A Friend Indeed
EyeSight Foundation of Alabama Raises the Bar
Dear Alumni and Friends,

The UAB School of Optometry is fortunate to receive funding for its professional and graduate programs from the state of Alabama as well as financial support for its research, patient care, and service programs from federal, state, and private agencies. From the very early years of the school, alumni have been supportive of the school and its programs. During the past decade, alumni, vendors, organizations, and friends have become a significant factor in providing support for capital improvement projects, research support, program support, student scholarships, and significant gift-in-kind donations.

An important source of funding for the UABSO and its faculty during the past decade has been the EyeSight Foundation of Alabama (ESFA). This unique foundation plays a vital role in providing support for a number of organizations, departments, and schools. In fact, the ESFA is the largest single private contributor to UAB as well as to the UAB School of Optometry. A careful analysis of the program support awarded by the ESFA to the UABSO over the decade since its inception reveals that the foundation has contributed 15 such awards, with 24 grants currently supporting individual faculty research. The collective amount of this support exceeds $3 million.

The president of UAB approached the chair of the Department of Vision Sciences in 2000 about applying for an institutional grant from the W.H. Keck Foundation to establish a facility for research related to the intact visual system. The ESFA provided $100,000 for three years that was an important part of the institutional match necessary to be eligible to receive this prestigious grant. Without their support, the creation of the Center for the Development of Functional Imaging (CDFI) would not have been possible. Beyond this, the ESFA has continued to be supportive of this center and its activities.

Likewise the ESFA has been very supportive of the UAB Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation. This center is jointly sponsored by the School of Optometry and the Department of Ophthalmology. The facility provides all levels of low vision rehabilitation to the local community, state, and beyond.

Another example of ESFA program support has been the purchase of a van for the transportation of students to county health departments and a variety of vision screening sites both locally and in the rural parts of Alabama.

For the past several years, National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding has been either level or increased only slightly, yet the number of investigators applying for grants has increased significantly. This has made NIH funding, or more specifically National Eye Institute funding, much more competitive.

The school and university are most fortunate to have the support of such a foundation. The ESFA’s contributions have provided significant assistance and support to both departments of the School of Optometry and the School of Medicine’s Department of Ophthalmology, among others. The school thanks the ESFA, its board, and its staff for their collegial efforts and generous support.

John F. Amos, O.D.
Dean, UAB School of Optometry
In this issue
Winter/Spring 2009 Vol. XIV, Issue 1

4 A Friend Indeed
The EyeSight Foundation of Alabama has been a valuable partner in the school’s mission of improving eye care throughout the region.

8 Global Sightings
SVOSH members share the details of their 2008 trip to Nicaragua, a trip that marked 30 years of SVOSH at UAB.

10 The Clinical Eye
What was recently a hidden gem is now more like a crown jewel, as the dispensary at the Department of Optical Services has become one of the most visible attractions of the renovated UAB Eye Care.

11 Student Spotlight
South Carolina native James Hill is making the most of his four years at the UABSO.

12 About the School
Sightings of faculty, students, and friends of the school—from social gatherings to scholastic milestones.

15 Faculty Focus
David A. Corliss, O.D., Ph.D., reflects on the changes taking place in the field of optometry, the craft of teaching, and his many outside interests.

16 From the President
News of note from Alumni Association president Melissa Hoercher, O.D.

Alumni Board Profiles
Meet the members of the board of the UABSO Alumni Association. This issue features Ernie Bowling, O.D., and JoAnn Graffeo King, O.D.

17 Alumni Profile
Larry Carter, O.D., a member of the UABSO’s third graduating class, has sustained a long, productive career in northwest Alabama.

18 Development
Charitable gift annuities explained
In a nondescript, rectangular building at UAB’s Vision Science Research Center (VSRC), researchers use a 14-ton magnet to gain rare insights into how the brain processes vision. Just down the hill, pediatric patients receive the benefit of national research projects at UAB Eye Care. Elsewhere in the state, clinicians and vision scientists collaborate in a mobile laboratory to combat glaucoma and other illnesses, while optometry students travel around the Birmingham area and beyond to provide eye care to underserved populations. Through all these disparate projects of the UAB School of Optometry, there runs one common thread—all were made possible through the support of the EyeSight Foundation of Alabama.

“In the 10 years it has been in existence, the EyeSight Foundation of Alabama has provided more private funding to the UAB School of Optometry than any other source,” says UABSO dean John F. Amos, O.D. “The foundation has shown a commitment to improving all aspects of vision care. More than just a donor, the foundation is truly a partner in many of the school’s efforts to provide quality eye care and promote vision research.”

A Solid Foundation
The EyeSight Foundation of Alabama was established in 1997 as the Alabama Eye Institute Inc. Funding for the foundation comes from gifts and from income generated from the sale of the Eye Foundation Hospital. “Generally, we give between $2.5 and $3 million per year toward eye care and vision causes,” says Torrey Smitherman, executive director for the EyeSight Foundation. “We target 5 percent of our assets and average it over three years. That way, when funds fluctuate from one year to the next, we are able to remain consistent with our funding of research grants for eye-health education programs and for programs that provide care for patients who qualify as low income or indigent.”

A board composed of approximately 20 business and community leaders from throughout the Birmingham area determines how funds are distributed. “That’s one of the features about this foundation that I credit for how successful it has been in fulfilling its mission,” says Smitherman. “The board chair serves a two-year term, so each two-year term seems to have its own personality. But we have board members who are so dedicated and supportive of the staff as well as the organizations we fund that we are really able to target a wide range of eye-care needs.”

Some of the more visible gifts the school has received from the EyeSight Foundation include funding for the functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) magnet at the UAB Center for the Development of Functional Imaging (CDFI) and for the recent renovations to the Henry Peters Building to create the state-of-the-art pediatric research facility at UAB Eye Care. The foundation also has supported a number of faculty research efforts and initiatives, such as Preschool Peepers, a program conducted by Wendy Marsh-Tootle, O.D., which aims to reduce the prevalence of untreated eye and vision problems in preschool children.

“We don’t limit the topics of scientific research that we fund,” says Smitherman. “There are foundations that focus in one area, such as glaucoma, but we keep it wide open. Research that touches on any aspect of eye health or eye disease is eligible.” That open-minded outlook often results in UABSO researchers receiving the start-up funds necessary to compile information needed to successfully
compete for grants from other sources, such as the National Eye Institute (NEI).

Groundbreaking Research

In 2002, vision researchers embarked on several unique research projects through the CDFI. The center features one of only four fMRI facilities in the world dedicated to vision science. The 14-ton magnet, which is approximately eight feet tall and seven feet in diameter, was purchased thanks in part to a $300,000 grant awarded over three years by the EyeSight Foundation. Although major funding for the facility came from the Keck Foundation and the National Science Foundation, the $300,000 award for the fMRI was at that time one of the EyeSight Foundation’s largest grants to date. “The gift from the foundation really helped attract the support we needed to get this center funded,” says Peggy Striplin, senior director of development for optometry.

“One thing that appealed strongly to our board members was that the entire UAB scientific community stands to benefit from results of the center’s vision research,” Smitherman says.

The fMRI consists of a magnet that is three-and-a-half times more powerful than a normal clinical magnet, and it allows researchers to look at differences in the level of blood oxygenation in the brain. By tracking which parts of the brain are active when presented with visual stimuli, researchers are gaining insight into how vision actually works.

Other research efforts funded by the EyeSight Foundation include a study by Paul Gamlin, Ph.D., a scientist in the VSRC who used the fMRI to investigate retinal ganglion cells and gain insights into circadian rhythms. David Whikehart, Ph.D., used funding from the EyeSight Foundation and the NEI to examine possibilities of corneal stem cells—research that carries the potential to one day alleviate the shortage of donated corneas for surgery.

“There is such a wide range of topics being explored with regard to vision research, and we try to fund projects from all across that range,” says Smitherman. “The School of Optometry plays a strong role in so many different kinds of research, such as retinal research, myopia, drug-based molecular therapy, and cataracts. Some have an immediate impact on patients, and some carry potential for great breakthroughs for the future of vision science.”

Community Welfare

Of all the outreach efforts that have been developed through the support of the EyeSight Foundation, few have had as much potential for a direct impact on the community as the Rural Alabama Diabetes and Glaucoma Initiative (RADGI). Through that program, VSRC researchers, optometrists, and Lions Club volunteers have organized an effort that brings eye care to some of the most underserved areas in the state. Using high-tech mobile screening labs, researchers are able to study the diseases in depth while providing a much-needed service to local populations.

“Our goal for the VSRC is to extend the center’s activity into projects that would have a more immediate impact for the citizens of Alabama,” says Kent Keyser, director of the VSRC. “This particular effort is a perfect match between the state’s needs and UAB’s resources.”

Like much of the research at the center, the results of RADGI studies could have global consequences. The screenings are being performed in some of the poorest sections of the state in places that in many ways are like microcosms of Third World nations, where the same problems occur in much larger numbers.

Started in 2001, RADGI has been extended each year and recently was extended for 2009. In addition to valuable research data—a paper was published in the December 2008 Journal of the American Optometric Association—the program has helped promote broader initiatives aimed at improving
quality of life in the Black Belt counties. Principal investigator Mary Jean Sanspree, Ph.D., was recently appointed as the governor’s representative on the Black Belt Action Commission and as the co-chair of the Black Belt Eye Care Consortium. “We have created a model that has proven effective,” says Sanspree. “Our model was used after Hurricane Katrina when we helped set up vision clinics in Bay St. Louis and Bayou La Batre for hurricane relief. This program has benefited from great coordination across the state, and it is clearly making a difference in these rural communities.”

**Overlapping Efforts**

The UABSO is not the only organization funded by the EyeSight Foundation, but because of the collaborative nature of many research projects, the school often is one of many entities working on initiatives supported by the foundation. “We fund a variety of different organizations, so it really excites us to see the camaraderie when these organizations work together to improve eye care,” says Smitherman. “This area is very lucky to have a great community of scientists doing vision research.”

A prime example, Smitherman says, is the UAB Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation, which is a joint operation between the UABSO and the UAB Department of Ophthalmology. The center grew out of the low vision service in the School of Optometry in the early 2000s. “That service continued to grow, and we knew there was potential there for even greater capabilities,” Striplin explains. “We had all this expertise to pursue low-vision research but no space to expand. The Department of Ophthalmology had the space and was interested in a joint program. The EyeSight Foundation was approached about funding this new joint venture, and they have supported it ever since.”

The center opened in late 2002 and has continued to grow as optometrists, ophthalmologists, and occupational therapists work directly with patients while conducting research into low vision. “We consider the UAB Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation one of our signature projects because the work there is so important,” says Smitherman.

To many people in the community, the high-profile research that is funded by the foundation will never be felt directly. However, a relatively small gift of $15,000 allowed the School of Optometry to purchase a van to transport students and faculty to community outreach sites—thereby providing a direct benefit to communities in need. “This is a great example of a collaborative partnership between multiple organizations the foundation has funded,” says Shirley Hamilton,
Assistant director of programs for the foundation. “Patients who may not otherwise receive eye care are being served, while the education part of our mission is being addressed through the optometry interns’ clinical training in nontraditional environments.”

While the EyeSight Foundation often gets much-deserved attention for the financial support it provides, Striplin says the total investment of the foundation’s board and staff members goes well beyond any financial contributions. “In addition to all they do for us financially, I also have to mention their collegiality and their true dedication to their mission of improving the quality of eye care,” she says. “They are constantly working in the vision community to encourage collaboration with other entities involved in vision care, and they give grants which encourage that collaboration. When we’ve had screenings in the Black Belt, foundation board members and staff have gone down there with us to assist and to gain an understanding of the project. They want to see how the money is spent, and they want to experience how their gifts are being used to fulfill the broader mission of the EyeSight Foundation of Alabama.”

In addition to research efforts, the ESFA has also helped fund various capital improvements, such as the renovations to the UABSO’s Henry Peters Building.

ESFA Funding

The following list is an example of some of the funding that the UAB School of Optometry has received over the past 10 years from the EyeSight Foundation of Alabama. While not a complete list, it does demonstrate the wide variety of program and research support that the school has received from the ESFA. Some of these items have been granted more than once.

- Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation renovation
- Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation equipment
- Operating expenses and technical support for the Center for Development of Functional Imaging (CDFI)
- Photoreceptive retinal ganglion cell research
- Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation symposium for Health Care Professionals
- Characterization of Endothelial Stem-like Limbal Cell research
- Renovation of four pediatric research examination areas
- Eye Can Learn
- Purchase of two RF Resonators for the CDFI
- Plasticity of binocular coordination research
- Preschool Peepers Program
- Purchase of Community Vision Services van
- Purchase of lab equipment for research
- Funding for a fullband RF channel amplifier for the CDFI
- Indigent Fund
- Molecular mechanisms of photoreceptor membrane research
- Potential role of soy isoflavones as antioxidant in prevention/delay of age-related cataract research
Global Sightings
Students Gain Through Giving in Nicaragua

By Michael C. Dasinger

Last winter, the UAB Student Volunteers for Optometric Service to Humanity (SVOSH) celebrated 30 years of service by taking a team of students, faculty, and alumni to Granada, Nicaragua, to provide eye care to an underserved population during the school’s spring break. While the inaugural mission trip to El Salvador in 1978 consisted of only 10 volunteers, the 2008 team consisted of 27 students, two faculty, and two UABSO graduates.

Unique to this trip was the cooperation of VOSH-Alabama and UAB SVOSH. Patti Fuhr, O.D., Ph.D. (resident, ’89), Wendy Marsh-Tootle, O.D. (’85), and Robin LaValley, O.D., as well as Abi Yildrim of the Vision Science Research Center, were the VOSH members who aided UAB SVOSH in Granada. Eye care was not the only aid offered during the week. As an all-everything engineer, Abi fixed several pieces of hospital equipment—sometimes without even knowing what they were.

During three days of clinic at the only hospital in the city, the group provided complete dilated eye examination for approximately 900 patients. Patients started lining up outside the hospital before daybreak waiting for much-needed eye care. One patient even carried his colostomy bag through the clinic twice in order to obtain reading glasses for his son. Another was escorted by a police officer wielding an assault rifle. Even the hospital nurses and staff came through the clinic for examinations.

As a result of so many patients and so little previous eye care, optometry students were exposed to many different ocular conditions. Third-year student Priti Panchal identified a child with congenital glaucoma that presented with only a single, subtle ocular manifestation. The diagnosis is even more impressive when you consider that the child wasn’t there for an exam but rather was there with a parent who was in line to be examined. Priti noticed that the child’s corneas looked larger than normal and asked the mom for permission to examine the child, who, after the devastating diagnosis, was referred to the hospital’s only ophthalmologist for further care.

Every morning, the first shift would get a quick breakfast at a gas station. Once they got to the clinic, 50 to 100 people would already be in line, and the line never seemed to shorten. It stayed that long throughout the day.

–Oliver Ali, Student, Class of 2009

VOSH members such as fourth-year student Jeremy Walz provided comprehensive eye examinations.

Rick Self helps with a patient during a busy day at the clinic.

SVOSH-Alabama and UAB SVOSH members helped provide eye care in Granada.
Children got valuable examinations when they accompanied their parents.

Residents lined up for hours each day to receive eye care.

Abby Jackson, O.D. ('08)

Other disorders included diabetic retinopathy, hypertensive retinopathy, glaucoma, severe dry-eye syndrome, chronic allergic conjunctivitis, cataracts, cataract post-op complications, foreign body removals, toxoplasmosis, and many others. Recycled glasses (neutralized by SVOSH members), reading glasses, and/or sunglasses were dispensed to each patient as needed. Medications including artificial tears and glaucoma, allergy, antibiotic, and steroid drops were dispensed when indicated.

While not in clinic, students were able to explore the city of Granada and get a taste of the local culture and cuisine. What better way to provide patient care than to experience the day-to-day activities of the local people? This experience allowed students to better understand the patients’ environment and daily tasks and apply this knowledge when making clinical decisions. Several students gained even more insight into the Nicaraguan culture when they attended a weekly chicken fight at a local arena. Even though such events are unheard of in much of American society, chicken fights are apparently one of Nicaragua’s favorite pastimes. From exploring volcanoes, watching chicken fights, and feeding monkeys to diagnosing ocular disease, providing an absolute presbyope with readers for the first time, and connecting with people of a foreign culture, Nicaragua will always be a special place in the hearts of those who were able to go.

This entire endeavor was made possible through the collective efforts of UAB SVOSH members, UAB alumni, and everyone else who donated time, money, and glasses. The stories are numerous and the memories priceless. Here’s to another 30 years of service!
Eyeglasses can be a deeply personal item. Few items of apparel can become so ingrained with the wearer’s identity while serving such an essential function.

At UAB Eye Care, optometric interns are trained to provide first-rate eye care, but when the examination is complete and the prescription is written, the job is just beginning at the Department of Optical Services. Finding the right frames, the right fit, and the right look is the art that comes after the science.

“People are surprised when they come here and see the selection we have,” says Michelle Self, the optician supervisor for UAB Eye Care. “We have the latest designer fashions in eyeglass frames, such as Coach, Dior, Gucci, and Giorgio Armani, as well as a great selection of lesser-known brands. We also have four American Board-certified opticians on staff, so we help people make sure the frames are perfect for their particular needs.”

Increasing Visibility

Even though the UAB School of Optometry has long been increasing the quality of patients’ vision, the clinic and dispensary were among the best-kept secrets on campus for many years. The main entrance to the Henry Peters Building, which houses the clinic and dispensary, was on the side of the building until massive renovations in 2004 resulted in the front entrance to UAB Eye Care. “Until we had that front window, people didn’t even realize we had a dispensary,” says Self. “They thought this was only a school of optometry where all we did was teach, so thousands of people drove past every day with no idea that they could come here for their eye-care needs.”

Following the renovations, the heightened visibility increased traffic to the dispensary. Traffic multiplied again in 2007 when UAB began offering Vision Service Plan (VSP) to all of its employees. “Richard Stroud, our practice manager, has done a great job of getting word out to UAB employees about what we have to offer,” says Self. “We go around and do screenings at different buildings on campus and let people know that we’re here. I think people have been pleasantly surprised when they realize the convenience of having all this here on campus. The location, plus the fact that they
can utilize payroll deductions for frames and lenses, should make our services very attractive to any university employee.”

Self says there was an initial increase of 500 patients per month after the completion of the renovations. “When the university offered VSP to employees, 3,000 people signed up for it, and this year, 3,000 more signed up,” says Self. “We hope those people will continue to get the word out and the growth will continue.”

Citadel Grad Turns Focus to Optometry

When James Hill got his driver’s license at age 16, one of his first regular duties was to drive his grandmother to her optometrist’s office so she could be treated for macular degeneration. Hill, who doesn’t wear glasses, had never spent much time around optometrists before that, but he was impressed by the attention she received and the benefits she got from the treatment.

After graduating from the Citadel in 2003, Hill spent two years working as a research specialist at the Medical University of South Carolina where he had the chance to watch many different medical specialists work with patients. It was there that he got his second up-close look at optometrists at work, and once again he was impressed, calling it the most positive of all his experiences observing medical professionals. “There was good one-on-one care,” Hill explains. “And probably 95 percent of the time, the doctor would do something that made a real improvement in the patient’s quality of life.”

Now in his fourth year of training, Hill is scheduled to graduate in May 2009, and when he does he will leave with much more than just a degree. He was elected UABSO’s first-year class president and is serving as a national liaison to the National Board of Examiners in Optometry. He is also serving as national president of the American Optometric Student Association (AOSA).

Hill says his responsibilities as president of a national organization include working with the AOSA’s board of trustees, appointing committee chairpersons and national liaisons, facilitating the development of programs to benefit the association and its members, and representing the AOSA at affiliated meetings.

After graduation, Hill says he would ideally like to open a primary care private practice—possibly back in his home state of South Carolina—with a special emphasis on treating low-vision problems such as the macular degeneration that affected his grandmother.

Hill’s experiences in the UABSO clinic have already allowed him to encounter many patients with a variety of low-vision problems, and that has inspired him to want to continue the work. “It’s taught me how to think through an examination, how to think like a doctor,” he says.

In addition to his experience with his grandmother, Hill now also draws inspiration from the experiences of other family members. Since enrolling at UAB he has learned that his father suffered with amblyopia as a child and now has almost no vision in one eye. “They didn’t catch it early enough, and when they tried to use a patch to strengthen his eye, it didn’t work,” Hill says. “This has made me more passionate about the need for prescreening and making sure when I practice that I catch every case I can as early as I can.”
About the School
News from In, Around, and Beyond UAB

Sthanam Promoted
Narayana Sthanam, Ph.D., has been promoted to the rank of professor in the Department of Optometry. Sthanam’s research involves studies of structure-function relationships of C3-convertases, key enzymes involved in complement activation. Over the past decade, Sthanam’s work has resulted in the determination of several atomic resolution structures, representing a significant contribution toward understanding the activation mechanism of this portion of the human immune system. A second area of research in Sthanam’s laboratory involves bacterial sortases, enzymes essential for the assembly of group B streptococcus pili. The long-term goal of this research is to develop a novel broad-spectrum antibiotic.

AOA Reception

REUNION WEEKEND 2009
The Start of a UABSO Tradition

All alumni are invited to attend the UAB School of Optometry’s 40th anniversary celebration in August 2009, but seven classes in particular will be recognized as part of the school’s first-ever on-campus reunion weekend.

On August 21-23, 2009, the UABSO will host 18 hours of continuing education while also hosting receptions and reunion activities for the classes of 1974, ’79, ’84, ’89, ’94, ’99, and ’04.

Because of this new tradition, the school will no longer recognize reunion classes at the SECO reception.
Sandestin Reception
Alumni from across the United States converged on Sandestin, Florida, for the annual summer conference, sponsored jointly by the Alabama Optometric Association and the UABSO Alumni Association.

Scott Williamson ('89) also had some family time with his wife, Amy; daughter, Rachel; and niece, Nicole.

Alumni John Bender ('89) and Shea Eagerton ('04) are joined by Eagerton’s fiancé, Christian Ehret.

Charles Brazeal ('77), John Walters ('84), Greg Leet ('84), and Charles Brown ('79)

Michael Stuts ('88) enjoyed Sandestin with his wife, Beth, and oldest daughter, Lauren.

Springer Lecture
The annual Springer Lecture was held in August. This year’s lecturer was Mark Dunbar, O.D., of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, Florida. His topic was the Evolution of Our Clinical Understanding and Management of Macular Disorders from Hruby and Gass to OCT. Also lecturing that weekend was Paul Chous, O.D., from Tacoma, Washington.

Left to right: Leo Semes, director of continuing education; Mark Dunbar, of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute of Miami, Florida; Paul Chous, of Tacoma, Washington; dean John F. Amos; and Jimmy Bartlett, chair of the Department of Optometry
Benjamin Honored by the ISCLS

The International Society of Contact Lens Specialists (ISCLS) recently awarded the Frederik William Herschel Medal to UABSO professor of optometry Joe Benjamin, O.D., Ph.D. The medal is the society’s highest award and is determined by the officers of the organization’s council. It was presented to Benjamin at the recent ISCLS banquet in Buenos Aires. Benjamin will be bound to wear the medal at future banquets of the ISCLS.

Sir Frederik William Herschel was a German who lived in London in the late 1700s and was an expert at grinding and polishing mirrors and lenses. He later applied that knowledge to telescopes. He is credited with discovering Uranus, the first new planet discovery since antiquity, and he coined the word “asteroid,” among other things. He also discovered infrared radiation. In the 1820s, his son, Sir John Frederik William Herschel, suggested ways of grinding and polishing small lenses so that they would fit the front of the eye. He also suggested making a mold of the eye, something that became possible some 60 years later when anesthetics were invented, in order to more exactly shape the lenses for the individual eye. These were ideas that allowed a fledgling contact lens practice to develop.

Of course, no great honor comes without personal trial. Benjamin arrived in Buenos Aires to find that he needed, but did not have, a tuxedo for the ceremony at the exclusive Jockey Club. After spending the afternoon with Spanish-speaking tailors, our colleague managed to arrive at the event in the nick of time.

Zakiya Nicks joins SCO

Zakiya Nicks, O.D. (’07), has joined the faculty of the Southern College of Optometry as an instructor. A graduate of the UABSO, Nicks completed a hospital-based primary care residency at the Memphis VA Medical Center. Nicks received her undergraduate degree at Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi. She is a member of the American Optometric Association, the Mississippi Optometric Association, the Tennessee Optometric Association, the National Optometric Association, and the West Tennessee Optometric Association.

Optical Service Wins Awards

OPL Labs has awarded the UABSO Optical Service with three prestigious regional awards: the Transitions 2008 Outstanding Performance Award, the Varilux 2008 Outstanding Performance Award, and the Crizal 2008 Practice of the Year Award. Congratulations to Optical Services Supervisor Michele Self and her staff for their outstanding performances.
‘Eye’ Do

Some members of the UABSO class of 2008 reconvened shortly after graduation for a “one-month reunion” at the wedding of Carrie Haare (’08) and Billy Turley.

Front row: Peggy Striplin, senior director of development; Jenny Drake; and Kennedy Walker. Back row: Mary Elizabeth Brice; Virginia Rogers, alumni specialist; Heather Brandy; Carrie Haare Turley; Keri Dennis; and Jody Simmons.

Hartley Grubbs, a third-year student from Pelham, Alabama, is the recipient of the $1000 American Optometric Foundation 2008 Vistakon ACUVUE Eye Health Advisor Student Citizenship Scholarship. This award is determined by the Cornea/Contact Lens faculty each year.

Lucy Kehinde Honored

Lucy Kehinde, a graduate student in the Department of Vision Sciences, received first place for a research presentation at the 2008 Annual Minority Access Role Model and Research Conference recently.

David A. Corliss, O.D., Ph.D.
Data Analyst with Optometric Roots

As he looks back on a varied career, David A. Corliss, O.D., Ph.D., is amazed by the advances that have been made in the optometric field.

“Optometry is far more challenging than when I went to school,” explains Corliss, director of special assessment projects in the Office of the Associate Provost for Planning and Analysis at UAB. “The scope of practice and responsibility has expanded enormously, and the fundamental science that is the clinician’s foundation has become correspondingly deeper and more complex.”

Corliss earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Vermont and earned his optometry degree from the New England College of Optometry. He also holds a master’s in physiological optics from Ohio State University and a Ph.D. in physiology and biophysics from UAB.

After working many years in the UABSO’s Department of Vision Sciences (then Physiological Optics), Corliss took a position as a data analyst in the Office of the Provost in 1995. In the years since, he has directed several major projects of university-wide importance, including UAB’s SACS accreditation and compliance audit project (2003-2005) and the Retention Research Project (2001-2003), and he was data analyst for UAB ADVANCE Institutional Transformation. His research interests include evaluation of diagnostic tests, clinical decision making, and clinical competency assessment.

Although his current focus on data analysis is far removed from his original optometric training, Corliss remains an associate professor with UABSO’s Department of Vision Sciences, and he provides faculty with consultation services on experimental design and statistical analysis with the data sets they generate.

In addition to his many duties at UAB, Corliss is also a professional photographer, having sold and exhibited his work. “Several people who’ve viewed my work tell me they now see things around them in a way they did not before,” he says. “As for the link between optics/optometry and photography, there are fundamental questions of perspective, how the eye responds to shadows, highlights, colors, form, and line.

“As I turn 65 and reflect on where I am now and what I am doing, I realize how fortunate I am to have the many opportunities that have marked the key moments of my career.”
Dear Colleagues,

It has been a busy quarter! My tenure as president culminated with the Sunday breakfast at our Annual Meeting at the Wynfrey Hotel. It was a particularly appropriate ending to the year, since the emphasis of the meeting was service. John Classé and Marty Habel gave a visual presentation honoring the 30th anniversary of SVOSH, from its inception through its continued focus on the humanitarian outreach of the organization. For everyone involved in SVOSH, it brought back memories and reminded us all of just what a privilege it is to be entrusted with the care and keeping of the gift of sight.

Following the presentation, we acknowledged the unselfish contributions of our Alumnus of the Year, Ken Moultrie, O.D., who exemplifies a charitable heart. Ken’s willingness to donate his time and talents to better our profession and to help others is well worthy of our recognition. The Coshatt Scholarship was awarded to a very deserving second-year student (and mom), Merin Graves. At the conclusion of the breakfast meeting, I handed the gavel to Jill Helton, O.D. Jill has always impressed me as one of our best and brightest stars.

Dr. Helton and I were proud to have been among the guests at the home of UAB president Dr. Carol Garrison, who expressed her appreciation for the UABSO Alumni Association, Bowling is also a diplomate in the primary care section of the American Academy of Optometry, and he serves on the academy’s primary care and ocular disease committees. A prolific international lecturer and author of over 50 professional journal publications, he is associate clinical editor of the journal Review of Cornea & Contact Lenses, and he serves on the editorial board of Optometric Management, Contemporary Optometry, and Refractive Eyecare.

“It is truly an honor for me to serve on the UABSO Alumni Association’s Board,” says Bowling. “To be a member of the alumni association is one small way to repay all the school has done for me and help the next generation of optometrists fulfill their dreams.”

JoAnn Graffeo-King, O.D.

JoAnn Graffeo-King, O.D. (’83), earned a bachelor’s degree in natural sciences (biology) with a minor in chemistry before entering the optometric technician program at the UABSO. After earning an optometry degree in 1983, she entered a private practice associated with a medical office in Mobile. She worked at OptiCare Associates for 10 years before moving to the practice where she has worked since 1987. She also served as president of the Gulf Zone Optometric Association.

Graffeo-King has three daughters—Kelsey, 18 (a freshman at Alabama), Tyler, 15, and Mary Franklin, 11. She also has four dogs “to keep her entertained.”

“The alumni board offers a chance to reconnect with classmates who also serve and to see how the decisions we make at the board meetings positively affect our school and our alumni,” she says. “I am honored to be working with those who genuinely care what our alumni think as they make decisions for our school and its future.”
When he opened his general optometry practice in Hamilton, Alabama, more than three decades ago, Larry Carter, O.D., had his work cut out for him. “In a small town you have to pretty much cover all the bases,” explains Carter, a member of UAB School of Optometry’s third graduating class in 1975. “When I came here, the city didn’t have an optometrist, and there was only one other in the county. Today I have three full-time staffers, two of whom have been working with me for more than 19 years.”

Carter, who grew up in Winfield, Alabama, first became interested in the UABSO after hearing the school’s first dean, Henry Peters, speak about the new school and the opportunities available in optometry.

“I was accepted into the UAB School of Optometry after only three years of undergraduate work because I had completed my prerequisite courses,” says Carter. “The school was seeking Alabama residents for students, and I had applied for the following year’s class. There was a cancellation in that incoming class, however, so there was a fortunate series of events that helped me basically skip a year of school.”

Carter has been actively involved in UAB’s alumni program, as well as in his community. A former member of the Hamilton City Council, Carter has held numerous offices within the Alabama Optometric Association, including serving as president of the organization in the early 1980s. He also served two five-year terms on the Alabama Board of Optometry.

“I was fortunate to serve on the board during a period of great changes and challenges,” says Carter. “When I was president of the board, we were able to amend our state optometry law to allow optometrists to prescribe therapeutic drugs for their patients—something we had been trained for at UAB but not allowed to do under the old law. It was exciting to be a part of a radical change in optometric practice and in writing and adopting new board regulations to govern the new authority. Getting the authority to practice the full scope of our training was one of the major advances in the optometric field during my career.

“Another big change has been the influx of women optometrists,” he adds. “Prior to 1974, there were only a couple of female optometrists practicing in Alabama. Now, UABSO classes are typically near or more than 50-percent female.”

Selected as Alabama Optometrist of the Year in 1996, Carter credits the university with helping lay the foundation for his long and successful career.

“UABSO is recognized as one of the premier programs in the United States, and I feel the level of training I received was excellent. Being associated with a major medical center allowed the School of Optometry to present students with opportunities not readily available to private optometric schools.”

As for the most rewarding part of his work, “I’ve had nearly a half-dozen patients who have decided to attend optometry school. I feel I must be doing something right if young people decide they want to follow the same career path.”

New Alumni Directory
The new and much-awaited alumni directory will soon be shipped. All dues-paying alumni will receive a free copy of the directory on disc in PDF format, or you may purchase a copy for $7. Contact Virginia Rogers at vsr@uab.edu for more information.
Charitable Gift Annuities:
*An Income Plan to Benefit You and the UAB School of Optometry*

**Income for Life**

A Charitable Gift Annuity is a simple contract between you and the UAB School of Optometry. In exchange for an irrevocable gift of cash, securities, or other assets, the UABSO agrees to pay one or two annuitants a fixed sum each year for life. The annuitants are typically you or you and your spouse. The older you are at the time of the gift, the greater the fixed income the UABSO can agree to pay.

At the end of your life, the remainder is transferred to the School of Optometry or the specific UABSO program of your choice.

Payments may be made in annual, semiannual, or quarterly installments.

**Tax Relief**

You receive an income tax deduction for the difference between the amount transferred and the value of the annuity.

In most cases, part of each payment is tax-free, increasing each payment’s after-tax value. If you give appreciated property, you will pay capital gains tax on only part of the appreciation.

In addition, if you are also the primary annuitant, the capital gains tax will be spread out over your life expectancy. If you were to sell the appreciated asset instead, all of the capital gains tax would be due in the year of the sale.

**An Investment in the UABSO**

A Charitable Gift Annuity enables you to provide support for you and another beneficiary during your life while leaving a legacy for the UABSO program of your choice. This partnership between you and the school will continue the UABSO’s advances in education, research, and service.
Charitable Gift Annuity Illustration

Gift: $25,000

Income Tax Deduction of $12,047.25

UABSO Charitable Gift Annuity

Annual Payment of $2,200 to the Donor for Life

Remainder

Call us today at (205) 934-9838 to discuss a Charitable Gift Annuity and its benefits for you and the UAB School of Optometry. We also welcome questions about other planned giving options.
In 2004, workers broke through the original brick wall on the ground floor of the Henry Peters Building to create a new front door for UAB Eye Care, thereby starting a new chapter in the history of the UAB School of Optometry. The renovated clinics, made possible in part by funding from the EyeSight Foundation of Alabama, stand as a very visible reminder of the ongoing collaboration between the ESFA and the UABSO.