

INVIEW

Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences Newsletter

A Word From Our Chair Joern B. Soltau, MD

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

Eleanor Roosevelt



Dear Friends,

Winter is upon us and the end of another year is fast approaching, so it is time once again to wish everyone a healthy and joyous holiday season. We can now reflect on 2021 as a year of triumph and success in the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences. We have learned to live with COVID-19, the Delta variant, and will now adjust to the Omicron variant as we enter 2022. Life must go on and so must the mission of our wonderful department.

In our clinical division, the conversion of our electronic health record system to Epic has demanded a lot of our attention and required a lot of our energy. During this turbulent period, our staff has been terrific and the remarks on our patient care surveys have been overwhelmingly positive. In short, I love our Ophthalmology team. Another accomplishment was the creation of the Norton Children’s Medical Group with our pediatric ophthalmology service now working under that umbrella. We welcomed Korrekt Optical to the Kentucky Lions Eye Center and proudly saluted the faculty promotions of Dr. Chris Compton, Dr. Wei Wang, and Dr. Patrick Scott to Associate Professors. I would also like to thank the Louisville Downtown Lions Club for their generous contribution in support of our new state-of-the-art ultrasound equipment.

In our research division, we made the reorganization and restoration of laboratory space within our complex a top priority while at the same time witnessed our researchers secure funding, publish, and expand their research programs. Our *Raise Some L* campaign was successful with bringing in additional funds that will be used to attract new talent to our faculty. With the relief of COVID-19 mandates, we were finally able to formally thank the Round-savall family members for their wonderful gift of our new confocal microscope.

In our academic division, the highlight of our year was the completion and dedication of our new Harry C. Stephenson, MD Conference Center. Without Dr. Harry Stephenson’s continued support of our teaching mission, this massive renovation project would not have been possible. I hope that you will join us for Grand Rounds and a presentation from one of our visiting scholars in the Stephenson Lecture Series so you can see this marvelous educational venue if you have not done so already. We graduated another group of outstanding residents and received national accolades for the certification of our residents in LASIK and refractive surgery procedures at the UofL Health Laser Eye Center at Medical Center East.

I wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season and a bright, successful New Year filled with much happiness, love, and peace.

Joern B. Soltau, M.D.
Chair

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- New Dr. Harry C. Stephenson Conference Center
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- Vision Research Update
- “Louie” The Cardinal Bird Visits the Eye Center

KORREKT OPTICAL SELLS EYEWEAR & CONTACTS LENSES IN KLEC

Korrekt Optical, one of Louisville’s oldest optical establishments, has leased the optical shop space in the Kentucky Lions Eye Center atrium. The space was previously occupied by Vision Associates, an optical dispensary from New Jersey that closed many of their out-of-state locations during COVID. Harry Schulman, the Executive Director and Vice Chair for the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences said, “Our main goal was to have an optical provider onsite to service our patients. We are not in the business of selling eyewear. We provide subspecialty care to this community and we just wanted our patients and the people who work on the Health Sciences Campus to have a convenient option.” All lenses are made locally to ensure a quick turnaround on prescription eyewear. Korrekt Optical’s optician, Tom Lardner, who previously worked for Vision Associates is familiar with the University of Louisville Physicians-Eye Specialists doctors and many of our patients who became accustomed to purchasing their glasses and contact lenses at the time of their appointments. Most patients who need a prescription for eyewear or contact lenses see Dr. Patrick Scott for their well eye care exam. Steve Baker, COO of Korrekt Optical, said “We are very happy to provide our services to the UofL community and the downtown Louisville area.” Korrekt Optical is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM.



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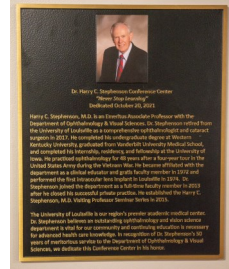
Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences Newsletter

“Never Stop Learning”

Dr. Harry C. Stephenson

Dr. Harry C. Stephenson Conference Center Dedication Reception

What began as a massive renovation project at the beginning of the summer resulted in a gorgeous new conference center dedicated and named in honor of our department’s beloved Dr. Harry Stephenson. On October 20, 2021, the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences held a dedication reception for the newly enlarged and remodeled Dr. Harry C. Stephenson Conference Center. Department Chair, Dr. Joern Soltau gave a presentation on the new 88 inch 4k touch panel with built-in white board and audiovisual system with the ability to livestream and record our faculty and guest speakers. The conference center is also equipped with surround sound and programmable LED dimmable lighting. Comfortable new chairs, new carpet, ceiling, and paint, two new sets of double doors for front entry and rear exit were added, and a service counter with a built-in icemaker and a rectangular under-the-counter refrigerator completed the restored conference center.



Dr. Toni Ganzel, Dr. Harry Stephenson, & Dr. Joern Soltau

The renovation necessitated removal of the back concrete wall to expand the seating. Over 70 guests attended the dedication reception including Dr. Harry Stephenson, his wife Catherine Stephenson, and many members of the Stephenson family. Dr. Soltau and Dr. Shorye Payne Durrett presented Dr. Stephenson



Front



Rear

with a gift of appreciation for his dedication to our department. Dr. Stephenson said, “This conference center is now a fresh, beautifully done, modernized, state-of-the-art facility and ready for our faculty, residents, fellows, and visiting scholars to use for many years to come.” Dr. Stephenson also sponsors the Dr. Harry C. Stephenson Visiting Professor Lecture Series on an annual basis. This renowned lecture series features guest speakers from other universities in the United States and from around the world. Dr. Stephenson added, “I want to thank Dr. Joern Soltau for his commitment to this department and I really appreciate all of the hard work our Executive Director, Butch Schulman did to meet budget and get this project done on time. Butch and his staff are simply remarkable.” The guests intermingled over light hors d'oeuvres and wine with Dean Toni Ganzel, Dr. Ron Paul, our faculty, and distinguished members of the university and Louisville community.



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Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences Newsletter

People Who Make a Difference

Our Featured Physician:

Shorye Payne Durrett, MD
 Assistant Dean of Student Affairs
 Ophthalmology Educator, Mentor,
 Leader and Community Treasure

Dr. Shorye Payne Durrett grew up in Clarksdale, Mississippi, a small town with a population of 17,500. She attended college at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where she completed her Bachelor's degree in Biology. Dr. Durrett completed her Medical School education at the University of Louisville, and continued her



training with our department for her ophthalmology residency, where she served as the Chief Resident, and her fellowship in medical retina and uveitis. She also completed a Master's degree in Public Health with a focus on clinical investigational science at the University of Louisville. She said, "All of my studies have been here in Louisville so giving back to the university I truly love comes easy for me. Louisville has become my adopted hometown." Dr. Durrett is a Board Certified ophthalmologist and an active member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology where she volunteers her time in their nationally renowned Minority Ophthalmology Mentors program. She is also a member of the Kentucky Medical Association, Jefferson County Medical Society, Kentucky Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons, Louisville Academy of Ophthalmology, and Ophthalmology Women of Louisville, where she served as the past-President. Dr. Durrett has served on multiple School of Medicine committees including but not limited to the Medical School Admissions Committee and the University of Louisville Summer Pre-Matriculation Medical Program for Minority and Rural Students where she initiated the Mary S. Joshua Endowed Scholarship. Dr. Durrett primarily works at the Veteran Administration Medical Center where she practices medical retina and teaches our department's residents and fellows. Over the past twenty years, she has also worked as a part-time faculty member and Assistant Professor in our department where she currently serves as the Director of Community Engagement and Professional Development. In 2020, Dr. Durrett was appointed as the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs for the School of Medicine.

Dr. Joern Soltau said, "Shorye's dedication to the advancement of women and minorities and her devotion to our Louisville community is uplifting and inspiring." Upon the death of Dr. William Kean, the only African American ophthalmologist in the city of Louisville, Dr. Durrett continued to run his private practice and deliver eye care to the west end community from 2008 through 2013. She also served as an eye care consultant to the Park Duvalle Community Health Center as well. Dr. Durrett is a life member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority where she served as the President of the Louisville Alumnae Chapter from 2013-2015. She was the Local Chair of the initiative, *Empowering Males to Build Opportunities for Developing Independence (EMBODI) Committee for Male Youth* with her beloved Delta Sigma Theta Sorority as well. She currently serves as Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's Local Chair for the Ways & Means Committee Overseeing Plans for Black Expo 2023, *"Rebuilding a Wealth Mindset from Generation to Generation"*. In 2017, Dr. Durrett established Vision Ambassadors, Inc. a 501c3, non-profit whose mission is to provide educational and financial assistance to help students obtain terminal-level graduate degrees with the intent of community wealth building and public service. In 1990, Dr. Durrett rededicated her life to Jesus Christ and in 2003 she became a licensed Associate Minister with Canaan Christian Church. Whether it is teaching Sunday School at her church, or helping underprivileged youth raise money in a car wash on Saturday afternoon, or working with our residents on the collection and donation of used eye glasses to those in need, or volunteering at numerous local Health Fairs, Dr. Durrett's larger than life presence, commitment and influence are simply undeniable. Dr. Durrett views herself as a "vision ambassador to help people see physically and spiritually and to shed light in people's lives." She is married to George Durrett, a local businessman and entrepreneur. The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences is extremely proud of Dr. Shorye Payne Durrett, our homegrown educator, mentor, leader, and community treasure.

Fundraising and How You Can Help



Lisa Warner

Interim Senior Director of Development

You can reach Lisa at:
lisa.warner@louisville.edu
 or 502-852-7448

As 2021 draws to a close and you are thinking about making your year-end charitable contributions, please consider investing in the missions of our department: Patient Care (locally and in underserved areas abroad), Research, and Teaching. Your partnership will strengthen the impact our department will have in our Kentuckiana community, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and around the world.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences Newsletter

People Who Make a Difference

Ophthalmology Faculty and Staff Discover the Secrets of Louisville Chefs

Louisville produces a third of the world’s bourbon, has numerous James Beard nominated and award-winning chefs, and is known for its unique and diverse culinary fare, so the clinical division of our department seized an opportunity to indulge and support many of the local restaurants that struggled during the pandemic. Once Louisville began to open back up from our statewide shutdowns this past summer, the Ophthalmology faculty treated our staff to private dinners at some of our city’s finest eateries. Dr. Sigford, Dr. Barr, and Dr. Wang took our retina team to *Mesh Louisville*. Dr. Soltau, Dr. Washington, and Harry Schulman took our glaucoma team to the *Gasthaus German Restaurant*. Dr. Mohay took our cataract and anterior segment team to *Porcini’s*. Dr. Eiferman took our cornea and refractive surgery team to *Mojitos Tapas Restaurant*. Dr. Compton and Dr. Clark took our oculoplastic team to *Mango’s*. Dr. Cooley and Dr. Silvestros took our pediatric ophthalmology team to *Havana Rumba*. The entire clinic staff had a marvelous time out on the town with our doctors. These relaxing venues, the great food, and fun conversations enhanced the comradery and close working relationships between our faculty and staff that continuously produces some of the highest patient satisfaction scores in UofL Health and the School of Medicine.



Dr. Soltau, Dr. Washington, and Harry Schulman with our Glaucoma team at *Gasthaus German Restaurant*



Dr. Barr, Dr. Sigford, and Dr. Wang with our Retina team at *Mesh Louisville*



Dr. Silvestros and Dr. Cooley with our Pediatric Ophthalmology team at *Havana Rumba*



Dr. Eiferman with our Cornea and Refractive Surgery team at *Mojitos Tapas Restaurant*



Dr. Compton and Dr. Clark with our Oculoplastic team at *Mango's*



Dr. Mohay with our Cataract and Anterior Segment team at *Porcini's*

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Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences Newsletter

Community Outreach & Engagement

Dr. Richard Eiferman and Dr. Erica Tolar Volunteer at Louisville Zoo

Dr. Richard Eiferman, cornea and external disease professor with the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, and Dr. Erica Tolar, a Louisville veterinary ophthalmologist and gratis faculty member with our department, volunteer their time and expertise as consultants to treat and manage the ophthalmic care of the animals at the Louisville Zoo. The fulltime zoological veterinarians at the Louisville Zoo utilize Dr. Tolar and Dr. Eiferman to augment the veterinary eye care of our zoo animals. Dr. Eiferman, who also has a clinical research interest in drug delivery, trains our residents in refractive surgery, and works in our resident teaching clinic one day a week, will periodically have our residents accompany him and Dr. Tolar to the zoo for broader exposure to veterinary ophthalmology. Dr. Erica Tolar runs Bluegrass Veterinary Vision, her own veterinary ophthalmology practice here in town. She occasionally lectures to our residents



on an array of topics and provides clinical ophthalmic exams on the transgenic pigs used in Dr. Maureen McCall's research laboratory. Dr. Tolar graduated from the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois, completed her internship in small animal medicine at the University of Tennessee, and returned to the University of Illinois for her residency in veterinary ophthalmology. She is a member of the Louisville Zoo Foundation Board. Dr. Eiferman and Dr. Tolar see an array of eye diseases and ophthalmic conditions at the Louisville Zoo. Dr. Zoltan Gyimesi, Senior Staff Veterinarian at the

Louisville Zoo said, "We are appreciative of medical specialists in our community, like Dr. Tolar and Dr. Eiferman, who volunteer their time and expertise to help us take great care of the animals at the Louisville Zoo. Dr. Tolar has been our consulting ophthalmologist since 2007 and has assisted with an assortment of patients from great apes to pinnipeds, to birds, reptiles, amphibians, and even fish. Dr. Eiferman has gotten more involved as a consulting ophthalmologist the last few years, as his sustained delivery of ophthalmic drugs can be highly desirable in zoo species that are not easily handled for multiple times a day topical therapy." Dr. Tolar conducts routine exams on the pinnipeds because sea lions and gray seals develop otariid keratitis and are at risk for cataracts and lens luxation while in captivity. The zoo staff has trained the pinnipeds to allow Dr. Tolar to do their exams and check their eye pressure without anesthesia.



Dr. Eiferman worked on a Red-Tailed Green Rat Snake named "Pickles". Snakes do not have eyelids and this non-venomous snake had an infection in the tear duct that went up to his orbit. Dr. Eiferman injected antibiotics with a long-acting sustained drug delivery around the eye via his patent that is currently being submitted to the FDA for human use. Dr. Tolar worked on a Snow Leopard with congenital eyelid agenesis. The big cat was missing the lateral half to three-quarters of her upper lid that required reconstructive surgery. She also worked on a tiger with cataracts and

secondary glaucoma that necessitated an enucleation of her globe. Eye diseases in the zoo animals vary from an orbital fungal retrobulbar abscess in a wallaby to a corneal perforation in a bongo to an eye infection in a Colorado River toad. Dr. Eiferman and Dr. Tolar worked on a penguin with fungal keratitis. A penguin's cornea has no blood supply and must be treated topically. Since you cannot put eye drops in a penguin's eye because the medication washes out when it dives into the water, Dr. Eiferman injected the medicine under the lining of the penguin's eye to provide a sustained release of the medication. Dr. Tolar said, "In this particular penguin, we placed subconjunctival collagen with voriconazole." Sometimes, zoo animals may not require treatment at all. Dr. Eiferman examined the opacity on the cornea of an orangutan that turned out to be a scar and did not require any type of surgery. He also examined the cataract on a 50 year old geriatric flamingo who was not a good candidate for surgery due to his advanced age. Dr. Eiferman said, "Our residents can learn from much of the ophthalmic care and treatment of these zoo animals because there are many similarities and differences in their eye anatomy and the various ophthalmic diseases." The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences is grateful for the opportunity to have Dr. Tolar and Dr. Eiferman support the fulltime veterinary staff at our Louisville Zoo. Our hometown zoo is a national treasure with many award-winning exhibits. We are proud of this community outreach initiative from our fulltime and gratis faculty.

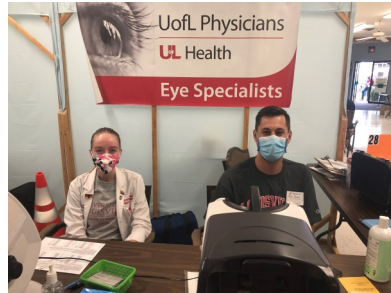
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Community Outreach & Engagement

Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church Health Fair

The residents from the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences and several University of Louisville Medical School students provided eye screening at the Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church Health Fair on October 2, 2021. Our Chair, Dr. Joern Soltau and the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Dr. Shorye Payne Durrett, assisted our residents and Medical School students at this event. Other departments in the School of Medicine also provided an array of services to the community including hearing exams, immunizations, and mammography.



Second year ophthalmology resident, Dr. Alex Rider (right), and fourth year Medical School student, Elizabeth Dugan (left)



Ophthalmology Department Chair, Dr. Joern Soltau (left) and Professor of Family & Geriatric Medicine and the Director of Health Equity in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in the Health Sciences Center campus, Dr. Karen Krigger (right)



Vision Screening at the Kentucky State Fair

The Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences joined the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation to provide vision screening this year at the 2021 Kentucky State Fair. Our ophthalmology residents worked over both weekends during the two-week run of the Kentucky State Fair. Our Executive Director and Vice Chair of Administrative Affairs, Harry "Butch" Schulman (pictured left), as well as our Clinic Manager, Bobbie Stroud, worked in the vision screening booth at the Kentucky State Fair during the week.

2021 Annual Ophthalmology Pumpkin Decorating Contest



The 2021 Annual Ophthalmology Pumpkin Decorating Contest was a grand success. Our patients selected the following winners: First Place – **Desiree Johnson**, Second Place – **Autumn Spears**, and Third Place – **Svetlana Iouknel**. Ophthalmology appreciates our creative staff for entering their decorative pumpkins and our patients for taking the time to vote on this year's winners.

Refractive Eye Surgery Program

Call **502-588-0550** to schedule an appointment or to get more information.



Procedures are offered at a more affordable rate ranging from \$495—\$795 per eye for custom LASIK

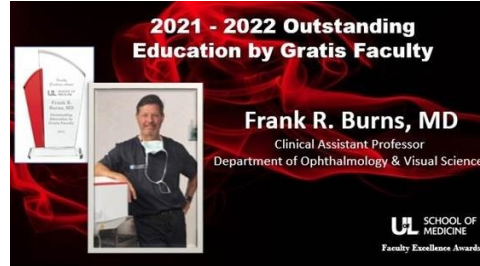
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Special Faculty Honors & Recognition

Dr. Frank Burns Wins School of Medicine Faculty Excellence Award

Dr. Frank Burns was selected by a committee in the School of Medicine as the recipient of the 2021 Faculty Excellence Award for Outstanding Gratis Faculty Teaching. Dr. Burns remains very active in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences resident teaching program. He gives regular lectures to our house staff and proctors our residents in cataract and laser surgeries. Dr. Burns has been an integral part of our nationally acclaimed refractive surgery training program. Dr. Burns and Dr. Richard Eiferman are both certified by Johnson & Johnson to teach the resident didactic course in refractive surgery and staff resident laser surgeries. Thanks to Dr. Burns and Dr. Eiferman, all of our residents are certified on the excimer laser prior to graduation from our program. The University of Louisville is only one of three ophthalmology programs nationwide that offers the Johnson & Johnson certification program to our residents. Dr. Burns worked with our Chief Resident, Dr.



Sanket Shah to present very impressive data on our residents' LASIK results at the recent American Academy of Ophthalmology meeting. Dr. Burns also serves on the UofL Health Laser Center at Medical Center East Laser Steering Committee. Dr. Burns is the immediate past-President of the Kentucky Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons. He is also the past-President of the Greater Louisville Medical Society (GLMS) and he currently serves on the GLMS Foundation Board. Dr. Burns is a member of the Annual Doctors Cup Golf Scramble Committee which raised money to fund six \$5,000 scholarships to Medical School students in 2021. On a national level, Dr. Burns serves on the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons Government Relations Committee. The Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences is extremely proud of our alumnus, Dr. Frank Burns. After he graduated from Medical School at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Dr. Burns completed his internship at the University of Louisville. After his internship, he worked in the research laboratories of our department's world renowned research scientist, Dr. Chris Paterson, who passed away in 2018. Dr. Burns conducted research for two years on corneal ulcer and pseudomonas keratitis and presented his data in Israel at the International Ocular Trauma Conference in Tel Aviv. He graduated from our ophthalmology residency program in 1992 and subsequently entered private practice in the metropolitan Louisville area where he has remained active with our department ever since. Dr. Burns is married to Dr. Carolyn Burns who he met in Medical School. She was the head of the pathology department at Jewish Hospital for 20 years and now works in transfusion medicine. They have two adult children, Meghan and Chris. Dean Toni Ganzel presented Dr. Burns with his award at the Dean's award ceremony and reception on November 30, 2021.

Dr. Jeremy Clark Wins National AAO Secretariat Award

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) selected Dr. Jeremy Clark for the AAO Secretariat Award. The Secretariat Award is an annual award recognizing special contributions to the Academy and the field of ophthalmology, as determined by Academy Senior Secretaries and Secretaries in their respective regions. Dr. Clark was recognized for his work as the Kentucky Ophthalmology Political Action Committee Chair (KOPAC) for the Kentucky Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (KAEPS). KOPAC represents all ophthalmologists throughout Kentucky. In his role as KOPAC Chair, Dr. Clark led innovative strategies for PAC fundraising during the COVID pandemic, and spearheaded successful initiatives to help ophthalmologists lobby in Frankfort for the ocular health of our patients. Through Dr. Clark's leadership, KOPAC held an online auction during the annual KAEPS meeting and secured the passage of the Driver's License Recertification Bill in our state legislature which protects all drivers in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences is extremely proud of Dr. Clark's achievements.



Dr. Soltau Wins KAEPS Ophthalmologist of the Year Award

Dr. Joern Soltau was selected by his peers in the Kentucky Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (KAEPS) as the *Ophthalmologist of the Year*. Dr. William "Chip" Richardson, President of KAEPS and an ophthalmologist from Georgetown, Kentucky presented Dr. Soltau with the award at the annual KAEPS meeting in May of 2021.



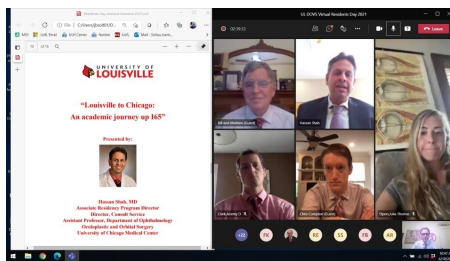
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Residents & Fellows

Residents Graduation 2021

The Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences said “Good-Bye” to our graduating residents on June 19, 2021. Despite the pandemic, our senior residents graduated without a hitch and for the second year in a row, our residents’ presentations and the guest speaker portion of our program was held virtually. The annual Charles Dwight Townes Memorial Lecture was given by Dr. Hassan Shah, an alumnus of our program. Dr. Hassan Shah is now an assistant professor of ophthalmology in the Oculoplastic and Orbital Surgery Division at the University of Chicago Medical Center. The Best Resident Presentation was awarded to our current third year resident, Christopher Langlo, M.D., Ph.D. Our Chief Resident, Dr. Frederick Blodi passed the torch to our new Chief Resident for the current academic year, Dr. Sanket Shah. The Patrick R. O’Connor Faculty Teaching Award, given to a fulltime faculty member selected by our residents, was presented to Dr. Richard Eiferman. The Charles T. Moran Volunteer Teaching Award, given to a gratis faculty member selected by our residents, was presented to Dr. Charles Bruce. The Dr. Melvyn M. Koby Educational Excellence Award, selected by our faculty and given to a graduating resident who exudes compassion and empathy in patient care and an excellent bedside manner with our patients, was presented to Adam Clarke, M.D. The residents’ graduation reception was hosted by Dr. Joern and Karin Soltau at their North Star Farm. Our faculty, staff, and invited guests from the community wished our graduating residents the best of success in their future endeavors: **Dr. Frederick Blodi** who is now in private practice in Des Moines, Iowa; **Dr. Adam Clarke** who is now in private practice in Columbia, Missouri; **Dr. Casey O’Shea** who is now in private practice in Atlanta, Georgia; and **Dr. Mohammad Ali Sadiq** who is now in a Retina Fellowship program at Cornell University. Dr. Judith Mohay, the Director of our Resident Teaching Clinic said, “All four individuals are great surgeons, compassionate physicians, and excellent clinicians. I tremendously enjoyed working with each of them and they will be truly missed.”



2021 Honored Guest Speaker, Dr. Hassan Shah



Best Resident Presentation presented to Christopher Langlo, MD, PhD



Our faculty and residents gather for a fun group photo



Patrick R. O’Connor Faculty Teaching Award presented to Dr. Richard Eiferman



Resident Reception held at North Star Farm



Charles T. Moran Volunteer Teaching Award presented to Dr. Charles Bruce



Our graduating residents with Dr. Judith Mohay (from L to R: Dr. Sadiq, Dr. O’Shea, Dr. Blodi and Dr. Clarke)

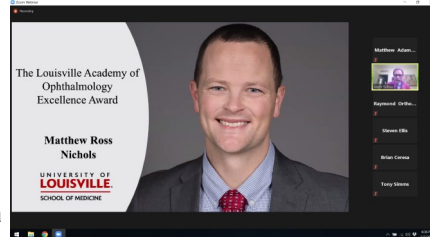
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Medical Student Award & Holiday Celebrations

Medical School Graduate, Dr. Matthew R. Nichols Receives LAO Award

The 2021 Louisville Academy of Ophthalmology Excellence Award was presented to University of Louisville Medical School graduate, Dr. Matthew R. Nichols at the Senior Honors Convocation this past May. The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences faculty selected Dr. Nichols to receive this special award. Dr. Nichols grew up in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. He graduated from the University of Louisville with a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering, worked as a Project Engineer at the Toyota Motor Manufacturing company after college, and then completed his Medical degree at the University of Louisville as well. Dr. Nichols accepted a commission with the United States Army after graduation, and he is currently an ophthalmology resident at the Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The Louisville Academy of Ophthalmology sponsors this award given to a graduating Medical School student who demonstrates excellence in ophthalmology elective coursework and remains committed to a career in ophthalmology after Medical School. The Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences salutes Captain Matthew Nichols on this special achievement.



Breakfast with Santa

Dr. Soltau (Santa) and his trusty elf (Butch Schulman) hosted a "Breakfast with Santa" event for our department's faculty and staff on December 11, 2021. The breakfast was catered by Chef Darnell Ferguson's *Super Chefs* restaurant, a breakfast and lunch café in the Highlands area of Louisville. Our Executive Director and Vice Chair of Administrative Affairs, Butch Schulman met Chef Darnell in line at Starbuck's. They became instantly acquainted, hit it off real well, and the next thing we knew, *Super Chefs* catered our holiday breakfast. The cooks prepared omelets to order for our faculty and staff, along with fresh fruit, bacon, sausage, biscuits and jam. Butch said, "It is very important that we support minority owned businesses in the metropolitan Louisville area. Chef Darnell just recently opened a new restaurant, *The Drippin Crab*, on Jefferson Street. He is not only a fabulous chef, but a superb human being." Dr. Soltau dressed in full Santa attire with beard and hat, and presented our staff holiday gift cards from the clinical faculty.



Ophthalmology's Annual Halloween Costume Contest

Once again, Ophthalmology's Annual Halloween Costume Contest held on October 29, 2021 was a grand success. Dr. Soltau came dressed in Bavarian attire complete with lederhosen, jacket, hat, and shoes. The staff winners were: First Place – **Crystal Woosley** as "Sam" from the movie, *Trick or Treat*; Second Place – **Katie Ward** as "Cruella Deville" from the movies, *Cruella* and *101 Dalmatians*; and Third Place – **Savana Horn** as "Mrs. Incredible" from the movie, *The Incredibles*.

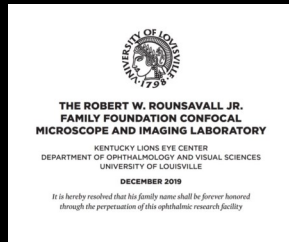


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Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences Newsletter

Louisville's Vision Research Center of Excellence

Private Dedication of Confocal Microscope for Rounsavall Family



The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences held a private dedication of our new confocal microscope in honor of the Rounsavall family. Dr. Joern Soltau gave presentation on the various research, clinical, academic, and philanthropic initiatives within our department and thanked the entire Rounsavall family for their generous gift. Members of the Rounsavall family met with our research faculty and spent time in the new Robert W. Rounsavall, Jr. Family Foundation Confocal Microscope and Imaging Laboratory. Dr. Jennifer Noel conducted a demonstration on the confocal microscope. Several Rounsavall family members viewed images under the microscope as well. Dr. Soltau presented the Rounsavall family with a dedication booklet that included our current research endeavors within the department and various images taken with the confocal microscope by the members of our research faculty. Dr. Maureen McCall, Vice Chair of Research Affairs said, "Our new Olympus confocal microscope has made our imaging capabilities on par with our colleagues at other institutions. It has made a huge impact of the quality of our images for presentations, grant applications and publications. We are grateful to the Robert W. Rounsavall, Jr. Family Foundation for their fabulous gift."



The Rounsavall family (from right to left): Elizabeth Rounsavall, G. Hunt Rounsavall, Gretchen Clark, Robert Rounsavall, Mary Rounsavall, and John Clark



Gretchen Clark and G. Hunt Rounsavall view images under the new confocal microscope.

Former Research Faculty Member was our Keynote Speaker at the Annual DOVS Vision Sciences Retreat

The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences held our annual Vision Sciences Retreat on October 1, 2021. Former Research faculty member, Dr. Nicholas Delamere was this year's keynote speaker. Dr. Delamere served on the faculty of our department from 1986-2006 where his research laboratory studied the mechanisms which control ocular pressure, fluid movement and the regulation of ion transport molecules in the lens and optic nerve. Dr. Delamere is currently the Head of the Department of Physiology and a Professor of Ophthalmology and Physiology in the College of Medicine at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. His current research focuses on the regulation of ion transport proteins in the lens and ciliary epithelium. His laboratory presently studies the way Na,K-ATPase proteins function, not only as sodium pumps but also regulators of cell proliferation and gene expression. This research is aimed at a better understanding of disease progression in cataract and glaucoma patients. Dr. Delamere's keynote address at the Vision Sciences Retreat was entitled, "An Unusual Form of Control: TPRPV1 and TRPV4 Channels in the Eye". Dr. Delamere said he was "delighted to return to the place he called home for over 20 years." We were honored to have him back home for a visit.



From Left to Right: **Nicholas Delamere, PhD**, **Nazarul Hasan, PhD** (Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics), **James Whitley** (Anatomical Science and Neurobiology), **Megan Zipperer** (Anatomical Science and Neurobiology), **Jennifer Noel, PhD** (Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences), **Maureen McCall, PhD** (Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences), **Aaron McGee, PhD** (Anatomical Science and Neurobiology)

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Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences Newsletter

Research Funding and Publications

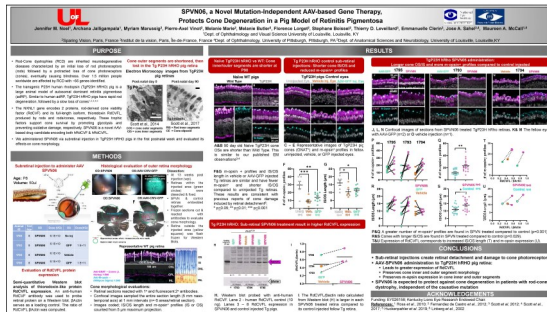
Dr. Maureen McCall Receives Two New Grant Awards



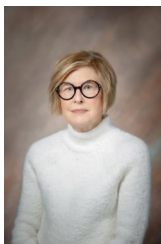
Dr. Maureen McCall, Professor and Kentucky Lions Eye Research Endowed Chair, received two new grant awards in 2021. The first grant is a Foundation Fighting Blindness sub-award entitled, “*Characterization of Swine Models for Usher*”. Dr. McCall will collaborate on this project with Astra Dinculescu, Ph.D. from the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Florida. The grant is intended to characterize a pig model for Usher syndrome which is a disease that causes blindness and deafness. Usher syndrome represents a group of genetically inherited disorders caused by mutations in at least ten distinct genes. There are no treatments currently available to prevent blindness caused by the irreversible loss of photoreceptor. One major challenge is the lack of an animal model that mimics the human USH3 ocular disease, specifically the gradual loss of retinal function and retinal degeneration caused by the lack of functional Clarin-1 protein. Dr. McCall and Dr. Dinculescu propose to create pig models of USH3 to understand the mechanisms of diseases and to provide a much needed tool for preclinical studies aimed to prevent vision loss. The second grant is an industry contract award from RZnomics, Inc. entitled, “*RZ-004 to Evaluate Rod Photoreceptor*”. RZnomics, Inc. is a Korean company that is seeking a cure for retinitis pigmentosa. Dr. McCall will examine the efficacy of their genome editing tool. The grant looks at the sub-retinal delivery of RZ-004 to evaluate rod photoreceptor morphological and functional survival in a pig model of P23H retinitis pigmentosa. The Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences applauds our Vice Chair of Research, Dr. Maureen McCall for her world renowned research work and advancements in the field of vision science.

Sparing Vision Presents Dr. Jennifer Noel’s Poster at ARVO

Sparing Vision, a genomic medicine company in Paris, France known to develop vision saving treatments for ocular diseases, selected three posters highlighting the company’s ocular research and lead gene therapy treatment, SPVN06, at the 2021 Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Annual Meeting. One of the three posters chosen was submitted by our own Jennifer Noel, Ph.D. Dr Noel’s poster entitled, *SPVN06, a Novel Mutation-Independent AAV-based Gene Therapy, Protects Cone Degeneration in a Pig Model of Retinitis Pigmentosa* was featured at ARVO. Sparing Vision administered SPVN06 via subretinal injection in pigs in their first postnatal week and evaluated its effects on cone morphology. The administration of AAV SPVN06 therapy was found to preserve cone morphology as well as preserve m-opsin expression in cone segments. It also leads to a greater expression of rod-derived cone viability factor, (RdCVFL). Dr. Jennifer Noel works in the laboratory of Dr. Maureen McCall. The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences congratulates Dr. Noel on this prestigious honor.



Dr. Barbara McLaughlin Wittebort Assists DOVS Research Faculty



Dr. Barbara McLaughlin Wittebort, former Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences faculty member, has returned from her retirement to accept a part-time advisory position within our Research Division. Dr. Wittebort assists our ophthalmology research faculty with grant writing and the review of their grant applications to help facilitate a higher acceptance rate. She also assists our research faculty with identifying various opportunities for grant submissions. Dr. Wittebort was a tenured professor at the University of Louisville with a joint appointment in the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences and the Department of Anatomical Sciences and Neurobiology for over 17 years. In 2003, while on sabbatical she was awarded a Science and Technology fellowship by the American Association for the Advancement of Science to work on Policy Analysis and Response at the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health.

In 2004, she accepted the position as Associate Dean for Research at the Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska where she served until her retirement. Dr. Wittebort has a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Florida, a Ph.D. in Anatomy from Stanford University, and completed her postdoctoral studies at Cambridge University in England and at the Division of Neuroscience City of Hope in Duarte, California. Her primary research focused on retinal and corneal diseases using animal models and human tissue respectively. Dr. Wittebort brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to our Research Division. She enjoys spending time with her seven grandchildren, ages 6 months to 15 years, doing pilates and yoga, and is an avid pickle ball player. The Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences is elated to have Dr. Wittebort back on our faculty on a part-time basis.

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“Louie” and the KLEC Lion

“Louie” the Cardinal Bird Visits Ophthalmology

“Louie” the Cardinal Bird visited the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences and the University of Louisville Physicians-Eye Specialists clinic to kick-off the 2021 Virtual Vision Walk sponsored by the Foundation Fighting Blindness, the world’s largest funder of retinal research focused on finding treatments and cures for eye diseases which affect more than 10 million Americans. Due to the pandemic, this year all participating universities featured their university’s mascot in a Virtual Vision Walk on June 12, 2021. “Louie” stopped by the Kentucky Lions Eye Center to entertain our patients, as well as express his appreciation to our research and clinical faculty and staff in support of Foundation Fighting Blindness.



“Louie” and our research team supported the 2021 Virtual Vision Walk



“Louie” walked through the clinic to greet our patients and thank Dr. Soltau for the invite in support of Foundation Fighting Blindness

Original Artist Pampers the KLEC Lion with a Much Needed Makeover

Rusty Schnurr is no stranger to the Louisville art scene. He grew up in St. Matthews, attended Trinity High School, and graduated with a BFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design. This past summer, he gave the metal lion sculpture that he created over twenty-five years ago a much needed makeover. The lion was temporarily removed from the Kentucky Lions Eye Center atrium to be cleaned and polished in another area of our complex. Rusty is renowned for his metal artwork around town. He became interested in working with metal while completing a post-Graduate course of study at the Atlanta College of Art. His company R. Schnurr Ironworks showcases many of his pieces in the metropolitan Louisville area. Rusty created a



Artist, Rusty Schnurr proudly stands next to the KLEF lion sculpture he created

life size horse head on display in Germantown, a large trolley car on display near Iroquois Park, three 30 foot tall horses for the Humana offices, and many other metal artworks in the Highlands neighborhood. The lion sculpture was created for a longtime member of the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation, Clay Morton. The lion sculpture is made from hot rolled metals found in old railroad cars and truck exhaust systems. Mr. Morton donated the lion sculpture to the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation in memory of Rusty’s grandfather, Raymond Schnurr, who was one of the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation Board members responsible for building the Kentucky Lions Eye Center. The Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation then placed the lion sculpture on

display in the atrium lobby of the Kentucky Lions Eye Center as a fitting permanent home. Since the lion sculpture is a symbol and constant reminder of our department’s gratitude to the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation for building the Kentucky Lions Eye Center, the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences paid Rusty Schnurr to clean and restore the sculpture to its original condition.

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Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences Newsletter

DOVS Alumni Reception & Summer Cookout

Annual Alumni Reception Held at AAO in New Orleans

The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences held our annual Alumni Reception at the American Academy of Ophthalmology meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana in November of 2021. Many friendly faces dropped by for a drink and hors d'oeuvres and the chance to win University of Louisville Swag Gear.



Dr. Eddie Washington and his wife Pamela Washington with Dr. Joern Soltau



Dr. Todd Purkiss (Alumnus, Class of 2008), Dr. Charles Barr, Dr. Joern Soltau, Dr. Sahana Vyas (Alumna, Class of 2005)



Dr. Joern Soltau, Dr. Julie Lee (Alumna, Class of 1988) and her husband Mr. Douglas Haynes



Dr. Pedram Hamrah (Alumnus, Class of 2006) and Dr. Joern Soltau



The UofL Swag Gear winners: From left to right – Dr. Casey Johnson, Dr. Chris Langlo (PGY4 Resident), Dr. Todd Purkiss (2008), Dr. Sahana Vyas (2005), Dr. Joern Soltau, Dr. Fiona Kim (PGY4 Resident), Dr. Ali Cohen (PGY4 Resident), and Dr. Juan Fernandez de Castro (Alumnus, Class of 2017)

Annual Summer Cookout for New Fellows, Residents, and Interns

Dr. Bill and Mathieu Nunery hosted this year's annual summer cookout in July of 2021 for our new Retina Fellow, PGY2 Residents, and PGY1 Interns. The Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences welcomed our new Retina Fellow, **Dr. Melih Ustaoglu** from the Gazi University School of Medicine in Ankara, Turkey. We welcomed our PGY2 resident class: **Dr. Simra Ahmed** from the University of Louisville School of Medicine, **Dr. Brennan Boyd** from the University of Arizona School of Medicine, **Dr. Joshua Iltis** from the University of Texas School of Medicine, and **Dr. Sina Rashidi Kikanloo** from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. We also welcomed our new PGY1 intern class: **Dr. Erich Berg** from the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine, **Dr. Andrew Clingerman** from the Northwestern University School of Medicine, **Dr. Kara Jones** from the West Virginia University School of Medicine, and **Dr. Kathryn Stucker** from the Indiana University School of Medicine. Dr. Joern Soltau said, "We are very proud of our new residents and fellows and we remain extremely grateful to Bill and Mathieu Nunery who opened up their home and continuously volunteer their time to our department even during their very busy retirement years."

