

# Profiles in Philanthropy

## Patricia Kearns: "I'm one of the lucky ones"

Who appreciates vision better than one who has lost her own? Patricia Kearns of Fort Lauderdale is one who discovered this truth. She lost her right eye in 1988, the victim of a Memorial Day bottle-rocket misfire.

The tragic accident led to her introduction to the people and services at Bascom Palmer - an experience that opened her heart to the Institute's efforts to prevent blindness and to the suffering of others who had equally bad, if not worse, ophthalmic problems.

"I really consider myself to be very lucky," she says. "I'm able to take advantage of all the wonderful things Bascom Palmer offers, AND I still have sight in my other eye. The accident made me painfully aware that there are those not so fortunate!"

Determined to turn a bad thing into something good, Mrs. Kearns looked to help Bascom Palmer broaden its assistance to those less able to afford the services it has available. Her decision to underwrite the expansion of the Institute's Ocular Plastics Clinic and establish an endowment fund to support ophthalmic care for underprivileged children will make that possible.

Appreciation for the programs at the University of Miami is a tradition in the Kearns family. Thomas Kearns, the President of Meekins Financial Corporation in Hollywood, is an alumnus who attended school on an athletic scholarship in the '40s and is now a major benefactor for the University's Athletic Department. In fact, his generosity contributed to the



*Thomas and Patricia Kearns*

University's Sports Hall of Fame, and he serves as a member of its Board of Trustees.

Until her involvement with Bascom Palmer, Mrs. Kearns, who describes herself as "a fourth generation Texan (and proud of it) and, now, a new Floridian of four years," devoted most of her time to charitable activities related to Covenant House and Hospice Hundred, a

fund raising auxiliary of Hospice Care of Broward County.

"I believe that 'to whom much is given, much is expected,'" Mrs. Kearns says, "and in that I am so privileged, I want to share what I can with others." Obviously, both Mr. and Mrs. Kearns live by that philosophy, and Bascom Palmer and the University of Miami are deeply appreciative.