

ICO  
MATT



# Guiding The Way

A half-million dollar federal Navigator Grant helps staff at the IEI educate patients about the Affordable Care Act pg 4

Homecoming 2013 pg 12

Mixing Optometry and Politics pg 16

A Student's Long Road to OD pg 20

# JOIN ICO'S NEW

## ALUMNI AMBASSADOR PROGRAM!

Are you looking for a way to be more engaged at ICO? Do you have wisdom to share with current and prospective students?

If so, then consider joining our new Alumni Ambassador program. Recently established by the Alumni Council, the program is intended to increase outreach and engagement among alumni and provide them with an opportunity to build relationships with prospective and current students.

Alumni Ambassadors support and promote the college and provide leadership through participation and involvement in ICO-related activities. Getting started is as simple as filling out a short survey about what activities you wish to participate in.

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**Learn more about ICO's Alumni Ambassador Program**  
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Charese Sanders and Debbie  
Crandall



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## DONOR CORNER



Through his service in health policy, attorney **BARRY MARAM** has worked closely with the Illinois College of Optometry and Illinois Eye Institute for more than a decade. This summer, he gave \$1,000 to help IEI patient William McCollough get cataract surgery at the Hyde Park Surgery Center.

**GIVE TODAY**

### **HOW HE BECAME INVOLVED WITH THE IEI:**

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I know the Illinois College of Optometry and Illinois Eye Institute through my seven-and-a-half-years (2003-2010) of serving as director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, which was previously the Illinois Department of Public Aid. The department covered all of Illinois Medicaid, which was a large part of the department and state budget. The goal was adequate access to quality healthcare at a reasonable cost. I realized that the IEI was the ultimate partner in their commitment to access and the implementation of eye care for children throughout the state.

### **ON CONTINUING HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INSTITUTION:**

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Since 2010, I have continued to interface with the IEI, sometimes as a community member and sometimes in a consulting role. What's motivated me to continue my relationship, especially as a community member and donor, is the great work of the institution. I've seen many healthcare providers throughout the state in my career, and the doctors at the IEI demonstrate an uncommon level of care and expertise, especially in their commitment to those who would normally be disenfranchised.

### **ON HELPING WILLIAM MCCOLLOUGH TO GET SURGERY:**

---

William was having tremendous vision problems that needed the expertise that the IEI could provide, and he was able to get those services even though he was not covered by insurance. I was aware that the IEI was willing to take him on as a patient despite the fact that he didn't have the resources himself. When I saw him after the surgery, he said that before he couldn't see, and now he could. It was great to see a smile on his face, hear the excitement in his voice. It made all the difference. I donated because it's a worthy cause and there's a real result in helping people's lives.



Over the last five years, the Illinois College of Optometry has undertaken several projects in the name of providing a contemporary environment that meets the needs of our students, patients, faculty and staff. The results are state-of-the-art facilities like the Eyepod and the Lecture Center. It's important to continue this progress, and we have taken big steps this year to initiate plans for several construction and renovation projects here at ICO.

Compared to when we were in school, today the college library functions quite differently. So, we are reconfiguring the existing space to shrink the footprint of the two-story library to allow for more collaborative and engaging study areas. In the new designs, there is also ample individual study space available for students and plenty of room to access both digital and print collections. The iconic spiral staircase will remain a fixture, but with a refreshed look and feel. While the library will still maintain some space on the second floor, we will be repurposing much of the space for academic and clinic administration and our communications team.

The renovation project in the library will provide an estimated 30-plus offices and work cubicles for faculty and staff as well as additional conference and meeting rooms, which can double as additional study rooms for students. The shifting of space will provide a new synergy on campus between departments that will be a benefit to both students and faculty for years to come. The renovation will make way for much-needed clinic space and the building of the new Alfred and Sarah Rosenbloom Center on Vision and Aging.

Located in the Illinois Eye Institute, the Rosenbloom Center provides unparalleled care not only to patients 65 and older but also to those with visual impairment. Since we announced the Rosenbloom Center last year, we have already appointed Dr. Eric Baas as service chief and put in place support staff. We began seeing patients in the temporary space in March 2013, and plan to break ground on the permanent facility in the coming months. We also have extended our reach to the near west suburbs with a satellite clinic at Stickney Township Medical Center to provide eye care to residents of the township, which includes portions of five suburbs. Many of these patients have already received further treatment at the Rosenbloom Center.

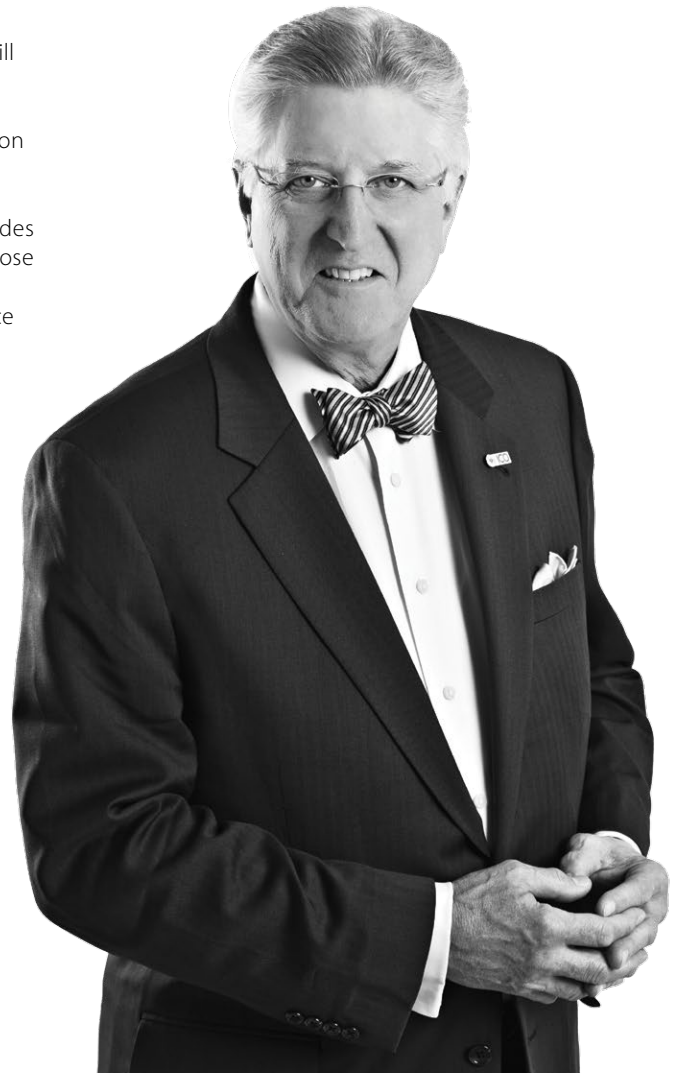
We are all very much looking forward to the day we get to break ground for the new Rosenbloom Center, especially after seeing the space planning and architectural renderings. This center fulfills a long-held dream of past ICO president Dr. Alfred Rosenbloom and his wife, Sarah. I invite you now to be part of their vision and join me by making a gift in support of the Rosenbloom Center, and ensure our ability to give patients superior care at cutting-edge facilities for years to come.



**Arol Augsburger, OD**  
President

## ICO UNDER CONSTRUCTION

### A Message From the President





IEI navigator Charmain Akhibi assists Claudia Cerino and William Franchesi with ACA enrollment.

## College Awarded Navigator Grant for ACA Education at IEI

For years, ICO's clinic, the Illinois Eye Institute, has been taking care of vulnerable populations and developing programs to chip away at the needs of uninsured and inadequately insured patients. Many IEI patients are not affiliated with a healthcare network, and often hold off on visiting the clinic until their vision is already compromised and an underlying health issue is present. So, when the opportunity to apply for a federal grant to develop a Navigator Counseling Program came along, the IEI leadership team jumped at the chance. In August, ICO was one of 11 institutions in Illinois to receive a federal Navigator Grant, a funding opportunity to help consumers understand new coverage options as the Affordable Care Act goes into effect. Nationally, \$67 million was awarded; at \$504,016, ICO's award was the second highest in the state.

"As the city's safety-net vision and eye care provider, the IEI is in a good position to put the grant to good use by educating

our patient base about the new health insurance landscape," says **Leonard Messner, OD, FAAO**, vice president for patient care services and executive director of the Illinois Eye Institute. "This grant is an extension of what we already do and we are fortunate to play a leadership role in the navigation and enrollment of Chicagoland's uninsured patient populations."

Following the grant announcement, two intense months proceeded as the institution worked to get a project team in place and train IEI staffers that had been selected as potential navigators. Many of the IEI staff hailed from the patient financial services and clinical operations departments. No new hires have been necessary to carry out the activities of the grant. In order for staff to be certified, they were required to complete and pass federal and state-specific training, which included two days of in-person sessions as well as background checks. Much of the training was devoted to helping consumers understand



insurance terms, premiums, copays, co-insurance, privacy and ethics, as well as to appropriate interactions between navigator and consumer.

From the start, IEI staff were eager to get involved with the navigator program. “I had staff emailing me to participate,” says **Shonzette Cheeks**, IEI senior director for patient services, who is serving as the project director for the implementation of the grant. “We even had to turn away some people.”

As of the end of October, 95 percent of the selected staff navigators had been fully certified as navigators. They will be enrolling existing uninsured patients and reaching out to organizations in the community to identify and help other uninsured residents get into qualified health plans. The goal is to assist approximately 6,000 individuals within the next year.

The government shutdown had no effect on training or other grant implementation activities, and navigators have fielded a healthy volume of calls from patients and interested Chicago residents. “I’ll be delighted when these individuals don’t have to worry about how they will have access to healthcare,” says Cheeks. “Before, we would enroll them in our charitable programs, but that’s not a long-term solution.”

The well-publicized glitches on the healthcare.gov website have meant that it sometimes takes navigators a long time to enroll patients in new health plans, and navigators have occasionally had to reschedule appointments because of these technical issues. Still, overall, despite the political strife and extreme media attention surrounding the launch of the Health Insurance Marketplace, things have smoothly at the IEI.

“I’m kind of disappointed with the negativity that has surrounded this, because it really hasn’t been our experience,” says Cheeks. “We have not had a negative experience at this point. We’ve had an overwhelmingly



Kathryn Nelson of the DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform trains navigators at ICO in September.

positive response in our interactions with patients and community groups.”

In the coming months, there will be several informational and enrollment sessions. The idea is for patients to get the in-person help they need and then enroll in qualified health plans either during regular IEI business hours or at one of the special sessions. Scheduled appointments can also be arranged. Several certified IEI staffers will be on hand at all times during IEI’s regular business hours.

“The patients have been very excited,” says Cheeks. “They feel that the IEI is a place they can trust because they have a relationship with us. They’re happy that they can now have access to healthcare without going to an unknown place or working with people they aren’t familiar with.”

—Jenni Gaster Sopko

I’ll be delighted when patients don’t have to worry about how they will have access to healthcare. Before, we would enroll them in our charitable programs, but that’s not a long-term solution.



**John Amos,  
OD '65,  
Named to  
Optometry  
Hall of Fame**

“I was pleasantly surprised and it was most unexpected. It’s the culmination of a career in which I have attempted to serve the profession.”

**John F. Amos, OD '65, MS, DOS**, was inducted to the National Optometry Hall of Fame at the 2013 Optometry’s Meeting in San Diego. A former professor and dean of the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry, Dr. Amos was recognized during a ceremony on June 27. The National Optometry Hall of Fame is administered by Optometry Cares - The AOA Foundation.

“I am very humbled and honored by my induction,” says Dr. Amos. “I was pleasantly surprised and it was most unexpected. It’s the culmination of a career in which I have attempted to serve the profession.”



After graduating from ICO, Dr. Amos spent several months as an associate in an optometric practice in Wichita, Kan., before being called to active duty in the Air Force.

He received a commission as an Optometry Officer and volunteered to serve in Vietnam. While treating patients at a field hospital in Cam Rahn Bay, he decided he would focus on education and furthering the scope of the optometry profession when he returned to civilian life. “I was treating eye disease and removing foreign bodies, and it occurred to me that this is something optometrists should do,” he says. “At that time, it was still a detect-and-refer model for disease management in the profession.” Dr. Amos received the Bronze Star for Meritorious Service as a result of his service in Vietnam.

Upon his return, he earned a degree in physiological optics from the Indiana University School of Optometry. He later joined the faculty at UAB, where he went on to publish two major textbooks, publish articles in every major optometric journal, and present hundreds of continuing education courses across the country. He was named dean in 2003 and served in that capacity until 2009; he retired in 2010 after 38 years at the school.

Looking back, Dr. Amos says the accomplishment he’s probably most proud of is developing one of the first approved residency programs at a school of optometry—a program that has served as a model for other schools to follow.

“Early in my career at UAB, I talked to the dean and received approval for a committee to look at establishing a residency program,” he says. “Then in 1978, we were able to start two programs. I have been a strong proponent of residency education because I wanted this type of clinical education when I was a student and there was none available.”

In addition to his roles at UAB, Dr. Amos has served on numerous committees of optometric organizations and remains active in several. He advises colleagues to work with professional organizations if they want to help enact change. “I would encourage everyone to get involved in organized optometry,” he says. “One of the activities I have enjoyed as an optometrist has been working through my local, state and national organizations. It so happened that my period of service coincided with some of the most exciting times in optometry with the passage of drug legislation. But there are other goals and that will be up to the next generation.”

Dr. Amos’ other honors include being named Optometrist of the Year by state, regional and national optometric associations. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the AOA, and was elected as a Distinguished Scholar of the National Academies of Practice. In 2004 he was named the UAB National Alumni Society Honorary Alumnus of the Year. In 2010 he received honorary doctorate degrees from the Southern California College of Optometry and Salus University.

He was the recipient of the Life Service Award from the American Academy of Optometry in 2012.

—Jacqui Cook



Drs. Eileen Bush and Eric Baas celebrate the new satellite at Stickney.

## Rosenbloom Center Opens Clinic at Stickney Medical Center

Though ground has yet to be broken on the Alfred and Sarah Rosenbloom Center on Vision and Aging (it's been operating out of a temporary space at the IEI), the center is already expanding its footprint beyond campus with the establishment of a satellite clinic inside the Stickney Township Medical Center in Burbank, Ill. In addition to Burbank, Stickney Township includes portions of four western suburbs.

"We hope the addition of vision and eye care services makes it easier for residents to access the care and treatment needed to maintain good eye health," says Rosenbloom Center chief **Eric A. Baas, OD '02, FFAO**. "The clinic at Stickney is an extension of our community outreach program and is there to provide comprehensive eye care for adults and children of all ages."

Eye care now joins the list of services Stickney Township residents can access at the medical center, which includes primary care, dental and mental health. The Rosenbloom Center satellite is open every Thursday and is attended by **Eileen Bush, OD '08**. She estimates that she's averaged about eight patients a day. "It's been a good start, especially considering we haven't been open very

long," says Dr. Bush. "I think the eventual goal is to see 12 to 16 patients per day."

Unlike at the Rosenbloom Center at the IEI, patients at the Stickney clinic are of all ages and have a wide range of vision issues. Dr. Bush says that she saw a lot of children over the summer, especially kids who were coming in for kindergarten eye exams. "I've also seen a lot of first-time older patients and a lot of patients who have not had an eye exam in years," she says. "Many of the older patients have multiple issues. So I've scheduled quite a few follow-up appointments at the Rosenbloom Center to take different types of imaging, test visual fields, etc."

The clinic's opening was commemorated on Aug. 22 with a ribbon cutting ceremony; in addition to Drs. Baas and Bush, representatives in attendance from ICO included President Arol Augsburg, OD, senior director of governmental and external affairs Vince Brandys, OD '90, and vice president for patient care services and IEI executive director Dr. Leonard Messner. Stickney officials, including township supervisor and public health district board president Louis S. Viverito, also attended the ceremony.

## Library Awarded More Than \$20,000 in Funding, Some from “Thrift Opt” Prize



ICO's library will undoubtedly be transformed in the upcoming months thanks to a long-planned renovation, but it's already enhanced its collection significantly through some recently awarded grants. Over the summer, the library received a \$5,000 Back to Books grant from the Illinois State Library and a \$15,000 grant from the National Network of Libraries in Medicine-Greater Midwest Region. It's also the beneficiary of the \$1,500 second-place Memmy award **Jonathan Dong '16** nabbed for his hit "Thrift Opt" video, which he produced with a few dozen classmates.

The ISL grant has been used to acquire materials for the Alfred and Sarah Rosenbloom Center on Vision and Aging. Purchases include patient education material and large-print books on low vision and aging, and

disease and disease management, including Alzheimer's, diabetes, autism and macular degeneration. Additionally, through investigating other ways to utilize the grant, the library developed a relationship with the Library of Congress' Braille and Audio Reading program. BARD provides access to downloadable books and magazines from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, as well as facilitates access to the Talking Books Center collections at the ISL and the Chicago Public Library. The library has already received two talking books machines that will reside at the Rosenbloom Center. Staff will be able to train patients on how to use the machines; they can also assist patients in signing up for programs so that they can receive their own talking books machines and audio books through the mail, free of charge.

Rosenbloom Center chief **Eric A. Baas, OD '02, FAAO** decided to purchase four computer stations equipped with closed-circuit televisions and voice recognition software available in six languages. The stations also feature a variety of applications including word processing, internet browsing and email, document and book scanning, voice recorder, spreadsheets, touch-screen and page-reader capabilities, and more. "It's cutting-edge assistive device technology," says library director Christine Weber. "We're all really excited about it."

Weber views the grants as complements to each other. "We're using the monies from both grants to help to create state-of-the-art assistive technology capabilities for use by Rosenbloom Center patients and their families," she says.



The library's talking book machines will reside at the Rosenbloom Center.

The NNLM-GMR grant will be used to acquire assistive technology equipment for the Rosenbloom Center so that low vision patients will be able to more easily access the material purchased by the ISL grant. After researching available resources, library director **Christine Weber** and

As for the \$1,500 Memmy prize awarded by the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Weber consulted with Dong and his classmates, and the consensus was that the funds go toward enlivening the library's walls. "It will definitely be used for some kind of permanent artwork for the library," Weber says. "It will be potentially related to archival photos, possibly in the form of a mural."



## InfantSEE Event Comes to ICO



By any account, **Tom Sullivan** has led a remarkable life. He graduated first in his class from Harvard. He was a guest on “The Tonight Show” with Johnny Carson more than 60 times. He’s appeared on such TV shows as “Touched by an Angel,” “Designing Women” and “MASH.” He sang “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the 1976 Super Bowl. He competes in marathons and triathlons. He’s also blind.

The performer headlined a day-long InfantSEE event at ICO on Sept. 6. For two hours, Sullivan shared his journey through stories and songs with a filled-to-capacity lecture center audience, frequently providing his own accompaniment on the piano that had been brought on stage for the occasion. At turns touching, funny and bawdy, the performance left audience members inspired and entertained.

Managed by Optometry Cares - The AOA Foundation, InfantSEE is a public health program designed to ensure that eye and vision care become an integral part of infant wellness and to improve children’s quality of life. The program provides no-cost eye and vision assessments for infants between the ages of six and 12 months, regardless of family income or access to insurance.

With the support of a grant from Allergan, ICO assistant professor and pediatric and binocular vision service chief **Valerie Kattouf**,

**OD ’95** worked with InfantSEE committee chair Glen Steele, OD to bring the event to ICO. “He contacted me last year to schedule dates,” she says. “To be honest, I was reluctant about the program at first. But a colleague at SUNY told me how inspiring and motivating students found the program to be. She said that a lot of people didn’t attend the event and regretted it. That was what really sold me.”

Dr. Kattouf got involved with the InfantSEE program—which launched in 2005—by virtue of the fact that she’s one of a relatively small number of pediatric lecturers in the country. “Pediatric lectures aren’t always the most popular at CE events, so there aren’t necessarily a lot of lecturers,” she says. “When the program was initially rolled out, I was lecturing a lot. So they reached out to me early on as I was discussing infant eye exams, and I traveled the country and gave about one lecture a month.”

Dr. Kattouf appreciates that InfantSEE is helping to raise awareness about not only the importance but also the feasibility of eye exams for young children.

“Nobody thinks anything of a two-year-old going to the dentist, but a two-year-old going to the optometrist seems alarming to many people,” she says. “In fact, vision has a much greater impact on a child’s well-being at that age.”

## ICO Board of Trustees Elects New Chair

**Donovan L. Crouch, OD ’63** was elected chairman of ICO’s board of trustees during the board’s biannual meeting in October. He has been a board member for 11 years and succeeds **Richard S. Kattouf, OD ’72**, who served in the role for six years. As chairman, Dr. Crouch will serve a one-year term and lead the college’s governing board, which is comprised of 20 members with varied backgrounds in education, healthcare, business and community leadership.

“We have a great board of trustees and a new five-year strategic plan to follow, so I am excited and look forward to the challenge,” says Dr. Crouch. “With everyone’s help, we will be able to fulfill ICO’s mission.”

Dr. Crouch is a 50-year private practice optometrist. A resident of Storm Lake, Iowa, he is actively involved with other organizations and boards such as the Iowa Optometric Association, Iowa Optometric Foundation, Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry, North Central States Optometric Council and the National Board of Examiners in Optometry. Dr. Crouch is a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and has been honored with numerous awards, including OD of the Year from the IOA and ICO’s Lifetime Service Award and Presidential Medal of Honor.





# Welcome, CI



## Class Profile

**1,177** Applicants  
**443** Interviewed

**174**  
Enrolled



# Class of 2017!



**23** Mean Age

**20** Age of Youngest Student

**34** Age of Oldest Student

**3.41** Mean GPA

**319** Mean OAT



# HOMECOMING 2013

A nighttime photograph of the Chicago skyline as seen from a boat on Lake Michigan. The city's skyscrapers are illuminated with various lights, and their reflections are visible on the water's surface. In the foreground, the curved railing of the boat is visible on the right side.

There aren't many sights that can match the majesty of the Chicago skyline at night. Attendees of the marquee Homecoming event, a dinner cruise aboard the Spirit of Chicago, enjoyed a prime view of the glittering architecture as they set sail on Lake Michigan. Thanks to all who were able to join us, and we hope to see even more alumni next year.

**Leadership Circle Reception • Blind Spot Barbeque • 50 Year Club Breakfast**





Student/Alumni Mingle • Dinner Cruise • Alumni Awards • Continuing Education



# ALUMNI AWARDS

**FRONT ROW:** Mamie C. Chan, OD '00, Professional Achievement Award; Sylvio L. Dupuis, OD '57, Humanitarian Award; R. Elliot Politser, OD '47, DOS, Lifetime Service Award; Anthony Barone, Outstanding Service Award; Albert S. Licup, OD '06, Young Alumnus of the Year Award

**BACK ROW:** Floyd Perkins, representing the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation, Distinguished Friend Award; David Rouse, OD '92, FAAO, Professional Achievement Award; Gary A. Leshner, PhD, FAAO, Excellence in Education Award; Arol Augsburger, OD, ICO President; Mark L. Skowron, OD '81, Alumnus of the Year Award



Thank You to Our Sponsors







# 50 YEAR CLUB

**FRONT ROW:** Herschel L. Stroud, OD '54, CCO; Edward Awe, OD '53, CCO; Claude H. McConnell, OD '48, NICO  
**BACK ROW:** Edward J. Seibert, Jr., OD '57; Norman Garber, OD '63; LeRoy W. Hill, OD '53, CCO; President Arol Augsburger, OD; Calvin E. Neymeyer, OD '63; Philip A. Ortiz, OD '63; Donovan L. Crouch, OD '63







# Dr. Mayor

## Mixing Optometry and Politics

By Jacqui Cook

When **Sandra Bury, OD '95**, enters the exam room to see a patient, she can expect to be greeted with questions about garbage pick up, taxes and street repairs well before the conversation turns to vision health.

That's because for many of her patients, their eye exam is a rare opportunity for one-on-one time with the mayor of their community.

Dr. Bury was elected last April as mayor of Oak Lawn, Ill., a southwest suburb of Chicago with about 57,000 residents. In the months leading up to and after the election she, like other alumni in government service, has come to the realization that politics and optometry can be an ideal complement to each other.

"Being an optometrist, you learn how to read people," Dr. Bury says. "It really made me better one-on-one when I knocked on doors. Optometrists everywhere are involved in their communities like I am, and there are opportunities if you really want to serve."

Dr. Bury's mayoral position is part-time, so she has continued to see patients at Complete Vision Care, the five-doctor practice she owns just about a mile from the mayor's office in village hall. She only cut back one of her days in the office, though she readily admits her schedule is anything but routine.

"I cannot stay on schedule for anything," Dr. Bury says with a laugh. "I always seem to spend the first five to 10 minutes talking about things related to being mayor. It's heartfelt and it's genuine—and it's also about 20 times a day. But it is really fun. A lot of mothers will bring their kids in to see the mayor when they get their eye exam, and I think it's especially good that I can be a role model for girls who come to see me."

Dr. Bury's path to the mayor's office was an unplanned journey unknowingly put in motion 25 years ago, when she began working with Floyd Woods, OD '51, the original owner of Complete Vision Care. After working alongside him for years as both a student and then a doctor, she completed her purchase of his practice a decade after graduating from ICO. In 2006, she moved it to the fully modern 3,500-square-foot building it's in today. Although Dr. Woods passed away in 2008, the practice maintains a strong ICO legacy: Katherine Narbone, OD '07, is clinical director, and Joanna Paczwa-Luty, OD '10, and ICO associate professor Darrell Schlange, OD '64, are part of the staff.

It was that dedicated and capable staff that gave Dr. Bury, 51, the confidence to seek the mayor's office. She knew the practice would continue to thrive even while her attention was focused on the campaign. Still, she is quick to point out that she had never set her sights on the mayor's office. In fact, she was planning to coast along for a while after finishing up her term as president of the Illinois Optometric Association. But then Dr. Bury noticed more of her patients were mentioning problems with various aspects of Oak Lawn to her, and their concerns were enough to get her to start attending village board meetings.

"I felt a duty to change what I saw," she says of the contentious meetings led by then-mayor Dave Heilmann. "Oak Lawn has been very good to me and I feel responsible in a way for the future. It's important to have it continue to be the wonderful community I have enjoyed all these years. Oak Lawn isn't just where I practice; it's where my heart is."

At first, Dr. Bury planned to simply put her financial support behind whoever challenged the incumbent in his bid for a third term. But as time went on, others in the village began to suggest she throw her hat in the ring and challenge him herself.

"I knew it would bother me more if I didn't run than if I ran and lost," she says. "I decided I wanted a new challenge in life."



"Optometrists have a very high level of professional training and are oriented to the individual patient and the community. That's what it takes to be in politics."





Throughout the campaign, which at times grew very contentious, Dr. Bury relied heavily on the skills she honed as an optometrist. She says being able to read people and relate to them wherever they are in life gave her an advantage over Heilmann, an attorney at a downtown Chicago law firm.

“Being an optometrist, you learn how to read people. It really made me better one-on-one when I knocked on doors. Optometrists everywhere are involved in their communities, and there are opportunities if you want to serve.”



“Being an optometrist, you look at a problem, assess what’s going on and you form a plan of attack,” she says. “I think those skills really helped me. Nobody really knew what the optometrist against the lawyer would look like.”

She won by 754 votes—about seven percentage points—and immediately set about making the changes she and her fellow Oak Lawn residents wanted to see. It’s been hectic, but for now Dr. Bury plans to keep her busy schedule and serve both her patients and her constituents.

“I am reluctant to cut more days from my schedule because I love optometry,” she says. “In politics, you can’t make anyone happy. With optometry, you can make almost everyone happy. This is a wonderful challenge and I am a better optometrist for it. Besides, it’s still not as hard as optometry school. No matter how bad it gets, I don’t need to memorize 50 different medications for a quiz tomorrow morning!”

## A Legacy of Service

As Dr. Bury embarks on the early days of her political career, **Sylvio Dupuis, OD '57**, reflects on a career in government and political service that goes back decades to when he was elected student council president in Manchester, N.H. Even though that was in the 1950s, Dr. Dupuis has carried that same sense of community service with him throughout college, optometry school, private practice and then politics and public service.

“I have tried to live my whole life that same way,” says Dr. Dupuis, 79. “I set goals and let the community know my objectives. I’ve always had an agenda of being concerned and caring about individuals, and I was always interested in politics that allow you to work with and provide service to other people.”

As an ICO student, Dr. Dupuis was president of his class, served on the student council and received the IOA Award of Excellence in 1957. Once he returned home to Manchester, New Hampshire’s largest city, he got married and set up a private practice in the same neighborhood where he grew up. His brother, a family physician, rented space to him in his building and from there Dr. Dupuis became an entrenched part of the community and the optometric profession. During that time, he also received a direct commission as an Optometry Officer in the Air Force and served on active duty during a period that included the Berlin Crisis of 1961.

By age 34, Dr. Dupuis was on the board of the American Optometric Association and realized he was going to need to travel more and more as he advanced in the organization. With four children at home, he and his wife, Cecile, felt that wasn’t an option. So in 1971, he decided to draw upon his work with the American Cancer Society, the United Way and contacts he made with Democratic candidates in the area and run for mayor of Manchester. Like Dr. Bury, it was Dr. Dupuis’ patients who sparked the idea to run for political office.

“I was a people person while I was practicing, and over time I heard about different things going on in the schools, mass transit, and other parts of the city,” he says. “That led me to think ‘I have a five-doctor practice, maybe I can take some time to do community service.’ The other doctors in my practice said it was a good idea and if I won, they’d buy me out. If I lost, I could go back.”

He won by a slim 291 votes and became the full-time mayor of Manchester, then (and now) a town of about 110,000 people. He won his second term by a much greater margin. Although it meant giving up his practice, he says he enjoyed his new role a great deal.

“Becoming mayor was an easy kind of transition to make,” Dr. Dupuis says. “I was very well-known in the community as an optometrist and my brother was well-known as a family physician. I really felt that rather than serving and helping one person at a time, being mayor of a large New England city was important and gave me the chance to help a lot more people.”

That same spirit—and the experience he gained—carried him from the mayor’s office in 1975 to an even bigger platform of service: founding president of the Catholic Medical Center in Manchester.

"It's not likely that an optometrist would have been made CEO of Catholic Medical Center, but the transition from optometrist to mayor made that possible," he says. "I was then seen as a successful professional manager."

During his decade of service, the CMC grew to be the largest cardiac surgery program in northern New England. So it was no surprise when then-governor John Sununu asked him to serve as commissioner of Health and Human Services for the state of New Hampshire. In that capacity, Dr. Dupuis was assigned to research diagnostic drug legislation for optometrists, which passed in 1985.

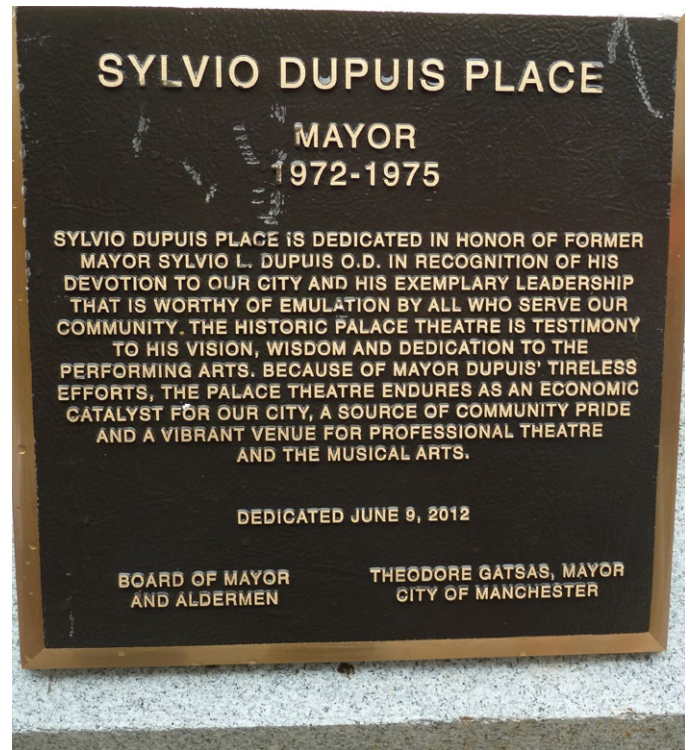
From there, Dr. Dupuis returned to optometry by serving as president of the New England College of Optometry, a post he was noticed for because of his strong commitment to optometry and health care in the region. He spent five years there before returning to the Catholic Medical Center for another five years. Still, he says, he kept his eye on what was happening in the government.

"All of this time, I stayed active in politics, no matter what the job," Dr. Dupuis says. "I worked on the Carter campaign and was appointed by President Carter to the Board of Visitors of the United States Military Academy at West Point. I also had a statewide role in the election campaigns of President Clinton."

Dr. Dupuis also was friends with then-New Hampshire governor Steve Merrill, who asked him to once again return to government, this time as the commissioner of insurance. He wanted someone who understood health care as well as government, according to Dr. Dupuis.

After three years in that post, there was a change in administration, so Dr. Dupuis left to become executive director of a law firm that wanted someone with management experience. He retired from that post in

"Becoming mayor was an easy kind of transition to make. I really felt that rather than serving and helping one person at a time, being mayor of a large New England city gave me the chance to help a lot more people."



A plaque near the Palace Theatre in downtown Manchester, N.H., commemorates Dr. Dupuis' work in the community.

1999—and two weeks later was asked to become interim president of Notre Dame College in Manchester. When the decision was made a few years later to close the college, he helped establish the Manchester campus of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Since 2002, he has held the post of special assistant to the president for government and community relations, and he played a key role in the establishment of the new school of optometry at MCPHS University in Worcester, Mass.

Looking back on his very long and illustrious career, Dr. Dupuis says it's clear choosing to become an optometrist had a profound impact on what he was able to do—and there is plenty of room for new optometrists who want to pursue a similar path.

"Optometry is a public service and community profession," he says. "Optometrists also have a very high level of professional training and are oriented to the individual patient and the community. That's what it takes to be in politics."



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# GOING THE DISTANCE

Ten years, two kids and more than 6,000 miles: Fourth year Stella Onyekwelu's route to OD has been an extraordinary journey.

By Erin Engstrom

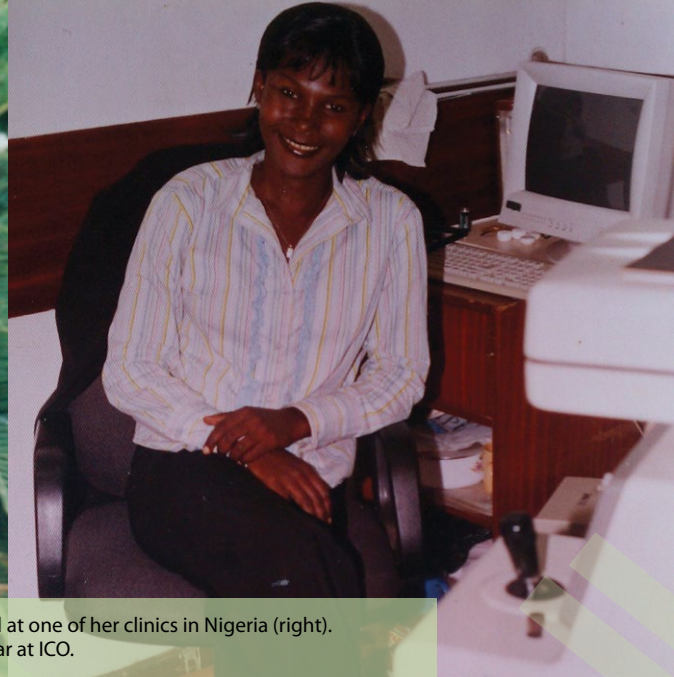
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Stella and Charles Onyekwelu with their children, Joseph and Michelle, outside their home in Warner Robins, Ga.





Stella graduating from the University of Benin (left) and at one of her clinics in Nigeria (right). Opposite: Stella examines a patient during her third year at ICO.

**I**magine moving to another country and finding out that you can't practice the profession you trained for. And that getting back into that occupation requires you to start your professional training from the very beginning.

That's what happened to **Stella Onyekwelu '14** when she moved from Nigeria to the United States in 2009.

Stella earned an OD from the University of Benin, one of the top universities in Nigeria, in 2005. In Nigeria, the study of optometry takes place over the course of six years. (As in many countries, in Nigeria the term undergraduate or graduate education does not apply in the same sense as in the United States; studies are integrated into one degree program.) The first year, students study basic sciences; the following four years are devoted specifically to optometric courses. Students participate in externships in the sixth year. Following graduation, students are required to intern for one year at the clinic of their choice.

From 2005 until 2008, Stella practiced in Maiduguri, in the northeastern part of the country, and in Lagos, Nigeria's largest city.

"I was in an MD/OD setting, where I worked up patients from case history to refraction," Stella says. "I was allowed to manage early glaucoma patients using common medications. I also treated minor eye allergies, but then I handed over the rest of the ocular disease part to the ophthalmologist."

Stella married her husband Charles, an aviation engineer, in 2007. A dual citizen of Nigeria and the U.S., Charles was living in Georgia, and Stella joined him in February of 2009. When she arrived, she realized that her training didn't match the American standard.

"Optometric education in the U.S. is a lot more advanced," she says. "There are lots of procedures optometrists do in the U.S. that are done mostly by ophthalmologists in Nigeria, things like BIO, 78/90, etc. Nigerian optometrists usually do posterior seg evaluations with only a direct ophthalmoscope. Also, the fourth year externship rotations in the U.S. expose students to different specialty areas. Most externship sites in Nigeria only offer primary care."

Initially, Stella felt discouraged. "I was so frustrated that I almost gave up and started thinking about getting a job as a cashier or working as an optometric technician in an eye clinic," she says. Charles encouraged her to think otherwise. "I told her, 'You have gotten too far into your profession to be looking for a job at Walmart. I'll be behind you 100 percent,'" he says.

Stella considered taking the board exams without additional coursework, but having seen how much more advanced optometry was in the U.S., she realized she wouldn't know a lot of material—even with several years of practice under her belt. She concluded that she needed to go back to school. "After much thought, I took that bold step to start my career all over again," she says.

ICO wasn't initially on Stella's radar as she started looking at schools. "I actually wanted a school near our home in Georgia, so I could drive to school daily and still be with my family," she says. She and Charles are the parents of a daughter, Michelle, almost five years old, and a son, Joseph, almost four.

But after investigating every program, she began to think that ICO might be the school for her. "The early clinic experience and high NBEO performance attracted my attention," she says. "A family friend also told me about ICO and how it stands out across the country. I did everything I could to gain admission."

**"I was so frustrated that I almost gave up and started thinking about getting a job as a cashier or working as an optometric technician in an eye clinic."**





“Leaving my kids behind at that tender age was a nightmare. I hope they will grow up someday and realize how I struggled to secure a better future for them.”

She was eight months pregnant with Joseph when she took the OAT. By the time she was contacted for interviews, her son was a few months old and her daughter just over a year. “We put the kids in the car and drove across the country to all the interviews she was offered,” says Charles. After traveling to Chicago for two interviews, Stella was told she would need to take several prerequisite courses.

“It’s pretty rare that we have a graduate of an international optometry program attend ICO,” says **Dr. Mark Colip ’92**, vice president of student, alumni and college development. “We have many who inquire and talk to us about it, but when they find out that they’ll have to go through all four years of our program, that usually ends the conversation.

“Because international students often enter optometry or medical programs straight out of high school, they’re sometimes lacking the broad-based science background that most of our students have: general chemistry, general physics, microbiology, calculus. We will often ask them to take additional classes to make sure everyone is on the same footing once they get to ICO.”

Stella took the prerequisites over the summer of 2010 and entered ICO that fall. “I worked extraordinarily hard to make it in,” she says.

Once at ICO, Stella felt a little uncomfortable being a decade older than most of her classmates, and she was challenged by some of the basic science courses of first year, like biochemistry and histology. “I took those courses during my first year in optometry school in Nigeria,” she says. “It felt like I didn’t have the brain for that anymore.” But she worked hard and earned good grades. “I realized that I could pull through with determination and hard work,” she says.

Not surprisingly, though, the most difficult aspect of attending ICO for Stella has been being away from her family. Charles and the kids now reside in Warner Robins, Ga., about 10 miles south of Macon, where Charles works

for the aerospace company Bombardier. Throughout her career at ICO, Stella has been in touch with her family daily through phone and Skype, and she travels home during break weeks, but she still feels she’s sacrificed valuable time. “Leaving my kids behind at that tender age was a nightmare,” she says. “I’ve missed most of their developmental milestones. I’ve felt bad that I wasn’t there for them. I hope they will grow up someday and realize how I struggled to secure a better future for them.”

Stella says she couldn’t have gotten through ICO without Charles’ support. “My husband has been my hero,” she says. “His encouragement has given me the strength to carry on in those frustrating moments.” Charles works nights so he can spend time with Michelle and Joseph during the day. “Sometimes people look at me and wonder why I’m always with the kids,” he says. “Once I went to the pharmacy without them—they were at daycare—and the pharmacist told me, ‘You look incomplete without your kids.’”

Now that she’s doing an externship in Atlanta, an hour-and-45-minute drive from Warner Robins, Stella is able to see her family more frequently. But it’s still not often enough for anyone, especially the kids. “One day we were going to the lake, and we took the road we take to go to Atlanta to pick up Stella,” says Charles. “My daughter asked if we were going to pick up Mommy. When I told her ‘No, we’re going to the lake,’ she started crying, and my son joined her too. They were crying most of the day. There was nothing I could do to bring their mom to see them that Saturday.”

But there’s no doubt in Stella’s mind that returning to school was the right decision, and next year she hopes to pursue a residency in cornea/contact lenses or pediatrics. She’s focusing her search on programs in Georgia and neighboring states. “At this point in my life, I have decided to concentrate on what lies ahead and not worry about the long years I have spent studying in two different countries,” she says. “Repeating optometry in the U.S. has given my career a whole new meaning.”

# CLASS NOTES

## 1948

**Floyd Mizener**, MCO, was awarded the Eye Care Professional of the Year Award from the International 3D and Advanced Imaging Society.



**Herbert E. Smith**, MCO, and his wife, Alice, celebrated 65 years of marriage on Sept. 17. They report that they are happily retired in Bloomington, Ill. Dr. Smith was one of the first officers to be commissioned in World War II, and he also served in the Korean War.

## 1949

**Leonard Drucker**, CCO, and his wife announced the birth of their first great-granddaughter, Jaycee Rose, on Aug. 9.

## 1960

**James Poland** retired from the Lifetime Eyecare Center in downtown Cumberland, Penn., after 50 years and 127,200 eye examinations.

## 1974

**Scott Mescher** was named the 2013 Titan of Taconite by the Winter Frolic Committee in Hibbing, Minn., for his contributions to the community.

## 1976

**Kevin Melicher** was named Optometrist of the Year by the North Dakota Optometric Association.

## 1978

**Dominick Maino** was awarded, along with co-authors Marc Taub, OD, and Mary Bartuccio, OD, the 2013 BMA Medical Book Award First Prize in Health and Social Care for *Visual Diagnosis and Care of the Patients with Special Needs* from the British Medical Association.



## 1981

**Sandra Block** was honored with the Carel C. Koch Memorial Award at the American Academy of Optometry meeting in October. The AAO awards this distinction to a person who has made outstanding contributions to the enhancement and development of relationships between optometry and other professions. She was also named one the 50 Most Influential Women in Optical by *Vision Monday*.



## 1988

**Marc Herwitz** was promoted to Commander in the U.S. Navy. He serves at the Capt. James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago. Retired Navy Commander Karen Kato, OD '88, administered his oath.

**R. Scott Wooley** detected a patient's visual field defect that led to the discovery of a tumor. He encourages all optometrists to consider visual field testing as part of comprehensive care.

## 1993

**Michael Tashner** was installed as president of the Wisconsin Optometric Association at the annual WOA meeting in September.

## 1994

**Ingyrd Vargas-Lorenzana** was awarded the Eye Care Professional of the Year Award from the International 3D and Advanced Imaging Society.

## 1996

**Nicholas Colatrella** was named president of the ICO Alumni Association.

## 1999

**Brian Hayes** and the staff at Saline Optometry hosted an open house to celebrate the 40th anniversary of their business on Sept. 18.

**Robert Quilleash** was installed as president of the Illinois Optometric Association at the IOA's annual meeting in September.

## 2002

**Jamie N. Hogan** joined the team at Frantz EyeCare, which has five offices in Florida.



## 2003

**Karmen M. Holdinghausen** and her husband, Jeff Kuznitz, welcomed son Zachary David on April 12. He joins siblings Hayleigh (6), Breanna (4) and Tyler (1).



## 2004

**David Hammes** was named Young Optometrist of the Year by the Wisconsin Optometric Association.

**Andrea L. McCann** and her husband, **Ryan Haiar, OD '04**, welcomed son Rowen Hayes Haiar on Aug. 27. He joins big brother Spencer.



## 2008

**Renee and Nana Owusu** welcomed son Kyan Ashton on Oct. 25. He joins sister Avery.

## 2009

**Kristina Dimova** joined the Hawaii Permanente Medical Group. She will practice out of the organization's Kaiser Permanente Hilo Clinic.

## 2010

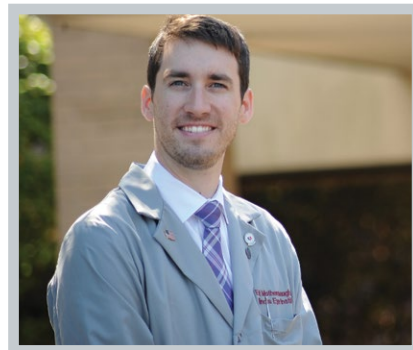
**Lindsay Sicks** joined the faculty of ICO in August as an assistant professor.

## 2011

**Robert Chun** accepted the position of clinical director at the Spectrios Institute for Low Vision.

## 2012

**Erik Mothersbaugh** joined the ICO faculty in July as an instructor.



**Matthew J. Nottingham** is an associate at Helena Vision Center in Helena, Mont.

## 2013

**Jennifer Fairbanks** joined the practice of **Michael Nagel, OD '89**, in Litchfield, Minn.

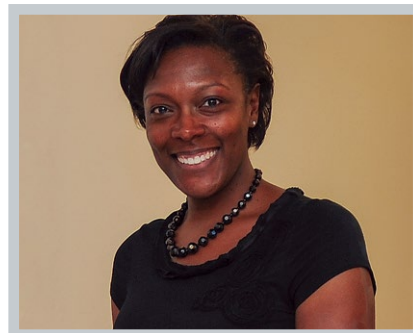
## FRIENDS & FAMILY

Assistant professor **Christine Allison, OD, FAAO, FCOVD** was elected vice president of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development at the annual COVD meeting in Orlando.

Professor **Kelly A. Frantz, OD, FAAO, FCOVD** received the A.M. Skeffington Award at the annual COVD meeting. Named for one of the pioneers of developmental

optometry, this award recognizes an optometrist who has made outstanding contributions to optometric literature in the areas of vision therapy and vision development.

**Teisha Johnson**, senior director of admissions and marketing, was appointed director-elect of the National Association of Medical Minority Educators - Central Region.



**Leonard Messner, OD, FAAO**, ICO's vice president for patient care services and executive director of the IEI, was honored as Optometrist of the Year at the annual Illinois Optometric Association meeting in September.



## ERRATA

*In the Fall 2013 issue, Sandra Bury, OD '95 was listed as graduating in 1985 rather than 1995. We regret this error.*

# IN MEMORIAM

## 1939

**E. Richard Friedman**, NICO, Plano, Texas, June 6. He was serving as chairman of the Texas Optometry Board when the landmark *Friedman v. Rogers* case appeared before the U.S. Supreme Court. After retiring from practice, at age 89, he served on the board of the Foundation for Education and Research in Vision at the University of Houston.

## 1940

**Robert J. Anderson**, NICO, Battle Creek, Mich., July 3. He practiced in Michigan for more than 40 years before retiring in 1982. He was a life member of the Michigan and American Optometric Associations. His survivors include son Ronald Anderson, OD '74.

**Sol W. Lesnick**, NICO, Farmington Hills, Mich., Sept. 22. His survivors include son Barry Lesnick, OD '77.

## 1941

**H. James Hulburt**, MCO, Madison, Wis., June 10. His professional career was interrupted by World War II, when he enlisted in the Navy and was deployed to the South Pacific, principally in American Samoa, where he served in a medical unit. After the war, he returned to Madison and practiced optometry for more than 40 years.

## 1945

**Manuel Bergman**, Hollywood, Fla., April 22. A founding faculty member of NOVA Southeastern College of Optometry, he taught ophthalmic optics from 1989 until his retirement in 2005. He was also an associate professor at Miami Dade College, serving as consultant and instructor for the

Optometric Assistant Program. In his free time, he was the Boy Scouts of America District Chairman of Advancement.

## 1948

**Raymond Bunkers**, NICO, Sioux Falls, S.D., May 8. He entered the Army in 1940, serving in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. He practiced in Canton, S.D., for 41 years before retiring in 1989. He was past president of the South Dakota Optometric Association and the North Central States Optometric Conference/Council. He also served as secretary of the South Dakota State Board of Optometry for several years, and was named Canton Citizen of the Year.

**Monte H. Friedman**, NICO, Houston, March 2. During World War II, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, serving as a flight engineer and navigator, flying B-27s and B-29s. Following graduation, he opened an office in Houston, where he practiced for 47 years.

**Richard L. Stratton**, NICO, Springfield, Ill., March 7. He served in the 8th Army Air Force during World War II, and was past president of the 490th Bomb Group USAAF Association. He practiced for more than 40 years in Springfield, both privately and as assistant professor at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. He was a member of the Illinois and American Optometric Associations, Midstate Optometric Society, International Optometric and Optical League, International Association of the Boards of Optometry, and past member and chairman of the Illinois Board of Optometry.

**Robert J. Walton**, MCO, Mount Prospect, Ill., July 27. He served in the Army during World War II and was a Veterans of Foreign Wars and Elks member.

## 1949

**Jack R. Hale**, NICO, Sunnyside, Wash., Jan. 19.

**Alvin F. Hindelang**, NICO, Lafayette, La., Oct. 3. He enlisted in the Navy during World War II before he was transferred to the Marines, where he was assigned to the 54th Marine Replacement Battalion and participated in the invasions of Guam and Okinawa. At NICO, he was voted Outstanding Athlete. He practiced for 40 years in Algiers, La. He had numerous professional affiliations, including president of New Orleans Contact Lens Society for 15 years, past president of the Algiers Lions Club, and Westbank chairman of the American Red Cross.

**Alender O. Simmons**, NICO, Greenville, S.C., May 22. He enlisted in the Navy during World War II and served on the USS *Consolation*. He practiced for more than 50 years in Greenville and Fountain Inn, S.C. He was a life member of the South Carolina Optometric Association.

## 1950

**Gerald H. O'Neill**, NICO, Plainfield, Ind., Nov. 28, 2012. He served in the Army during World War II, and was present at the Invasion of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge. The first optometrist in Hendricks County, he practiced for 35 years in Plainfield. He also served as an optometrist for the Indiana Boys School from 1951 to 1972. He was a life member of the



Indiana and American Optometric Associations, the Stonebelt Society and VOSH International. He was presented with a Kentucky Colonel's citation in 1990.

**Harold Shane**, St. Johns, Mich., Sept. 28. He served in the Navy during World War II. He practiced in St. Johns from 1950 until his retirement in 1988. He was a member of both the Michigan and American Optometric Associations, as well as the St. Johns-Ovid Masonic Lodge and the St. Johns Exchange Club.

**Melvin Strobel**, NICO, Louisville, Ky., July 27. He was in the Army Air Corps during World War II, serving on a radar outpost near the Panama Canal. He was one of the pioneers of the aerosol industry, establishing the first aerosol products manufacturing facility in the South. He practiced optometry in Louisville and Shelbyville, Ky.

**James F. Woodward**, NICO, Bismarck, N.D., Oct. 4. He entered the Army in 1943, serving in the Antiaircraft Command and Corps of Engineers. Following his graduation from NICO, he was recalled to the Army and served in Labrador and Greenland for three years. He practiced in Bismarck from 1953 until his retirement in 1993. He was past president of the North Dakota Optometric Association and served on a national committee of the American Academy of Optometry.

## 1951

**I.C. Barrale**, CCO, St. Louis, Nov. 11, 2012.

**Sherman Olson**, NICO, Maple Ridge, B.C., June 9. He practiced for almost 20 years in the Vancouver area, and was a past president of numerous professional groups including the British Columbia Association of

Optometrists. His colleagues referred to him as the "Father of Optometry."

## 1955

**Irving Assael**, Walnut Creek, Calif., July 20. He practiced in Woodmere, N.Y., before moving to Walnut Creek.

**Daniel D. Hinson**, NICO, Des Moines, Iowa, Aug. 24. He was in the Army's Medical Service Corps, serving at Brooke Army Medical Hospital at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. He practiced optometry for 41 years, specializing in pediatrics. He was a partner at Vision Park Family Eye Care of Urbandale and West Des Moines.

## 1967

**Gerald F. Kramer**, Elgin, Ill., Jan 27. He practiced in Illinois for 45 years before retiring in 2012.

## 1994

**Tod M. Diffenbaugh**, Lexington, Ky., Sept. 2. He was an optometrist for Stratton Eyes in Lexington.

## 2011

**Nancy Chong Leung**, Kent, Wash., Sept. 23. She died after suffering a hemorrhagic stroke. She is survived by husband Donald Leung, OD '11. Her classmates have set up a fund to honor her with a seat in ICO's lecture center.

PLEASE SHARE ALUMNI  
NEWS WITH ICO

SEND INFORMATION TO:

Connie M. Scavuzzo, MA  
Senior Director of Alumni Development  
312-949-7080  
cscavuzzo@ico.edu or  
alumni@ico.edu

# SECONDLOOK

## Stephanie R. Johnson-Brown, OD, MEd

### CURRENT POSITION:

Executive Director of Plano Child Development Center in Chicago

**FAMILY LIFE:** Spouse, Perry; two adult children, Crystal and Robert

**ICO CLASS OF:** 1978



## THEN

### Why did you decide to pursue a career in optometry? Did your father, the late Robert L. Johnson, OD '60, influence that decision?

My dad had an enormous influence on my career choice. His example as a pioneer of practicing behavioral optometry in an urban setting showed me early in my life that this was the career for me. My dad and his partner, Henry Moore, OD '46, opened the door to their nonprofit optometric center, Plano Child Development Center, in 1959 while operating a private practice at the same time.

My dad gave me, my four sisters and my brother the opportunity to work at Plano. I began working there during my junior year in high school and have been working continually since then. I discovered my passion for the optometric vision therapy specialty during this time. It was fulfilling for me to see first-hand the results of vision therapy—improving patients' self-esteem, grades, behavior and academic performance.

### What brought you to ICO?

Living in Chicago and having two of my siblings in college at the same time made ICO the obvious choice. I attended the University of Illinois at Chicago for my undergraduate studies, completing my prerequisites for optometry school in two years and two summers. During my interview at ICO at 19 years old, I was asked why I didn't just wait and enjoy college

and I said, 'If I can get into optometry school now, I can enjoy life afterward.'

### What do you remember about being at ICO?

ICO was a little challenging at times. My educational background was different from my peers (I didn't come to ICO with a major in science) and being an African American female also set me apart from my peers. I do, however, have wonderful memories of one of my professors, Dr. E.R. Tennant. He was able to teach in a way that made it clear he cared deeply about optometry and his students.

## NOW

### Tell us about the Plano Child Development Center and your role there.

I serve as executive director of the center and I also am co-owner with Joseph McCray, Jr., OD '75, of our private practice, Plano Optometrics. The mission of the center is to identify, evaluate and treat economically disadvantaged children who have under-developed and/or inefficient vision information processing systems. As the only nonprofit African American service providers offering comprehensive vision therapy treatment intervention to patients in the Chicagoland area, we offer a wide array of services that previously weren't available. Our fee for service is often one-third the cost of similar service in our area.

As a nonprofit, Plano relies heavily on donations. One of our donors—my nephew, Arizona Cardinals wide

receiver Larry Fitzgerald—has a personal connection with Plano. As a child, he received vision therapy at Plano during his summer visits from Minnesota. He once said some of the drills in football camp reminded him of what he did in vision therapy! He completely supports Plano because of the strong foundation vision therapy gave him, helping him to become the outstanding athlete he is today.

### You became president of the National Optometric Association in July, the start of a two-year term. What are your goals as NOA president?

I have four major goals as president of NOA. My first goal is to collectively magnify the individual contributions of NOA through our dedicated health-focused organization. Second, my goal is to continue our platform of service for our patients and communities. The third goal is to expand our brand to include the prevention of childhood developmental visual problems. My final vision is to grow our membership both internally and externally.

### You've spent your career giving back to disadvantaged families, making sure they have access to good vision care. What advice do you have for young optometrists who want to give back to their own communities?

My advice is to first be sure they have the passion and the heart for what they are striving to do and don't get discouraged. They should start slowly, develop a short-term and long-term plan, collaborate with others, and stay surrounded by people with a shared vision and passion.



# DATEBOOK

## NOVEMBER

### November 11

First Day of Winter Quarter

### November 28-30

Thanksgiving Break



NOV.  
**28-30**  
Thanksgiving  
Break

## DECEMBER

### December 3

NBEO Part II Exam

### December 23-January 4

Winter Break

## JANUARY

### January 20

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
College/Clinic Closed

## FEBRUARY

### February 8-15

Final Exams

### February 16

Continuing Education Program  
Six Hours - Tested  
ICO Campus

### February 17-22

Winter Quarter Break, no classes

### February 24

First Day of Spring Quarter



DEC. 23-  
JAN. 4  
Winter Break



FEB.  
**16**  
CE Program



# ICO

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## LASTLOOK



*Students compete in the watermelon eating contest at the 2013 ICOlympics on Aug. 17. The class of 2015 took the overall prize for the second year in a row.*

*Photo by Jonathan Dong '16*