated reading glasses, eye drops, and surgical equipment.



Dr. Elizabeth "Libby" Fairless performing manual small incision cataract surgery.

demonstration and in conjunction with Dr. Pons as well as visiting residents from South Africa. The DMEI team also learned more about the other outreach work underway at Dr. Pons' Mabuda Farms, such as helicopter-based dental and visual outreach services, anti-human trafficking movements, environmental conservation, and rehabilitation services for disabled children.

Throughout the two most recent visits in late 2023 and May 2024, the Dean McGee ophthalmologists and local provider teams screened hundreds of patients across various

clinical settings and distributed over 200 pounds of sight- and life-saving medical supplies as well as reading glasses. The DMEI providers also gave lectures as part of an educational conference to providers who traveled from across the country.

A second 2024 trip is planned for late September. Again, DMEI physicians will be there to provide much needed care to those in Eswatini suffering from a wide range of ophthalmic disease and vision-threatening conditions. ■



DMEI "Reader Rankings" Winner

ON JUNE 27, the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) was named the winner in *The Journal Record's* 2024 "Reader Rankings" in the "Best Cosmetic or Plastic Surgeon" and "Best Optometrist" categories. The announcement was made during a reception honoring the top 2024 "Reader Rankings" finalists held at the Visual and Performing Arts Center at Oklahoma City Community College.

Kamran M. Riaz, MD, Awarded Thelma Gaylord Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology

DR. KAMRAN M. RIAZ, A CORNEAL SPECIALIST AT THE DEAN MCGEE EYE INSTITUTE (DMEI) AND CLINICAL PROFESSOR and vice chair for clinical research in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology, has been named the recipient of the Thelma Gaylord Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology. Established in 2020 after a gift from the E.L. and Thelma Gaylord Foundation, the Thelma Gaylord Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology is the second endowed chair in the Institute/Department to carry the distinguished Gaylord family name. The other is the Edward L. Gaylord Endowed Chair, which is occupied by the chair of the OU Department of Ophthalmology, Dr. R. Michael Siatkowski. It was previously held by Drs. David W. Parke II, MD, and Gregory L. Skuta, MD.

“I am deeply thankful, honored, and humbled to receive the Thelma Gaylord Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology and to be promoted to Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology and Vice Chair for Clinical Research,” said Dr. Riaz. “I look forward to continuing to advance our academic mission, focusing on the clinical care of patients, teaching, and research. I am proud to be a part of DMEI, which is such an indispensable

institution in our great state of Oklahoma.”

A native of Chicago, Dr. Riaz received both his bachelor’s (*magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa) and medical degrees from the University of Illinois - Chicago. He completed his residency in ophthalmology at Northwestern University in Chicago, where he served as chief resident, and his fellowship in cornea/external disease/refractive surgery at the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas. From 2016 to 2019, Dr. Riaz was a member of the full-time faculty in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science at the University of Chicago. He received the Department’s 2018 Residents’ Excellence in Teaching Award (Teacher of the Year) as well as the Chicago Curriculum in Ophthalmology’s 2018 Teacher of the Year Award.

Since joining DMEI in March 2019, Dr. Riaz’s practice has focused on complex and premium cataract surgery, corneal transplantation, refractive surgery, and the management of difficult and challenging surgical cases. In 2021, he was awarded “40 Under 40” and “Achievers Under 40” recognitions by *Oklahoma Magazine* and *The Journal Record*, respectively. In April



Kamran M. Riaz, MD
Thelma Gaylord Clinical Professor
Vice Chair for Clinical Research

2022, Dr. Riaz received a Faculty Aesculapian Award from the OU College of Medicine's senior class, the first ophthalmologist to ever receive this prestigious recognition. In addition, he is listed among *Castle Connolly Top Doctors*, *Castle Connolly Top Asian American and Pacific Islander Doctors*, and *Top Doctors of the 405*.

A world-renowned expert in clinical optics, Dr. Riaz has lectured at academic institutions and in various other venues across the country and around the world. He also serves as an oral examiner for the American Board of Ophthalmology.

Given his robust interest in clinical research, Dr. Riaz was named the vice chair for clinical research for DMEI and the Department of Ophthalmology in August 2024. He previously held the title of director of medical student research and has served as the mentor for multiple resident and medical student presentations at numerous national meetings.

Dr. Riaz has authored or co-authored more than 100 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters. He also serves as the primary editor of an optics textbook published in September 2022 entitled *Optics for the New Millennium: An Absolute Review Textbook* and is co-editor of a new book entitled *Clinical Atlas of Anterior Segment OCT: Optical Coherence Tomography* (please see page 27). In addition, Dr. Riaz co-authored five segments on intraocular lenses in 2023 for the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology's *Surgical Curriculum for Ophthalmology Residents*.

Dr. Riaz was recently appointed to the editorial board of the scientific journal *Eye* and has served as a scientific reviewer for numerous journals. He has served on the faculty/editorial committee for the *Clinical Optics* section of the American Academy of Ophthalmology's (AAO's) *Basic and Clinical Science Course* since 2019 and became chair for this section in 2024. He also serves on the Cataract Subcommittee for the AAO's Ophthalmic News and Education (ONE) Network Editorial Committee. For his service to the Academy, Dr. Riaz was the recipient of an AAO Achievement Award in 2023.

“Dr. Riaz is extraordinarily well respected by his colleagues and the profession for his skills as a clinician, surgeon, educator, clinical researcher, innovator, and scholar,” said R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA, DMEI's chief executive officer and chair of the OU Department of Ophthalmology. “As he is clearly establishing himself as a national and international leader, we are honored to have him as part of the Dean McGee Eye Institute and the OU Department of Ophthalmology, where his presence has elevated the accomplishments of our profession.”

Dr. Riaz and his wife, Sanaa Hameed, MD, have three children. He is fluent in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Urdu/Hindi, and enjoys jazz music, world history, and Chicago sports teams. Dr. Riaz has invented four surgical instruments for use in ophthalmic surgery and has named three of them for his three children. ■

Dr. Riaz is extraordinarily well respected by his colleagues and the profession...

MEET ANOTHER DMEI CENTENARIAN

William L. Parry, MD (age 100), with his ophthalmologist, Dr. Reagan H. Bradford Jr. Dr. Parry served as chair of the Department of Urology in the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine from 1962 to 1994.

AT THE DEAN MCGEE EYE INSTITUTE (DMEI), WE LOVE TO CELEBRATE OUR PATIENTS WHO ARE CENTENARIANS! If you are a DMEI patient age 100 or more and would be willing to have your name and picture included in the next edition of DMEI *InVision*, please contact the Development Office at 405.271.7801 or at DMEI-Development@dmei.org. ■



Jeremy F. Tan, MD, receiving his award in Reykjavik, Iceland.

DR. JEREMY F. TAN AWARDED GRAND PRIZE

IN JUNE, JEREMY F. TAN, MD, attended the Arctic Midnight Sun Surgical Workshop in Reykjavik, Iceland. This conference is the leading scientific workshop for advancing knowledge of the utility of fish skin grafts for managing surgical wounds and burn injuries. The top 55 cases for presentation were chosen from a large number of submissions to demonstrate special insights and tips.

Dr. Tan, a clinical associate professor and ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgeon at the Dean McGee Eye Institute/University of Oklahoma (DMEI/OU), was recognized with one of four grand prizes for orbital work performed at DMEI. This work was also published in the *Journal of the American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* with DMEI residents and co-authors Elise E. Steinberger, MD, MS, and Ashtyn Z. Vogt, MD (please see page 26). To learn more about Dr. Tan, who now holds the Tolbert Family Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology, please see page 40. ■

Dr. Ann Acers-Warn to Serve as American Board of Ophthalmology Chair



*Ann Acers-Warn, MD, MBA
Clinical Professor*

ANN ACERS-WARN, MD, MBA, CURRENT VICE CHAIR OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF OPHTHALMOLOGY (ABO), will serve as chair beginning in January 2025. Service as an ABO director requires a strong commitment to the mission and principles of the ABO, as the Board depends on directors devoting significant time and energy to the responsibilities assigned to them. ABO directors typically serve a four-year term renewable for an additional four years. They contribute to initial and continuous certification programs in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, serving as subject matter experts; developing quality, safety, and performance improvement assessments; and assisting in the administration of ABO examinations.

Although a number of current or former Dean McGee Eye Institute/University of Oklahoma (DMEI/OU) faculty have served as ABO directors over the last 25 years, Dr. Acers-Warn, a clinical professor at DMEI/OU and a comprehensive ophthalmologist at DMEI's Lawton facility, is the

first to become chair while an active member of the DMEI/OU faculty.

Current or past faculty members from DMEI/OU who have served as ABO directors include Drs. C.P. "Pat" Wilkinson (chair, 2004), Gregory L. Skuta, David W. Parke II, and R. Michael Siatkowski. In addition to Dr. Acers-Warn, current DMEI/OU faculty who have served as ABO examiners, item writers, and/or in other ABO volunteer capacities since 2020 include Drs. Rebecca K. Morgan, Annie Moreau, Anil D. Patel, Tammy L. Yanovitch, Maria E. Lim, Gregory L. Skuta, Kamran M. Riaz, and R. Michael Siatkowski. Andrew T. Melson, MD, will become an ABO examiner in 2025.

Of note, Dr. Morgan has participated in the administration of 39 oral examinations, more than any other non-director, active ABO volunteer. ■



Community's Choice Awards

AT AN EVENT AT THE EMBASSY SUITES DOWNTOWN/MEDICAL CENTER in Oklahoma City on August 8, the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) was announced as the winner of *The Oklahoman* "2024 Community's Choice Award" for "Best Eye Care Clinic/Center." DMEI's Optical Shops were also honored with winning "Best Eyewear Store."

Dr. Brian K. Firestone Receives Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award

BRIAN K. FIRESTONE, MD, AN OCULAR ONCOLOGIST at the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) since 2014 and clinical associate professor in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology, has received the 2024 OU College of Medicine's Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation. This prestigious award is given in recognition of demonstrated excellence in promoting scholarship, encouraging high standards of character and integrity, and dedicated commitment to the compassionate care of patients and to the art and science of medical practice. Dr. Firestone was officially presented with the award at the OU College of Medicine Spring Faculty Meeting on May 6.

The last member of the DMEI/OU Department of Ophthalmology faculty to receive this award was Dr. Bradley K. Farris in 2007. In addition to a faculty award, the OU College of Medicine presents a Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award to a graduating medical student each year. DMEI's Dr. Annie Moreau was the recipient of the student award in 2006 as was Dr. Deanna H. Dang, a current PGY3 ophthalmology resident, in 2022.

In addition to the above members of the DMEI/OU Department of Ophthalmology



*Brian K. Firestone, MD
Clinical Associate Professor*

family, membership in the (Arnold P.) Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS) includes Drs. Juliana C. Bryant, Stephen R. Fransen, Austin L. LaGrow, Andrew T. Melson, Rupin N. Parikh, and R. Michael Siatkowski. The GHHS fosters and recognizes humanistic principles and compassionate care. "I am deeply grateful and humbled by this recognition," stated Dr. Firestone. "None of us would be able to care for our patients and do our jobs without our amazing support staff," he continued. "We have some of the very best technicians, nurses, schedulers, photographers, and administrative staff around. One of the best parts of my job is getting to work alongside all of them to help our patients. They deserve this just as much as I, so I dedicate this to them and appreciate their work and compassion every day!"

We congratulate Dr. Brian Firestone on his 2024 Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award and thank him for his shining example to us all as a highly skilled and caring physician! ■

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH PROGRAM



Brittany L. Erickson
*Business Office Supervisor
McGee Eye Surgery Center
April 2024*



Tabitha N. Thagard
*Patient Appointment Coordinator
Oklahoma Health Center
May 2024*



Lisa D. Teahon
*Patient Financial Service
Coordinator
Oklahoma Health Center
June 2024*



Marisela McNeal, COA
*Technician Supervisor
Oklahoma Health Center
July 2024*



Kiuna S. Brown
*Patient Appointment Coordinator
Oklahoma Health Center
August 2024*

DMEI PRESENTS AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS



American Glaucoma Society Annual Meeting
Huntington Beach, California
March 2024

- Jessica Hsueh, MD (Resident)
- Mahmoud A. Khaimi, MD
- Kamran M. Riaz, MD



American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery Annual Meeting
Boston, Massachusetts
April 2024

- Mahmoud A. Khaimi, MD
- Kamran M. Riaz, MD



Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology Annual Meeting
Seattle, Washington
May 2024

- Martin-Paul Agbaga, PhD
- Michelle C. Callegan, PhD, FARVO
- Phillip S. Coburn, PhD
- Lea D. Bennett, PhD
- Elizabeth A. Fairless, MD (Chief Resident)
- Kevin K. Fuller, PhD
- Raju V.S. Rajala, PhD



European Wound Management Association
London, United Kingdom
May 2024

- Jeremy F. Tan, MD



The Journées Ophtalmologiques Universitaires de Québec Annual Meeting
Québec City, Québec, Canada
February 2024

- Annie Moreau, MD, FACS
- Jeremy F. Tan, MD



North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society Annual Meeting
Honolulu, Hawaii
March 2024

- Annah P. Baykal, MD (Resident)
- Adam R. Bleeker, MD (Resident)
- Andrew T. Melson, MD



North American Skull Base Society Annual Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia
February 2024

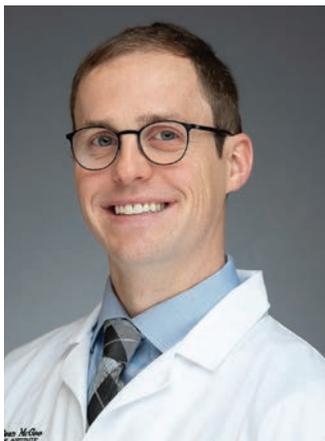
- Annie Moreau, MD, FACS
- Jeremy F. Tan, MD



Dean McGee in Attendance at Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill

IN APRIL, DMEI RESIDENT DR. ASHLEY A. OOMS (CENTER) and two faculty members, Drs. Ben J. Harvey (left) and Cynthia A. Bradford (right), participated in Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill as part of the 2024 American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) Mid-Year Forum in Washington, DC. Both Drs. Harvey and Bradford are past presidents of the Oklahoma Academy of Ophthalmology (OAO). Dr. Bradford is also a past AAO president. Dr. Harvey currently serves as the OAO's Councilor to the AAO Council, which also met during the Mid-Year Forum. In July, Dr. Harvey was announced as the AAO Secretariat for State Affairs' new regional representative for the state societies in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. ■

Dr. Andrew T. Melson Selected for Academy Leadership Development Program



Andrew T. Melson
Assistant Professor
Residency Program Director

ANDREW T. MELSON, MD, HAS BEEN SELECTED for the 2024-2025 class of the American Academy of Ophthalmology's (AAO's) Leadership Development Program (LDP). This is the result of a highly competitive process with only 20 members chosen annually. Dr. Melson was selected as the nominee of the North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society, and his LDP project will focus on ways to increase the number of neuro-ophthalmologists in the United States.

Since 1998, the AAO's Leadership Development Program has helped identify and develop future leaders of state, subspecialty, and specialized interest societies. During the one-year program, class participants learn about leadership, advocacy, and association governance. Each class meets in person four times, twice in conjunction with the AAO's annual meeting.

To learn more about Dr. Melson and his background, please see page 4. ■

DR. R. MICHAEL SIATKOWSKI TRAVELS TO SINGAPORE

IN LATE APRIL, R. MICHAEL SIATKOWSKI, MD, MBA, the Dean McGee Eye Institute's chief executive officer and Edward L. Gaylord professor and chair of the University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology, traveled to Singapore as a guest of the government to advise Singaporean officials in their creation of a Health Manpower Development Plan (HMDP). He visited all ophthalmology training sites in Singapore, which included Tan Tock Seng Hospital, the Singapore National Eye Centre, the National University Health System, and Kandang Kerbau Women's and Children's Hospital. He lectured to trainees and faculty at all of these institutions and also provided feedback to Singapore's Ministry of Health on strengths and challenges for their programs.

Dr. Siatkowski also participated in the National Healthcare Group Eye Institute's (NHGEI's)

Ninth International Ophthalmology Congress (IOC) held at the Centre for Healthcare Innovation. He delivered the 12th Victor Yong Lecture entitled, "Potential Pitfalls in Pediatric Neuro-Ophthalmology." Dr. Siatkowski also engaged in sub-sessions on neuro-ophthalmology dilemmas.

This Congress is the NHGEI's banner event and serves as an international platform for ophthalmologists to co-learn and network via a series of symposia covering both clinical and surgical topics. The unique format utilizes a combination of panel discussions, case presentations, and debates to address important dilemmas in ophthalmology. More than 400 local, regional, and international ophthalmologists were in attendance for the two-day meeting on April 19-20. ■



Dr. R. Michael Siatkowski (center back) pictured with attendees at the NHGEI's Ninth International Ophthalmology Congress in Singapore.



Dr. Siatkowski (center back) leading a group discussion with leadership at Tan Tock Seng Hospital in Singapore.



Dr. Siatkowski (front left) pictured with faculty from Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Dean McGee Eye Institute Optical Shops Offer FL-41™ Filters

FL-41™ TINT IS RUSTY-ROSE IN COLOR and usually tinted to a darkness of 50%. Available in all four of the Dean McGee Eye Institute's optical shops, it has been found useful to reduce eyestrain, tension headaches, and migraine. FL-41™ filters out certain wavelengths of blue and green colors thought to be particularly bothersome to patients with light sensitivity. By blocking these wavelengths of light, this filter also improves contrast and sharpness, which increases visual acuity.

Charly Boomershine, a patient of Angela M. Plant, OD, FAAO, heard about the migraine tint, FL-41™, from a friend. In May, the Edmond satellite office was able to fit her in FL-41™ glasses. Her experience is shared below. ■



Patient Testimonial CHARLY BOOMERSHINE

“I’ve only had the glasses since Tuesday, but I have already noticed a significant improvement in migraine symptoms, especially since this week has had a lot of (barometric) pressure changes. I have woken up with a migraine two separate days since I got these glasses, and within twenty minutes of putting my glasses on after getting out of bed, each migraine went away. Compared to the fact that I usually can’t get a migraine to stop after it has started for the day, this is a huge improvement in symptoms. Before these glasses, I have tried anti-glare lenses, blue light filter lenses, and pressure points to manage migraine symptoms. None of those had lasting benefits.”

FACULTY & STAFF AWARDS AND ACTIVITIES

Michelle C. Callegan, PhD, FARVO



- Poster presentation: Callegan M.C., Mursalin M.H., Coburn P.S., Parrott A.C., Longoria-Gonzalez L., Astley R. “Impact of Innate Factors on Persistence of *Staphylococcus aureus* in the Mouse Cornea,” Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, May 2024.
- Poster presentation: Longoria-Gonzalez L., Coburn P.S., Callegan M.C. “Contribution of Leukocidin ED to *Staphylococcus aureus* Endophthalmitis Pathogenesis,” ARVO Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, May 2024.
- Published: Parrott A.C., Coburn P.S., Miller F.C., LaGrow A.L., Mursalin M.H., Callegan M.C. “The Role of CCL Chemokines in *Staphylococcus aureus* Endophthalmitis,” *Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science*, June 2024.

Rachel M. Caywood, OD, FAAO



- Council on Optometric Practitioner Education Reviewer for Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry.
- Council Consultant for Part II National Board of Examiners in Optometry.
- Contributor to book chapter: Crum A., Di Meglio L. “Applications in Contact Lens Fitting,” chapter 18, in: Levinson B., Woreta F., Riaz K.M., editors. *Clinical Atlas of Anterior Segment OCT: Optical Coherence Tomography*, Elsevier Publishing, New York, NY, May 2024.

Phillip S. Coburn, PhD



- Oral presentation: “Endogenous Bacterial Endophthalmitis: What Lies Beneath,” Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, May 2024.

- Poster presentation: Callegan M.C., Mursalin M.H., Coburn P.S., Parrott A.C., Longoria-Gonzalez L., Astley R. “Impact of Innate Factors on Persistence of *Staphylococcus aureus* in the Mouse Cornea,” ARVO Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, May 2024.
- Poster presentation: Longoria-Gonzalez L., Coburn P.S., Callegan M.C. “Contribution of Leukocidin ED to *Staphylococcus aureus* Endophthalmitis Pathogenesis,” ARVO Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, May 2024.
- Published: Parrott A.C., Coburn P.S., Miller F.C., LaGrow A.L., Mursalin M.H., Callegan M.C. “The Role of CCL Chemokines in *Staphylococcus aureus* Endophthalmitis,” *Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science*, June 2024.

Ronald M. Kingsley, MD



- Oral presentation: Fairless E.A., Kingsley R.M., Farris B.K. “Prevalence of Diabetic Retinopathy Among Native American Patients with Diabetes at a Tribal Clinic in Oklahoma,” Dean McGee Eye Institute Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK, June 2024.
- Published: Jhaveri C.D., Liu D., Maguire M.G., Glassman A.R., Kingsley R.M., et al. “Risk Factors for Meeting Criteria for Switching from Bevacizumab to Aflibercept When Treating Eyes with Diabetic Macular Edema and Visual Acuity < 20/40,” *Ophthalmology*, Aug. 2024.

Maria E. Lim, MD



- Oral presentation: “Understanding Amblyopia: From Historic Insights to Modern Treatments,” Dean McGee Eye Institute Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK, June 2024.

Andrew T. Melson, MD



- Oral presentation: “Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension,” 24th Annual Technician Lecture Series, Dean McGee Eye Institute Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK, June 2024.
- Published: Cottom S., Barrientez B., Melson A. “Severe Hyperglycemia with Teprotumumab for Treatment of Thyroid Eye Disease,” *Case Reports in Ophthalmology*, March 2024.

Annie Moreau, MD, FACS



- Invited lecturer: “Anophthalmic Socket and Periorbital Carcinoma Management,” Journées Ophtalmologiques Universitaires de Québec, Québec City, Québec, Canada, Feb. 2024.
- Invited lecturer: “Floppy Eyelid Syndrome,” Innovation Conference, Québec Optometry Association, Montréal, Québec, Canada, April 2024.
- Moderator: Orbit Reconstruction Session, North American Skull Base Society Meeting, Atlanta, GA, Feb. 2024.

Jila Noori, MD



- Published: Ting M., Hsueh J., Noori J. “Multiple Evanescent White Dot Syndrome Associated with COVID-19 Infection: A Case Report,” *Journal of Medical Case Reports*, June 2024.
- Published: Garbrecht J.L., Powell Z.R., McClard C.K., Noori J. “Frosted Branch Angiitis in a Patient with Systemic Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis: A Case Report,” *BMC Ophthalmology*, March 2024.

Anil D. Patel, MD, FRCSC



- Oral presentations: “Pupil Examination and Disorders” and “Myasthenia Gravis,” 24th Annual Technician Lecture Series, Dean McGee Eye Institute Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK, June 2024.

Kamran M. Riaz, MD



- Co-Editor: Levinson B., Woreta F., Riaz K.M. *Clinical Atlas of Anterior Segment OCT: Optical Coherence Tomography*, Elsevier Publishing, New York, NY, May 2024 (please see page 27).
- Visiting professor: “Ophthalmic Optics,” University of Texas at Houston, Feb. 2024.
- Visiting professor: “Optics Review,” Nazareth Hospital, Philadelphia, PA, Feb. 2024.
- Visiting professor: “Optics Review,” Lecture Series for Northwestern Ophthalmology Residents, Chicago, IL, Feb. 23 – March 1, 2024.
- Visiting professor: “Optics for Those Who Hate Optics,” Chicago Curriculum in Ophthalmology, Chicago, IL, March 2024.
- Invited lecturer: “Corneal Neovascularization: Current Strategies and Emerging Therapies,” *AudioDigest Ophthalmology*, Feb. 2024.
- Invited lecturer: Lorusso D., Monk B., Riaz K.M., Vergote I. “Management of Ocular Toxicities Associated with Antibody-Drug Conjugates,” module in “Latest Advancements in Recurrent/Metastatic Cervical Cancer: Unlocking New Possibilities,” *Medscape*, Feb. 2024.
- Invited lecturer: “2024 Update on the Alphabet Soup of Corneal Surgeries,” Dean McGee Eye Institute Optometry Symposium, Oklahoma City, OK, Feb. 2024.
- Invited lecturer: “Intraocular Lens (IOL) Calculations in Short and Long Axial Length Eyes,” American Academy of Ophthalmology Webinar, May 2024.

FACULTY & STAFF AWARDS AND ACTIVITIES

- Invited lecturer: “Ocular Side Effects of Emerging Treatments for Ovarian Cancer,” WooU University Webinar, May 2024.
- Invited lecturer: “Real-World Outcomes with Enhanced Monofocal IOLs,” Cataract and Technology Summit 2024, San Diego, CA, June 2024.
- Invited panelist: “Good to Great Surgeon: Working Through Complications” and “Toolkit for Job Success,” American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS) Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Bleeker A., Kingrey B., Murphy D.A., Cooke D.L., Wendelstein J.A., Riaz K.M. “Comparison of Total Keratometry Versus Standard Keratometry in Post-Refractive IOL Formulas,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Muayad J., Loya A., Hussain Z., Chauhan M., Alsoudi A., Riaz K.M. “Healthcare Utilization and Social Trends Among Keratoconus Patients in the All of Us Research Program,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Rangu N., Rangu N., Ouano D., Riaz K.M. “Clinical Outcomes of Mitomycin Intravascular Chemoembolization (MICE) to Treat Corneal Vascularization,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Wendelstein J.A., Savini G., Riaz K.M., Gatinel D., Cooke D.L., Hoffer K.J., Pantanelli S.P., Langenbucher A., Yeo T.K. “Differences Between Keratometry and Total Keratometry Measurements in a Large Dataset Obtained with a Modern Swept Source OCT Biometer,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Rangu N., Gill M.S., Riaz K.M., Khaimi M.A. “Performing Ab-Interno Canaloplasty Post Keratoplasty in Steroid-Induced Glaucoma Eyes – 3 Years Outcomes,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Hoang D.T., Murphy D.A., Cooke D.L., Riaz K.M. “Comparison of Three Surgical Corrections for Aphakia: Suture Fixated Modified Toric IOL Vs. ACIOL Vs. Intrascleral Haptic Fixation IOL,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Rangu N., Heath M.T., Szkarlat M.R., Riaz K.M. “Comparison of Clinical Outcomes of Sub-50 Micron and Sub-100 Micron Grafts in Descemet Stripping Automated Endothelial Keratoplasty,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Wendelstein J.A., Seiler T., Riaz K.M. “Comparison of Photopic and Mesopic Visual Acuity After Bilateral Implantation of Two Different Diffractive Multifocal Intraocular Lenses,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Riaz K.M., Guillamet A.C., Van Gorp T., Moore K.N. “Ocular Safety Results from Phase 3 Mirasol Confirmatory Trial: Mirvetuximab Soravtansine in FRα-Positive Platinum-Resistant Ovarian Cancer,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024. (Best Paper of Session Award.)
- Oral presentation: Wendelstein J.A., Langenbucher A., Riaz K.M. “Prediction of IOL Decentration, Tilt, and Axial Position Using Anterior Segment OCT Data,” ASCRS Annual Meeting Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Sandhu U., Riaz K.M., Khaimi M.A. “Performing Ab-Interno Canaloplasty Post Keratoplasty – 2 Years Outcomes,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Hoang D.T., Murphy D.A., Wendelstein J.A., Riaz K.M. “Comparison of Refractive Outcomes with Zero-Aberration IOL Vs Monofocal Plus IOL in Eyes Undergoing Triple DMEK Surgery,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Hussain Z.S., Chauhan M.Z., Loya A., Riaz K.M. “Longitudinal Incidence of Hydrops and PKP Secondary to CXL Performed in Keratoconus: A 7-Year Analysis of Trinetx Analytics Platform,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Suraneni S., Anter A.M., Leal S., Bleeker A., Murphy D.A., Riaz K.M., Cooke D.L., Tonk R.S. “IOL Power Calculations in Post-Hyperopic Laser Vision Correction Eyes Comparing Keratometry, Total Keratometry, and Newer Formulas,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Cooke D.L., Riaz K.M., Shammam H.J. “Introduction to and Clinical Outcomes of the

- Shammas-Cooke IOL Formula for Post Myopic Laser Vision Correction Eyes,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: Awidi A.A., Chang D.F., Riaz K.M., LaBorwit S.E., Prescott C.R., Srikumaran D., Daoud Y., Woreta F.A. “Anti-Inflammatory Medication Use after Cataract Surgery: An Online Survey of Practice Patterns,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
 - Oral presentation: “What’s New in the Alphabet Soup of Corneal Surgery,” Dean McGee Eye Institute Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK, June 2024.
 - Oral presentation: “What’s on the Menu: An Overview of Currently Available Intraocular Lenses in the United States (as of June 2024),” 24th Annual Technician Lecture Series, Dean McGee Eye Institute Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK, June 2024.
 - Skills transfer lab: “Capsular Stabilization Techniques (STL6),” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
 - Skills transfer lab: “Capsular Stabilization Techniques (STL12),” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
 - Skills transfer lab: “Anterior Vitrectomy (STL18),” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
 - Skills transfer lab: “Advancing Flanged Intrasceral Haptic Fixation: Key Concepts, Barriers, and Refinements (IC-306),” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
 - Poster presentation: Hoang D.T., Murphy D.A., Cooke D.L., Riaz K.M. “Comparison and Clinical Outcomes of Scleral Fixation of Modified Toric IOL Vs. Intrasceral Haptic Fixation IOL Surgery,” ASCRS Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2024.
 - Poster presentation: Suraneni S., Anter A., Leal S., Bleeker A., Hoang D.T., Riaz K.M., Cooke D., Tonk R. “IOL Power Calculations in Post-Radial Keratotomy Eyes Comparing Formulas with Standard Keratometry and Total Keratometry,” Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, May 2024.
 - Poster presentation: Hefley B., Shrestha P., Vasini B., Hoang D.T., Ma J., Riaz K.M., Karamichos D. “Characterizing Extracellular Vesicles from Diabetic Keratopathy and Keratoconus,” ARVO Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, May 2024.
 - Poster presentation: Sandhu U., Riaz K.M. “Performing Ab-Interno Canaloplasty Post Keratoplasty – 2 Years Outcomes,” ARVO Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, May 2024.
 - Poster presentation: Refai F., Hseuh J., Riaz K.M. “Socioeconomic Factors and Medical Comorbidities Influence Keratoconus Disease Burden,” ARVO Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, May 2024.
 - Published: Rangu N., Riaz K.M. “Mitomycin Intravascular Chemoembolization (MICE) to Treat Corneal Vascularization Prior to Penetrating Keratoplasty,” *American Journal of Ophthalmology Case Reports*, Jan. 2024.
 - Published: Rangu N., Cooke D.L., Mittal A., Reinhard T., Wacker K., Langenbucher A., Wendelstein J.A., Riaz K.M. “Comparison of Pre- and Post-DMEK Keratometry and Total Keratometry Values for IOL Power Calculations in Eyes Undergoing Triple DMEK,” *Current Eye Research*, May 2024.
 - Published: Sandhu U., Osborn A.R., Dang D.H., Murphy D.A., Langenbucher A., Wendelstein J.A., Riaz K.M. “Refractive Astigmatism Outcomes of Femtosecond Laser-Assisted Arcuate Keratotomies Combined with Femtosecond Laser-Assisted Cataract Surgery: Two-Year Results,” *Current Eye Research*, May 2024.
 - Published: Rangu N., Dang D.H., Riaz K.M. “Current Trends in the Management of Corneal Neovascularization,” *Current Opinion in Ophthalmology*, July 2024.
 - Published: Anter A.M., Bleeker A.R., Shammas H.J., Suraneni S., Kingrey B., Murphy D.A., Leal S., Ghalibafan S., Tonk R.S., Cooke D.L., Riaz K.M. “Comparison of Legacy and New No-History IOL Power Calculation Formulas in Postmyopic Laser Vision Correction Eyes,” *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, Aug. 2024.

FACULTY & STAFF AWARDS AND ACTIVITIES

Scott Samples, FCLSA, NCLE-M, CPOT



- Oral presentation: “Corneal Disease and Contact Lenses,” 24th Annual Technician Lecture Series, Dean McGee Eye Institute Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK, June 2024.

R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA



- Invited guest: Health Manpower Development Plan Visiting Expert, Singapore Ministry of Health, April 2024 (please see page 20).
- Named lecturer: “Potential Pitfalls in Pediatric Neuro-Ophthalmology,” 12th Victor Yong Lecture, National Healthcare Group Eye Institute, Ninth International Ophthalmology Congress, Singapore, April 2024 (please see page 20).
- Named lecturer: “The Evolution of Character in Academic Medicine” and “Potential Pitfalls in Pediatric Neuro-Ophthalmology,” Annual Seymour B. Gostin Memorial Lecture, 44th Resident and Alumni Day, University of Texas Southwestern, Dallas, TX, June 2024.
- Oral presentation: Ali M., Green L.K., Lorch A., Pettey J.H., Siatkowski, R.M., Winokur J., Woreta F. “Effect of USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK) on Ophthalmology Residency Match,” Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology Annual Meeting, Austin, TX, Feb. 2024.
- Poster presentation: Saeed O., Siatkowski R.M., Coussa R.G. “Primary Scleral Buckling Versus Vitrectomy for Treating Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) Associated Stage 4A Retinal Detachment: A Review of Surgical Outcomes,” Vit-Buckle Society, Miami, FL, April 2024.
- Published: Sharieff J.A., Fong J.W., Parikh R.N., Siatkowski R.M. “Anomalous Superior Oblique Tendon in Brown Syndrome,” *Journal of Neuro-Ophthalmology*, Feb. 2024, Epub ahead of print.

Gregory L. Skuta, MD



- Panel member: Ophthalmic Devices Panel, Health Devices Advisory Committee, Center for Devices and Radiological Health, United States Food and Drug Administration, March 2024.
- Guest speaker: “Pursuing Purpose with Passion,” 41st Annual Stanton L. Young Master Teacher Award Dinner, Oklahoma City, OK, April 2024.
- Oral presentation: “Understanding Visual Fields in the Glaucoma Patient,” 24th Annual Technician Lecture Series, Dean McGee Eye Institute Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK, June 2024.

Jeremy F. Tan, MD



- Invited lecturer: “TED Talk: Stop Pushing. Review of Therapeutic Alternatives for Thyroid Eye Disease,” “Crying Not Allowed: Evaluation of the Tearing Eye,” and “Broken Wall: When You Need More Than a Carpenter. Treatment of Orbital Fractures,” Journées Ophtalmologiques Universitaires de Québec, Conférence Alain Rousseau, Québec City, Québec, Canada, Feb. 2024.
- Invited lecturer, surgical webinar: Long T.C., Borah G.L., Tan J.F. “Fishing for Innovation: The Use of Fish Skin in Plastic Reconstructive Surgery,” Kerecis, Reykjavík, Iceland, Feb. 2024.
- Oral presentation: Brame L., Parikh A., Tan J., McKinney K. “Sinoorbital Osteoma: Combined Endoscopic and Open Craniofacial Resection,” North American Skull Base Society Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, Feb. 2024.
- Oral presentation: Prather K.Y., Brame L.S., Gupta A., Parikh A.C., Zhao X., Tan J.F., McKinney K.A., Graffeo C.S. “Endoscopic Transorbital-Supraorbital Combined Approach Through an Eyelid Incision for Pott Puffy Tumor,” North American Skull Base

Society Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, Feb. 2024.

- Electronic poster presentation: Evans A.R., Isaac R., Atte A., Tan J., McKinney K., Radant M.R., Graffeo C.S. "Facial Reconstruction Following the Resection of Familial Gigantiform Cementoma Adjacent to the Skull Base: Technical Note," North American Skull Base Society Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, Feb. 2024.
- Poster presentation: Vogt A.Z., Steinberger E.E., Tan J.F. "Skin and Bone – Intact Fish Skin to Reconstruct Traumatic Orbital Floor and Wall Defects," European Wound Management Association, London, United Kingdom, May 2024.
- Published: Zhao X., Evans A.R., Shi H., Pelargos P.E., Tan J., Do T., Dunn I, Graffeo C., Bauer A.. "Novel Eyelid Supraorbital Pretemporal Approach to the Anterior Communicating Artery Complex: A Quantitative Cadaveric Comparative Study," *Journal of Neurological Surgery Part B: Skull Base*, May 2024.
- Published: Zhao X., Tan J., Labib M.A., Desai R., Graffeo C.S., Bauer A.M., Dunn I.F. "The Eyelid Trans-Orbital Trans-Cavernous Approach to the Basilar Apex: A Cadaveric Proof-of-Concept Study," *Journal of Neurological Surgery Part B: Skull Base*, May 2024.
- Published: Steinberger E.E., Vogt A.Z., Tan J.F. "Skin and Bone: Intact Fish Skin to Reconstruct Traumatic Orbital Floor and Wall Defects," *Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, May/June 2024.

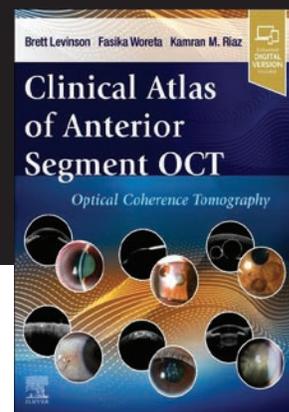
Dr. Kamran M. Riaz Is Co-Editor of New Textbook

KAMRAN M. RIAZ, MD, A CORNEAL SPECIALIST AT THE DEAN MCGEE EYE INSTITUTE (DMEI) and clinical professor and

vice chair for clinical research in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology, serves as one of three editors of a new textbook, *Clinical Atlas of Anterior Segment OCT: Optical Coherence Tomography*, which was published by Elsevier in February 2024. Dr. Riaz, who authored five of the 20 chapters himself, was joined in this effort by co-editors Brett Levinson, MD, and Fasika A. Woreta, MD, MPH, both of Baltimore, Maryland. Former DMEI resident and glaucoma fellow, J. Christian Berry, MD, and DMEI optometrist and contact lens specialist, Rachel Caywood, OD, FAAO, also contributed to the book.

Clinical Atlas of Anterior Segment OCT expertly guides clinicians through all aspects of OCT imaging of the anterior segment (AS) with hundreds of high-quality OCT images that highlight the utility of AS-OCT in diagnosing and managing a wide spectrum of anterior segment diseases. Among its many uses for the diagnosis of corneal and anterior segment conditions, AS-OCT can help differentiate between various corneal pathologies, show the anatomy of the anterior chamber angle, obtain information about the lens-capsule complex, and guide contact lens fitting.

Dr. Riaz also has been awarded the Thelma Gaylord Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology (please see page 12). ■



Kamran M. Riaz, MD
Clinical Professor
Thelma Gaylord Endowed
Chair in Ophthalmology
Vice Chair for Clinical Research

A Simple Blepharoplasty Lifted This Patient's Spirits, Not Just Her Eyelids

BY STACI ELDER HENSLEY

WHEN A PATIENT IS DEALING WITH DROOPY EYELIDS, IT CAN BE MORE THAN JUST A COSMETIC ISSUE. Often it interferes with a person's ability to see properly and, by extension, their overall quality of life.

Such was the case for Rhonda Wallis, who began experiencing the frustrating problem a decade ago.

"I had been dealing with this for a very long 10 years," she said. "My eyelids started coming down over my eyes in my early 40s, and when I would lie down, I couldn't read words that were on the television. When I would be looking down while reading my cell phone or a book, it would be very blurry. I absolutely hated taking pictures, because I looked like I didn't have eyes. I felt ugly."

Wallis was considering plastic surgery when she happened to see a commercial about Dean McGee Eye Institute's (DMEI's) surgeons who specialized in solving her problem through a procedure known as blepharoplasty. She called the very next day to make an appointment and soon after was treated by Dr. Thai Do, a DMEI specialist in ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery and clinical assistant professor in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology.

"Ms. Wallis had a condition known as bilateral upper eyelid dermatochalasis, which means there was too much excess skin weighing down and hooding the eyelids. She also had left upper eyelid ptosis. That occurs when the upper eyelid sags due to muscle weakness, particularly of a muscle called the levator palpebrae superioris," Dr. Do explained. The surgical procedure he performed involved removal of the excess upper eyelid skin, plus tightening of the weakened muscle on the left eyelid to raise the lid.

"Blepharoplasty is often a one-and-done procedure. Once the excess skin is removed, the problem is fixed, and in Ms. Wallis's case, her prognosis is good," he added. "Any residual hooding after a blepharoplasty is most commonly caused when there is a concurrent brow ptosis, causing a descending or drooping of the eyebrows. A good analogy of this is that the eyebrow is like a curtain rod, and the eyelid skin is the curtain. If the rod is low, the curtain will touch the ground, even if it is the correct size."

**Dr. Do and his staff
have been the best.
He's changed my life.**

Many patients opt to have a follow-up brow lift to enhance their blepharoplasty procedure results, he added.

"The surgery went well, and I was surprised at how quickly it was done," Wallis said. "Every



Rhonda Wallis before...



...and after blepharoplasty surgery.

day I could tell that more and more of my eyes were showing. I can see while lying down and when looking down now, and I have 20/20 vision. Even the first day I was able to put makeup on and see how beautiful my eyes looked, which really excited me.”

Wallis described the care she received from Dr. Do and the Dean McGee team as “amazing.”

“Everyone is always respectful and nice, and they are there if you have any questions or concerns,” she said. “Dr. Do and his staff have been the best. He’s changed my life. I now have a confidence I haven’t had in a long time, and I thank him with all my heart for that.”

Prior to the surgery, Wallis said whenever she went out in public, she would look down to avoid meeting people’s eyes. Now, she said, “I actually feel pretty at 50 years old and have had many people tell me that I don’t look my age.”

“My family wondered why I’m so concerned about the way my eyes look, and some of them thought it was just vanity,” she added. “Even my husband didn’t understand why I was doing the surgery until he saw the results. Now he tells me how beautiful I am all of the time!” ■

TWENTY-THREE DMEI OPHTHALMOLOGISTS RECOGNIZED AS CASTLE CONNOLLY TOP DOCTORS AND/OR TOP DOCTORS OF THE 405

- + Ann Acers-Warn, MD, MBA
- *+ Andrew K. Bailey, MD
- *+ John M. Bell, MD
- *+ Cynthia A. Bradford, MD
- *+ Reagan H. Bradford Jr., MD
- *+ Brian K. Firestone, MD
- + Layne E. Goetzinger, MD
- *+ Ben J. Harvey, MD
- *+ Ralph B. Hester III, MD
- * Ronald M. Kingsley, MD
- *+ Carolyn E. Kloek, MD
- *+ Maria E. Lim, MD
- *+ Andrew T. Melson, MD
- * Annie Moreau, MD, FACS
- + Rebecca K. Morgan, MD
- *+ Anil D. Patel, MD, FRCSC, FACS
- *+ Kamran M. Riaz, MD
- *+ R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA
- *+ Rhea L. Siatkowski, MD
- *+ Gregory L. Skuta, MD
- *+ Jeremy F. Tan, MD
- *+ Deana S. Watts, MD
- *+ Tammy L. Yanovitch, MD, MHSc

* Top Doctors of the 405 (2024)

+ Castle Connolly Top Doctors (2024)

*+ Both

PHILANTHROPY UPDATE

Giving with an Eye to the Future— New Endowed Professorship Enables DMEI to Expand Its Excellence

BY STACI ELDER HENSLEY

DR. ROBERT S. ELLIS AND HIS WIFE, NANCY PAYNE ELLIS, HAVE CONTINUED THEIR LONG-TIME GENEROUS SUPPORT

of the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) with a gift of \$500,000. The funds will be used to establish the Dr. Robert S. and Nancy P. Ellis Endowed Professorship.



Dr. Robert S. and Nancy Payne Ellis

Now retired, Dr. Ellis was a very prominent allergist and immunologist with the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic in Oklahoma City. His ties to DMEI initially came through his younger brother, Dr. Hal D. Balyeat. The latter was among the state's

most respected cataract surgeons and was a

DMEI ophthalmologist for more than 25 years before passing away in 2003.

“One of the reasons for our supporting this professorship is because, with Bob being a physician, we know how important it is to recruit quality physicians to a medical facility, and we want Dean McGee to continue to be the very best,” Nancy Ellis said. “This gift is a way that we can help achieve that goal.”

“I believe with all my heart that the purpose of us living on this earth is what we can do for others,” Dr. Ellis said. “Anything we can do to further medical research, to further knowledge, to further education; I believe that’s our purpose. We’ve been blessed, or we couldn’t do this.”

Originally from Shawnee, Dr. Ellis was the oldest of five boys and attended medical school at Northwestern University in Chicago, graduating in 1950. From there he completed an internship and two-year residency in internal medicine at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, a training period that was interrupted for two years while he served in the United States Air Force.



Jim Durbin
Executive Director of Development

After his military service, he went on to complete a three-year fellowship in allergy and immunology at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor. He then returned to Oklahoma, beginning his tenure with the allergy clinic.

For Dr. Ellis, the ties to DMEI evolved naturally through the connection with his brother, but the couple both have strong independent connections with the Institute, noted Chief Executive Officer Dr. R. Michael Siatkowski, who is also the Edward L. Gaylord professor and chair of the University of Oklahoma’s Department of Ophthalmology.

“Hal was a real inspiration to us, being the successful younger brother. We also became friends with Dean McGee and (Drs.) Tullos Coston and Thomas Acers early on,” Mrs. Ellis said. “Plus, we always used the Dean McGee Eye Institute for our family’s ophthalmology care – whether it was children, adults, or ourselves – because we knew that they were the finest doctors in the country.”

For many years, Mrs. Ellis served on the board of the Oklahoma Eye Foundation, which was established for the purpose of developing and nurturing a world-class eye center in Oklahoma City. After DMEI was established, and at her brother-in-law Dr. Balyeat’s request, she would go on to serve on the boards of both the Institute and the Dean McGee Eye Institute Foundation.

Dr. Ellis, meanwhile, was a founder of the Presbyterian Health Foundation (PHF), another

long-time DMEI donor and promoter. Dr. Ellis served as a trustee for the PHF for 25 years. Mrs. Ellis also served for many years on its Board of Directors.

“I treasured the association because I knew the fine work the Institute was doing, and it remains one of the top ophthalmology programs in the country,” she said. “I have learned so much.”

Prior to this latest gift, the Ellises had given nearly \$400,000 to the Institute over the years.

“Bob and Nancy have done so much for DMEI from its very beginning – far beyond just monetary donations,” Dr. Siatkowski said. “We have been blessed to have their strong support for many years.”

“Our gift is for the future, and it is very important that we could make a gift that would have an impact and continue on,” the couple said. “We have 17 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, and we want them to also have access to the finest ophthalmology care there is.” ■

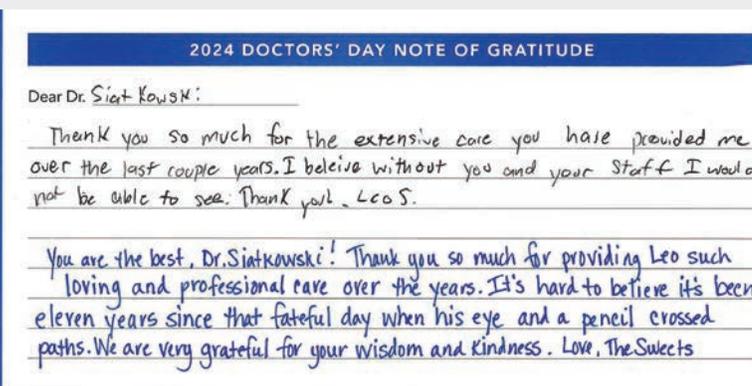


Drs. R. Michael Siatkowski (left), Robert S. Ellis (center), and Gregory L. Skuta (right).

DOCTORS' DAY 2024

NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY IS OBSERVED ANNUALLY IN THE UNITED STATES ON MARCH 30 as a day to honor physicians. Once again, the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) Foundation sent a mailing to DMEI patients offering them a way to say “thank you” to their doctor(s) by making an unrestricted gift to the DMEI Foundation in honor of their doctor(s) and, if they desired, by providing a note of gratitude.

DMEI received over \$12,600 in donations from 116 patients. (See a complete list of donors on the next page.) However, the notes of gratitude that were received were the most fulfilling aspect of this initiative. The notes for each doctor were bound together in an attractive notebook and presented to each of them as a keepsake. An example notebook is presented below (with patient and doctor permission):



Notes of gratitude for R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA:

“I believe without you and your staff I would not be able to see.”

“It’s been eleven years since that fateful day when his eye and a pencil crossed paths.”

We thank all of those who honored their doctors with notes of gratitude and gifts to the DMEI Foundation! ■

Doctors' Day 2024 Donors

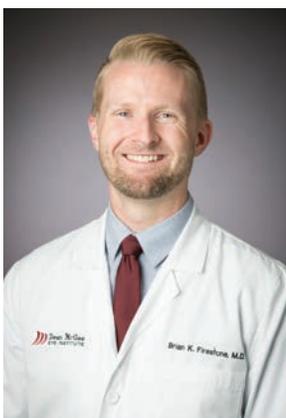
Anonymous
Anonymous
Martella and Oneil A. Anderson
Joyce Archibald-Hodge
Gloria A. and G. William Bailey
Cheryl F. and Jeff S. Baker
Paul A. Barfield
Susan Barnes
Eloise Bentley
Charlotte D. Bert
Bileau Bhasin
Pam and Roy Bollenbach
Benhardt Brockett
Shizuko Burgess
Michael and Cynthia Carder
Joyce E. Carle
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Gervis Coker
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Phyllis A. Douglas
Candace Downing
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Natalie A. Essary
Dennis and Margaret Farmer
Earl C. Felton
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Naomi F. Hall
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Cynthia M. Heng
Marlon E. Henry
Apolinar Mata Hernandez
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Wilbur House
Betty Hunsucker
Jerry and Joyce Ingram
Debra and Lee Jackson
William and Sharon Johnston
Sharla Juvenal
Linda Keel
Barbara L. Kerrick
Larry C. Kindt
Doug and Dawna Kitchens
Lee Y. and Robert M. Konopnicki
Conchita Q. Kovach
Mark J. Lewakowski
Ellouise H. Love and Ernest P. Love
Brenda J. Madison
Cortez J. Madison
Fred W. and Mary K. Marvel
Louella McAfee
Linda J. McCoy
Janice E. McCreary
Jeanne G. McKenty
Gail D. Meltzner
Sinia B. Miller
Sandy Mills
Wayne D. Moore
Joyce L. Morgan
Michael F. Moroz
William H. Myles Jr.
Thy K. Nguyen, MD
Gerald R. Oulds
Lewis Owens
Stacy L. and Earl R. Palmer
Tom F. Parrish

Sarah Beth and Preston Patterson
Brenda B. Pavey
Daniel E. Pendleton
Leon Spinner Platt
Donna J. Plewes
Wanda J. Plummer
James M. and Hye R. Pruchnicki
Betty J. Rackley
Linda and Marvin Resnick
Sarah Rooker
James C. Ryan
Joseph Shirley
Geneva and Benny Sisson
Anne Claire Sneed
Marva J. and Terry E. Spencer
Charles and Nancy Stanphill
Nancy A. and Jerry J. Stewart
Sara and Kyle Sweet
Abiha and Syed M. Taha
Judge and Mrs. Ralph G. Thompson
Curtis Towery
Cristina M. Tran, MD
John P. Tulp
LaDonna and Bob Wallis
Gina and Brent L. Wendling, PhD
Marilyn Wetmore
Grace M. and Robert P. Wettemann
Regina L. Whitefield
Marsha L. Williams
Billy G. Williamson
Patsy Ann Wylie

DMEI COMPLETES FUNDRAISING FOR ENDOWED CHAIR FOR STATE'S AND ONLY OCULAR ONCOLOGI

CANCER OF THE EYE CAN BE A THREAT TO BOTH VISION AND LIFE. In the past, patients in Oklahoma who were diagnosed with ocular cancer had to leave the state to receive care. That changed in 2014 with the addition of Brian K. Firestone, MD, to the faculty at the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) and the University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology.



Brian K. Firestone, MD
Clinical Associate Professor

During his tenure at DMEI/OU, Dr. Firestone, who is a clinical associate professor, has treated more than 1,200 cancer patients, and has done so with compassion and clinical and surgical excellence. His dedication was recently recognized by the OU College of Medicine with the 2024 Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation (please see page 16). This award is given in recognition of demonstrated excellence in promoting scholarship, encouraging high standards of character and integrity, and a dedicated commitment to the compassionate care of patients and to the art and science of medical practice.

Within an academic setting such as DMEI/OU, endowed positions are important tools for retaining top-quality faculty. Holding

an endowed position is a distinction that demonstrates that a faculty member has performed at the highest level. In addition to this public recognition of excellence, interest earned on the endowment funds provides financial support for faculty members as they pursue educational, academic, and service activities.

To honor Dr. Firestone and support his work for the state of Oklahoma, DMEI worked to create an endowed position. Over the course of one year, through the generosity of 79 donors, including 58 grateful patients of Dr. Firestone, DMEI board members, and friends of the Institute, more than \$642,000 was raised. The total raised, combined with a match from the DMEI Foundation, will create an endowed chair of \$1 million to be awarded to support Dr. Firestone.

Lead donors to the effort included:

- **Peggy J. Kates** (\$300,000) – As a patient of Dr. Firestone's and a survivor of ocular cancer, Kates knows firsthand the importance of having an ocular oncologist in Oklahoma. She approached DMEI leadership to establish an endowed position and generously committed her own funds to the effort because, as she shared, "I want to ensure that Oklahomans who have eye cancer can receive the best care right here in Oklahoma."

In recognition of Kates' lead gift and over \$335,000 in prior support for DMEI's ocular oncology and pathology programs,



Dr. Firestone and DMEI leadership at the MidFirst check presentation. Pictured (left to right): Brian K. Firestone, MD, Jim Durbin, Gregory L. Skuta, MD, Garyl G. Geist, MAcc, and R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA.

the endowed chair will be named the **Ben and Peggy Kates Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology**. In 1976, Kates and her late husband Ben, along with the late D. Michael Hamilton, started Midwest Wrecking Company, which is now the largest demolition company in Oklahoma.

- **Paul and Andria Heafy** (\$165,000) – Long-term, committed donors to DMEI, the Heafys (please see page 60) recognized the importance of this initiative and how necessary it was to DMEI’s mission of providing the best in patient care. Andria Heafy said, “Dr. Firestone is one of the preeminent ocular oncologists in the nation. DMEI is extremely fortunate to have him on staff and for him to call Oklahoma home. It’s a privilege to be a part of providing him with the funding necessary for him to continue his incredibly important work in this great state.”
- **MidFirst Bank** (\$50,000) – MidFirst Bank celebrated National Eye Care Month in January with a gift to DMEI to support vision research and eye care. “We are fortunate to have access to this level of patient care at the Dean McGee Eye Institute and to have Brian K. Firestone, MD, serving on faculty,” said Jeff Records, chairman and chief executive officer of MidFirst Bank. “MidFirst further demonstrates its ongoing support of DMEI through its Eye Care Visa® Debit Card.”

- **Presbyterian Health Foundation (PHF)** (\$50,000) – PHF continued its decades-long support of DMEI with a gift to help establish the endowed position for Dr. Firestone. As Rick McCune, PHF president stated, “This is an investment in the future of medical care in our state.”
- **Stephenson Family Foundation** (\$25,000) – The Stephenson Family has a long history of supporting both cancer initiatives and DMEI, so supporting this initiative was a natural fit. Julie S. Rotman of the Stephenson Family Foundation stated, “We are honored to support the Dean McGee Eye Institute and Dr. Firestone as essential components of the health sciences ecosystem in Oklahoma City.”

“As the competition for talent in academic ophthalmology increases, endowed positions are critical to our efforts to support and retain our brightest and most committed faculty, such as Dr. Firestone,” stated DMEI’s chief executive officer, R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA. “We could not do this without the support of our committed donors for whom we are extremely grateful.”

“I am truly humbled by the generosity of all the donors who made this endowed position possible,” Dr. Firestone said. “It will allow me to continue treating patients, grow in my knowledge and skills, publish research findings, and educate the next generation of ophthalmologists so as to improve cancer care in Oklahoma.” ■

Couple Funds Retina Research with Charitable Donation from Individu

AUTOSOMAL DOMINANT STARGARDT-LIKE MACULAR DYSTROPHY (STGD3) IS AN INHERITED RETINAL DISEASE caused by mutations in the ELOVL4 gene. STGD3 damages the macula – the round area at the center of the retina responsible for central vision – which leads to vision loss in children and young adults.

Research at the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) and in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Departments of Cell Biology and



*Martin-Paul Agbaga, PhD
Associate Professor*

Ophthalmology focuses on the role that very-long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (VLC-PUFAs) play in vision and in the mitigation of the deleterious effects of the mutated ELOVL4 gene in STGD3.

Martin-Paul Agbaga, PhD, associate professor in the two departments, and his mentor, Robert E. “Gene” Anderson, MD, PhD, began

working together on this research over 20 years ago when Dr. Agbaga was a graduate student. Following Dr. Anderson’s retirement in 2020, Dr. Agbaga has continued this important area of research and has made significant discoveries.

According to Dr. Agbaga, “Our research has shown that VLC-PUFAs are critical for retinal function and that mutations in ELOVL4 that affect VLC-PUFA biosynthesis cause retinal dysfunction and degeneration. Recent research findings suggest that dietary supplementation with VLC-PUFAs could be an effective treatment for macular degeneration. However, currently, there are no natural sources of VLC-PUFAs to be evaluated as dietary supplements for the attenuation of retinal degeneration. Our immediate goal is to develop novel ways to chemically synthesize VLC-PUFAs so that they can be evaluated.”

Dr. Anderson and his wife, Gloria, believe so much in the research that Dr. Agbaga is conducting that they recently donated \$100,000 to support his work. Dr. Anderson was on the faculty of DMEI/OU for 25 years and has served as director of vision research at DMEI/OU Department of Ophthalmology, chair of the

\$100,000 Through Qualified Retirement Account

Department of Cell Biology, and director of the Oklahoma Center for Neuroscience.

Their gift will be used to underwrite a collaborative effort with a team from the Czech Republic to synthesize the compounds needed to produce VLC-PUFAs in large amounts using a technology the team developed. Dr. Agbaga's laboratory will then feed these compounds to mice and rat models and evaluate retinal function and structural rescue using lipidomics, molecular biology, and functional analysis. His ultimate goal is to study these compounds in a clinical trial for treatment of STGD3 and age-related macular degeneration.

"Martin-Paul is so close to possibly demonstrating a novel therapeutic approach to treating childhood vision loss in STGD3 patients and others with age-related macular degeneration that Gloria and I wanted to help support him at this critical juncture," Dr. Anderson said.

The Andersons made their gift through a qualified charitable donation (QCD), which is a direct transfer of funds from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). "A QCD is a tool that donors age 70 ½ or older can use to reduce

their taxable income," stated Jim Durbin, DMEI's executive director of development. "For those age 73 or older, it can help them meet their required minimum distribution (RMD). Instead of taking their distribution as income to be taxed, they can direct that amount to a qualified charity, such as the Dean McGee Eye Institute." ■



Gloria and Dr. Robert E. "Gene" Anderson at the OU College of Medicine Alumni Association's Evening of Excellence in 2020, where Dr. Anderson was presented the Dean's Award for Distinguished Medical Service.

If you would like to support the work of the vision scientists at DMEI/OU, you can make a donation using the enclosed reply envelope or go to www.dmei.org/donate-now and give to the Vision Research Fund. To make a QCD like the Andersons did, please contact Jim Durbin for details at 405.271.7803 or jim-durbin@dmei.org.



Dean McGee Eye Institute staff members, technicians, and doctors at the May 1 Northwest Oklahoma City satellite office open house event.

DURING CALENDAR YEAR 2023 AND INTO EARLY 2024, the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) undertook a more than \$3 million expansion of its Northwest Oklahoma City satellite clinic located at 3500 NW 56th Street (near INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center). The original 6,827-square-foot clinic with nine examination rooms was home to one comprehensive ophthalmologist (Ralph B. Hester III, MD) and one optometrist (Tasha J. Schellenberg, OD). The expanded clinic covers 11,867 square feet, boasts 21 examination rooms and a minor surgery suite, and allows for the addition of a second full-time comprehensive ophthalmologist or optometrist, as well as visits by some of DMEI's

Key Donors Make Oklahoma City Sa

other providers such as retinal specialists, oculoplastic surgeons, and cornea and external disease physicians. Currently, in addition to Drs. Hester and Schellenberg, Drs. Victoria A. Bugg and Matthew S. Chorost (comprehensive ophthalmology), Drs. Thai Do and Jeremy F. Tan (ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery), and Dr. Laura A. Kahn (optometry) are seeing patients there.

It is anticipated that the expansion will allow DMEI to increase the number of unique patients seen at the Northwest Oklahoma City satellite clinic from 6,000 to 11,000 per year and support growth in overall visits from 13,000 to 25,000 annually.

This expansion was made possible through the generous support of the following donors, who together gave \$875,000 to the project:

- The Chickasaw Nation
- E.L. and Thelma Gaylord Foundation
- Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma*
- LaDonna and Herman Meinders

Expansion of DMEI's Northwest Satellite Clinic Possible

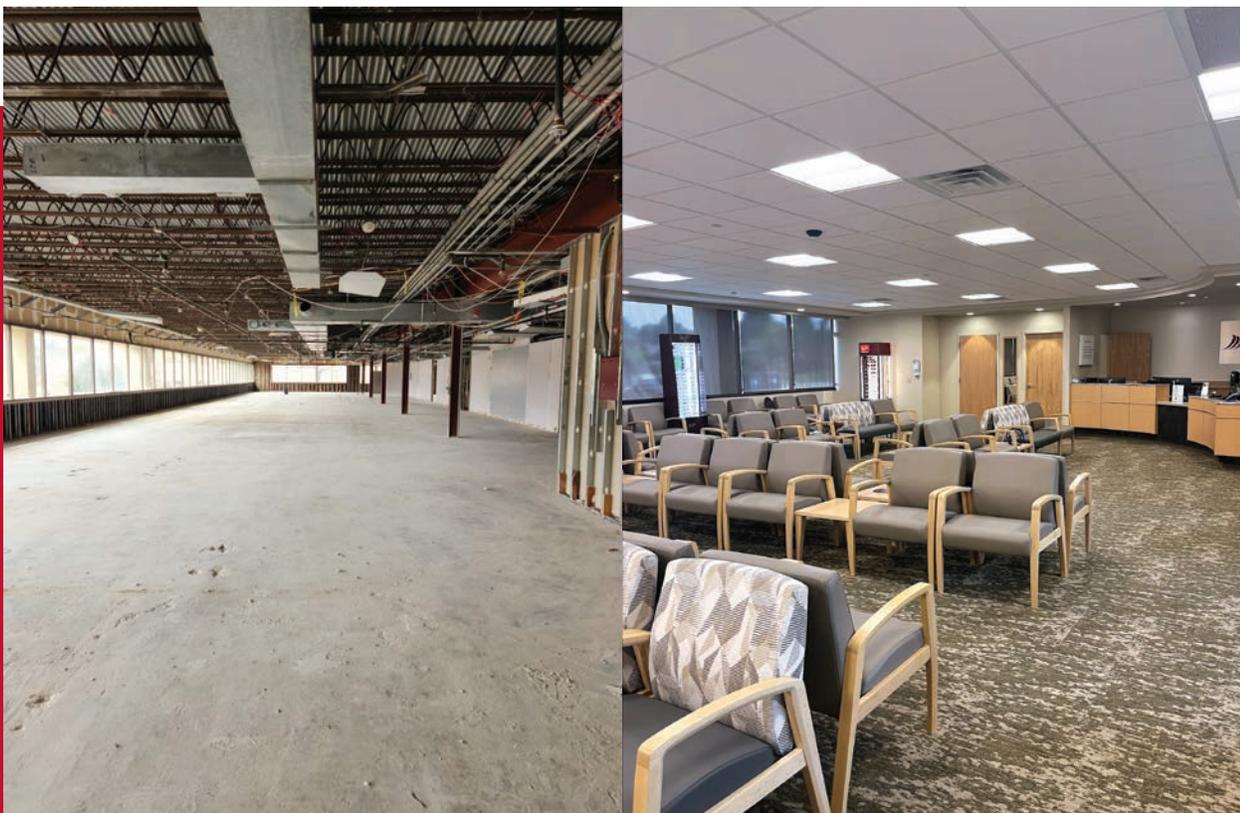
“We are so very grateful to these donors who came along side us to help make this expansion possible,” stated R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA, chief executive officer of DMEI and Edward L. Gaylord professor and chair of the University of Oklahoma Department of Ophthalmology. “Expanded space and services at one of DMEI’s busiest clinics will help the organization meet current demand, provide a

better experience for our patients, and allow for future growth.”

To schedule an appointment at the Northwest Oklahoma City satellite office, please call 405.271.9500. ■

**Please see related story on page 31 of DMEI In Vision, summer 2023, issue 27.*

Before (left) and after (right) expansion of DMEI's Northwest Oklahoma City satellite office located at 3500 NW 56th St.



TOLBERT FAMILY ENDOWED CHAIR Awarded to Jeremy F. Tan, MD

WHEN AN ANONYMOUS DONOR WAS LOOKING FOR A WAY TO HONOR HIS LONGTIME FRIEND, JAMES R. "JIM"

TOLBERT III – current Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) board member and board chair emeritus – Mr. Tolbert suggested an endowed chair at DMEI.

This friend made an initial pledge of \$200,000 in December 2021 towards this effort and then personally worked to raise the money needed from others who would be interested in honoring Mr. Tolbert in this manner. (Please see page 27 of DMEI *InVision*, winter 2022, issue 24 for more information about this initiative and Mr. Tolbert.) Through this donor's efforts, an additional \$497,800 in gifts and pledges was secured from donors including David and Kim Rainbolt, BancFirst, the Raymond H. Hefner Jr. Family, and the Howard Family Charitable Foundation, Inc. This brought the total amount raised to \$697,800. With a 50% match from the DMEI Foundation of \$348,900, the Tolbert Family Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology was established with a balance of slightly over \$1 million.

On July 1, 2024, Jeremy F. Tan, MD, an oculoplastic surgeon at DMEI and clinical associate professor in the University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology, was named the inaugural recipient of the Tolbert Family Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology.

A native of New Jersey, Dr. Tan earned his undergraduate degree (major in ceramics and minor in biology) from the University of Delaware, where honors included *summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, and Phi Kappa Phi. He completed his medical studies at Temple University in Philadelphia, where he was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. Dr. Tan then pursued his ophthalmology residency at DMEI/OU, during which he served as chief resident and received the Dr. and Mrs. T.E. Acers Resident Honor Award and Robert G. Small, MD Resident Award for Medical Student Education. He completed a two-year American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (ASOPRS) fellowship with Ophthalmic Surgeons and Consultants of Ohio in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Tan joined the DMEI/OU faculty in 2018 and was the recipient of the Edward and Thelma Gaylord Faculty Honor Award in 2023. He also serves as a member-at-large on DMEI's Executive Committee.

Dr. Tan's practice focuses on patients with periocular, lacrimal, or orbital conditions. This includes inflammatory and oncologic disease, trauma to the area around the eye, and aesthetic and rejuvenative enhancements such as



Jeremy F. Tan, MD
Clinical Associate Professor

IN OPHTHALMOLOGY

blepharoplasty (removal of excess eyelid skin), ptosis repair (droopy eyelid lifting), endoscopic forehead and brow lift, mid-face lift, lower eyelid fat removal, and injectables (Botox, fillers, etc.).

Recently, Dr. Tan became the new DMEI/OU director of global ophthalmology. In this role, he will oversee the Bradley K. Farris, MD Global Eye Care Program, which regularly sends a group of residents and faculty to Eswatini in southeastern Africa to assist the nation's only ophthalmologist, Dr. Jonathan J. Pons, in caring for a population with few resources. He will also serve as fellowship director for any future global ophthalmology fellows.

“The Tolbert Family Endowed Chair provides Dr. Tan with the resources necessary to devote time to our global ophthalmology efforts, which are outside his normal clinical and academic duties,” stated R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA, DMEI’s chief executive officer and Edward L. Gaylord professor and chair of the OU Department of Ophthalmology. “Awarding this chair to Dr. Tan allows us to continue our global ophthalmology endeavors, which is an aspect of our education program that sets us apart nationally.”

“I am honored to be named the inaugural recipient of the Tolbert Family Endowed Chair,” said Dr. Tan, “and am deeply grateful to the donors who funded it. It will allow me to dedicate the time necessary to continue and expand a thriving global ophthalmology program here at DMEI/OU.”

Dr. Tan is a first-generation American, born of immigrant parents from the Philippines with ethnic roots in Southeastern China. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Karen, and their three young sons and exploring the diverse culinary scene in Oklahoma City. ■



Dr. Jeremy F. Tan (far left) and Dr. Andrew T. Melson (far right) pose for a picture with local elders during a 2023 global eye care trip to Eswatini.



Beth and Jim Tolbert at the OU College of Medicine Alumni Association's 2017 Evening of Excellence (EOE). Mr. Tolbert was presented the Dean's Award for Distinguished Community Service at the 1997 EOE celebration. He has served on the DMEI Board of Directors since 1972 and was chair from 1992 to 2013.

Martin-Paul Agbaga, PhD, *Re-Elected to ISSFAL Board of Directors*



*Martin-Paul Agbaga, PhD
Associate Professor*

MARTIN-PAUL AGBAGA, PHD, HAS BEEN RE-ELECTED TO SERVE ANOTHER FOUR-YEAR TERM as a

board member of the International Society for the Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids (ISSFAL). ISSFAL is the leading organization in the world devoted

to the study of fatty acids and their effects on human health and disease.

In addition to his service on ISSFAL's board, Dr. Agbaga currently also serves on a five-member Governance Committee for ISSFAL. As a member of the Governance Committee, he actively participates in the development and

refinement of governance policies, ensuring that they align with the organization's values and goals; is responsible for carefully reviewing proposed revisions to existing governance documents, offering insights, and contributing to the decision-making process; and serves in an advisory capacity, providing recommendations and guidance on governance matters to support the overall success of ISSFAL projects.

Dr. Agbaga was recently promoted to associate professor with tenure in the Departments of Cell Biology and Ophthalmology. His laboratory is located in the Dean McGee Eye Institute. In 2020, Dr. Agbaga was nominated for the ISSFAL board by Nicolas G. Bazan, MD, PhD (LSU Health-New Orleans School of Medicine), Michael A. Crawford, PhD, FSB, FRCPATH (Imperial College London), and Robert E. Anderson, MD, PhD (Dean McGee Eye Institute/OU Department of Ophthalmology). ■

SAVE THE DATE



8th Annual Robert E. Anderson, MD, PhD Lecture
Thursday, September 12, 2024

17th Annual OU Vision Workshop
Thursday/Friday, September 12 - 13, 2024

Tullos O. Coston, MD Lecture Hall, Dean McGee Eye Institute, Acers Pavilion, Fifth Floor

Reza Dana, MD, MSc, MPH

W. Clement Stone Clinical Research Scholar
Claes H. Dohlman Professor of Ophthalmology
Vice Chair for Academic Programs
Director, Harvard-Vision Clinical Scientist
Development Program
Co-Director, Cornea Center of Excellence
Harvard Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts

Director, Cornea and Refractive Surgery Service
Senior Scientist (Schepens Eye Research Institute)
Associate Chief for Academic Programs
Massachusetts Eye and Ear



Michelle C. Callegan, PhD, FARVO
Director of Vision Research

DMEI Hosts Annual ARVO Reception

DURING THE MAY 2024 ANNUAL MEETING of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), “Vision for the Future,” in Seattle, Washington, the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI), University of Oklahoma Health Sciences (OUHS), and other academic vision research centers. The reception was held at the Sheraton Grand Seattle Hotel. ■



Pictured (left to right): Michael H. Elliott, PhD, FARVO, Gregory L. Skuta, MD Professor of Ophthalmology and Professor of Physiology, and Robert E. Anderson, MD, PhD, George Lynn Cross Research Professor Emeritus.



Pictured (left to right): Fu-Shin Yu, PhD, Professor of Ophthalmology and Anatomy/Cell Biology at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan; Michelle C. Callegan, PhD, FARVO, DMEI's Director of Vision Research; and Phillip S. Coburn, PhD, Assistant Professor of Research at DMEI/OU.

RESEARCH FACULTY— DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

Martin-Paul Agbaga, PhD
Robert E. Anderson, MD, PhD*
Lea D. Bennett, PhD
Michelle C. Callegan, PhD, FARVO

Daniel J.J. Carr, PhD, FARVO*
Yan Chen, PhD
Phillip S. Coburn, PhD
Michael H. Elliott, PhD, FARVO

Jami M. Gurley, PhD
Feng Li, MD, MPH, MS
Raju V.S. Rajala, PhD

* Professor Emeritus

Research Seminar Series

The **OU Vision Club*** is proud to host visits and seminars by local, national, and international experts in vision research. The Vision Club Seminar Series is held at the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) and is sponsored by DMEI and the Department of Ophthalmology at University of Oklahoma Health Sciences (OUHS).

The **OUHS Department of Biochemistry and Physiology,**** chaired by internationally renowned vision scientist Dr. Julia Busik, also hosts and sponsors several vision researchers as part of its departmental seminar program.

Recent Events:



FEBRUARY 29, 2024

Bradley D. Gelfand, PhD**

Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Ophthalmology
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

"Sex Differences in Choroidal Angiogenesis Inhibition by Human IgG1 Antibodies"



APRIL 18, 2024

Lois E. H. Smith, MD, PhD**

Professor of Ophthalmology
Harvard Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts

"Can We Prevent Retinopathy Through Metabolic Shifts?"

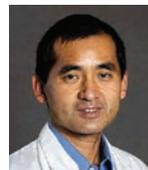


MARCH 14, 2024

Manuela Bartoli, PhD**

Professor and Director of Research
Department of Ophthalmology
Medical College of Georgia/Augusta University
Augusta, Georgia

"Molecular Mechanisms of Vascular Senescence in the Diabetic Retina"



APRIL 25, 2024

Jianhai Du, PhD**

Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
West Virginia University
Morgantown, West Virginia

"Metabolic Ecosystem in the Outer Retina"



MARCH 21, 2024

Vera L. Bonilha, PhD*

Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology
Cleveland Clinic
Cleveland, Ohio

"Pathological Mechanisms in Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD): Role of Oxidative Stress"



JULY 18, 2024

Ana Chucair-Elliott, PhD*

Associate Staff Scientist
Genes & Human Disease Research Program
Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation

"Cell-Specific Contributions to the Epigenomic and Translational Landscapes of the Aging Retina"

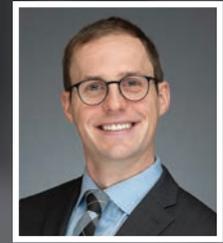


MARCH 28, 2024

Irina A. Pikuleva, PhD**

Carl F. Asseff Professor and Vice Chair for Research
Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio

"Pharmacologic Activation of CYP46A1 in the Brain and Retina to Treat Neurological and Eye Disorders: From Purified Enzyme to Mice and Humans"



Andrew T. Melson, MD
Residency Program Director

DRS. ADAM R. BLEEKER AND JULIANA C. BRYANT NAMED NEW CO-CHIEF RESIDENTS



Adam R. Bleeker, MD
Co-Chief Resident

DRS. ADAM R. BLEEKER AND JULIANA C. BRYANT have been selected as co-chief residents for the 2024-2025 academic year, which started on July 1.

Born and raised in Mitchell, South Dakota, Dr. Bleeker completed his bachelor of arts (BA) degree (*summa cum laude*) in chemistry and mathematics at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, and his medical degree at the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine, where he was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. After a transitional year at the University of South Dakota, he began his ophthalmology residency at the Dean McGee Eye Institute/University of Oklahoma (DMEI/OU). Dr. Bleeker enjoys playing golf and spending time with his wife, Brooke, and mini goldendoodle, Charlee. They are expecting their first baby in January 2025.



Juliana C. Bryant, MD
Co-Chief Resident

Dr. Bryant grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and attended the University of Kansas in Lawrence, where she completed a BA in chemistry with a minor in business, graduating with highest distinction. She completed her medical degree at the OU College of Medicine and was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society and Gold Humanism Honor Society. In medical school, she developed a love and fascination for the field of ophthalmology. Prior to starting her ophthalmology residency at DMEI/OU, she completed her intern year in internal medicine at OU Health Sciences. She enjoys cooking and baking, exercising, doing puzzles, playing tennis, and spending time with her family, friends, husband, Saxon, and one-year-old daughter, Naomi. They are expecting their second child in September 2024.

Drs. Bleeker and Bryant's predecessor as chief resident, Elizabeth A. "Libby" Fairless, MD, will enter a one-year medical retina fellowship at the University of Utah's Moran Eye Center in Salt Lake City. After fellowship, she will return to DMEI/OU as a faculty member, practicing both medical retina and comprehensive ophthalmology. ■

Second Annual “Eyeball” Fundraiser DODGEBALL TOURNAMENT

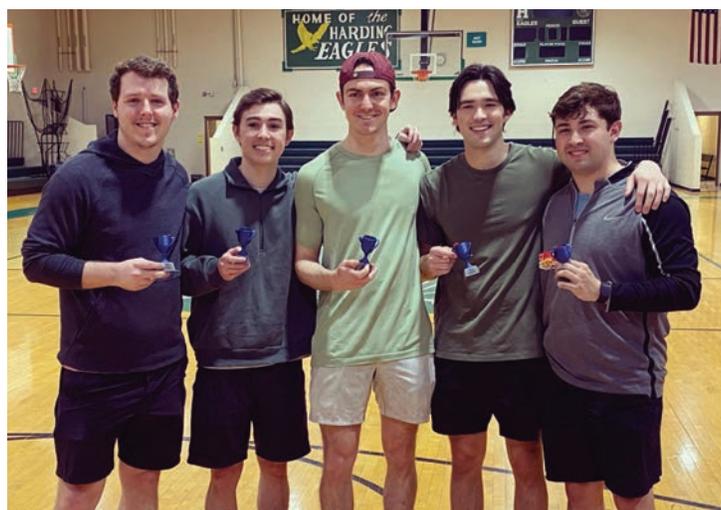
ON MARCH 10, the University of Oklahoma (OU) Ophthalmology Interest Group (OIG) hosted a fundraiser to support medical student research in ophthalmology at the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI). Macey Blakley, a third-year medical student (MS3), organized the event, and the OIG co-presidents Anushka Raj, MS4, and Fares Refai, MS3, provided excellent leadership support. This OU Health Sciences campus-wide “Eyeball” dodgeball tournament included 12 teams of five players. The event was held at Harding Charter Preparatory High School in Oklahoma City and raised over \$5,000. ■

Sponsors for the fundraiser included:

Ann Acers-Warn, MD, MBA
 Victoria A. Bugg, MD
 Thai Do, MD
 Garyl G. Geist, MAcc
 Ben J. Harvey, MD
 David and Cindy Heminger
 Kimberly A. Howard
 Mahmoud A. Khaimi, MD
 Ronald M. Kingsley, MD
 Carolyn E. Kloek, MD
 Maria E. Lim, MD
 Melody Marcum
 Andrew T. Melson, MD
 Aman Mittal, MD
 Annie Moreau, MD, FACS
 Laura and Susan Ransom
 Kamran M. Riaz, MD
 R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA
 Gregory L. Skuta, MD
 Jeremy F. Tan, MD
 Mark A. Wyckoff
 Tammy L. Yanovitch, MD, MHSc

Raffle item donations included:

Abuelo's
 Aria Salon & Spa
 Big Truck Tacos
 BJ's Restaurant
 Bricktown Brewery
 Cafe Kacao
 Chicken N Pickle
 Dean McGee Optical Shop
 Elemental Coffee
 Ma Der Lao
 McNellie's Group
 Oklahoma City Museum of Art
 Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum
 Oklahoma Food Tours
 Oklahoma City Thunder
 Raising Cane's
 S&B Burger
 Top Golf
 Torchy's Tacos
 Twin Hills Golf and Country Club



The winning team, the Step 2 Brothers, posing with their trophies. Pictured (left to right): Jarret Garbrecht, Jake Neighbors, JP Eagleton, Riley Stayton, and Zach Powell.

Fares Refai Accepted into NIH Medical Research Scholars Program

FARES REFAI, WHO RECENTLY COMPLETED HIS THIRD (MS3) YEAR AS A UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA (OU) MEDICAL STUDENT, has been accepted into the 2024-2025 National Institutes of Health (NIH)/National Eye Institute (NEI) Medical Research Scholars Program. Refai, who is co-president of the OU Ophthalmology Interest Group, completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Tulsa. Current Dean McGee Eye Institute resident and OU College of Medicine graduate, Annah P. Baykal, MD, participated in this NIH program in 2019 – 2020.



Fares Refai, MS3



Dr. Annah P. Baykal (right center), a medical student at that time, and other participants in the Medical Research Scholars Program pose outside the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

OPHTHALMOLOGY INTEREST GROUP HONORED BY STUDENT COUNCIL

THE OPHTHALMOLOGY INTEREST GROUP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA (OU) COLLEGE OF MEDICINE received the Interest Group of the Year Award from the College's Student Council on April 18.

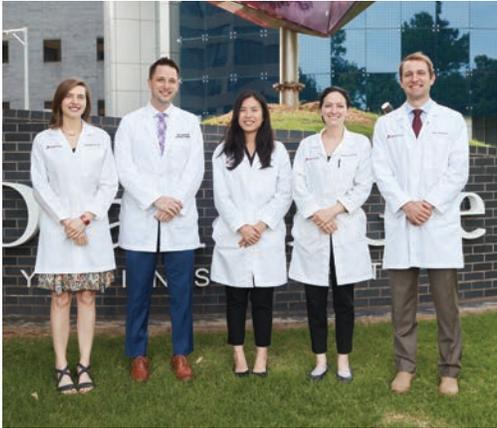
"Many people share in this award," stated R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA, in announcing the news. "The Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) residents are great teachers and mentors to medical students interested in ophthalmology. Many of the DMEI faculty participate in teaching medical students, and many formally advise them as well."

He continued, "None of this would happen without a great medical student education program. We thank Dr. Cynthia A. Bradford for starting and shepherding a program that became one of the best in the nation, and applaud Dr. Tammy L. Yanovitch for truly taking it to the next level and beyond." Dr. Yanovitch became DMEI's director of medical student education in July 2020. Dr. Siatkowski also expressed deep gratitude to Laura Ransom, who assumed the role of medical student education coordinator in August 2022.

Medical student education is a crucial part of the DMEI mission, and we are all proud to see this recognition from the OU College of Medicine Student Council! ■

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY | THE GRAD

RESIDENTS



Pictured (left to right) are the graduating residents, Elise E. Steinberger, MD, MS; Austin L. LaGrow, MD; Jessica Hsueh, MD; Elizabeth A. "Libby" Fairless, MD (chief resident); and Kyle J. Royalty, MD.



Jessica Hsueh, MD (left), has completed three years of residency training and will enter a cornea and refractive surgery fellowship at the University of California, San Diego.



Austin L. LaGrow, MD (left), has completed three years of residency training and will join Eye Care Specialists of Oklahoma in Edmond and Midwest City as a comprehensive ophthalmologist.



Elizabeth A. "Libby" Fairless, MD, Chief Resident (left), has completed three years of residency training and will enter a one-year medical retina fellowship at the University of Utah's Moran Eye Center in Salt Lake City. After fellowship, she will return to DMEI as a faculty member, practicing both medical retina and comprehensive ophthalmology. Graduating residents are shown with Dr. Andrew T. Melson (right, residency program director) during the DMEI Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual OU Resident and Alumni dinner held on Saturday, June 1 in the Inasmuch Foundation Atrium at the Dean McGee Eye Institute.



Kyle J. Royalty, MD (left), has completed three years of residency training and will enter private practice as a comprehensive ophthalmologist, joining fellow DMEI resident alumnus Dr. Andrew A. Wilson and others in Athens, Georgia.



Elise E. Steinberger, MD, MS (left), has completed three years of residency training and will join the faculty in the Department of Ophthalmology at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston as a clinical assistant professor.

UATES OF 2024

FELLOWS



Amit Bajaj, MD (right), has completed a one-year cornea/external disease/refractive surgery fellowship and will join a private multispecialty ophthalmology group south of Atlanta, Georgia, focusing on comprehensive ophthalmology, cornea, and keratorefractive surgery. He is pictured with Rhea L. Siatkowski, MD (left), cornea and external disease fellowship director.



Raman A. Michael, MD (left), has completed a one-year glaucoma fellowship and will join a private multispecialty ophthalmology group in Arlington Heights, Illinois (a Chicago suburb), with an emphasis on glaucoma and comprehensive ophthalmology. He is pictured with Ben J. Harvey, MD (right), glaucoma fellowship director.



Kumar S. Sambhav, MD (left), has completed a two-year vitreoretinal surgery fellowship and will join the retina section in the Department of Ophthalmology at West Virginia University in Morgantown as an assistant professor. He is pictured with Vinay A. Shah, MD (right), outgoing vitreoretinal surgery fellowship director.

Anushka M. Raj, MD, Receives 2024 Dean McGee Award in Ophthalmology

DR. ANUSHKA M. RAJ received the 2024 Dean McGee Award in Ophthalmology, which is given annually to the University of Oklahoma (OU) College of Medicine “graduating senior with the most outstanding performance in ophthalmology.” Dr. Raj, who was born in London, England, but grew up in Oklahoma, earned her undergraduate degree (*summa cum laude*) in chemical biosciences with a minor in nonprofit organizational studies from the University of Oklahoma-Norman.



Anushka M. Raj, MD
DMEI/OU PGY1 Intern

During medical school at OU, she served as co-president of the Ophthalmology Interest Group and was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society and Gold Humanism Honor Society. Dr. Raj also conducted clinical research with Kamran M. Riaz, MD, at the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI). Her many outside interests include competitive volleyball.

Congratulations to Dr. Raj and all the best to her as she begins her internship and ophthalmology residency here at DMEI/OU! ■

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY INCOMING 2024 RESIDENTS & FELLOWS

INCOMING 2024 DMEI/OU PGY1 INTERNS



Diego E. Dominguez, DO
College: University of Oklahoma,
Norman, Oklahoma
Medical School: Oklahoma State
University, Tulsa, Oklahoma



Anushka M. Raj, MD
College: University of Oklahoma,
Norman, Oklahoma
Medical School: University of
Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Rebekah L. Robinson, MD, PhD
College: Georgia Southern University,
Savannah, Georgia
Medical School: Augusta University,
Augusta, Georgia



Nitish Sood, MD
College: Augusta University,
Augusta, Georgia
Medical School: Augusta University,
Augusta, Georgia



Megan E. Sweeney, MD
College: University of Michigan, Ann
Arbor, Michigan
Medical School: University of Missouri,
Columbia, Missouri

INCOMING 2024 DMEI/OU FELLOW



Jared M. Raabe, MD
Cornea Fellow
College: Texas A&M University, College
Station, Texas
Medical School: University of Texas
Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas
Residency: Emory University,
Atlanta, Georgia



Congratulations to the following faculty members who received academic promotions effective July 1, 2024:

Martin-Paul Agbaga, PhD, Associate Professor
Kamran M. Riaz, MD, Clinical Professor



MASONIC CHARITY FOUNDATION OF OKLAHOMA DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

APRIL 29, 2024

Drs. Zelia M. Correa and J. William Harbour



Drs. Harbour and Correa (center) with DMEI residents and Andrew T. Melson, MD (far left), residency program director.

Zelia M. Correa, MD, PhD
Professor of Ophthalmology
Co-Director, Ocular Oncology Service
Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
Miami, Florida

PRESENTATION: "Clinical Trials in Ocular Oncology and Their Potential Impact on Patient Management"

J. William Harbour, MD
Professor and Chair
David Burton, Jr. Endowed Chair
Department of Ophthalmology
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
Dallas, Texas

PRESENTATION: "Precision Ocular Oncology: Harnessing the Power of Modern Genetics"

JULY 29, 2024

Jonathan J. Pons, MD

Founder, Medical Director, and Ophthalmologist
Grace Vision Clinic, Siteki, Eswatini, Africa
Consultant Ophthalmologist, Good Shepherd Hospital, Siteki, Eswatini
Founder, Medical Director, and Ophthalmologist, Lubombo Medical Services
Founder and Director, Medical Mission Eswatini
Trustee and Principal Investigator, Eswatini Antivenom Foundation

PRESENTATION: "Who will GO? Trends in Global Ophthalmology"



After his lecture, Dr. Jonathan Pons (standing) led a wet lab course for the PGY4 residents, Drs. Adam Bleeker (far left), Ahmad Abdel-Aty (back center), Mostafa "Moses" Khattab (front center), Juliana Bryant (front right), and Ashley Ooms (not pictured).

**ALUMNI
Achievements**



Andrew R. Osborn, MD (Chief Resident, 2021-2022)

Missouri Eye Institute, Springfield, Missouri
Assistant Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology, University of Missouri School of Medicine - Springfield Campus

In his new role, Dr. Osborn will teach local medical students in clinic and provide regular lectures during third-year medical student surgery rotations.

DMEI Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48 Meeting/44th Annual Tullos O. Coston, MD

JANE C. EDMOND, MD, DELIVERED THE 44TH TULLOS O. COSTON, MD LECTURE

on June 1 as part of the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) Ophthalmology Symposium 2024/48th Annual University of Oklahoma (OU) Resident and Alumni Meeting. Her Coston Lecture was entitled “*Bias and Errors in Medical Decision Making – Are You at Risk?*” She also delivered a second lecture entitled “*The Benefits of Positive (and Negative) Role Models in Medical Education.*”

Dr. Edmond is an internationally renowned pediatric ophthalmologist who serves as the current president of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), as well as Director of the Mitchel and Shannon Wong Eye Institute, the Wong Family Distinguished University Founding Chair and Professor in the Department of Ophthalmology, and Interim Vice Dean for Professional Practice at Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin. She is also a past president (2019-2020) of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (AAPOS).

Born in El Paso, Texas (where she later finished high school), Dr. Edmond earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Texas at Austin (*summa cum laude*, special honors in biology, and Phi Beta Kappa). She received her medical degree (Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society) and completed her residency in ophthalmology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. Dr. Edmond pursued initial



Pictured (left to right): Jane C. Edmond, MD, 2024 Tullos O. Coston, MD Lecturer, and R. Michael Siatkowski, MD, MBA, DMEI chief executive officer and Edward L. Gaylord professor and chair of the OU Department of Ophthalmology.

fellowship training in pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus at the University of Iowa and later in neuro-ophthalmology at Baylor College of Medicine.

Prior to assuming her current position in Austin in January 2018, Dr. Edmond served as faculty at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children’s Hospital (1991 to 1997); at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Scheie Eye Institute, and Wills Eye Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1997 to 2003); and again at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children’s Hospital (2003 to 2017), where she was promoted to the rank of professor in 2015. Among her many achievements at the University of Texas at Austin is the

th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Lecture

establishment of an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-approved residency program in ophthalmology, which began in 2022.

Dr. Edmond's clinical and academic focus has been on pediatric neuro-ophthalmology, the ophthalmic impact of craniosynostosis and pediatric brain tumors, and complex strabismus in adults and children. She has served as an author on approximately 50 peer-reviewed publications and 12 book chapters, and has delivered more than 125 national and international lectures and visiting professor presentations. Dr. Edmond has trained over 250 residents and approximately 50 pediatric ophthalmology and neuro-ophthalmology fellows. In addition, she has served as an oral examiner for the American Board of Ophthalmology since 2003 and is a past editorial board member for the *Journal of AAPOS* and the AAO's *EyeNet Magazine*.

Her many honors and awards include the Marshall Parks Bronze Medal and a Lifetime Achievement Award from AAPOS and a Senior Achievement Award as well as Secretariat Awards from the AAO.

Dr. Edmond and her husband of almost 40 years, Randal S. Weber, MD, FACS (chair of the Department of Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston from 2003 to 2017), have two adult children, a son, Austin, and daughter, Sophie.

"It is always an honor to have a sitting AAO president as well as a department chair visit DMEI, but Janie's visit is particularly meaningful to me given our decades long collaboration and comradery in pediatric ophthalmology," stated Dr. R. Michael Siatkowski, DMEI's chief executive officer and Edward L. Gaylord professor and chair of the OU Department of Ophthalmology. ■



SAVE THE DATE!
DMEI Ophthalmology Symposium 2025
49th Annual OU Resident and Alumni Meeting
Friday/Saturday, May 30 – 31, 2025

45th Annual Tullos O. Coston, MD Lecture (May 31)
Michael X. Repka, MD, MBA

President-Elect, American Academy of Ophthalmology
Past President, American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
David L. Guyton, MD and Feduniak Family Professor of Ophthalmology
Vice Chair for Clinical Practice
Division Director of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Adult Strabismus
Wilmer Eye Institute
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Baltimore, Maryland

2024 Resident/Alumni Meeting Awards



EDWARD AND THELMA GAYLORD FACULTY HONOR AWARD

RONALD M. KINGSLEY, MD

Pictured (left to right): Jessica Hsueh, MD, Austin L. LaGrow, MD, Elise E. Steinberger, MD, MS, Ronald M. Kingsley, MD, Elizabeth A. "Libby" Fairless, MD, and Kyle J. Royalty, MD.



DMEI FACULTY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN RESIDENT SURGICAL EDUCATION

THAI DO, MD

Pictured (left to right): Jessica Hsueh, MD, Kyle J. Royalty, MD, Elise E. Steinberger, MD, MS, Elizabeth A. "Libby" Fairless, MD, Thai Do, MD, and Austin L. LaGrow, MD.



DMEI FACULTY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN RESIDENT CLINICAL EDUCATION

MARIA E. LIM, MD

Pictured (left to right): Austin L. LaGrow, MD, Jessica Hsueh, MD, Kyle J. Royalty, MD, Maria E. Lim, MD, Elise E. Steinberger, MD, MS, and Elizabeth A. "Libby" Fairless, MD.



DR. & MRS. THOMAS E. ACERS RESIDENT HONOR AWARD

ADAM R. BLEEKER, MD

Pictured (left to right): Adam R. Bleeker, MD, and Ann Acers-Warn, MD, MBA.

As part of the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) Ophthalmology Symposium 2024 and the University of Oklahoma (OU) Department of Ophthalmology's 48th Annual Resident and Alumni Meeting, the recipients of a number of awards were announced during a ceremony held in the Inasmuch Foundation Atrium at the Dean McGee Eye Institute on the evening of Saturday, June 1.



ROBERT G. SMALL, MD RESIDENT AWARD FOR MEDICAL STUDENT EDUCATION

DEANNA H. DANG, MD

Pictured (left to right): Deanna H. Dang, MD, and Andrew T. Melson, MD.



ANNIE MOREAU, MD FELLOW TEACHING AWARD

KUMAR S. SAMBHAV, MD (repeat recipient)

Pictured (left to right): Jessica Hsueh, MD, Austin L. LaGrow, MD, Elise E. Steinberger, MD, MS, Kumar S. Sambhav, MD, Elizabeth A. "Libby" Fairless, MD, and Kyle J. Royalty, MD.



RESIDENT OUTSTANDING DMEI STAFF AWARD

HELEN F. HOWELL
Residency Program Coordinator

Pictured (left to right): Jessica Hsueh, MD, Austin L. LaGrow, MD, Elizabeth A. "Libby" Fairless, MD, Helen F. Howell, Elise E. Steinberger, MD, MS, and Kyle J. Royalty, MD. Howell retired from the above role on June 30. More to come in the next issue of DMEI InVision.



RESIDENT OUTSTANDING DMEI STAFF AWARD

BARENCA S. MALDONADO
Certified Ophthalmic Assistant (COA)

Pictured (left to right): Barenca S. Maldonado, COA, and Jessica Hsueh, MD.

24th Annual Technician Lecture Series



Kamran M. Riaz, MD (center near podium), presented "What's on the Menu: An Overview of Currently Available Intraocular Lenses in the United States (as of June 2024)" during the morning session of the 24th Annual Technician Lecture Series.

THE DEAN MCGEE EYE INSTITUTE (DMEI) HOSTED THE 24TH ANNUAL TECHNICIAN LECTURE SERIES on June 1 in conjunction with the DMEI Ophthalmology Symposium 2024. DMEI is pleased to offer this educational experience to ophthalmic assistants and technicians, ranging from the basic to expert level and from both in-house and outside physician offices. The seven lectures provided were approved by the International Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (IJCAHPO) for six continuing education credits. Eighty-two technicians from across the state heard from DMEI physicians Andrew T. Melson, MD, Anil D. Patel, MD, FRCSC, Kamran M. Riaz, MD, and Gregory L. Skuta, MD; DMEI contact lens specialist Scott Samples, FCLSA, NCLE-M, CPOT; and Becca Suggs, COA, with Eye Care Specialists of Oklahoma. ■

DEAN MCGEE EYE INSTITUTE AMONG NATION'S TOP TEN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN *DOXIMITY* AND *U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT* 2024-2025 SURVEYS

THE DEAN MCGEE EYE INSTITUTE/UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA (DMEI/OU) OPHTHALMOLOGY RESIDENCY PROGRAM WAS AGAIN RANKED 7TH IN THE NATION among academic departments affiliated with a public university by *Doximity's* 2024-2025 survey. The program was 16th overall. In *U.S. News & World Report's* latest review of the country's academic eye centers, which was also released in July, DMEI/OU tied for 9th among public institutions and was tied for 22nd overall. The other seven universities also among the top ten public institutions in both surveys were the University of Iowa, University of Utah, University of Michigan, University of California, Los Angeles and San Francisco, respectively, Oregon Health and Science University, and University of Texas Southwestern. ■

Remembering Dr. Walter J. Stark Jr.

SURROUNDED BY FAMILY, WALTER J. STARK JR., MD, passed away February 29 in Sarasota, Florida, due to complications from Parkinson's disease. He was 81 years old.

Dr. Stark served as professor of ophthalmology and director of cornea and cataract services at the Johns Hopkins University's Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, where he was a member of the faculty for over 40 years. He was the Walter J. Stark Jr. Distinguished Professor and Boone Pickens Professor of Ophthalmology at Johns Hopkins and retired in 2015 after an illustrious career. Dr. Stark and his family graciously endowed the annual Walter J. Stark Lectureship in honor and memory of his father, Walter J. Stark Sr., an Oklahoma City banker who served as the first administrator of the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) until his passing in 1991.

Born in Oklahoma City, Dr. Stark was a 1960 graduate of Harding High School, where he earned a state title in swimming, and completed his undergraduate and medical (Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society) degrees at the University of Oklahoma. He pursued his ophthalmology residency at the Wilmer Eye Institute/ Johns Hopkins University, after which he served for two years as a clinical associate at the National Eye Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Stark joined the Wilmer faculty in 1973 and became an international leader in anterior segment eye surgery. In 2004, a donation from longtime patient Margaret C. Mosher

resulted in the dedication and naming of the Walter J. Stark, MD and Margaret C. Mosher Center for Cataract and Corneal Diseases at the Wilmer Eye Institute.

Among his countless professional achievements, Dr. Stark published approximately 500 peer-reviewed papers, chaired the Food and Drug Administration's Ophthalmic Devices Advisory Panel, helped lead the Collaborative Corneal Transplantation Studies, and mentored numerous residents and fellows, many of whom are among the leaders in the profession of ophthalmology. He received the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Life Achievement Honor Award in 2003.

Dr. Stark is survived by his high school sweetheart and wife of 60 years, Polly Allen Stark; three children; nine grandchildren; and three siblings.

DMEI Chief Executive Officer R. Michael Siatkowski MD, MBA, said of Dr. Stark, "Walter will be truly missed, both as a prized member of our profession, and a treasured member of the DMEI family." ■



Dr. Walter J. Stark Jr. (back center) pictured with Dr. James Chodosh (left center), members of the Stark family, and Dr. R. Michael Siatkowski (far right), DMEI's chief executive officer and department chair, during the 30th Annual Walter J. Stark Memorial Lecture reception in October 2022.



SAVE THE DATE: Monday, October 7, 2024
THE 32ND ANNUAL WALTER J. STARK MEMORIAL LECTURESHIP
8:30 am–9:30 am • Tullos O. Coston, MD Lecture Hall

Steven E. Feldon, MD, MBA

*Executive Vice President, Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology
Past President, North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society
Professor and Former Director, Flaum Eye Institute
University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry
Rochester, New York*

Cataract Specialist Dr. Helga Fuenfhausen Reflects on Her Dean McGee Days

BY STACI ELDER HENSLEY

SPECIALIZED PROCEDURES CAN HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON A PERSON'S QUALITY OF LIFE, and nowhere is this more evident than in the field of ophthalmology.

That ability to make lasting transformations is what drew Dr. Helga Fuenfhausen Pizio to the Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) as a resident, where she honed her surgical skills, specializing in cataracts. After graduating from residency, she established a private practice in Las Vegas, Nevada. Several years later, in 2008, she went on to establish New Eyes, a comprehensive eye care facility dedicated to providing patients across southern Nevada with advanced eye surgery and a full range of vision care.



Drs. Helga Fuenfhausen Pizio (left) and P. Lloyd Hildebrand (right).

Among her partners is former Dean McGee physician Dr. P. Lloyd Hildebrand, an oculoplastic surgeon. Two of her fellow residents at DMEI – Dr. Robert B. “Bobby” Taylor III and Dr. Steven N. Montgomery – have joined the growing practice as well.

Pizio also worked hand-in-hand with Dr. Hildebrand and her husband, oculoplastic specialist Dr. Nicolas Uzcategui, to establish an

ophthalmology department at nearby University of Nevada–Las Vegas (UNLV), where they all now teach and conduct research. The three, with their colleagues, have a long-term goal to establish an eye care institute along the lines of Dean McGee, providing that same exceptional trifecta of patient care, teaching, and research, she said.

“The training I received at Dean McGee was phenomenal; it was crucial to my success as an ophthalmologist,” Dr. Pizio said. “I received the full range of exposure, from pediatrics to pathology. At DMEI, I was able to do 10 times as many surgeries than at the majority of other programs, so I was much better trained coming out of there than most residents.”

“Today I recruit residents from DMEI to join my practice because they are so well trained,” she added. “And I love being able to teach myself. Without good teaching, you can’t have good practitioners, and it’s an honor and a privilege to help develop the next generation of ophthalmologists.”

It was during Dr. Pizio’s own medical student days at the University of Miami (Florida) School of Medicine (where she graduated with honors in 1992) that she became interested in ophthalmic surgery. The professors at the school’s affiliated and prestigious Bascom Palmer Eye Institute recommended that she apply for a residency at Dean McGee.



*Helga Fuenfhausen Pizio, MD
Resident Class of 1996
Dean McGee Eye Institute/University of Oklahoma*

“They raved about its excellence, especially in surgical training,” she said. “When I came to the interview, I was so impressed with the facility and the faculty and the quality of training. DMEI was my first choice, and I was very fortunate to be accepted.”

Dr. Pizio commended her many Dean McGee instructors, starting with cataract surgeon Dr. Cynthia A. Bradford. “As a resident we went to her house once a month to present our worst cases or special cases,” she recalled. “So we had peer pressure to do well, but it also was a way for everybody to help each other.”

She has great memories as well of being mentored by Drs. Hildebrand, Ronald M. Kingsley, Gregory L. Skuta, Bradley K. Farris, David W. Parke II, and Stephen R. Fransen, among others. She returns to the Institute frequently for alumni meetings, and said she was thrilled to present Dr. Kingsley with the inaugural DMEI Alumni Professorship last December.

The daughter of German immigrants who were an engineer and a teacher, respectively, Dr. Pizio is the first in her family to become a physician.

“I was fascinated with being able to fix things,” she said. “That’s why I gravitated to

ophthalmology, because of the opportunity to make a difference and actually correct the problem,” she continued. “Especially with cataracts, there’s so much that can be done. It’s a big impact for a relatively brief procedure, and that’s something I find very satisfying.”

Dr. Pizio’s legacy will be felt down through the generations, as her two children are also pursuing doctoral degrees. Son Edward is completing a medical degree at UNLV and is spending his second summer conducting research at DMEI. Matthew, her other son, is completing a PhD in neuroscience, also at UNLV, and plans to focus on vision research.

Above all, Dr. Pizio said, what is most rewarding for her as a physician is when she’s in the operating room, knowing that with a cataract procedure she can restore someone’s sight, and by extension, their ability to function and enjoy life.

“When I’m outside my job, in general I’m a pussycat,” she said. “But in the operating room I’m captain of the ship, no question. I’m responsible for the eye and its vision, and I take that very seriously.” ■

Ensuring Vital Needs Are Met

Andria and Paul Heafy Are Passionate in Their Support for DMEI and Its Mission

BY STACI ELDER HENSLEY

The Dean McGee Eye Institute (DMEI) is blessed to receive generous financial support from many donors, and among the most impactful of these gracious individuals are Oklahoma City philanthropists Andria and Paul Heafy, who established and operate the Wilshire Charitable Foundation.

The Heafys have a deep and long-time connection to the Institute, one which began with Andria's first marriage to Stephen Stark, son of former DMEI administrator Walter J. Stark. Under the elder Stark's 13-year management (1978 to 1991), Dean McGee grew from three floors with five ophthalmologists to six floors of physicians and basic scientists. The number of patients treated also grew four-fold during his tenure.

To honor those achievements after Mr. Stark's passing in 1991, members of the family (including Andria), plus friends and colleagues, established the annual Walter J. Stark Memorial Lectureship, which brings the leading voices in ophthalmology to the Institute to share best practices and insights (please see page 57). They continue to underwrite the lectureship to this

date, and said they hope to continue doing so through multiple generations.

Despite losing her husband to glioblastoma multiforme in 2002, Andria maintained her close ties to DMEI and currently serves on its Board of Directors. After being widowed, she met Paul Heafy in 2005 during a Heritage Hall high school basketball game. They soon began dating and were married in 2006. Paul was welcomed with open arms by the Stark family, and together the couple has significantly expanded their support for the Institute over the years.

The Heafys have always preferred to give anonymously, but were persuaded to share their story as a way to encourage others.

“We don’t want our name on buildings,” the couple said. “But we started thinking about it, and if it would encourage other people to give, that’s an important part of helping others understand why it’s a good thing to contribute to an institution of this caliber. If our going public encourages other people to give, that’s the most important thing.”

In addition to the Stark Lectureship – which they both faithfully attend each year – the couple has given \$62,000 in funds to help establish the Gregory L. Skuta, MD Endowed Chair, plus \$165,000 in contributions toward an endowed position for Dr. Brian K. Firestone, the state’s first and only ocular oncologist.

In 2013, the couple donated \$250,000 to establish and underwrite a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Discretionary Fund. This fund greatly improved DMEI’s ability to tackle unexpected needs in every area, and the couple has replenished the fund as needed with gifts in increments of \$125,000. To date, the Heafys have given more than \$1 million to the fund.

Andria noted that the Institute has had exceptional leadership since its founding, a fact that gives her and her husband confidence that their donations will be used in an appropriate and impactful manner.

“They’ve had tremendous leadership over the years,” she said. “The three that I’ve worked with are Dr. David Parke, Dr. Greg Skuta, and now Dr. Mike Siatkowski, and the Institute has been in incredibly capable hands with all three of them.”

“One of our philosophies is that when we donate to an institution like Dean McGee, since we’re not medical experts I don’t think we should be telling them what to do with their money,” Paul

said. “But as a finance expert I know that there is always a need for a discretionary fund, because even at the best-resourced institutions things will come up that are not in the budget.”

The fund has been a godsend for both former CEO Dr. Gregory L. Skuta and current CEO Dr. R. Michael Siatkowski, who is also the Edward L. Gaylord professor and chair of the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine’s Department of Ophthalmology.

“When Paul and Andria first approached us more than 10 years ago, they asked that their initial and subsequent gifts be applied toward a discretionary fund that would allow the Institute to accomplish objectives and fulfill needs that would not be possible without their contributions,” Dr. Skuta said. “In the years that followed, I cannot tell you how many times,



Paul and Andria Heafy

when faced with important but unbudgeted needs that I thought at first would have to be deferred, I then reminded myself of the availability of these funds. They have become a vital resource in achieving our organizational mission in countless ways.”

Dr. Siatkowski agreed, pointing out that discretionary funds are used for a wide variety of needs in each of the Institute’s key areas of patient care, teaching, and research.

“For example, if one of our team gets a grant and purchases equipment, and that equipment breaks or needs repairs, there are no funds to handle it,” he said. “Or, a researcher may be temporarily between grants. The discretionary funds make it possible for us to cover those expenses and ensure that our research never stops.”

The Heafys’ support also covers unfunded mandates, large and small, that enhance Dean McGee’s teaching mission. The funds have been used to pay conference fees so that medical students can present papers, to reward or reimburse faculty who have gone above and beyond, and even smaller morale-boosting items like paying for meals for residents’ lectures or meetings, and purchasing jackets and t-shirts with the DMEI logo, as a way to build camaraderie.

Finally yet importantly, these monies have been used to underwrite community efforts like vision screening in schools with underprivileged children, joint projects with other nonprofit agencies, and other local and international

outreach initiatives, including DMEI’s work in Eswatini in southeastern Africa.

“I don’t think there’s anyone at the Institute who is not touched either directly or indirectly by those funds,” Dr. Siatkowski said. “Everybody has seen some benefit.”

“For me as a leader, to know I have some (financial) backup, and therefore some leeway, is a blessing, because both unexpected needs and new opportunities frequently arise,” he said.

They have become a vital resource in achieving our organizational mission in countless ways.

So far this year, he noted, discretionary funds were used to purchase a new endoscope for the Institute’s McGee Eye Surgery Center (MESC). In May, MESC received the distinction as one of the “Best

Ambulatory Surgery Centers” in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*. A total of 1,979 ophthalmic ambulatory surgery centers were reviewed and only 10% of these were selected as “Best Performers.”

In addition to their ongoing DMEI support, the Heafys’ philanthropy is widespread. They donate to and/or entirely fund a wide variety of smaller institutions and programs, which have a significant impact on the Oklahoma City metropolitan area and beyond. One of their strong interests is in international programs combating eye disease, so they were particularly drawn by DMEI’s international care outreach programs in Africa.

Originally from Massachusetts, Paul Heafy attended Northeastern University in Boston where he studied finance. Graduating at a



Andria and Paul Heafy on travel adventures.

time when his home state was going through economic hardship, he learned about highly paid opportunities with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).

“The only requirement was that their offices were relocating to the Midwest,” he said. “I told them, ‘You’ve got a deal!’”

Fifteen years later, in 1988, Paul formed his own company, National Loan Investors, as an offshoot of his FDIC work. “We’ve been going strong ever since and have successfully ridden every economic wave,” he said. “We had 50 employees at one time, but I’m a little older, so we’re slowing down a bit.”

“I hope to run the company until I’m 85 or 90,” he added. “As long as I’m the boss, I enjoy it! Of course, most people would say that.”

Andria Heafy grew up in Miami, Florida, and then moved to Norman to attend her parents’ alma mater, the University of Oklahoma. After earning a bachelor’s degree in political science, she went on to law school at Oklahoma City University. From there she became an assistant district attorney for Oklahoma County, where she would eventually be assigned, at her request, to the challenging sex crimes division.

“I found my niche in the courtroom as a prosecutor,” she said. “But it was definitely difficult to deal with these types of cases.”

After her marriage to Stephen Stark, Andria went into private practice in order to have more time with her family. “Being a prosecutor is a full-time job with no room for anything else,” she said. “You just can’t do it part time.”

Together the Heafys have four children and four grandchildren, who live in various locations around the country. The blended family gets together as often as possible. “It’s not the Brady Bunch, but it works!” Andria laughed.

“We’ve done all sorts of stuff together,” Paul added. “Once the last child went off to college, we started to travel around the world. Between us, we’ve been to 81 countries – 70 of them together – and circled the globe four times. We literally started out going west and eventually came back around to Oklahoma.”

The Heafys said that while they still prefer to remain anonymous in their ongoing support of Dean McGee, they are glad to speak publicly to encourage others to donate.

“To restore someone’s eyesight as your profession is a wonderful thing,” the two said. “There’s not much greater gift than the gift of sight, and we think that’s what makes the Dean McGee Eye Institute such an attractive recipient of generosity from people.” ■





*The true power of sight lies
in the depths of our hearts,
not the clarity of our vision.*

- The Sight, David Clement-Davies



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Oklahomans and the global community through excellence
and leadership in patient care, education, and vision research.*

• DMEI • inVision

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