LEGACY FULFILLED
Second-Generation Optometrists a First for UABSO
Dear Alumni and Friends,

The UAB School of Optometry has achieved many milestones in its 34 years of existence. I had the opportunity to mention several of these superlatives in this column in the Fall 2003 issue of *Focal Point*. The state legislature established the UAB School of Optometry in 1967 to help meet the eye care needs of the citizens of the state, and I believe the school has met every expectation the legislature may have had. Since its inception in September 1969, the school has graduated 1,044 doctors of optometry. These men and women practice in almost every county in the state. Clearly they are meeting the mandate of the legislature to provide accessible and excellent eye care to the people of Alabama.

Beyond this important goal of providing excellent care, many of the school’s graduates of its first professional program (Doctor of Optometry) have made significant contributions to the profession by serving in its national, regional, and state organizations. (The same is true of many of the faculty.) Many of these graduates have also assumed leadership roles in their local communities and added significantly to the quality of life in these communities.

The school has reached the point in its existence when the second generation of UAB-educated optometrists is beginning to enter the profession. This issue’s cover features three second-year students who are children of alumni. This marks an important time in the evolution of the school and the profession. It is always heartening when children want to follow their parents into the field and is perhaps the ultimate compliment a child can pay a parent. In the case of these students, it is also reassuring to know they are entering a profession whose future is so promising—a profession whose self-determination made possible a metamorphosis that ensures future growth. For all the uncertainties facing the American health-care system, one thing remains clear: Americans want and expect excellent primary and specialty health care, and eye care is no exception. I believe this bodes well for the future of the profession and all optometry students.

The school graduated its 31st class on May 21, 2004. This class is unique in that it was the first to begin its optometric education in the new millennium. The speaker at this year’s Doctoral Convocation and Hooding Ceremony was William B. Deal, M.D., vice president for medicine and dean of the School of Medicine. This was a very special event and the faculty, staff, and students wish the new graduates well as they begin their careers.

I am pleased to inform you that Dr. Paul Gamlin was appointed chair of the Department of Physiological Optics, effective June 1, 2004. Dr. Gamlin is a nationally known and respected vision scientist and teacher. I have every confidence that this outstanding department will continue to grow under Dr. Gamlin’s expert leadership.

John F. Amos, O.D.
Dean, UAB School of Optometry
Three second-year students are the latest in an emerging trend, as a second generation of optometrists is carrying on a family tradition at the UAB School of Optometry.

Military service provides opportunities for many UABSO students and alumni.

Studies at UAB point to age-related declines in visual ability and reaction times as possible causes for traffic accidents among the elderly, yet Alabama remains one of many states that require no vision screenings or other special requirements for drivers’ license renewals.

Meet the 34th class of optometrists to graduate from UAB.

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

Rod J. Fullard, Ph.D., has spent more than 20 years at UAB, fueled by a love of teaching optics and a passion for research.

News of note from Alumni Association President Lynn S. Hammonds, O.D.

For more than 50 years the Wallace family has been known for providing quality eye care in Bessemer, Alabama. Today, Fred Wallace continues the tradition started by his father, juggling the family practice with his responsibilities as the executive director of the Alabama Board of Optometry.

The Campaign for UAB was a tremendous success, thanks in large part to the generous contributions of UABSO supporters and alumni. This issue includes a complete wrap-up of donations received by the UABSO in this milestone fund-raising effort.
In its relatively short history, the UAB School of Optometry has enjoyed a lot of well-publicized firsts—celebrating all the memorable milestones that come with the establishment of a new school. In recent years, however, the UABSO has quietly reached a new stage in its development with the arrival of some notable seconds—as second-generation alumni Kristian Edlund ('99), Dawn Duchelet Wilzek ('03), and Audrey Brazeal Wood ('04) have all followed in their parents’ footsteps as graduates of the UABSO. Last year, three more alumni saw their children take the same path when Matthew Habel, Wesley Mayes, and Kristin Sullins all began their first year at the UABSO, marking the first time that any class has seen more than one second-generation student.

"To those of us who have been here since the early days of the school, it doesn't seem like it has been long enough for us to already be graduating the children of our alumni," says John F. Amos, O.D., dean of the School of Optometry. "This really is a remarkable milestone for the school, but more importantly, it speaks well of the profession as a whole that these exceptional young people who have grown up with optometry would choose to follow their parents into the field."

**Early Exposure**

Optometry was a family affair even before Bill Sullins, O.D., graduated from the UABSO in 1976, so it should have come as no surprise when his daughter, Kristin, chose the same career. "I've got several first cousins who are optometrists, so Kristin certainly has been exposed to the profession for most of her life," Sullins says. "I had no idea she was considering optometry until she started looking at possible occupations she could pursue with a biology degree. I was thrilled that she would even think about it."

Kristin says the idea of optometry was always appealing, and the possibility of following her family members into professional practice had been in the back of her mind since she was a child. "I knew I was interested since I was about 10 years old," she says. "I was intrigued when my dad would check my eyes and would let me look into his eyes. Of course, I didn't know much about the actual science of it, but the idea that you could learn so much by looking into someone’s eye was always fascinating."

Kristin grew up around her father’s practice in Huntsville, Alabama. After high school she moved to Greenville, South Carolina, where she got her undergraduate degree from Furman University—but even then she says she never got completely away from the profession.

"I worked for an optometrist in Greenville while I was in college, and then I worked for Dr. Tom Norton at [UAB’s] Vision Science Research Center one summer," she says. "When it came time to make a decision, I discussed it with my dad, but he let it be my decision. I knew I wanted to study optometry, and I knew I wanted to come back to the state of Alabama. UAB was the obvious choice; in fact, I didn't really have intentions of doing anything else."

**Adolescent Indecision**

While Sullins was considering a return to her home state, applying to the UABSO involved a different kind of decision for Kentucky native Wes Mayes. Having spent his life near his father’s practice in Central City, Kentucky, Mayes could choose to study optometry at UAB, Southern College in Memphis, or Indiana University, since the state of Kentucky has contracts with all three schools.

It should be no surprise that Wes picked UAB, since his father, Freddie Mayes, O.D. ('79), was convinced early on of the value of his UABSO education. "At the time when I interviewed at schools, the thing that was appealing to me was the faculty at UAB," the elder Mayes says. "You could tell they believed they were building something special, and they were really committed to making it the optometry school of the future."

Within a few years, Mayes says, it was apparent that commitment was paying off. As the profession began to change and grow, the UABSO changed along with it, always maintaining its
place at the forefront of optometry research and education. For his part, the elder Mayes remained closely involved with the group through the UABSO Alumni Association as well as through the Kentucky Optometric Association.

“Early on, Wes says he felt the need to try a different profession to distinguish himself from his father, but during his freshman year at the University of Kentucky, he says he started to come around to the idea of carrying on a family tradition. “I considered dentistry when I was in high school, but after my first year of college, I really started to warm up to the idea of having a family practice that could be passed down from one generation to the next,” Wes says. “I realized that optometry allows you to help people and to be directly involved in health care without sacrificing your family life.”

A Change of Heart

Like Mayes, Matt Habel says he was not always sold on the idea of taking up his father’s legacy. The son of Martin Habel, O.D. (’78), Matt grew up in the small town of Rainsville in northeast Alabama. There, he says, he felt pressure to pursue a career in optometry, but it didn’t come from his father.

“I was always pretty emphatic that I would never go into optometry,” Habel says. “Growing up in a rural area, everyone knows you’re the doctor’s boy, so I grew up feeling like everyone just assumed that was what I would do—like I didn’t have any other options available to me.”

As a result, Habel pursued an undergraduate degree in chemical engineering at the University of Alabama. But as his graduation date grew closer, he realized that life as an engineer might never be as fulfilling as what his father’s profession had been.

“When I was 15, my dad took me on a mission trip to Costa Rica, and I got to help out the doctors while they provided eye exams,” Habel says. “I got to see how people’s lives were changed by something as simple as receiving a pair of glasses—something I had always taken for granted.”

With that memory in the back of his mind, Habel says he finally realized that optometry wasn’t his only option, but it was definitely going to be his first. “I’m a very social person, and I realized that if I went to work as a chemical engineer, I would basically be locked in a box every day with my work,” Habel says. “I knew if I didn’t get in at UAB, chemical engineering would still be an option for me.”

Martin Habel says his son’s decision came as a shock for several reasons. “For one thing, he had always said he would never go into optometry,” Habel explains. “But there was also the fact that he can walk into the workplace today as a chemical engineer and do as well as a newly graduated optometrist would.

“But of course, as a parent, I want him to be happy in whatever he does and to find meaning in that. It’s flattering that he would choose to follow in my footsteps.”
For most graduates of the UAB School of Optometry, life is filled with the rigors of being a practicing optometrist. But for two alumni in particular, the normal challenges of a career have become even more complicated.

Both Mark McGuire, O.D. (’83), and Carl Spear, O.D. (’91), serve in the U.S. Army Reserve, a duty that has often meant juggling optometry practice with intermittent and sometimes extended military service. “It’s a little different than the normal optometry stuff,” says Spear.

When Duty Calls

For the past 24 years, McGuire has served in the United States Army Reserve. He began in a Health Professionals Scholarship Program (HPSP) like many of the school’s students today. After graduation, he completed four years of active duty as part of the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson in Colorado. He spent another 10 months on active duty in the early 1990s during Operation Desert Storm, where he worked at Eisenhower Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia; Puerto Rico; and at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia.

The past two years, however, McGuire’s schedule has become especially dizzying. Before 9/11, McGuire was working in a private practice in Marion, North Carolina. He was training for duty in Egypt with the 3rd Medical Command when the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington occurred. His original deployment lasted a month, and he had hired two optometrists to cover the office while he was away. “Once 9/11 happened, I just looked at [the optometrists] and said, ‘I think you guys might need to see how long you can stay here.’ And they agreed to stay on.”

McGuire returned to the States in the fall of 2001 but was quickly re-deployed to Kuwait on Christmas Day. Once there, he took on the task of establishing an eye clinic in Afghanistan, where he brought replacement spectacles and protective-mask inserts for the 101st Air Assault, 10th Mountain, and 82nd Airborne divisions.

“The from a medical standpoint,” McGuire says, “we just have to make sure that the soldiers have the proper medical preparation. And once they get there, we’ve got to make sure we’ve got the assets to maintain that force—in other words, keep them healthy and keep them active. It’s a constant challenge.”

Starting From Scratch

In the summer of 2002, McGuire returned to the United States and took part in preparations for Operation Iraqi Freedom, but soon after returned to Kuwait, where he assumed command of the Troop Medical Clinic in Camp Doha. There he was responsible for the health care of 10,000 coalition troops in the immediate area. Building the camp, he found, was not unlike building a small city—one where everything from water to food to health care has to be established.
After his initial service, Spear spent two years at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma, where he taught and completed a year of residency in ocular diseases. He then moved to Florida, where he worked for Vision America in Tallahassee and later set up a private practice in Navarre. “It’s what I really wanted to do when I started,” Spear says of the private practice. “It just took a little while to find the right place to do it.”

Spear didn’t live his dream long before duty called again. In August 2001, he rejoined the Reserve, and the rest, of course, is history. Spear was activated on the 27th of December 2002 as part of the 350th Civil Affairs Command. “We’re sort of the liaison between the civilian population, the military, and all the other non-military agencies,” he says.

**Activating Optometrists**

Spear’s initial mission at the beginning of 2003 took place in Hungary, where his unit trained a group of Iraqi exiles for the impending invasion. After training, the Iraqis were subdivided according to region and functioned as native guides for portions of the country. “When we were going into an area,” says Spear, “we had a guy who knew the area, who knew the local dialect, who knew all the local customs—who still had friends and family in that area.”

Spear has been constantly busy since his reactivation, and after leaving Iraq in June of 2003, he has been working with a Special Operations liaison program to Latin America, based in Pensacola. He travels often to such places as Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Honduras, and Panama—yet he says he is very eager to return to private practice when he is released from active duty at the end of this year.

“I’ve gotten to do stuff that most people will never even think about doing and stuff that most people don’t even know exists,” says Spear. “It’s been fun, but I’m ready to get back to the civilian life. Basically, what I do in the military has nothing to do with the civilian side. But in the end it’s all [about] dealing with people, and really optometry is very much a people-driven profession. From that standpoint, obviously my background has been very helpful.”

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**Opportunities for Education Abundant in Armed Forces**

Like Mark McGuire and Carl Spear, many of the UABSO’s current students are involved with the military, often in a type of scholarship-for-service exchange program. For instance, both Blane Tarr and Jennifer Owen are in the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP). Similar to the Army ROTC program for undergraduate students, HPSP offers students two to four years of schooling for free, after which the students pay back the time to the Army.

“It very much appealed to me just because I have a personal distaste for debt,” says Tarr, a third-year student from Jefferson City, Tennessee. Tarr is also thinking about the military as a career after his initial service of four years. “For me it’s definitely an option,” he says. “I’m keeping all my doors open. The military appeals to me personally because that’s my personality type.”

When Tarr graduates he will have a direct commission to the rank of captain and will go to Officer Basic Course (OBC), which will train him for the duties he will have for the next four years. During that time, Tarr will most likely work as an optometrist doing primary care at an Army base somewhere in the United States, Europe, or Asia. Except for the location, the nature of the work will be similar to what he would encounter here as a civilian doctor.

Jennifer Owen, a soon-to-be fourth-year student, is in the Air Force’s HPSP and got involved both for the reduction of her school debt as well as for the prospect of travel. “I wanted the opportunity to be able to go to other countries and live other places,” says Owen, who has a brother in the Navy and a brother-in-law in the Army.

Owen will serve for three years after she graduates next May; she will find out some time next spring where she will be stationed. Like Tarr, she is also considering military service as an extended career. “I think within three years I’ll know if I want to stay and make a career out of it,” she says.

Another UABSO student, Patrick Pyron, is in his first year of optometry school and is going on his ninth year of service in the National Guard. He, too, is using his military service to help reduce the cost of school, though his involvement with the Guard began as an undergraduate.

Pyron has been using two scholarship programs: the Alabama National Guard Education Assistance Program (ANGEAP) and the Tuition Assistance (TA) program. Both have helped him in the past but are no longer available. His ANGEAP benefits have been used up from his undergraduate career, and the TA funds, which he only recently began receiving, have been discontinued for graduate students. Pyron will probably temporarily leave the Guard in order to focus on his studies.

In the meantime, Pyron will continue to work as an office manager for a local optometry practice. However, he says he’s planning to return to the Guard after school.
It’s plain to see that more elderly people are driving than ever before. And they’re having more—and worse—traffic accidents. Statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that drivers past the age of 70 now have a fatality rate almost equal to that of teenage drivers, the highest-risk demographic of all.

What to do about that growing problem, though, is much less clear. Physicians, researchers, and policy makers are struggling with both the complexity of automobile safety for the elderly and the political power of a voting bloc that’s resistant to the idea of introducing standards that would make it more difficult to get drivers’ licenses.

“Research at the policy level has found that states such as Alabama, which don’t require vision tests when people renew their drivers’ licenses, have higher crash rates among older drivers than states that do test,” says recently retired Professor of Optometry Melvin Shipp, O.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H. “That stands to reason, since the major sensory activity involved in driving is vision. And as age increases, so does the likelihood of sensory deficits.”

Clear the Road

Statistics show that almost half of Americans over age 65 will develop one of the three most common eye diseases: glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration. But Shipp says the answer to those problems is not to stop those people from driving, but rather to give them the treatments and the tools they need to continue driving without impairments.

“There’s an unfortunate misperception that the whole point of vision testing is to get drivers off the road,” Shipp says, “when in reality, the purpose is to make sure that drivers are functioning at their highest level. So many of these conditions can be either treated or corrected, which improves safety for everybody.”

But visual acuity, however important, is only one part of the puzzle. Reflexes and reaction times also decline with age. Hearing loss is sometimes a factor, and then there is one of the most complicated of impairments, involving an activity known as “visual processing.” Even though a driver may have good vision, with age, the cortex of the brain often becomes unable to juggle competing sensory information rapidly enough to make decisions that would prevent a collision.
Unexpected Results

New research is offering insight into the types of interventions that help make elderly drivers safer and those that don’t. And there have been some surprises along the way. Cynthia Owsley, Ph.D., professor of ophthalmology at the Callahan Eye Foundation Hospital, is lead author of a recent study that assessed the effectiveness of educational programs for older drivers. Though such programs have increased in popularity in recent years, Owsley’s project found that they don’t reduce the risk of car crashes among the drivers who participate.

“We found that drivers who took these classes were more inclined to modify their behavior,” says Owsley, “such as avoiding high-traffic times of day, postponing trips in inclement weather, driving less at night, driving more slowly, and being more cautious at intersections.

“But giving them the knowledge and skills turned out to have no effect on the crash risk. To me, that suggests two things: First, the behavioral changes are so subtle that they may not show up in accident rates, and second, innovative prevention programs are going to be required for us to see a real difference in safety benefits.”

Some of these changes, according to Owsley, involve so-called “passive” approaches—improving the driving environment rather than the capabilities of individual drivers. Examples include making roadways and vehicles safer, road signs more visible, and restraint systems and air bags more effective.

Traffic engineers in Michigan scored a victory recently by creating more turn lanes at intersections, making traffic signals and road stripes larger, and increasing the size and brightness of road signs. As a result of such simple changes, the state’s crash rate among drivers 65 and older is already down by more than a third.

There is still a major public-health role, Owsley says, in treating drivers who have chronic medical conditions that affect their safety. She cites a recent study by her research group in ophthalmology that found that drivers who had cataract surgery were involved in 50 percent fewer crashes. “These findings were especially important because it’s the first time we’ve identified a way to reduce crash risk by directly focusing on the older driver,” says Owsley, “rather than on seat belts, air bags, highway design, and so forth.”

Legislative Optometry

Alabama is far from alone in giving older drivers the green light to renew their licenses indefinitely with no screenings of their physical ability. It’s one of 32 states that have no special requirements for license renewals.

Florida, which has the highest death rate for older drivers, does give some vision and hearing tests to elderly applicants—but as many as 18 years can pass before re-testing is required. As a result, a driver who passes the tests at 75 may be home free until the age of 93.

Of the states that do require regular vision screenings, most of them look at simple visual acuity (or sharpness) only, using tests that are unable to measure important factors such as visual tracking, depth perception, contrast sensitivity, and night vision.

But when it comes to making public policy, Shipp says, “Older people are more inclined to vote, and politicians who run for office know that.”

That’s one reason why James McClendon, O.D., who taught clinical optometry at the UABSO in the 1970s, says he’s proceeding very carefully in his effort to help a group of professionals come up with proposals for Alabama legislators to set new safety standards for elderly drivers.

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“There’s a lot of anecdotal evidence about people now driving who shouldn’t drive, or should drive with severe restrictions,” McClendon says. “As for statistical evidence, it’s a little bit early to say. We’re working with the Alabama Department of Public Safety to extract the data we need from incident reports, and then graph it by decades of age.

“We believe there’s a significant problem, and that’s why our goal is to do this correctly.”
The 31st Doctoral Convocation and Hooding Ceremony for graduating optometry students was held on May 21 at the Alys Robinson Stephens Performing Arts Center. Of the 38 students honored, 28 graduated with a grade-point average of 3.0 or higher and four students graduated *cum laude*.

Graduate degrees were conferred on three students. Xiaochuan Guo received a Doctor of Philosophy in Vision Science. Lan Quang O'Donnell earned a Master of Science in Vision Science as well as a Doctor of Optometry. Katie Gilbert McCreary earned a Master of Public Health along with the Doctor of Optometry.

Postdoctoral Certificates of Residency were given to Regina L. Callihan, O.D., Lori Walker Couch, O.D., Paul A. Dearling, O.D., MindaBeth Greenberg, O.D., Carrie Adrian Heller, O.D., Thea Rossi, O.D., Elizabeth Anderson Steele, O.D., Candice Turner, O.D., and Ann Marie Wonderling, O.D.

Adam Shaikh, O.D., completed the VSP Fellowship in Glaucoma. Candice Turner, O.D., earned national recognition when she received the Vistakon/Dr. George W. Mertz Contact Lens Residency Award for talent and commitment in the fields of children’s vision and contact lenses.

The AOSA Faculty Awards were given to Roderick J. Fullard, B.S., O.D., Ph.D., Basic Science Instructor Award; Kristine Becker Hopkins, O.D., M.S., Clinical Science Instructor Award; and Joseph B. Fleming, O.D., Clinical Instruction Award. Tammy P. Than, O.D., received the 2004 UAB President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching for Optometry.

William B. Deal, M.D., senior vice president for medicine and dean of the University of Alabama School of Medicine, was the guest speaker. His address offered a reminder to graduates “of the rich heritage of optometry that has enabled you to get to this point today,” as well as some advice for managing the stress that is common to a physician’s lifestyle.
**Scholarship Awards**

- **Clark F. Amos Presidential Scholarship** (Student Entering Residency Program and Optometric Education)
  - Lee Doyle McPherson
  - James Daniel Wilder III
- **Dr. Lester Caplan/CIBA Vision Corporation Endowed Scholarship** (Excellence in Contact Lens Patient Care)
  - Lee Doyle McPherson
- **Vision Service Plan/Dr. Henry P. Peters Excellence in Primary Care Scholarship Award** (Excellence in Primary Care and Committed to Enter Private Practice)
  - Abnous Anna Abbey
- **Fredric and Marion Rosemore Family Foundation Scholarship**
  - Given in honor of G. Robert Crosby, O.D.
  - (Best Exemplifies Primary Care Practice Potential)
  - Eugene Everett Benfield III
  - Brent Coleman Laircey
  - Lee Doyle McPherson

**Achievement Awards**

- **Alcon 4th Year Optometry Student Scholarship Award**
  - Ashley Brooke Holloway
- **Best Alcon Pharmaceutical Case Report**
  - Ashley Brooke Holloway
- **COVD Award for Excellence in Vision Therapy**
  - Demonstrates a Strong Interest in Clinical Skills and Vision Therapy
  - Chad Freeman Chaney
- **Designs for Vision Incorporated/William Feinbloom Low Vision Award**
  - Excellence in Low Vision Patient Care
  - Chad Freeman Chaney
- **Eschenbach Low Vision Student Award**
  - Outstanding Proficiency in Low Vision Patient Care
  - Katie Gilbert McCready
- **Goodkin Border and Associates Low Vision Award**
  - Excellence in Low Vision Patient Care
  - Christine Drake White
- **Marchon Practice Management Award**
  - Superior Practice Management Skills
  - Audrey Edwards Richards
- **Odyssey Medical, Inc. Dry Eye Management Award**
  - Proficient in Dry Eye Management
  - David John Helton
- **RGF Lens Institute Clinical Excellence Award**
  - Excellence in Dispensing Contact Lenses
  - Brent Coleman Laircey
- **VisionAmerica Co-Management Award**
  - Excellent Management Skills
  - Donald Richard McCurdy
- **Vistakon Acuvue Eye Health Advisor Award**
  - Student Citizenship Scholars
  - Best Exemplifies Ideal Eye Care Standards of Practice
  - Amy Elizabeth Riggs
- **Vistakon Excellence in Contact Lens Award**
  - Excellence in Clinical Contact Lens Patient Care
  - Ashley Brooke Holloway
- **Winchester Optical/David J. Kerko Low Vision Award**
  - Outstanding Proficiency in Low Vision Care
  - Adria Noelle Porter

**Awards of Distinction**

- **Dean’s Award of Excellence**
- **Outstanding Student in Academic, Leadership, and Service Qualities**
  - Ashley Brooke Holloway
- **Southern Council of Optometrists Clinical Excellence Award**
  - Excellence in Clinical Patient Care
  - Chad Freeman Chaney
- **Jess Boyd Eskridge Clinical Excellence Award**
  - Excellence in Clinical Patient Care
  - Amy Elizabeth Riggs
- **Birmingham Area Optometric Society Clinician Award**
  - Outstanding Proficiency as a Clinician
  - Lisa Ragas Pradillo
  - Adria Noelle Porter
- **Beta Sigma Kappa Silver Medal**
  - Academic Excellence
  - Lee Doyle McPherson
- **Alabama Optometric Association Leadership Award**
  - Outstanding and Proven Leadership Qualities
  - Chad Freeman Chaney

**Residency Award**

- **Vistakon/Dr. George W. Mertz Contact Lens Residency Award**
  - Demonstrates Talent and Commitment in the Fields of Children’s Vision & Contact Lenses
  - Candice Irene Turner, O.D.

**Faculty Awards**

- **The UAB President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching School of Optometry Recipient**
  - Tammy P. Than, O.D.
- **American Optometric Student Association Faculty Awards**
  - Basic Science Instructor Award
  - Roderick J. Fullard, O.D., Ph.D.
  - Clinical Science Instructor Award
  - Kristine Becker Hopkins, O.D., M.S.
  - Clinical Instruction Award
  - Joseph B. Fleming, O.D.

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  - Tammy P. Than, O.D.
- **American Optometric Student Association Faculty Awards**
  - Basic Science Instructor Award
  - Roderick J. Fullard, O.D., Ph.D.
  - Clinical Science Instructor Award
  - Kristine Becker Hopkins, O.D., M.S.
  - Clinical Instruction Award
  - Joseph B. Fleming, O.D.
VSP Scholarship Awards
The VSP Scholarship Awards were announced recently. Each year, fourth-year optometry students are considered for these awards, which are given for excellence in academic performance, excellence in primary-care clinic, and commitment to enter independent practice of optometry. Brent Laircey received the Henry B. Peters, O.D., VSP Excellence in Primary Care Scholarship Award, and Abnous Abbey received the Vision Service Plan Scholarship Award.

Save This Date!
November 13, 2004
Dedication of the new ground-floor teaching clinic.
Invitation to follow.

White Coat Ceremony
Second-year optometry students recently marked the beginning of their clinical practice with the White Coat Ceremony. This new ritual, begun last year, emphasizes the importance of both clinical excellence and compassionate care of patients. At the ceremony, Jacob Ivey was awarded the Vision America/Dr. James W. Marbourg Clinical Examination of the Visual System Outstanding Student Award.

You Are Invited
You are invited to Open House at the UAB School of Optometry, Sunday, September 19, 2004, from 1:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Open House will be held in the newly renovated Clinic Floor of the Henry B. Peters Building at 1716 University Boulevard. Students, staff, and faculty will be on hand to answer your questions concerning the program. Admissions and financial aid representatives will be available to address your individual concerns. For more information, and to confirm your attendance, contact Lisa Entrekin at (205) 934-6150 or at lentrekin@icare.opt.uab.edu.
**SECO**

The highlights of the 2004 SECO International Conference must surely be the sweep of major awards by the UAB School of Optometry. Dean John F. Amos was named the SECO 2004 Optometrist of the South. Nominated by the ALOA, Amos is described as having “influenced an entire generation of southern optometrists.”

UABSO faculty member Mary Jean Sanspree, Ph.D., was honored with the SECO 2004 Award of Merit. Sanspree is director of the Outreach Module of the Vision Science Research Center, where she works with the Rural Alabama Diabetes and Glaucoma Initiative and the Helen Keller Art Shows for visually impaired children, among other projects. In supporting the ALOA nomination of Sanspree, Amos remarked that “she has touched the lives of many by making a difference in the quality of life of those with visual limitations.”

Wrapping up the sweep is Janice Payne, CPO, who received the SECO 2004 Paraoptometric of the South Award. Payne is on staff at the Philadelphia, Mississippi, practice of 1983 UABSO graduate Kent Stribling, O.D. Stribling nominated Payne, saying, “her dedication has been an integral part of the success of this practice.”

The excitement of the SECO Awards made the annual Alumni Reception all the more festive. Attended by alumni, faculty, staff, and friends, the reception was an occasion to relax and reconnect with colleagues.
More About the School

2004 Service Awards

Faculty and staff of the UABSO were recently honored for years of continuous service to UAB. It is through the commitment and drive of these and others that the UAB School of Optometry continues to excel.

25-year service award

- Jennifer Banks
- John G. Classe, O.D.
- Michael S. Loop, Ph.D.
- Edna Maxine Rice
- Thomas T. Norton, Ph.D.
- John T. Siegwart, Ph.D.
- David R. Whikehart, Ph.D.
- Willie M. White

20-year service award

- Roderick J. Fullard, O.D., Ph.D.
- Adam Gordon, O.D.

15-year service award

- William J. Benjamin, O.D.
- William J. Lenker
- David E. Parkinson
- Craig D. Smith, Ph.D.

10-year service award

- Virginia P. Brooks
- Diane R. Dickinson
- Timothy W. Kraft, Ph.D.
- Chi-Hao Luan, Ph.D.
- Randy P. Mann
- Sheila A. Peoples
- Kiran Srivastava
- Om Srivastava, Ph.D.
- Connie S. Wright

5-year service award

- Dava B. Craft
- William B. Crysel
- Champion Deivanayagam, Ph.D.
- Kristine B. Hopkins, O.D.
- William K. McCalley
- Krishna Murthy, Ph.D.
- Daniel Sibley

Optometrists Sighted at AOSA’s Eyeball

The Annual Eyeball, sponsored by the AOSA, attracted students, faculty, and staff to the Pickwick Hotel in Birmingham for a live band and great fellowship. Shown left to right are: Thomas Norton, Physiological Optics; Kim Ocampo, second year; Kristin Fulwiler, second year; Paul Gamlin, Physiological Optics; Jennifer Owen, third year and AOSA President; and Tim Gawne, Physiological Optics.

Optometrists attending the AOA Congressional Conference in May in Washington, D.C., “stormed the hill” to meet with congressmen about pressing issues pertinent to optometry. Pictured are (from left to right) Ben King (’83) from Mobile; Donna Matthews (’88) from Birmingham; Martha Greenberg from Russellville and incoming ALOA president; Congressman Robert B. Aderholt; Marsha Swanson (’00) from Birmingham; and David Duval (’74) from Mobile.

Gathering at their annual holiday dinner are 2004 residents Carrie Heller, Candice Turner; Ann Wonderling; Paul Dearing; Lori Couch, Gina Callahan, and Beth Steele. Not pictured are MindaBeth Greenberg and Thea Rossi.
Faculty Focus

Roderick J. Fullard, Ph.D.
From Down Under to the Deep South

In his 20-plus years at UAB, Roderick J. Fullard, Ph.D., has always stood out among his peers. As if his research wasn’t enough, a relaxed demeanor and disarming accent make him one professor who is difficult to forget.

But even with the unique qualities that set the native Australian apart, he admits that over the past 20 years, his family has become more southern than he might like to admit.

“My oldest daughter, Michelle, is studying at Vanderbilt, where she has fallen in love with Nashville and has even acquired a taste for country music—which I never thought would happen,” laughs Fullard. “And when my wife, Helen, went to work for Outback Steakhouse a few years back, she had a couple of customers who complained that the hostess with the ‘fake’ Australian accent was a bit much. So maybe we’re not as foreign as we thought.”

“Fake” accent aside, no one questions Fullard’s authenticity when it comes to his role as a professor in the Department of Physiological Optics. Since 1988, he has devoted much of his time to researching keratoconjunctivitis sicca, commonly known as dry eye. During that time, he has led some of the definitive studies on some tear proteins, including lapocalin, formerly referred to as tear-specific prealgamen. “[Former UABSO professor] Dr. Dawn DeCarlo (’92) was a graduate student when we conducted some of the first studies on that,” Fullard says. “Later, I worked with Allergan when they were trying to come up with their cyclosporine formulation for dry eye, which has recently been approved for their phase 1 and phase 2 clinical trials.”

These days, Fullard says he has turned his attention more to the ocular surface and cytokine receptors, which he says helps complete the picture of how cyclosporine is effective in treating dry eye.

“The cooperative environment between schools and departments here makes research so effective,” Fullard says. “That is one thing that has kept me here. The other is that I honestly love to teach. I teach optics, which is one of the less glamorous subjects in optometry, but it is important. Every time a student prescribes a pair of glasses or contacts, optics come into play.”

With three children—one daughter in college, another, Bonnie, entering college this fall, and a son, John, entering his junior year at Spain Park High School—Fullard says his time away from the school is never dull.

“Three kids keep me fairly busy,” he says. “The two girls were valedictorians at Hoover High School, and all three have always been involved in sports and other activities. I feel very fortunate that a good bit of my life revolves around my family.”

Shipp Retirement
Melvin D. Shipp, O.D., Dr.P.H., retired in May after 28 years with the UAB School of Optometry. Participating in many activities in the fields of optometry and public health, Shipp has excelled as a teacher, a researcher, and a leader. Twice he received the AOSA Award for Excellence in Teaching Instruction. He is a senior scientist in the CLEERE study, investigating the prevalence and progression of refractive error in children. He has been active in the American Academy of Optometry, the National Board of Examiners in Optometry, and the American Public Health Association, among others. At the UABSO, where Shipp was a professor of optometry, he served as director of Optometric Technician Program, assistant dean for clinical services, director of clinics, and chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee. Shipp retired from the UABSO to become the Dean of the Ohio State University College of Optometry. At a retirement party in his honor, friends and colleagues reminisced, roasted, and toasted Shipp while wishing him the best in his future endeavors.

AOSA Officers
On June 1, 2004, the AOSA installed new officers:

President Anjali Patel
President-Elect Jon Bundy
Trustee Kim Ocampo
Trustee-Elect Elissa Bunick
Vice-President Zach McCarty
Treasurer Brandy Carroll
Secretary Melissa Brown
Second-Year Rep. Kate Thompson

AOSA Officers
From the President

For several years the UABSO alumni president has been asked to speak briefly to the graduating class at its doctoral convocation and hooding ceremony. This was my first time to be involved in the ceremony, and it was a very emotional experience for me. It brought back fond memories of my days as a student and reminded me of how important my own family was to my development and success.

In preparation for this task, I thought a lot about what I could say that would be meaningful to graduates as they start their professional journey. My suggestions were as follows:

To begin, I would suggest that you find an optometrist who has been actively involved in optometry for more than 20 years, someone who is passionate about the profession. This kind of relationship will help ground you and connect you to your optometry roots.

Second, I would suggest that you surround yourself with other health-care colleagues who respect you and optometry. Spend time developing relationships with professionals who are interested in taking care of your patients when needed, and take part in collaborative efforts where your skills and expertise are respected.

Third, I would suggest that you stay connected to your school and your optometry friends and colleagues. Your relationship with UAB doesn’t have to end today.

As time passes you will discover that some of the friends you made during your time here will be friends of the heart, not just friends of the road.

And finally, if the past is in any way predictive of the future, I know that if you work hard, you will find a career that will provide you with a very comfortable lifestyle. I challenge you to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves to give back to your profession and to your community. When called on by the school to provide a free eye exam for a needy child, do it! When asked to join together with other optometrists in the state to eradicate amblyopia in this great country, do it! When called on by the state professional organization or UAB to serve on a committee or work on a special project, do it! When asked by the Alumni Association to make a special contribution to a scholarship fund, just do it! Your involvement will make a difference, and I promise it will enrich your life and professional career.

May you be richly blessed as you give back to creation, making this world a better place than you found it.

Lynn Hammonds, O.D.
President, UABSO Alumni Association

Fred Wallace, O.D.
Building on 52 Years of Family Practice

If any alumnus can relate to the students on the cover of this issue, it’s Fred Wallace, O.D.

Like those students, Wallace is a second-generation optometrist. And like those students’ fathers, Wallace has remained active in the UABSO Alumni Association while also being heavily involved in the Alabama Board of Optometry.

Wallace’s father, Harry Wallace, O.D., started a family practice in Bessemer in 1952. After graduating from the UABSO in 1982, Wallace joined his father’s practice, which the two of them continue to run today.

“I grew up in that environment, working in the office during the summers and things like that,” the younger Wallace says. “I was always interested in the work that went on there, but my parents never recommended that I pursue it as a career. They allowed me to make that choice on my own.”

Wallace and his father continue to run that practice today, but his patient load accounts for only a portion of Wallace’s responsibilities. He currently serves as executive director of the Alabama State Board of Optometry.

Wallace was appointed to the state board by then-Governor Jim Folsom in 1993, and he served two five-year terms before stepping down and taking over the executive director responsibilities in 2004.

These days he says he devotes one day per week to working on board matters and uses the remaining days to see a full load of patients, although he says he puts some time in at the board office throughout the week.

“It keeps me busy, but I enjoy it,” Wallace says. “I still treat patients, and the board allows me to be involved in another level of patient care—one that deals with issues facing the profession as a whole. It can be dealing with issues related to patient care, it could be dealing with legislative issues, or it could be any number of other things that keep you in contact with all the licensees in the state. The thing I like best about it is that you’ve got your finger on the pulse of the whole profession.”

When not dealing with optometric issues, Wallace says he spends time with his kids—Eric, 19, and Suzanne, 16—as well as with his other interests of piano, guitar, and Porsches.

Asked whether or not either of his children is likely to become a third generation of optometrists, Wallace says it is too early to tell.

“That is yet to be determined,” he says. “There are a lot of options available to them, and I think which one they choose to pursue should be their decision, just like it was for me.”
Dave Goode
Hometown Loyalty Fuels Community Involvement

Dave Goode is a native of Birmingham, and he loves his hometown.

If being a lifelong resident isn’t enough, Goode’s years of consistent service attest to the high level of his commitment to his community.

After graduating from John Carroll High School in Birmingham, Goode stayed close to home when he chose to attend UAB—at that time a relatively new school. While enrolled in college as a full-time student, Goode worked nights at The Birmingham News. He also found time to be involved in a variety of collegiate activities.

Goode graduated with a degree in finance and accounting, a degree that has served him well in his career, as he has spent most of his professional life working at AmSouth Bank. Today, he serves as AmSouth’s senior relationship manager in the wealth management group.

Goode and his wife Anna have three children, Davis, Maggie, and Charlie. In addition to being actively involved in his church, Our Lady of Sorrows, Goode is also involved in most aspects of his children’s lives. He works with the Cub Scouts and coaches his son’s baseball team and his daughter’s softball team. In his spare time he says he enjoys family camping trips.

Occasionally Goode says he spends time on the golf course and hopes that too will one day be a family activity if his children take an interest in the sport. He also takes time to be on the board of the Ronald McDonald House as well as the Dean’s Community Advisory Committee at the School of Optometry.

UABSO Helps Make Campaign a Success

The Campaign for UAB was the largest fund-raising endeavor ever undertaken by a public university in the state of Alabama. The $350-million goal was surpassed by $39 million, with the help of more than 51,000 donors.

The UAB School of Optometry played an important role in the success of the campaign. Our school goal was $5 million. By the end of the campaign, more than 800 people had participated, contributing $8,724,747.

Without the help of alumni, friends, corporate friends, foundations, faculty, and staff, we never would have come close to our goal, but with your help, we surpassed our goal by more than 75 percent. For that help, those of us at the school are extremely grateful. Thank you!

Although not all the goals that were set six years ago have been met, some have been surpassed. We established new endowed scholarships but still need many more. We established research funding, but fell short of the needs. The goal for renovation of the ground-floor clinic started out at $600,000, and it grew into a $5-million project. Most of the funds needed for this venture have been secured. The functional MRI building was completed and the equipment installed in what also turned into a multimillion-dollar undertaking. Program support has been steady for all areas of the school.

These donations represent outright gifts, pledges, endowments, planned gifts, memorials, and annual-fund gifts as of the end of the campaign on December 31, 2003.

The UAB School of Optometry is poised for continued successes. On behalf of everyone at the school, I thank you, our donors, for so generously investing in the school’s future. I hope that you will continue to be our partners as we maintain the momentum established with the campaign.

Sincerely,

Peggy Driscoll Striplin, M.A.
Senior Director of Development
Director of Alumni Affairs

Call for Nominations
Alumni of the Year

Nominations for this year’s Alumni of the Year are due on October 1, 2004. For information on criteria, consult the alumni page of the UABSO Web site at www.uab.edu/optometry, or contact Virginia Rogers at (205) 934-5605 or at vsr@uab.edu.
“One thing that appealed to me back then was the faculty at UAB. You could tell they believed they were building something special, and they were really committed to making it the optometry school of the future.”

— Freddie Mayes, O.D.
UABSO graduate and father of current student Wes Mayes

“I’ve gotten to do things most people will never even think about doing and things that most people don’t even know exist.”

— Carl Spear, O.D.
UABSO graduate and Army reservist

“There is an unfortunate perception that the point of vision testing is to get drivers off the road when in reality, the purpose is to make sure drivers are functioning at their highest level.”

— Melvin Shipp, O.D.
Former UABSO professor