

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute® | University of Miami Health System



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Images

AI

Artificial Intelligence
and Your Sight

Global Expertise

Bascom Palmer Ranked
No. 1 in USA Again

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute's mission is to enhance the quality of life by improving sight, preventing blindness, and advancing ophthalmic knowledge through compassionate patient care and innovative vision research.

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Bascom Palmer members of Iron Arrow (left to right): Drs. Chris Alabiad, Eduardo Alfonso, Richard Lee, Steven Gedde, Jean-Marie Parel, David Tse and Michael Gittelman. Not pictured are Drs. John Clarkson, Sanjoy Bhattacharya and alumnus Gordon Miller. 13

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Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute is a global leader in developing artificial intelligence (AI) systems for the diagnosis, treatment and management of vision diseases and disorders.

Our innovative Artificial Intelligence and Computer Augmented Vision Laboratory is developing personalized digital glasses to augment the vision of patients with sight-stealing conditions. Our scientists and clinicians are also developing artificial intelligence algorithms to analyze vast databases of digital images to diagnose eye diseases – a step that could revolutionize eye care in underserved communities around the world.

This issue of *Images* highlights many of the exciting ways we are putting AI to use in ophthalmology, turning yesterday's "gee-whiz" science fiction into today's sophisticated diagnostic, treatment and monitoring technology.

Of course, the development of AI systems and solutions would not be possible without the human intelligence and skills of our clinicians, scientists and educators. Whether treating a child's strabismus, an adolescent's traumatic injury or a senior's glaucoma, our clinicians are dedicated to protecting, preserving and restoring the natural gift of vision.

It is a credit to our entire team that two prestigious publications have once again ranked the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute No. 1 in the United States. For the 18th time, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Bascom Palmer the best eye hospital in the nation; and *Ophthalmology Times* named us the nation's No. 1 overall ophthalmology program and the best in clinical care and recognized our residency program as the country's finest.

As we begin a new decade, our dedicated team of clinicians, scientists and educators continues to focus on the future in keeping with our tradition of leadership in vision beyond 2020.



With the support of our generous donors, sponsors and industry partners, Bascom Palmer will continue to make life-changing discoveries in every field of ophthalmology. Thank you for helping to advance our mission.



Eduardo C. Alfonso, M.D.
Kathleen and Stanley J. Glaser Chair in Ophthalmology
Director, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute



Artificial Intelligence and Vision

Screening children for eye problems, diagnosing corneal and retina disorders and developing digital glasses for patients with limited vision are among Bascom Palmer's many artificial intelligence initiatives that are contributing to the future of vision care.

In the world of fashion, image is everything. The right look turns heads and captures the attention of social media influencers. At Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, images of the eye play an even more important role, helping clinicians diagnose, treat and manage diseases that affect vision.

Now, Bascom Palmer's physicians and scientists have teamed up to combine the power of artificial intelligence (AI) with advanced three-dimensional (3D) optical imaging to create the world's first autonomous artificial intelligence system for corneal tissues – a remarkable advance that could dramatically improve vision care around the globe.

"Artificial intelligence is creating a revolution in ophthalmology, and Bascom Palmer is in the forefront," said Mohamed Abou Shousha, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of clinical ophthalmology.

Abou Shousha, who holds secondary appointments in electrical and computer engineering and in biomedical engineering, leads a team of 15 clinicians, engineers, trainees, and doctoral students at Bascom Palmer's Artificial Intelligence and Computer Augmented Vision Laboratory, located within the

Institute's William L. and Evelyn F. McKnight Vision Research Center. The team has developed AI software that can analyze high-resolution optical coherence tomography (OCT) images and determine with exceptional accuracy whether the corneal tissues in the front of the eye are healthy or not.

Bascom Palmer's new AI system can provide accurate early diagnoses of vision disorders that change the shape and health of the cornea, such as keratoconus, Fuchs' dystrophy and eye infections. It can also better detect dry eye syndrome, a condition that affects an estimated one in eight U.S. adults but lacks an objective and accurate diagnostic technique.

"We are looking at a number of conditions on the corneal tissues and surface of the eye," said Sonia Yoo, M.D., a professor of ophthalmology and a specialist in corneal and external diseases. "Our goal is to take those OCT images, feed them into our diagnostic suite and use this leading-edge system in patient clinics. A trained technician can then use those images for highly sophisticated diagnoses, regardless of geographic location, which allows us to share Bascom Palmer's expertise globally."

Dr. Sonia Yoo





Dr. Mohamed Abu Shousha in a “visual obstacle course” designed to help patients with limited peripheral vision navigate successfully in a variety of settings using digital glasses developed in his laboratory.

Advanced Corneal Diagnostic Software

Bascom Palmer’s autonomous AI system incorporates three leading-edge technologies, beginning with advanced OCT imaging. Although OCT technology has been available for more than two decades, ophthalmologists have primarily focused on the retina and macula in the posterior part of the eye. “One reason is that there has been little ability to produce clinically relevant information from a basic cross-sectional image of the cornea,” said Abu Shousha.

To improve that capability, Abu Shousha developed Corneal Microlayer Tomography (C-MLT), an advanced OCT tool that provides 3D images of the individual layers of the cornea. “C-MLT is the only available diagnostic system that can show all layers of the cornea and permit easier recognition of findings that differ from normal conditions, which improves substantially upon existing methods for diagnosis of important corneal diseases,” he added.

Abou Shousha and Yoo have recruited more than 700 Bascom Palmer patients for a clinical study of using C-MLT technology. To date, they have obtained more than 200,000 images of different stages of eye disease as well as images of eyes with no disease.

After collecting that information, the data are fed into a powerful computer that uses machine learning protocols. Models using neural network algorithms

were created to build an autonomous AI system. “Any neural network needs to be taught, and it’s only as good as its training,” said Abu Shousha. “In this case, our AI system now has an accuracy of over 99 percent in diagnosing many corneal conditions.”

For instance, the AI system is able to recognize the early stages of keratoconus, a progressive eye disease in which the cornea thins and bulges to form a cone-like shape, leading to loss of vision. Because of the distorted shape of the cornea, individuals with keratoconus should not have refractive (LASIK) surgery. Currently, the standard of care is to screen every patient for keratoconus before LASIK surgery, and the AI system will permit accurate detection of keratoconus even in the early stage of development.

Bascom Palmer’s system can also quickly evaluate patients facing cataract surgery for Fuchs’ dystrophy, and forewarn the surgeon and the patient of a heightened risk of post-operative swelling of the cornea. In some cases of corneal swelling, a patient might need a corneal transplant – placing a tissue graft from a donor – to address the underlying condition, in addition to the cataract procedure.

In 2015, Bascom Palmer received a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop this screening technology also for detecting corneal graft rejection. “Using C-MLT imaging we are able to see graft rejection two months before it becomes

AI

apparent to an ophthalmologist,” said Abou Shousha. “That lets us treat the problem at an earlier stage with better patient outcomes.”

A Cost-Effective Device

Along with the C-MLT and AI application, Abou Shousha’s team is developing a cost-effective, high-performance OCT device powered by Bascom Palmer’s diagnostic software that can be used for patient examinations almost anywhere in the world.

With this equipment, a clinician could check an individual’s eyes by capturing images with the OCT device. Those images would be uploaded to the diagnostic suite – an application housed in a cloud-computing environment. The AI system would then send back the results to the clinician quickly, along with any recommendations for treatment and follow-up.

Currently, not every physician has the specialized experience to interpret OCT images and make a diagnosis, which is why automating the process and screening with a low-cost device and AI software is a game-changer for vision care.

“We are giving international vision care providers the ability to benefit from the expertise of our specialists at Bascom Palmer,” said Yoo. “It extends the reach of our corneal vision care to underserved and remote communities throughout the world.”



Dr. Darlene Miller

Identifying Pathogens

Along with detecting dry eye and corneal disorders, Bascom Palmer’s autonomous AI system may also lead to faster identification of microbes that infect the eye.

“It can take several days or longer to obtain results from cultures taken from a patient’s infected eye,” said Darlene Miller, D.H.Sc., M.P.H., research professor and technical director of Bascom

Palmer’s Ocular Microbiology Laboratory. “Infections by many microorganisms have the same presenting signs and symptoms, making it difficult to determine the right treatment.”

One of the most common conditions is a corneal ulcer (also known as keratitis), an infection of the cornea caused by trauma to the cornea or improper use of contact lenses. A prompt, accurate diagnosis is critical because keratitis can lead to a corneal scar or blindness if not treated appropriately. “Unfortunately, many clinical diagnoses are incorrect,” said Miller. “As a result, some patients take unnecessary antibiotics or the wrong medication for their eye conditions.”

Bascom Palmer’s researchers and clinicians are in the early stages of using AI to improve the diagnostic process. “We are gathering images and data, and building a neural network,” Miller said. “Our goal is to develop a mobile platform where clinicians around the world could take images of the cornea, upload them to our system and get diagnostic results with a high degree of certainty, long before the diagnosis and treatment would traditionally have begun.”

So far, the dataset includes images of the cornea of more than 1,000 patients with corneal ulcers, information about the microorganisms obtained from the microbiology laboratory, and clinical information from electronic health records (EHRs). Identities have been removed from the data to protect patient privacy. “Although a challenging project, it can be life-changing for patients, and a revolutionary advance in corneal ulcer care,” Miller said.

A Collaborative Approach

For Abou Shousha, the autonomous AI system is the culmination of 10 years of collaborative research and development which has produced 28 U.S. and international patents to date. “We have a core multidisciplinary group at the University of Miami evaluating evolving applications of this

“With Bascom Palmer’s physicians and scientists collaborating with others around the world, there is an even more robust set of geographic, ethnic, and socioeconomic data to power the algorithm. It is Bascom Palmer’s commitment to unite the world and help patients through technology.”

— Dr. Ranya Habash

technology,” he said. “This work involves colleagues from the biomedical and the electrical & computer engineering departments, collaborating with Bascom Palmer’s scientists and physicians.”

While the AI system is well on its way to advancing the diagnosis and care of diseases that affect vision, it has other potential medical applications as well. For instance, one of the early signs of rejection in kidney, lung or heart transplants is a thickening of the endothelial cells that line the interior surface of the patient’s blood vessels.

Currently, physicians typically insert a needle into a transplanted organ to capture those vascular endothelial cells and check for rejection. Rejection of a corneal transplant can be determined by visualizing the endothelial cells of the transparent cornea by OCT and AI technology. It is hoped to find a way to apply the AI technology to the vascular endothelium of organ transplants.

This is just one of the many exciting research programs at Bascom Palmer that benefit from grants and private philanthropy, Abou Shousha added.

“There is real value in our collaborative approach to vision research. It’s one of the main reasons that Bascom Palmer will continue to make lasting contributions to the field of vision.”

Many of Bascom Palmer physicians and scientists are applying machine learning and artificial intelligence in their efforts to improve vision care. “AI is now woven into the fabric of our diagnostic, treatment and research programs,” said Eduardo C. Alfonso, M.D., director of Bascom Palmer.

Swarup Swaminathan, M.D., assistant professor of clinical ophthalmology, is looking to expand the use of artificial intelligence in the diagnosis and monitoring of glaucomatous disease, as are other glaucoma specialists at Bascom Palmer.

Richard Lee, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of ophthalmology, is using advanced ocular imaging



technologies with AI to assess glaucoma risk and to detect glaucoma progression. In conjunction with Anna K. Junk, M.D., professor of clinical ophthalmology, and Sanjoy K. Bhattacharya, Ph.D., professor of ophthalmology, Lee is seeking to advance understanding of the pathophysiology of pseudoexfoliation glaucoma to develop directed anti-glaucoma therapy.

Partnering with Microsoft to Diagnose Global Vision Problems

When Lilian Lee-Ferland was diagnosed with glaucoma, she wanted to know whether her vision would deteriorate quickly, slowly, or at all. Fortunately, she came to Ranya Habash, M.D., medical director of technology innovation and an assistant professor of clinical ophthalmology, who is leading the Institute’s partnership with Microsoft to develop a worldwide screening and assessment system.

“We are using artificial intelligence to improve our diagnosis of serious eye problems such as glaucoma, using patient records from Bascom Palmer and other sites around the world,” said Habash. “Through machine learning, we are teaching Microsoft’s AI application to recognize glaucoma, macular



degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, melanoma, and myopia, just as an experienced ophthalmologist would.”

“Our algorithm integrates data like Lilian’s age, family history, eye pressures, visual fields, and optical coherence tomography to give a real-time prediction of her glaucoma risk. This is a far more personalized, accurate, and customizable approach to medicine.”

“I feel more confident about my future, thanks to this new technology,” Lee-Ferland said.

A Global Consortium

In 2016, Bascom Palmer and Microsoft co-founded a global consortium called the Microsoft Cloud+AI Network for Eyecare, launched in collaboration with several of the largest eye institutes in the world. The goal was to use artificial intelligence to diagnose, to prevent blindness, and to deliver eye care services worldwide through remote diagnostic capabilities and telemedicine services. “Our focus was to develop algorithms that identify various eye diseases on a global scale, so early treatment can prevent vision loss,” said Habash.

Artificial intelligence can make these associations and integrate data within seconds or minutes, while it would take humans years to collect those data and identify patterns within them. While research papers typically draw on findings from 25 to 30 patients, AI-powered technology can analyze the data on millions of patients at one time.

In the first two years of the project, data and images from the electronic health records system were used for machine learning, powered by Microsoft’s Azure platform. The first development was for predicting and tracking the progression of refractive errors, such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism in children. “Uncorrected refractive errors are a leading cause of blindness in the world. It’s incredible that one of the world’s leading causes of blindness can be

prevented if a child simply has a pair of glasses,” said Habash. Easily treated refractive vision problems can make it difficult for children to learn in school and hamper their ability to enjoy sports and other outdoor activities.

Habash presented this myopia model at HIMSS 2018, one of the world’s largest health IT conferences, alongside Microsoft Corporate Vice President Anil Bhansali and Raghu Gullapalli, executive director of emerging technologies at LV Prasad Eye Institute in India. Afterwards, the Indian state of Telangana, with more than 35 million people, agreed to screen children routinely for visual impairments using AI.

Diagnosing Retinal Diseases

Diseases such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy steal vision. They also add to the nation’s burden of healthcare costs, which makes early diagnosis a national imperative. However, there is limited access to vision screening and care.

“This motivated our team to develop an AI algorithm for classifying and diagnosing retinal diseases by using a neural network and a large data set of more than 86,000 images,” said Habash.

Harry W. Flynn, Jr., M.D., the J. Donald M. Gass Chair in Ophthalmology, worked with Habash in labeling the retinal images in order to train the machine learning system. “It is exciting bringing AI into our clinical retinal practices and could be a dramatic step forward in worldwide screening procedures,” he said.

Flynn added that early detection of retinal diseases results in prompt referrals to ophthalmologists. “The combined use of telemedicine and AI will allow application of earlier and better treatment of patients with vitreoretinal disease.”

Retina specialist Luis J. Haddock, M.D., an assistant professor of clinical ophthalmology, is also exploring innovative surgical and diagnostics technology for retinal diseases using artificial intelligence.

“AI is now woven into the fabric of Bascom Palmer’s diagnostic, treatment, and research programs.”

— Dr. Eduardo Alfonso

A Breakthrough Machine Learning Algorithm

Most recently, Habash is working with Microsoft’s Cloud+AI for Healthcare team to develop screening algorithms for other eye diseases including age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and ocular melanoma. “We’ve recently made a huge breakthrough, developing an algorithm that detects several retinal diseases with 88 percent accuracy – better than most eye care providers,” Habash said. “We’ve demonstrated that prediction of multiple retinal diseases can be achieved on a single model with high accuracy. That’s a game-changer.”

According to the World Health Organization, at least 2.2 billion people worldwide have blindness or visual impairment, at least 1 billion of whom could be treated to reduce vision loss. “Retinal diseases such as macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy are insidious because patients don’t see a problem until damage has been done. This also presents a tremendous healthcare cost to society,” Habash said. “The economic burden of eye disorders and vision loss in the United States is \$139 billion and increasing each year, which is why automated AI screening for early diagnosis and treatment is critical.” According to Habash, limited access to healthcare, rising medical costs, lack of insurance or transportation, and other financial and personal constraints restrict early diagnosis of eye disease.

Using Bascom Palmer’s Multi-Disease Retinal Algorithm, Powered by Microsoft Cloud+AI Platform, patients can be screened on a large scale for very little expense, since the diagnosis is generated by the AI algorithm rather than an ophthalmologist. “What makes our software unique is that it can diagnose several retinal diseases at once, including the severity of those diseases, and can be used on any device ubiquitously,” said Habash. “I foresee our technology on any device, in every healthcare clinic, anywhere in the world. That’s how we can help the most people.”

Currently, Habash and the Microsoft team are working through the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) submission process to achieve Breakthrough Device Designation. Breakthrough designation indicates that the FDA views the algorithm as a potential solution for an unmet medical need, which helps accelerate their regulatory review process. Habash envisions the algorithm will enhance and not replace the doctor-patient relationship. Since widespread screening is fast, accurate, and inexpensive, patients could gain access at local eye clinics, primary care offices, or even a neighborhood pharmacy. “Imagine walking into your local Walgreens or CVS where you are able to check your blood pressure at one kiosk, and have a retinal scan at another. The scan could show, for example: ‘your photos suggest moderate macular degeneration. Please see your ophthalmologist in the next three weeks.’ This allows patients to become proactive and for doctors to provide treatment in a timely manner.”

The project’s next algorithms will focus on Alzheimer’s disease and retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). Researchers have found amyloid plaques in the brains of patients with Alzheimer’s disease. Because the same plaques can be identified on the inner surface of the retina using optical coherence tomography (OCT), an AI algorithm for the OCT scans could serve as a screening tool for dementias. As for ROP, access to pediatric ophthalmologists who screen for this disease can be sparse. According to Habash, “using an algorithm to screen automatically from the neonatal unit would help us treat infants in time to save their vision.”

Now that the foundation has been set, Habash and her Microsoft colleagues are inviting other institutions to join the growing network. “With Bascom Palmer’s physicians and scientists collaborating with others around the world, there’s an even more robust set of geographic, ethnic,



Dr. Harry Flynn, Jr.



AI



Normal vision



This patient with limited peripheral vision cannot see the child in the cart.



Using digital glasses, the child can now be seen.

and socioeconomic data to power the algorithm. It's Bascom Palmer's commitment to unite the world and help patients through technology," said Habash. This collaboration includes academic institutions, pharmaceutical companies, device manufacturers, electronic medical records vendors, and other technology companies. "The Microsoft Cloud+AI Network for Healthcare is one of the biggest research initiatives in history," Habash said. "We are proud that Bascom Palmer is paving the way for better vision care around the world."

Developing Digital Glasses to Augment Patients' Vision

In Bascom Palmer's Artificial Intelligence and Computer Augmented Vision Laboratory, researchers are taking the gift of sight into the future with digital glasses that can expand a patient's limited field of vision or correct double vision. Now in the development stage, this revolutionary technology could open the door to a higher quality of life for patients with severe vision loss.

"It was too stressful for me to enjoy going shopping because I was always worried about bumping into people," said a Bascom Palmer patient with limited peripheral vision who tried out the digital glasses. "Soon, I'll be able to go to crowded places and see who's next to me."

Sharing their clinical and scientific knowledge, Abou Shousha's collaborative AI team is building an

augmented vision system straight out of "Star Trek." It combines an augmented reality headset that contains tiny cameras and a video display with an advanced software algorithm that quantifies and compensates for visual field and double vision impairments.

First, the camera captures a wide-angle image of the environment in front of the patient. The image is uploaded to a cloud computing system where an AI application makes adjustments to compensate for lost vision and sends the image back to the patient in real time. Based on each user's unique vision profile, the software displays customized corrective images of the scene being viewed through the digital glasses in real time, enhancing the user's vision and awareness of the surrounding environment. As the patient moves around, the AI software automatically remaps and redisplay images being viewed by the patient in order to supplement the intact visual field.

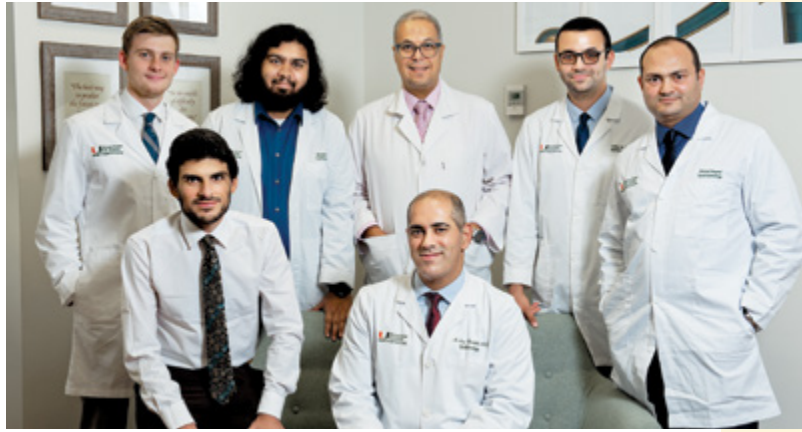
"Our patients' desire for greater safety and mobility, as well as restoring their ability to watch TV or read in comfort, are important benefits they have experienced from our augmented vision program," said Abou Shousha.

A New Dimension in Visual Aids

Bascom Palmer's vision augmentation software application takes visual aids that are currently available into a new dimension. Unlike some other magnifying devices, prisms and special lenses, digital glasses can be worn anywhere for several hours at a time in order to augment an individual's vision.

"We trained our system using a database with visual field data from thousands of patients with glaucoma, stroke, or retinitis pigmentosa – diseases that decrease the field of vision," said Abou Shousha. "It is the only available method to autonomously detect and correct the user's vision defects using AI algorithms trained on real patients."

In an ongoing clinical trial at Bascom Palmer, more than 100 patients affected by these diseases have tested the diagnostic and augmented vision



Members of the Artificial Intelligence and Computer Augmented Vision Laboratory

abilities of the digital glasses. A prototype version was able to augment peripheral object awareness in 78 percent of the patients. It also improved mobility by facilitating the identification of moving objects outside the reduced field of vision.

After using the prototype digital glasses on a visual “obstacle course” in the laboratory, a patient said, “I wasn’t able to throw a football with my grandkids because the ball would disappear in my blind spots.” Another patient, William Benson, liked the comfort of the lightweight headset, adding he was excited to retain much of his peripheral vision. Looking ahead, patient Thomas Wilson said, “It gives me hope that these digital glasses will help all the younger people who are losing their vision to disease.”

A Worldwide Need

Along with augmenting a patient’s lost vision, the AI application being developed at Bascom Palmer also includes powerful new capabilities for diagnosing, screening and monitoring the progression of vision-stealing eye diseases.

Throughout the world, more than 500 million people are losing their central or peripheral vision from different diseases and disorders. Glaucoma and retinitis pigmentosa are two diseases that lead to a loss of peripheral vision, which makes it difficult to see objects to the side, above, or below a person’s central vision.

Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of loss of central vision among people age 50 and older. Another serious condition is diabetic retinopathy, which affects vision in about a third of individuals with diabetes. Additionally, millions of stroke patients also have irreversible visual impairments.

Bascom Palmer vision diagnostic and correction algorithms coupled with the Magic Leap 1 spatial computer allow autonomous diagnosis and correction of vision defects.

A Powerful Diagnostic Capability

“Our digital glasses incorporate an automatic self-administered diagnostic testing capability including a simpler application for tracking visual field impairments,” said Abou Shousha. “Instead of the traditional visual field diagnostic test in which the patient clicks a handheld button when seeing a flash of light, our application tracks the movements of the eye to look at the light. It is therefore faster and more accurate.”

Abou Shousha said the diagnostic software in the digital glasses can measure a visual field of 100 degrees, substantially better than the current standard of care. “Clinical studies conducted at Bascom Palmer have demonstrated that our autonomous visual field test is accurate, reproducible, and easier to use than existing technology,” he said. “With 8 million visual field tests conducted annually, this new screening and diagnostic application could be a valuable addition to the market.”

Advancing Vision Technology

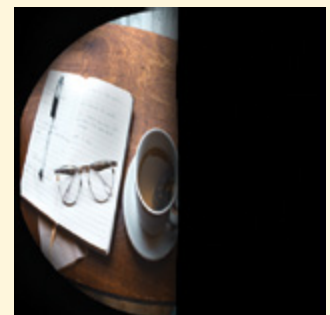
“It’s very rewarding to surprise our patients by making an unexpected contribution to their lives,” said Abou Shousha. “Being able to help our patients is why we are all here at Bascom Palmer.” ■



Normal vision



This patient sees only part of what is in front of him and cannot see the cup on the right.



Using digital glasses, the patient can now see the cup.



Bascom Palmer Ranked No.1 Again!

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute has received top honors in two prestigious national rankings.

U.S. News & World Report once again ranked Bascom Palmer as the nation's **Best in Ophthalmology** in its 2020 Best Hospitals edition. This year marks the 18th time that Bascom Palmer has received the No. 1 ranking since the publication began surveying U.S. physicians for its annual "Best Hospitals" rankings 30 years ago.

Bascom Palmer is also named the **No. 1 Overall Ophthalmology Program, First in Clinical Care**, and **Best Ophthalmic Residency Program** in the United States by *Ophthalmology Times*, a national publication focused on cutting-edge advancement in vision care.

Bascom Palmer has long been at the forefront of innovation in ophthalmology, advancing vision research and expanding knowledge about eye diseases and disorders at a rapid rate. The Institute's scientists and researchers work closely with its clinicians to translate their findings into leading-edge patient care. ■



BEST HOSPITALS FOR OPHTHALMOLOGY		
Rank	Hospital	Reputation (%)
1	Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami, Miami	52.3
2	Wills Eye Hospital, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia	47.5
3	Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore	36.8
4	Mass. Eye and Ear Infirmary, Massachusetts Gen. Hosp., Boston	24.2
5	Stein and Doheny Eye Institutes, UCLA Medical Ctr., Los Angeles	22.6
6	University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City	14.0
7	Duke University Hospital, Durham	13.0
8	Kellogg Eye Center, Michigan Medicine, Ann Arbor	9.3
9	UCSF Medical Center, San Francisco	8.3
10	Cole Eye Institute, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland	8.2
11	USC Roski Eye Institute, Los Angeles	6.6
12	New York Eye and Ear Infirmary of Mount Sinai, New York	6.5

Ranked by U.S. News & World Report 2019-2020

“We are honored to be recognized as the best in the nation for the high quality of care that our patients receive each time they visit Bascom Palmer. Bascom Palmer provides a forum where key issues and challenges facing ophthalmology are addressed, where new technology is unveiled, and where our doctors come together to teach the nation’s best and brightest residents the best care for their patients.”

– Eduardo C. Alfonso, M.D.



Sheryl Stephenson, group editorial director, *Ophthalmology Times*, (center), presents Dr. Steven Gedde, residency program director and vice chair of education (left), and Dr. Vittorio Porciatti, director and vice chair of research (right), the Best Overall Program award.

\$9.12 Million NEI Grant

Research to develop a new drug for protecting premature infants from blinding eye disease

Wei Li, Ph.D., has been awarded a five-year, \$9.12 million R24 grant from the National Eye Institute (NEI) to develop a new drug that would protect infants from a potentially blinding eye disorder known as retinopathy of prematurity (ROP).

ROP primarily affects premature infants weighing about 2 ¾ pounds or born before 31 weeks of gestation. Approximately 28,000 infants in the United States each year fall into this category. Of these, approximately 14,000-16,000 are affected by some degree of ROP, in which disrupted development of the blood vessels in the eye spreads throughout the retina, causing scarring and bleeding. While most of these children do not need treatment, about 1,100-1,500 infants annually develop ROP that requires medical treatment, and 400-600 infants each year in the U.S. become legally blind from the disease.

The clinical sign of ROP is the abnormal and disorganized growth of retinal blood vessels, called pathological angiogenesis, which may cause bleeding, retinal detachment, and too often blindness. Preterm infants require normal and organized blood vessel formation or physiological angiogenesis to support retinal development. Several drugs, called angiogenesis inhibitors or blockers, have been developed and approved to treat angiogenic diseases in adult retinas. However, compared to adults with fully developed retina, ROP infants with developing retina and blood vessels are particularly susceptible to side effects caused by these non-selective angiogenesis inhibitors. As a result, there is currently no FDA-approved drug therapy for ROP, which is presently treated with laser therapy to “burn away” the periphery of the retina. This therapy destroys the peripheral retina to save the central retina, but has limited efficacy and does not address the underlying cause of abnormal retinal blood vessel growth.

Li, a professor of ophthalmology, invented a new technology to screen systematically for disease-restricted or selective drug targets. Using this technology, he discovered a protein called secretogranin III (Scg3) which selectively attacks pathological angiogenesis in ROP but does not affect physiological angiogenesis in the developing retina of preterm infants. He then generated a therapeutic antibody to inhibit Scg3 function specifically. This anti-Scg3

antibody is a prototype of the next generation angiogenesis blockers that can selectively inhibit pathological, but not physiological, angiogenesis. As a result, the antibody will alleviate ROP but not cause side effects on normal developing retina.

This NIH R24 grant will support the work to further develop this humanized antibody for targeted therapy of ROP with minimal side effects. In the next five years, Li will perform additional studies to analyze the therapeutic efficacy and safety of this humanized antibody in various experimental models of ROP, strictly following FDA guidelines. At the end of the project, he will summarize the results in an application to the FDA for clinical trials.

A major focus of Li’s research is the development of disease-selective angiogenesis blockers also for several other eye diseases, including diabetic macular edema, proliferative diabetic retinopathy, wet age-related macular degeneration, and cancers of the eye, in addition to retinopathy of prematurity.

“Results from this study will be significant because anti-Scg3 antibody has the potential to become an important drug for ROP therapy,” said Vittorio Porciatti, D.Sc., the James L. Knight Professor of Ophthalmology and director of research at Bascom Palmer.

NEI at National Institutes of Health usually funds only one or two R24 grants each year to support the development of novel therapies and devices for the treatment of eye diseases. Typically, an R24 grant requires a multidisciplinary team of scientists and clinicians to focus on generating preclinical data that will lead to the development of new drugs or medical devices for eye disease therapy. The Li team includes more than 10 scientists and clinicians from the University of Miami, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine, University of North Texas, and Everglades Biopharma, LLC. Keith A. Webster, Ph.D., UM professor emeritus, is a co-principal investigator, and Audina M. Berrocal, M.D., a Bascom Palmer professor of clinical ophthalmology and retinal specialist with expertise in retinopathy of prematurity, is a co-investigator. ■



Dr. Wei Li

Training Physicians in Ghana



Dr. Thomas Johnson with his trainee, Dr. Edith Dogbe, in Accra, Ghana

Bascom Palmer oculoplastic and reconstructive specialist **THOMAS E. JOHNSON, M.D.**, has traveled on medical missions throughout the world, treating patients with complex cases and training local vision care physicians. Recently, he spent a week in Ghana as part of the volunteer team with ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital, a converted DC-10 aircraft that transports an operating room and training facility to developing countries.

Working side-by-side with physicians in the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra, the capital of the West African nation, Johnson screened about 50 people and then treated 10 patients with complex conditions.

“One of our most memorable patients was a young girl with a huge benign tumor that was pushing her eyeball forward,” he said. “Without surgery, she would have lost her vision. But we were able to remove the whole tumor surgically, leaving her with a normal

eye. Her parents were extremely happy and very grateful for her care.”

Along with demonstrating the advanced technology in the ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital, Johnson spent several days with the Accra doctors in their own hospital. “As part of the training, it’s important to show them what can be done in their own setting,” he said. “We did surgery for several orbital tumors and had several patients that needed eyelid surgery and reconstruction.”

In addition to Johnson, the ORBIS medical team included a cataract surgeon from Harvard University and a pediatric ophthalmologist from San Diego. “I have been on missions to Ethiopia and Cameroon in recent years,” Johnson said. “I enjoy meeting the people and learning the culture, as well as educating the physicians.”

Johnson added that an oculoplastics specialist in Cameroon was inspired by the ORBIS 2017 mission, and is now training in a fellowship in Canada. “It is very gratifying to change lives indirectly through education as well as directly by performing surgery,” he said. “Our team has a powerful impact on improving vision care in Africa and beyond.” ■

Congratulations to fellows **JONATHAN F. RUSSELL, M.D., PH.D.**; **NATHAN L. SCOTT, M.D.**; **M.P.P.**, **ADAM L. ROTHMAN, M.D.**; and **J. DANIEL DIAZ, M.D.**, for being awarded Heed Fellowships for 2019-2020. A Heed Fellowship, presented by the Heed Ophthalmic Foundation and the Society of Heed Fellows, is one of the most prestigious honors a post-graduate trainee

in ophthalmology can receive. Of the 24 awards given nationally this year, Bascom Palmer’s doctors received four. Drs. Russell and Scott are currently completing their fellowships in retina and will become chief residents later this year. Diaz and Rothman are fellows – Diaz in retina, Rothman in glaucoma.



Drs. Adam Rothman, Nathan Scott, Jonathan Russell, Nicolas Yannuzzi, J. Daniel Diaz

Bascom Palmer’s ophthalmology residents and fellows have a long and impressive history of receiving Heed Fellowship awards. Current chief resident, **NICOLAS YANNUZZI, M.D.**, received a Heed Fellowship last year. Ten current faculty members also received the award during their ophthalmology training: **EDUARDO C. ALFONSO, M.D.**; **HILDA CAPO, M.D.**; **VICTORIA CHANG, M.D.**; **ANAT GALOR, M.D.**; **DAVID S. GREENFIELD, M.D.**; **J. WILLIAM HARBOUR, M.D.**; **BYRON L. LAM, M.D.**; **PHILIP J. ROSENFELD, M.D., PH.D.**; **SWARUP S. SWAMINATHAN, M.D.**; and **WILLIAM E. SMIDDY, M.D.**

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants



Dr. Harry Flynn, Jr.

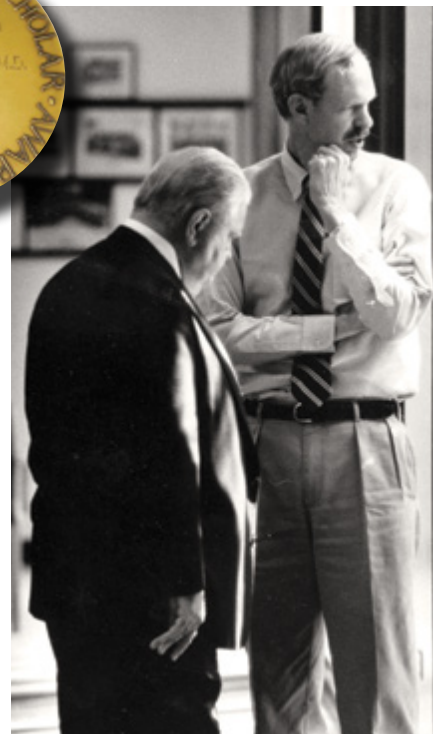
Julio Frenk, University of Miami President and Tomas A. Salerno, chair of the Faculty Senate honored **HARRY W. FLYNN, JR., M.D.**, with the University's **2019 Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award**. Flynn, the J. Donald M. Gass Distinguished Chair in Ophthalmology, has performed clinical care, teaching and research at Bascom Palmer and the University of Miami for more than 40 years. He is recognized as a world leader in the care of patients with vitreoretinal diseases, such as retinal detachment, diabetic retinopathy, and severe infections of the eye.

Flynn has helped train hundreds of ophthalmology residents and retina fellows who now practice all over the world, including several ophthalmology chairs at other universities. He is author or co-author of more than 571 peer-reviewed

publications, 106 book chapters and eight textbooks, and he has delivered 31 named lectures around the world.

Stephen G. Schwartz, M.D., professor of clinical ophthalmology and medical director of Bascom Palmer at Naples introduced Flynn as an early mentor. "If not for him, I wouldn't be where I am at Bascom Palmer," said Schwartz. "And, hundreds of others could tell you the same thing."

At the award ceremony, Flynn said: "I stand on the shoulders of giants," acknowledging Bascom H. Palmer, M.D., who performed the first-ever corneal transplant in Florida, and Edward W.D. Norton, M.D., his mentor who founded the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. Flynn ended his remarks with "If you can enjoy what you do and have a positive impact, it doesn't get any better." ■



Drs. Edward Norton and Harry Flynn, Jr.



STEVEN GEDDE, M.D., was recently inducted into Iron Arrow, the University of Miami's highest honor society. Based upon Seminole Indian tradition, Iron Arrow recognizes those in the University community who exemplify five key qualities: leadership,

character, humility, scholarship, and love of alma mater. A glaucoma specialist, Gedde is Bascom Palmer's vice chair of education and the residency program director. He holds the John G. Clarkson Chair in Ophthalmology.

Congratulations to the **University of Miami Miller School of Medicine's Ophthalmology Interest Club** for receiving the Toppel Award for Student Group of the Year. This university-wide award is given annually to a student organization for creating career and mentorship opportunities, providing service to the community, and helping students become leaders within their respective fields. Under the leadership of Bascom Palmer's faculty mentors, **RICHARD K. LEE, M.D., PH. D.** and **CHRISFOUAD ALABIAD, M.D.**, the ophthalmology interest group participates in community health fairs, eye screenings, free eyeglass clinics, and international missions. Elaine Han and John Lee, the two medical student co-directors of this student-run organization, received the award at the recognition ceremony.

Faculty Promotions

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute

takes great pleasure in announcing the promotion and tenure decisions of seven faculty members. These men and women represent exceptional leadership and excellence in eye care, vision research, and ophthalmology education at Bascom Palmer, the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, and beyond.



NINEL GREGORI, M.D., chief of ophthalmology at the Miami Veterans Affairs Medical Center (Miami VA), has been promoted to **Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology**. The Miami VA is an integral part of Bascom Palmer's educational program, and under Gregori's direction, Bascom

Palmer's residents and fellows see more than 25,000 patients each year and perform hundreds of surgeries, laser procedures and intravitreal injections. A retina and vitreous diseases specialist, Gregori has been a member of the Bascom Palmer faculty since 2007. She received a medical degree from the University of Utah School of Medicine, after which she undertook an ophthalmology residency and a fellowship in vitreoretinal diseases and surgery at Bascom Palmer. Her clinical expertise includes vitreoretinal diseases and surgery as well as complex cataract surgery. She is a leader in Bascom Palmer's extensive gene therapy program and has been involved in numerous clinical trials, research studies and surgical procedures involving gene therapy, retinal prosthesis, and stem cell derived retinal pigment epithelial cell transplantation for inherited retinal diseases.



ABIGAIL S. HACKAM, PH.D., whose laboratory is located within Bascom Palmer's Evelyn F. and William L. McKnight Vision Research Center, has been promoted to **Professor of Ophthalmology**.

The research in Hackam's laboratory encompasses the fields of genetics and ophthalmology. Her focus is on understanding signaling mechanisms that contribute to retinal degeneration and optic nerve regrowth, through the use of cellular, molecular and bioinformatics analyses. She received a bachelor of science degree in biology from the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, followed by a doctor of philosophy degree in human genetics at the Johns Hopkins University. She then completed two post-doctoral fellowships: the first in medical genetics at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, and the second in ophthalmology at the Johns Hopkins University. She joined the Bascom Palmer faculty in 2003.



ANNA K. JUNK, M.D., has been promoted to **Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology**. Her expertise in glaucoma and cataract surgery places her clinically at the forefront of minimally invasive glaucoma surgery (MIGS). MIGS offers an opportunity to patients with mild to moderate

glaucoma to decrease their medication burden without the surgical risks of traditional glaucoma procedures. Junk has been an integral part of the Bascom Palmer residency program, teaching cataract surgery at the Miami VA since joining the Bascom Palmer faculty in 2006. Junk's research interests include the pathogenic mechanisms of glaucoma, surgical treatment, and radiation and steroid effects on the lens and eye. A native of Germany, she received a medical degree and trained in ophthalmology at the Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich. She then completed a residency in ophthalmology and a fellowship in ophthalmic pathology at the Montefiore Medical Center at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York and a glaucoma fellowship at Wills Eye Hospital at Jefferson College of Medicine. She sees patients at Bascom Palmer in Miami and the Miami VA.



WENDY W. LEE, M.D., M.S., a specialist in ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery, as well as aesthetic and cosmetic ophthalmic surgery, has been promoted to **Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology**. Lee treats a broad spectrum of oculoplastic disorders,

including the diagnosis and treatment of skin cancers of the eyelids, trauma involving the eyelids and orbit, and aesthetic services – blepharoplasty of the upper and lower lids, brow and forehead lifts, and non-surgical cosmetic enhancements including botulinum toxin treatments, dermal fillers and photorejuvenation. She received a medical degree from Tulane University and a master of science degree in physiology from Georgetown University. Lee completed a residency in ophthalmology at Tulane, followed by a fellowship in ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery at Bascom Palmer. She joined the faculty in 2004, and also holds a secondary appointment in the department of dermatology. She is available for consultation at Bascom Palmer in Miami.



WEI LI, PH.D., a Bascom Palmer scientist known for his innovative research, has been promoted to **Professor of Ophthalmology** and awarded tenure. His research within Bascom Palmer's Ocular Vascular Disease Laboratory focuses on developing new therapies and disease-

selective angiogenesis blockers for eye diseases. Li was recently awarded a five-year, \$9.12 million R24 grant from the National Eye Institute to develop a new drug that would protect infants from potentially blinding eye disorders due to retinopathy of prematurity. Having received a bachelor of science degree in pharmaceutical science and a master of science degree in pharmacology from Zhejiang University School of Medicine in China, Li then received a doctorate in pharmacology from the University of Nebraska and completed post-doctoral work in the same field at Yale University School of Medicine. He joined the faculty of Bascom Palmer in 2002.



MOHAMED ABOU SHOUSHA, M.D., PH.D., FRCS, has been promoted to **Associate Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology**. A cornea specialist, Abou Shousha is available for consultation on corneal and external diseases, including infection disease and keratoconus.

He also performs surgery to remove cataracts and implant of intraocular lenses. He received a bachelor's degree in medicine and surgery and a master's degree in ophthalmology from Alexandria University, Egypt. He then received a doctoral degree of ophthalmology from the Supreme Council of Universities - Egypt. Abou Shousha completed an ophthalmic residency at Saint Louis University School of Medicine; a fellowship at the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Glasgow University, United Kingdom; and research and clinical fellowships in corneal and external diseases at Bascom Palmer. In addition to secondary appointments in the department of electrical & computer engineering, and the department of biomedical engineering, he is director of Bascom Palmer's Artificial Intelligence and Computer Augmented Vision Laboratory. His research interests include new technologies for digital visual aids and early diagnosis and treatment of corneal graft rejection, keratoconus, dry eye, ocular surface diseases, and pediatric and adolescent corneal transplants. Abou Shousha joined the faculty in 2015 and sees patients at Bascom Palmer in Miami.



HONG JIANG, M.D., PH.D., has been promoted to **Associate Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology and Neurology**. She earned a medical degree at Zhejiang University School of Medicine in China and a doctorate in neuroscience at the University of Hong Kong. She completed

a neurology residency at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and then completed two fellowships prior to joining the faculty in 2011: the first in medical genetics and neuroscience at the University of Rochester and the second in neuro-ophthalmology at Bascom Palmer. She conducts research into advanced structural and functional ophthalmic imaging for the study of neurodegenerative diseases. Jiang is available for consultation at Bascom Palmer in Miami. ■

AWARDS AND HONORS



(left to right) AOI First Vice-President, Dr. Richard Abbott (Bascom Palmer fellow, 1978), with Dr. Richard Parrish and Dr. Marie-Jose Tassignon, AOI Treasurer

Congratulations to **RICHARD K. PARRISH, II, M.D.**, a dedicated scientist, educator, and world-renowned glaucoma specialist, for being inducted into the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis (AOI), the prestigious organization consisting of the world's top academic ophthalmologists. Induction into the AOI is one of the highest honors in the field of ophthalmology as the AOI limits active membership to only 70 members worldwide. Parrish is the editor in chief of the *American Journal of Ophthalmology* and his enviable academic career includes more than 100 peer-reviewed original scientific publications and many more chapters and abstracts. He served as the project chairman of the National Eye Institute's Fluorouracil Filtering Surgery Study, the first multicenter randomized clinical trial in glaucoma surgery in the US.



BEST DOCTORS IN AMERICA 2018-19

VITREORETINAL DISEASES

Thomas A. Albini, M.D. (M, P, PBG)
Audina M. Berrocal, M.D. (M, C, N)
Janet L. Davis, M.D. (M, P, PBG, N)
Yale L. Fisher, M.D. (PBG)
Harry W. Flynn, Jr., M.D. (M)
Jorge A. Fortun, M.D. (PBG, C)
Ninel Z. Gregori, M.D. (VA)
Jaclyn L. Kovach, M.D. (N)
Philip J. Rosenfeld, M.D., Ph.D. (M, PBG)
William E. Smiddy, M.D. (N, M, P, PBG)

CORNEAL AND EXTERNAL DISEASES

Eduardo C. Alfonso, M.D. (M)
Richard M. Awdeh, M.D. (M)
William W. Culbertson, M.D. (M)
Kendall Donaldson, M.D. (P)
Richard K. Forster, M.D.
Yunhee Lee, M.D.
Carol L. Karp, M.D. (M)
Terrence P. O'Brien, M.D. (PBG)
Lana Srur, M.D. (M)
Sonia Yoo, M.D. (M)

GLAUCOMA

Steven J. Gedde, M.D. (M)
Alana Grajewski, M.D. (M, N)
David S. Greenfield, M.D. (PBG)
Elizabeth Hodapp, M.D. (M)
Richard K. Parrish II, M.D. (M, C)

NEURO-OPHTHALMOLOGY

Norman J. Schatz, M.D.

OCULAR ONCOLOGY

J. William Harbour, M.D. (M, PBG)

OPHTHALMIC PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

Thomas E. Johnson, M.D. (M)
Wendy W. Lee, M.D., M.S. (M)
David T. Tse, M.D. (M, N)

PEDIATRIC OPHTHALMOLOGY

Hilda Capó, M.D. (M)
Craig A. McKeown, M.D. (M, PBG, N)

ANESTHESIOLOGY

Steven I. Gayer, M.D. (M)



VITREORETINAL DISEASES

Thomas A. Albini, M.D. (M, P, PBG)
Audina M. Berrocal, M.D. (M, C, N)
Janet L. Davis, M.D. (M, P, PBG, N)
Sander R. Dubovy, M.D. (M)
Harry W. Flynn, Jr., M.D. (M)
Jaclyn L. Kovach, M.D. (N)
Philip J. Rosenfeld, M.D., Ph.D. (M, PBG)
Stephen G. Schwartz, M.D. (N)
William E. Smiddy, M.D. (N, M, P, PBG)

CORNEAL AND EXTERNAL DISEASES

Eduardo C. Alfonso, M.D. (M)
William W. Culbertson, M.D. (M)
Kendall Donaldson, M.D. (P)
Anat Galor, M.D. (VA)
Carol L. Karp, M.D. (M)
Krishna S. Kishor, M.D. (PBG)
Ellen Koo, M.D. (PBG)
Sonia Yoo, M.D. (M)

GLAUCOMA

Steven J. Gedde, M.D. (M)
David S. Greenfield, M.D. (PBG)
Elizabeth Hodapp, M.D. (M)
Richard K. Parrish II, M.D. (M, C)

NEURO-OPHTHALMOLOGY

John R. Guy, M.D. (M)
Byron L. Lam, M.D. (M)

OCULAR ONCOLOGY

J. William Harbour, M.D. (M, PBG)

OPHTHALMIC PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

Chrisfouad R. Alabiad, M.D. (M, VA)
Thomas E. Johnson, M.D. (M)
Wendy W. Lee, M.D., M.S. (M)
David T. Tse, M.D. (M, N)
Sara T. Wester, M.D. (M, C)

PEDIATRIC OPHTHALMOLOGY

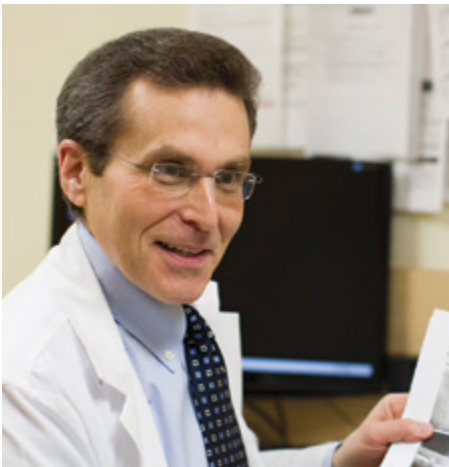
Hilda Capó, M.D. (M)
Kara M. Cavuoto, M.D. (M, PBG)
Craig A. McKeown, M.D. (M, PBG, N)

(M) Miami
(PBG) Palm Beach Gardens
(P) Plantation
(N) Naples
(C) Coral Gables/Lennar
(VA) Veterans Affairs

World's 50 Most Influential People in Ophthalmology

Three of Bascom Palmer Eye Institute's faculty members are among those honored as the Top 50 most influential figures in ophthalmology.

PHILIP J. ROSENFELD, M.D., PH.D., CAROL KARP, M.D. and **J. WILLIAM HARBOUR, M.D.**, were named to the Ophthalmologist Power List 2019.



Dr. Philip Rosenfeld

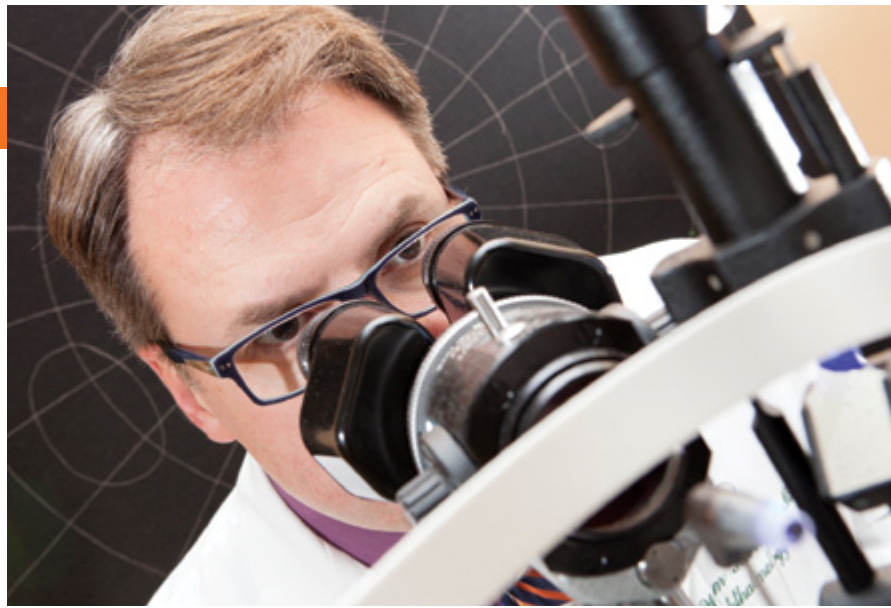
Rosenfeld pioneered the off-label use of Avastin (bevacizumab) to treat wet age-related macular degeneration, a leading cause of vision loss among the elderly. A specialist in vitreoretinal diseases, he said upon receiving the award, "On a daily basis, I am most proud of

my research team and their ability to tackle difficult problems, endure failure, understand what it takes to perform bulletproof science, and merge with exciting new data that makes a difference in the world." His discovery has saved vision in millions, has become the standard of care for retina specialists throughout the world for its effectiveness, and has saved health-care agencies billions of dollars. This is the fourth time Rosenfeld has been named to the Power List.

Karp, holder of the Richard K. Forster Chair in Ophthalmology, is expert in the management of ocular surface tumors and anterior segment surgery. In the late 1990s, she pioneered the use of interferon for the treatment of ocular surface squamous neoplasia. She designed protocols to



Dr. Carol Karp



Dr. J. William Harbour

study the drug in patients with ocular surface tumors, curing them of their cancer without surgery. Her work has helped to change the standard of care of these lesions.

Harbour, holder of the Dr. Mark J. Daily Endowed Chair, is one of the most highly respected ocular oncologists in the world. He discovered the key gene mutations in uveal melanoma and then invented a highly innovative prognostic test for the disease, based on gene expression profiling and computer machine learning. This test has become the standard of care throughout the United States and is considered the most accurate prognostic test available for ocular melanoma - benefiting thousands of patients every year.

Eduardo C. Alfonso, M.D., Bascom Palmer's director, was named to the Power List in 2014, 2016 and 2018. Also named in 2018 were Bascom Palmer professors of ophthalmology Harry W. Flynn, Jr., M.D.; Richard Parrish, II., M.D.; and Sonia Yoo, M.D. In 2017, Ranya Habash, M.D., assistant professor of clinical ophthalmology, was included in the Power List that featured ophthalmology's "Top 50 Rising Stars."

The members of this year's Power List are recognized in five categories: Champions for Change, Inventors, Emerging Leaders, Mentors and Surgical Pioneers. Each of Bascom Palmer's 2019 honorees are listed as inventors. Three other doctors on the 2019 Power List trained at Bascom Palmer: Alan Bird, M.D., (fellow, 1969), recognized as a mentor; inventor Steven Charles, M.D. (resident, 1973); and surgical pioneer Robert H. Osher, M.D., (resident, fellow, 1981). ■

AWARDS AND HONORS

Formula For Success



Dr. Sarah Wellik

Bascom Palmer continues at the helm of the Florida Society of Ophthalmology (FSO). Glaucoma specialist and cataract surgeon **SARAH WELLIK, M.D.**, is president-elect, to begin her term as president in June 2020. Bascom Palmer has enjoyed a long history of leadership within the FSO, beginning in 1948, when the Institute's namesake, **BASCOM H. PALMER, M.D.**, served as president of the organization. **STEPHEN G. SCHWARTZ, M.D., M.B.A.**, was president in 2010, as was **KRISHNA S. KISHOR, M.D.**, who served in 2017 and **KARA M. CAVUOTO, M.D.**, in 2018.

At the FSO's annual meeting, Kishor received the President's Recognition Award. **CAROL L. KARP, M.D.**, received the Shaler Richardson M.D. Service to Medicine Award, presented to a physician recognized for the greatest personal contribution to quality ophthalmic patient care.



Dr. Krishna Kishor

Bascom Palmer, the department of ophthalmology for the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, is pleased to announce the Miller School received a prestigious Unrestricted Grant in the amount of \$115,000 from **Research to Prevent Blindness (RPB)** to support the development and expansion of Bascom Palmer's renowned vision research program. Since RPB was founded in 1960, it has channeled more than \$373 million into eye research. As a result, RPB has been identified with nearly every major breakthrough in vision research in the last 60 years.

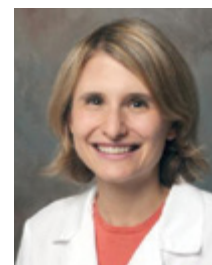
Additionally, congratulations to **JOHN YOHAN LEE**, a medical student doing research at Bascom Palmer, for receiving a prestigious Research to Prevent Blindness Medical Student Eye Research Fellowship. This fellowship will enable Lee to take a year off from medical school classes and devote that time to contribute to vision research. Lee's mentor is **DANIEL PELAEZ, PH.D.**, research assistant professor of ophthalmology and scientific director of the Nasser Al-Rashid Orbital Vision Research Center at Bascom Palmer.

Vision Beyond 2020

For more than five decades, Bascom Palmer has been making life-changing discoveries in every field of ophthalmology, including innovative treatments for glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, optic nerve disease and advanced surgical procedures. Each year, our talented physician-educators engage with their colleagues around the world at the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), the world's largest assembly of ophthalmologists. For the first time, Bascom Palmer had a 600-square-foot booth in the exhibition hall, where our faculty members and alumni held "Meet the Experts" educational forums and the Florida Lions Eye Bank hosted wet labs where doctors learned surgical skills using corneal tissue. This year, 70 Bascom Palmer's doctors and scientists presented 200 lectures, symposiums, courses, posters and papers during the 2019 meeting, including **HARRY W. FLYNN, JR. M.D.**, who presented the prestigious Jones/Smolin Lecture, "New Bugs, New Technologies and New Drugs: Infectious Endophthalmitis in the 21st Century."

Additionally, faculty members received these outstanding honors: **STEPHEN G. SCHWARTZ, M.D., M.B.A.**, received a Secretariat Award; **THOMAS A. ALBINI, M.D.**, a Senior Achievement Award; and **GUILLERMO AMESCUA, M.D.**, **JORGE FORTUN, M.D.**, **ANNA K. JUNK, M.D.**, and **WEN-HSIANG LEE, M.D., Ph.D.**, received Achievement Awards.

Bascom Palmer's physicians have been recognized by the American Academy of Ophthalmology for generously volunteering their time and expertise needed to create the *Academy's Basic Techniques of Ophthalmic Surgery, Third Edition*, an essential textbook for any ophthalmology resident or trainee. **STEVEN J. GEDDE, M.D.**, served as an author for the Glaucoma Surgery section; and **ANAT GALOR, M.D.**, and **SONIA YOO, M.D.**, served as authors for the Anterior Segment Surgery section of the valuable educational resource.



ANAT GALOR, M.D., has received the 2020 Ludwig von Sallmann Clinician-Scientist Award, presented by the ARVO Foundation for Eye Research. ARVO, the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, is the largest eye and vision research organization in the world and includes 12,000 researchers from more than 75 countries. Galor, whose current research includes investigation on ocular surface pain when patients present with dry eye symptoms, was selected for the award based on her accomplishments as a young clinician-scientist.

Welcome New Faculty

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute is pleased to announce the appointment of three new faculty members. With these physicians, the Institute has increased the size of its faculty to 73 physicians and 19 scientific investigators. This team of 92 is committed to continuing Bascom Palmer's 56-year history of advancing the practices of ophthalmology through innovations in therapeutics, diagnostics, and vision research.

ZUBAIR ANSARI, M.D., an assistant professor of clinical ophthalmology, is a comprehensive ophthalmologist with a specific focus on cataract



and complex anterior segment surgery. He completed his residency at Bascom Palmer and an academic global

ophthalmology fellowship at the Wills Eye Hospital, where he received both the Lee Family Community Service Award for his humanitarian efforts and the Fellow of the Year Award for exemplary teaching. Throughout his training and career, Ansari's primary focus has been global ophthalmology, working to combat the ever-growing prevalence of blindness and visual impairment in resource-poor communities. He coordinates volunteer experiences for residents training at Bascom Palmer and is currently working to build collaborations with NGOs, charitable institutions, physicians, and researchers in order to provide humanitarian, surgical, and medical aid around the world. He is available for consultation on general eye care and cataract at Bascom Palmer's locations in Miami and Coral Gables.

FLORENCE CABOT, M.D., is a cornea specialist who joins the faculty as an assistant professor of clinical ophthalmology. She received her medical degree from the Université Paul Sabatier followed by a residency in ophthalmology at the Université Antilles-Guyane, both in France. Prior to the completion of



her fellowship in cornea and external diseases at Bascom Palmer, Cabot served as a senior research

associate at Bascom Palmer's Ophthalmic Biophysics Center where she worked extensively on imaging accommodation using optical coherence tomography, presbyopia treatment, and the development of a remote-controlled robotized slit lamp to facilitate eye care in underserved areas. In 2019, she was selected as the Emerging Vision Scientist in the state of Florida and was invited to Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, to advocate for eye research. In addition to her continuous dedication to ophthalmic research, Cabot is available for consultation on cornea, cataract, and refractive surgery at Bascom Palmer in Miami.

SWARUP S. SWAMINATHAN, M.D., a *magna cum laude* graduate of Harvard Medical School's Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology program, joins the faculty as an assistant professor of clinical ophthalmology. Following the completion of his



residency in ophthalmology at Bascom Palmer, he completed a fellowship in glaucoma at the Duke Eye Center.

The recipient of the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Medical Research Fellowship, and Heed Ophthalmic Foundation Fellowship, Swaminathan has a keen interest in imaging research in glaucoma in order to assist ophthalmologists in improving their ability to diagnose glaucoma and identify patients at high risk for vision loss. Clinically, he is eager to work with patients to identify optimal treatment options, including minimally invasive glaucoma surgery. He is available for consultation regarding glaucoma and cataract at Bascom Palmer in Miami.

To schedule an appointment with a Bascom Palmer specialist, please call 1-888-845-0002 or visit bascompalmer.org.

Victory in Sight

Each year, the highly anticipated Evening of Vision Gala brings together elegance, excitement and support by the Palm Beach community in celebration of Bascom Palmer. “Victory in Sight,” the 38th annual gala, paid tribute to the Institute’s many achievements since its founding, as well as its exciting future as the premier eye care center in the nation. Guests also celebrated the Lois Pope Center for Retinal & Macular Degeneration Research recently opened on Bascom Palmer’s Palm Beach Gardens campus, ushering in a new era of collaborative, cutting-edge research on retinal diseases. The ribbon-cutting of the new center was held on January 15, 2020.

Lois Pope, who donated \$12 million for the Research Center at the 2018 Evening of Vision Gala, chaired the 2019 event. Honorary Chairs were James Borynack and Adolfo Zaralegui. Bascom Palmer extends its gratitude to Grand Gala Patrons Lois Pope, Frank Chopin and Kathleen Ford, Christy and Earl Powell, and the Caroline and Alitza Weiss Family Foundation. Special thanks to Gala Patrons Raysa and Alfonso Fanjul, Findlay Galleries Inc., Michelle and Howard Kessler, McNulty Charitable Foundation, Pietrafesa family, Ari Rifkin, Irvin Saltzman Family Foundation, and Suzy and Jack Welch. The 2020 gala will be held February 28, at The Breakers Palm Beach. For information, call 561-355-8642.



Lois Pope with Dr. Jorge Fortun



James Borynack and Adolfo Zaralegui



Dr. Eduardo Alfonso, University of Miami President Julio Frenk, and Dean Henri Ford



Alitza Weiss and Caroline Weiss

Eye on the World



To honor Bascom Palmer’s global impact, the Institute was thrilled to host its fourth annual Evening of Vision Gala, “Eye on the World.” Since opening its doors in 1962, members of Bascom Palmer’s faculty have been sharing clinical and research expertise with ophthalmologists throughout the world. As physicians graduate from its global fellowship and residency programs, the web of ophthalmologists trained at Bascom Palmer strengthens and grows, adding to the network of ophthalmologists with whom we work. This translates to better care for our patients at home or abroad.

The gala was a great success thanks to the generous support of the Naples community. The highlight of the evening was the announcement that the E.D.S. Family Pediatric Program became the first million-dollar pillar program named at Bascom Palmer Naples.

Thank you, Naples. for supporting the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. While Bascom Palmer is proud to tackle the world’s most challenging eye diseases, we are proud to call Naples our home. The next event in Naples will be the 20/20 Vision Luncheon, featuring Isaac Lidsky as the guest speaker. For information, call 239-659-3986.



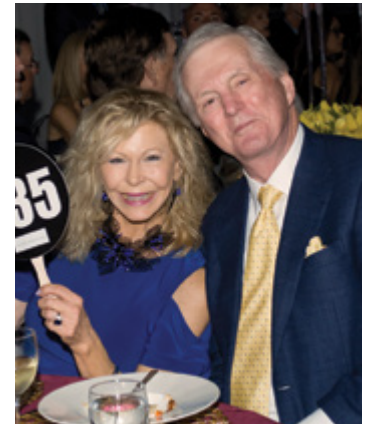
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Dr. Eduardo Alfonso and Ro’Nylah Cummings



Mike Ganjei, Usha and Monte Ahuja



Patricia and William Kassling



Frankie Wolfson and Jeri Wolfson



Adam and Ashley Gerry, Julie and Marc Danner, Luis Otero

Palm Beach Medical Forum

First held in 1988, the Palm Beach Medical Forum is a popular Palm Beach tradition where Bascom Palmer’s physicians share the most recent vision research and medical highlights. “Bascom Palmer has been at the forefront of gene therapy for inherited retinal diseases, a viable option to restore sight, for more than a decade,” said neuro-ophthalmologist Byron Lam, M.D., as he began the 2019 forum. He was joined by Audina Berrocal, M.D., a pediatric retinal surgeon, who performs gene therapy surgeries on children. She shared numerous stories of her young patients whose sight has been restored with these life-changing breakthroughs. Philip J. Rosenfeld, M.D., Ph.D., a pioneer in the use of drugs to prevent blindness in neovascular (wet) age-related macular degeneration, who is credited for saving vision in millions around the world, shared his research and latest findings on the dry form of the disease.



Drs. Byron Lam, Audina Berrocal and Philip Rosenfeld



Dudley and Peggy Moore, Chairs



Richard and Mary Lee Bastin



Dr. Carol Bastek and Christine Finnegan

For Your Eyes Only Palm Beach



Lois Pope, Chair



Ari Rifkin and Patty Snoddy



Nancy Rollnick and Peggy Moore

Jorge Fortun, M.D., retina specialist and medical director of Bascom Palmer at Palm Beach Gardens, was the featured speaker at the third annual “For Your Eyes Only” luncheon held in Palm Beach. Fortun shared important tips on what you can do to keep your eyes healthy as well as sharing the latest treatments for retinal diseases. Event proceeds will support research at Bascom Palmer’s Lois Pope Center for Retinal and Macular Degeneration Research, which will apply laboratory research to clinical care, providing novel therapies for retinal disease, increasing the number of clinical trials, and bringing endless possibilities to prevent vision loss.



Key Private Bank's Trish Hare with speakers: Dr. Ranya Habash, Dr. Audina Berrocal, and Dr. Jaclyn Kovach

For Your Eyes Only Naples

Ladies gathered in Naples for the annual For Your Eyes Only luncheon to engage with some of Bascom Palmer's women in ophthalmology. Guests learned about Bascom Palmer's latest advancements in gene therapy for inherited retinal diseases, treatments for age-related macular degeneration, and artificial intelligence in vision care. Bascom Palmer extends its thanks to Key Private Bank for their sponsorship of the event.



Sitting: Enid Weygandt, Carol Sorrentino, Jean McKenzie, Christy Mayer, Standing: Pam Boyd, Janice Teal, Dr. Ranya Habash, Hanna Cummins, Joanne Remington

AI Miami

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming eye care around the world. This powerful technology which will make it easier to diagnose a wide range of eye diseases and disorders, was discussed at a medical forum hosted by Northern Trust in Miami.

Ranya Habash, M.D., presented her AI research at Bascom Palmer and how it is leading to exciting new solutions for enhancing vision. She was joined by additional Bascom Palmer and University of Miami experts, each sharing their expertise on AI as it plays an increasingly important role in managing a number of eye diseases and overall health.



Drs. Eduardo Alfonso, Nick Tsinoremas, Ranya Habash, Sonia Yoo, and Mohamed Abou Shousha



Angela Whitman and Lynn Kislak



Dr. Harry Flynn and Candace Falsetto



Dr. Richard Lee with Alfredo and Luz Gutierrez

The Bascom Palmer Society

Recognized as the George E. Merrick Society at the University of Miami

Honoring the Institute's most generous benefactors whose gifts exceed \$1 million, the Bascom Palmer Society was created in memory of the Institute's namesake, Bascom Headon Palmer, M.D., an ophthalmologist who pioneered eye care in Miami.

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**In loving memory*

Donations listed as of May 31, 2019

Gordon Miller, M.D., Honors Bascom Palmer's Founder



In February 1960, Gordon Miller was a senior at Washington University School of Medicine and wanted to avoid the winter in St. Louis. He came to Miami for his rotation in ophthalmology. His plans to follow a career in internal medicine were shelved in favor of a career in ophthalmology because of Bascom Palmer's founder – Dr. Edward W.D. Norton.

At that time, Norton had recently arrived in Miami to become "Chief" of the division of ophthalmology at the University of Miami School of Medicine. With big plans for the future, he and his colleague, Victor C. Curtin, M.D., were laying the groundwork for an ophthalmology department at the university. Just two years later, their dream was realized when the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute opened its doors, named in honor of Bascom H. Palmer, M.D., one of Miami's first ophthalmologists.

After earning his medical degree, Miller returned to Miami for his residency because of the opportunity to learn from Norton and Curtin, two of the brightest minds in

ophthalmology. "Whenever there was a question regarding a diagnosis or a problem with a patient, Dr. Norton was always available to answer questions and to teach, teach, teach," said Miller. "He was also tireless in his efforts to recruit a great faculty and serve his fellow man."

After being called to serve in the U.S. Army, Miller returned to Bascom Palmer and in 1966 became chief resident under "the Chief." "I like to think that I was his favorite resident," said Miller. "Dr. Norton was like a guiding light for me."

Miller launched a long and successful career as an ophthalmologist in private practice in Miami Beach, specializing in oculoplastics. Following Norton's personal example of service, Miller taught at the Miami Veteran's Administration Hospital for 15 years as a voluntary faculty member. "I have always been interested in medical education," he said. Miller also supports Bascom Palmer's Mary and Edward Norton Library of Ophthalmology – one of the most comprehensive ophthalmic libraries in the world.

In honor of Norton, Miller provided a bequest to create the Gordon R. Miller Endowed Jr. Chair in Ophthalmology. "This gift is a tribute to the Chief and this great Institution," he said.

The Norton Society

Recognized as The Bowman Foster Ashe Society at the University of Miami

Members of the Norton Society have generously supported Bascom Palmer with gifts totaling \$500,000 – \$999,999. This society honors the vision and leadership of Edward W.D. Norton, M.D., the Institute’s founding chairman.

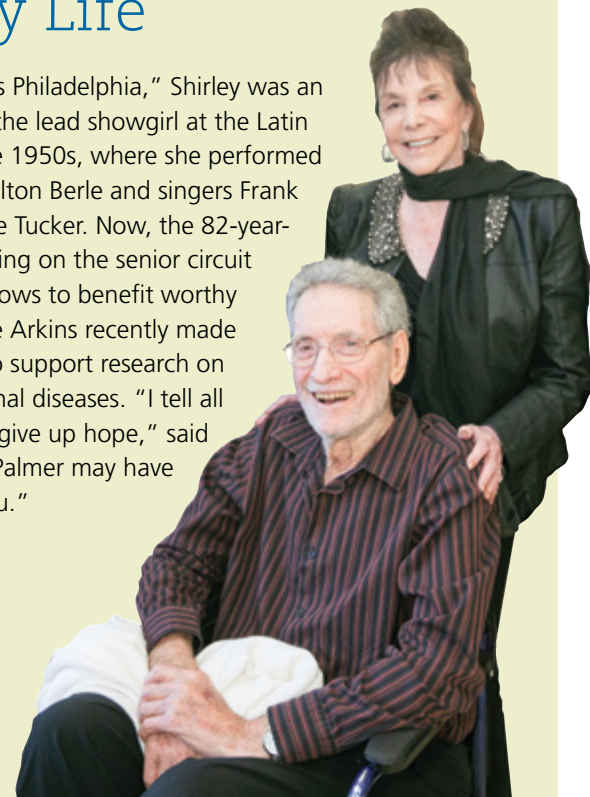
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| | Gertrude G. La Londe* | | |

“Bascom Palmer Gave Me Back My Life”

Jules and Shirley Arkin feel a strong sense of connection with Bascom Palmer. More than 30 years ago, Jules Arkin was seen by retinal specialist J. Donald M. Gass, M.D., one of the Institute’s first five ophthalmologists, and more recently by Philip J. Rosenfeld, M.D., Ph.D. “I took part in Dr. Rosenfeld’s studies a decade ago,” said Jules, whose brother, Stanley, was chair of the Board of Governors of the Anne Bates Leach Eye Hospital. “While I don’t have much vision left, Dr. Rosenfeld has been able to stabilize my condition.”

His wife, Shirley Forrest Arkin, was preparing to judge a Miss USA pageant in 2000 when her vision began to blur, and she had sudden pain in her eyes. “I went to a local doctor who told me I would go blind, and there was nothing they could do,” she said. “I immediately went to Bascom Palmer and knew they would know how to treat my condition.” Terrence P. O’Brien, M.D., the Charlotte Breyer Rodgers Chair in Ophthalmology, performed three corneal transplants using tissues provided by the Florida Lions Eye Bank. “I’ve gone from being nearly blind to having 20/20 vision again,” said Shirley. “Bascom Palmer gave me back my life.”

A former “Miss Philadelphia,” Shirley was an opera singer and the lead showgirl at the Latin Quarter in the late 1950s, where she performed with comedian Milton Berle and singers Frank Sinatra and Sophie Tucker. Now, the 82-year-old is still performing on the senior circuit and organizing shows to benefit worthy organizations. The Arkins recently made a \$110,000 gift to support research on corneal and external diseases. “I tell all my friends not to give up hope,” said Shirley. “Bascom Palmer may have the answer for you.”



The Luminary Society

Recognized as The Grand Founder Society at the University of Miami

The Luminary Society recognizes individuals who are beacons for progress in vision research, clinical care and education. Generous donors have contributed gifts totaling \$100,000 - \$499,999.

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**In loving memory*
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The Founder Society honors donors who have supported Bascom Palmer's mission with gifts totaling \$50,000 – \$99,999 that enable the Institute's physicians and researchers to combat blinding eye disease.

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Women's Guild

We would like to recognize the Bascom Palmer Women's Guild of 2019. This is an esteemed group of women whose membership fees support eye research, and who work together as ambassadors for Bascom Palmer in our communities. The Women's Guild in Naples and Miami furnished Bascom Palmer's youngest patients with coloring books and crayons during their doctor visits, while the Guild in Palm Beach Gardens supported research in pediatric ophthalmology.

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We have reached a landmark year for Bascom Palmer Eye Institute – the year 2020. This is a number most often discussed in the field of ophthalmology, as it represents a baseline for what is considered normal or 20/20 vision. To commemorate the 2020 milestone, we have created the Council of 20/20 – a group of distinguished Bascom Palmer ambassadors and philanthropists who will be recognized at events and in *Images* for their longstanding and unwavering support of Bascom Palmer's clinical and research activities. In essence, they will be the effectors of change in our mission. We are grateful to the individuals who have already joined our Council of 20/20 and encourage others who wish to be change agents in vision research to join us. For more information, please contact the development office at 305-326-6190.

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**In loving memory*

Supporting Vision Research

As a neuroradiologist in Birmingham, Ala., Ronald A. Lepke, M.D., took pride in delivering excellent care to his patients. Thanks to a caring and compassionate specialist at Bascom Palmer, he was able to continue his practice until he passed away in 2019.


When Ron was unable to find a diagnosis for his own vision problem, he began to search for a solution," said his former wife and advocate. Alicia R. Lepke. "He learned about the research being done by Carol L. Karp, M.D., the Richard K. Forster Chair in Ophthalmology, and began traveling to Bascom Palmer. She became our friend and the savior of Ron's vision."

While receiving treatment at Bascom Palmer, Lepke became deeply interested in Karp's research and left a \$1.5 million gift in his estate to create the Ronald and Alicia Lepke Endowed Professorship Fund for Corneal and Ocular Surface Diseases in support of her research.

"Ron was a researcher at heart and would spend whatever time was needed to find the solution to a question about his patients," said Alicia. "He had a great appreciation for Dr. Karp, both as a physician and a researcher. Ron respected her right out of the gate and never lost faith in her abilities. I wish I could adequately express what Dr. Karp's brilliance, kindness and friendship has meant to both of us. She is a gift to each of her patients."



Dr. Carol Karp and Dr. Ronald Lepke



2020 is looking better than ever.

Bascom Palmer ranked #1 in ophthalmology for the 18th time.

In their annual survey ranking America's Best Hospitals, *U.S. News & World Report* has once again ranked Bascom Palmer as the nation's best in ophthalmology. This marks the 18th time America's leading ophthalmologists have recognized Bascom Palmer Eye Institute of the University of Miami Health System as the best in the country for patient care, education and vision research. For more than five decades, Bascom Palmer has been making life-changing discoveries in every field of ophthalmology. Now our dedicated team of doctors, scientists and educators is focused on 2020 and beyond. To schedule an appointment or learn more, please call 1-800-329-7000.



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Standing on
the shoulders
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