

# ICO MATTERS

WINTER 2022 • V21 ISSUE 2



## Patient Stories

- + 150th Anniversary Celebration
- + Community Advisory Board
- + ...and more!

MAGAZINE OF THE ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

# ICO

## class of

# 2026

### ADMISSIONS

ICO's Class of 2026 has **110** enrolled students. There were **599** applicants with **302** students interviewed.

### PERSONAL STATISTICS

The entering class is **70%** female and **30%** male. The mean age is **23** and **5%** of the class is married.



### TESTING

The mean GPA for the Class of 2026 is **3.48**.

The mean OAT TS score is **311**.

<b>Cumulative GPA Distribution</b>	3.70 ≥	<b>30%</b>
	3.50 - 3.69	<b>23%</b>
	3.20 - 3.49	<b>25%</b>
	3.00 - 3.19	<b>15%</b>
	≤ 2.99	<b>7%</b>

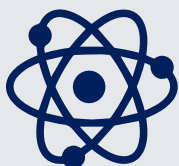
### ETHNICITY

Caucasian - **46%**  
Asian/Asian American - **35%**  
Multiracial - **15%**  
Hispanic - **3%**  
Black/African American - **1%**



### COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

**United States**, Canada, **Colombia**, Egypt, **Jordan**, Morocco, **Poland**, and State of Palestine



### UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS

**63%** Biological Sciences, **9%** Health Sciences, **8%** Psychology, **5%** Chemistry, and **4%** other



## Features

### 10 Patient Stories

We take a deep dive into the lives of four patients. They show us a world beyond the IEI.

### 26 Community Advisory

We learn about the importance of the Community Advisory Board and how it impacts the role we play within the Bronzeville community.

### 30 Alumni Ambassadors

At ICO, we're helping future students build a network before they even arrive on campus.



# ICO MATTERS

WINTER 2022 • V21 ISSUE 2

#### EDITORIAL

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## Departments

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BC Last Look

## BERNARD "BERNIE" P. NEVEL, OD '55 BERNIE NEVEL SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Since graduating, **Bernie Nevel, OD '55** has been a selfless and generous contributor to ICO, but the **Bernie Nevel Scholarship Fund** must be particularly special to him because it was not his idea.

"I and everyone who loves him want to honor him," said **Kevin Danahey, OD '91**. "This scholarship is a tribute to how he has advanced the lives of so many doctors and the lasting impact he has had on so many patients."

"Bernie has always shown such kindness and compassion to everyone he cares for. His true gift is his ability to recognize the potential in others. There are so many graduates who have walked through the doors of ICO because of his encouragement and belief in them," said Dr. Danahey. "He has an incredible ability to help others through his wisdom and humility, and I'm not the only one who has benefitted from his mentorship."

Dr. Danahey was determined to endow the scholarship but raising enough funds to endow it required a joint effort. Dr. Danahey, Dr. Nevel's children, **Nancy** and **Adam**, his son-in-law, **Dale**, and Dr. Nevel's wife, **Eta**, "were all reaching out to friends and to patients who love Bernie. We had so many people contribute. It's such a great way to show what an impact one person can have."

"Bernie has always loved ICO, and I think its one of his greatest attributes," said Dr. Danahey. It was Dr. Nevel's vision that led to Michiana Eye Center, LLC, an equally owned-OD/MD practice, to become an externship site for ICO. "Bernie was so instrumental in making this happen. As an OD/MD practice, our practice is very medically oriented. This model provides so much value to the students, but also to the doctors."

It was also through Dr. Nevel's encouragement that Dr. Danahey chose to give back. "I don't think I would have personally reconnected to ICO if weren't for Bernie." Dr. Danahey now serves on ICO's development committee, and continues to maintain a very strong relationship with ICO. "All of this is because of Bernie."

"Every successful optometrist can say they are where they are today because someone believed in them along the way. For me, that was Bernie." This scholarship allowed Dr. Danahey and Dr. Nevel's family to not only thank Dr. Nevel for the great legacy he leaves behind, but also to open up the door for all those who have interacted with Dr. Nevel. In this way, we can all thank him for the good that he does.

"I know I am not the only one who is a better person and a better optometrist because of the people they have had around them. So for other optometrists out there, if there is someone who inspired you, this might be an option for you too. You are supporting the future of our profession and at the same time, honoring those people who got you to where you are today."

"To this very day, he has touched so many lives in so many meaningful ways. I'm so happy we got to honor him in this way."



(L-R) Kevin A. Danahey, OD '91, Bernie Nevel, OD '55, and Richard Weis, MD.

# President's Spotlight

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It has been a great year of 150th Anniversary celebrations at ICO! What a joy and privilege to welcome so many ICO alumni and friends back to campus and to our various events as we celebrated together; the first and only college of optometry to reach the 150-year mark! One of the hallmarks of our ICO experience was in being together and accomplishing something great – achieving our Doctor of Optometry degrees. I have heard from so many alumni reminiscing about their time at ICO and in Chicago, and the many memories and friendships attached to their ICO experiences. Nearly each person I spoke with raved about the remarkable improvements they observed as they toured the ICO campus during their visit. From the establishment of the Dr. Robert and Lena Lewenson Pediatric Center (2019), Dr. Alfred and Sarah Rosenbloom Center on Vision and Aging (2015), the EYEPOD laboratory floor (2009), and the Residential Complex (1995) to renovations of Brady Hall (2022), the library (2014), and the lecture center (2011), the physical changes and improvements to the ICO campus have been a source of pride for all.



In the year leading up to 2022, our Board of Trustees challenged us to make the year more than just a great party. We set goals to be inclusive by inviting and scheduling events that would gather and include as many people as we could in our celebrations. We accomplished that. We set a goal to raise needed funding in support of ICO's mission. We are making great progress on that. We set a goal to write a new Strategic Plan setting the College's course for the next five years. We accomplished that.

Over the course of the past year we have celebrated 150 years at the following events:

- o Employee Service Year Anniversaries
- o CE Programs
- o Grand 150th Anniversary Open House in June
- o Leadership Circle Members Reception
- o Alumni Cruise of the Greek Islands
- o Reunion events
- o Alumni Reception at American Academy of Optometry

Our celebrations will continue into early 2023 with two special CE programs. One to be held on February 5 and our Annual Joint Symposium between the faculty of the Illinois College of Optometry and the University of Chicago Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences to be held on April 2. You can register to be part of these excellent educational programs by participating either in-person on ICO's campus or through our virtual, online program.

If you would like to help us wrap-up and put a bow on this festive year, I encourage you to make a special tax-deductible contribution to our 150th fundraising efforts in support of ICO's three pillars: Research and Education, Patient Care in the Illinois Eye Institute, and Service to our Community.

It is a true honor to serve as ICO's President during this historic year and I want to thank our alumni for making ICO what it is today. I have truly enjoyed our many conversations, reminiscing with you, and celebrating our historic alma mater. I look forward to working together in setting ICO's course for what the next 150 years will bring!

My very best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful holiday season!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark K. Colip, OD '92". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark K. Colip, OD '92

# In Focus

## Welcome, Class of 2026

With so many things happening for our 150th anniversary, we still found time to welcome and celebrate our newest incoming class. Fall quarter is over, and winter quarter is underway. We wish them all the best of luck as they continue their optometric journey. If you're wondering what orientation was like, check out our takeover!

**INSTAGRAM TAKEOVER!**



*Sarah Bittle '26, takes over ICO's Instagram and shares her orientation experience.*

*Scan the QR Code and click Sarah's photo to view her takeover.*



*Orientation team members are ready for move-in day.*



*ICO's orientation team.*



*ICO students enjoying ICO Olympics.*



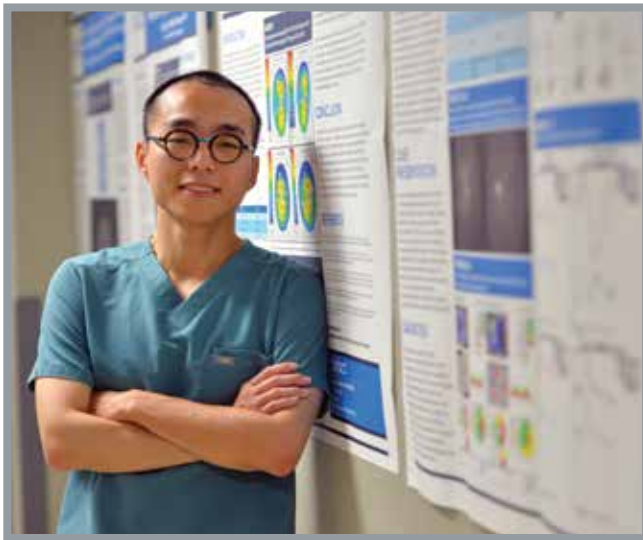
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# Summer Research Program

This year we welcomed two students to our fourth annual Summer Research Program, **Ria Patel '25** and **Zhiming (Jimmy) Tu '25**. Ria spent the summer at ICO researching *Post-Keratoplasty Contact Lens Fitting Considerations* while Jimmy researched the *Effect of Blink Rate and Viewing Condition on Computer Vision Syndrome*. Thank you to the

program mentors **Jennifer Harthan, OD '06**, **Lindsay Sicks, OD '10**, and **Yi Pang, MD, OD, PhD** for working with these students over the summer!

As always, we look forward to seeing how students will apply their research moving forward!



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## Brady Hall Renovations

The "Brady Hilton" has gotten a facelift! After months of dust and debris, the new Brady Hall has opened with new carpets and a brand-new lounge area on every floor. More than a few of our faculty and staff are excited to settle in after the renovation.

Most exciting for the students is our newly renovated cafeteria with a new floor, a tile accent wall, and a new beverage station. A new space has also been dedicated to serve as a place for students to come together to have open conversations with one another. Aply named after the Blindspot, many of our alums from the 80s and 90s favorite Friday hangout spot.

Stay tuned for more exciting announcements about this space in the near future!



## Many, many cheers for ICO at Academy!

ICO again took Academy by storm this year! 43 research posters were presented (13 residents and 14 students were involved with these posters). We held four CE lectures and one workshop, and two papers were presented.

Not only that, many of our faculty, former residents and ICO alums received a fellowship this year. Congratulations to our faculty members, **Drs. Stephanie Adams, Catherine Niermann, Patricia Salazar, and William Skoog**. Congrats to our former residents, **Drs. Melissa Caceres, Kelly Cohen, Thomas Collins, Randi-Jo Francis, Nora Kuby, Alyssa Lancaster, Olivia Nichols, Alexandra Piper, Kelsey Trast, and Claire Skorseth** and to our alums, including but not limited to, **Drs. Nicholas Blasco, Jessica Chan, Kimberly Fazio, Benjamin Michalick, Rabab Rafique, Aidan Stubbs, and Zachary Wallburg**.

A very special congratulations to **Sandra Block, OD '81** who received the Henry Peters Memorial Award from the Academy's Public Health and Environmental Vision Section.



ICO faculty members **Catherine Niermann, OD; William Skoog, OD '21; Patricia Salazar, OD, and Stephanie Adams, OD,** (not pictured) received their fellowship this year.



**Sandra Block, OD ' 81,** Professor Emeritus, received the Henry B. Peters Memorial Award recognizing her substantial work and accomplishments in public health.

## Welcome New Residents

2021-2022 Residents have been here for nearly six months! They're teaching, precepting, and deepening their knowledge even further. Needless to say, they are on their way to becoming leaders in the field.

They did a great job at Academy, and we're excited to see many of them receive their fellowship next year!





*A campaign by Illinois College of Optometry*

# COMMITTED TO YOUR VISION

Every day we strive to continue our commitment to...



OUR  
**PATIENTS**



OUR  
**STUDENTS**



OUR  
**COMMUNITY**



Together, we can strengthen and expand the optometric profession. Make a commitment to the future of optometry. Will you join us?

LEARN MORE:

[ico.edu/committed-to-your-vision](http://ico.edu/committed-to-your-vision)

## White Coat 2022

For the second year in a row, we held ICO's White Coat Ceremony for our second-year students. The second professional year brings students closer to independent patient care in the clinic. In recognition of the seriousness of these clinical undertakings, it was agreed that the White Coat Ceremony would continue as a second-year ceremony.

From what we heard, waiting a year helped the Class of 2025 grasp the significance of this ceremony. "We were hoping to do it last year, but I feel like it was more meaningful after doing a year of school," said **Maleeka Bokhari '25**. **Bayan Allaz '25** added, "I had clinic this morning right before the White Coat Ceremony. . . While we were reading the oath, I was like, 'That's it. It's happening. We made it.'"

Second years, we look forward to seeing how your next few years in the clinic will shape you into doctors of optometry!





Dr. Colip welcomes the Class of 2025 into 2nd year.



A special thanks to the following alumni and mentors who coated these students at the 2022 White Coat Ceremony!

- ❶ Dayne Crouch '25 coated by **Craig Couch, OD '90** (father) and **Donovan Crouch OD '63** (grandfather).
- ❷ Amani Kahn '25 coated by **Ghazala Ali, OD '94** (mother) and **Ayaz Khan, OD '94** (father).
- ❸ Rachel Lee '25 coated by **Erica Ittner, OD '09** (mentor).
- ❹ Paul DeLakis '25 coated by **Paul DeLakis, OD '88** (father).



### Video

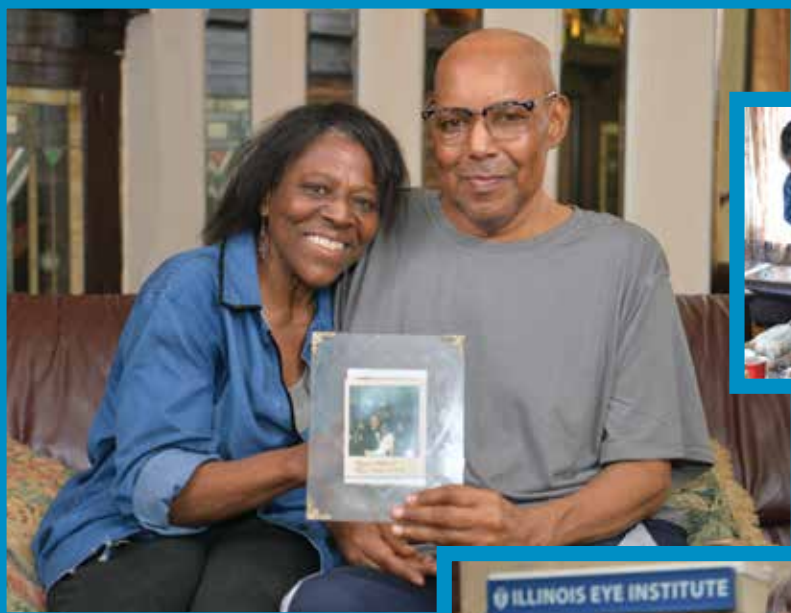
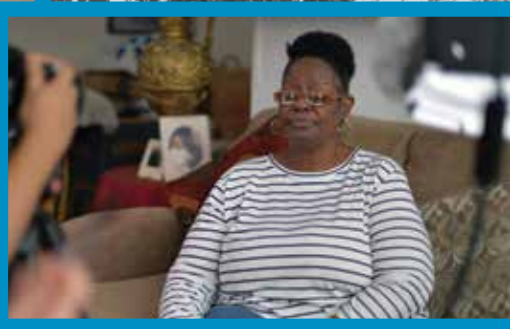
Check out this year's lookback video on ICO's YouTube channel.



### Photos

Download photos on ICO's Flickr page.





# UN TOLD STORIES

*By: Nora Matland*

This year, we wanted to do something special to celebrate 150 years. So the communications team set out to put together four patient stories. Our patient stories stand on their own. You can access each of them by scanning the qr code or going to our YouTube channel.

Below are our own reflections of the time we spent with patients. And a small thank you to the patients who volunteered to make this possible.

Patients are the reason our doctors show up every single day. They're the reason we're all here. During this momentous year, we wanted to take a step back to remind ourselves just how important they are.

As communications professionals, we don't often have the opportunity to interact with patients. Out of respect for their privacy, much of our focus is on the stories of our faculty and students.

But ultimately, in our 150th year, I knew we needed to give patients a chance to tell their own story. What an emotional ride it has been.



# MOORE

As we set out to create a video series of patient stories to celebrate our 150th anniversary, I'm not sure we knew how impactful their stories would be.

There are so many things that are left on the cutting board whenever you have 4 hours of interviews but only 5 minutes to tell each patient's story. The interview videos will be on our public channels, but some parts of the stories seemed too sacred for that medium.

In this magazine, and for our alumni, we can recognize those moments that brought us to a greater understanding of what optometrists do every day, like the ink pens the Low Vision Unit gave Ms. Moore which allowed her to write poetry to her son. "I don't know if I have much I can leave behind. These poems are my legacy to him." And as we walked out the door, the last thing she said to us was, "There's nothing I'm prouder of than raising him to be the man he is today." We didn't get to add the pictures of her brother, mother, her father and so many other relatives wearing IEI glasses.

We didn't add that when we visited the McWrights, Mr. McWright had recently gone through surgery. Even so, they still wanted to share their story. We interviewed them in a house that had been owned by three generations of McWrights. We didn't get to share their story about honeymooning at Niagara Falls, or that after our interview, they served us zucchini cake to welcome us into their house. We didn't get to share just how much of a fight it was to get Mr. McWright to the IEI. In the end, that visit saved his eyesight. We heard how hard it was to commute to the suburbs to see her doctor as a glaucoma patient. It's a big reason



The ink pens the Low Vision Unit gave Mrs. Moore allowed her to write poetry to her son.

why her pressure was so high when she finally arrived at the IEI. Again and again, she thanked us for being in her community. Again and again, she let us know how much happier she was being a patient at the IEI.

We tried to capture Mr. Jeffrey Platt's frustration and anger, but being in the room with him, it was palpable. We couldn't include the list of doctors, the hours and hours spent in waiting rooms – all done in the hope of improving his eyesight. We couldn't include the miles Mrs. Platt had to drive in search of a cure. The names, the places, always moving further and further from his doctor in Michigan all the way to Chicago, just to finally find some relief. To share his story with us he drove all the way from Michigan.

Ms. Surpris, is in fact not only a diabetes patient but also a glaucoma patient. We weren't able to touch on that either. There was an entire interview with her glaucoma doctor that we weren't able to add due to



# MCWRIGHT

After our interview, they served us zucchini cake to welcome us into their house.

time constraints.

In every story there was so much respect and appreciation for the IEI doctors. Having the IEI as a constant in each of these patients' lives has made a world of difference.

More happily, you also didn't catch us hauling equipment up four flights of stairs. You didn't have to endure the nasty glares our Uber drivers gave us when we pulled out a trolley load full of equipment and tried to finagle said equipment into their cars without scratching anything. We explored neighborhoods we'd never seen before, and we learned a little more about what it means to be from Chicago.

I learned about the South Side from the McWrights and Ms. Moore. From Ms. Surpris, I learned the importance of a yearly eye exam. I learned about the horrors and trials of double vision, and how hard recovery is after surgery from Mr. Jeffrey Platt. And from all of them, I learned what an essential role ICO plays in building a healthier and happier community.

I personally can't thank them enough for letting us bring you their stories.

Between our commutes to and from work, our day-to-day routines, or perhaps a run-in with a frustrated patient, I think we can sometimes lose "our why." When you get lost in daily minutiae, you sometimes forget what an impact you are having. My hope is that these interviews will remind you of how important your work is.

It was an honor to work on this project, and I'm proud to share it with you.

# PLATT



To share his story with us he drove all the way from Michigan.



# SURPRIS

There was an entire interview with her glaucoma doctor that we weren't able to add due to time constraints.

## Getting to know our patients

In 2014 the ICO communications team visited patients Geraldine "Gerri" Norington, Karen Hennesy, George Martinez, and Joyce Smith. Their incredible stories can be seen on ICO's YouTube channel.



# ICO 150th Anniversary CELEBRATION

On June 17th, ICO held one of our biggest parties in a very long time. After nearly 3 years without seeing our alumni, we welcomed hundreds back to campus! In celebration of ICO, the great city of Chicago, and our Bronzeville neighborhood, we went hyperlocal. We were happy to be able to source much of the food and the drinks directly from local businesses in the area. Alumni, faculty, staff, and students all mingled together, and a special Leadership Circle reception was held where we announced ICO's newest campaign: "Committed to Your Vision."

We couldn't have asked for a better day to celebrate 150 years, and the sun shone late into the evening. A trolley transported many participants from Optometry's Meeting to our courtyard where BBQ and tamales and special 150th anniversary drinks were served. There were tours of ICO and the IEI, and more than a few alumni peeking in to see how the clinic had changed since their time at ICO.

There is so much that ICO has to be proud of in its 150-year history. We look forward to remaining at the forefront of optometric education and continuing to graduate some of the best doctors in the country.



CAMPUS  
TOURS



ICO.EDU/150

CHICAGO  
CUISINE





## ALUMNI MINGLE



## PHOTO BOOTH



## LEADERSHIP CIRCLE RECEPTION



ICO Leadership Circle members (L-R) **Mark Weber, PhD**; **Vicki Granaki**; **Roy Wesley, OD, PhD**; ICO president **Mark Colip, OD '92**; **Peter Nelson, OD '67**; and **Scott Jens, OD '91**.

## Thank You to Our 150th Anniversary Celebration Sponsors

### Visionary Sponsors

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Alcon

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## Raman Bhakhri, OD

Associate Professor of Optometry

Every year, fourth-year students award the Golden Apple award to the faculty member who has influenced them the most over the course of their four years at ICO. This year, **Dr. Bhakhri** received this award. Dr. Bhakhri's influence as a professor extends to other class years as well. He also was selected as Teacher of the Year by the second- and third-year classes. Being such a popular teacher, we wanted to learn a little bit more about what values he brings to his teaching and a bit about his journey to ICO.

### Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got into optometry?

I got into optometry because of a few friends of mine. Back in Canada, they introduced me to the profession. I wanted to learn more, so I started shadowing my own optometrist. He was always so happy at work, so I asked him, "You're always smiling. I've never seen you upset. Why?" His response: "Because I love my job." I was sold. From there I applied to optometry school. All my friends and I were accepted into PCO/Salus. So, that's where we went.

### What drew you to ICO?

As a student, I was interested in low vision. I did a rotation at PCO/Salus in the low vision and disease unit, and I loved it, but I knew I needed to learn more. I was looking for a similar clinical experience but also wanted to learn outside the familiar PCO/Salus environment.

Faculty members at PCO/Salus spoke highly of ICO, so I applied for an ICO residency. The ICO Low Vision/Ocular Disease residency was exactly what I was looking for. The program strengthened my knowledge and skills while also introducing me to the teaching aspects of optometry. None of that was possible without help, though. The mentorship I received from the faculty during that residency year is something I will always appreciate. I wouldn't be teaching if it wasn't for them. I still lean on those mentors today for support and guidance.

I enjoyed my time at ICO so much. I wanted to stay on as faculty, but at that time there weren't any open positions. It took me doing a residency at ICO to realize teaching had to be part of who I am as an optometrist.

Luckily, a position opened at the Southern California College of Optometry. It was an opportunity I couldn't say no to. The seven years I spent teaching there were amazing. There too, I was lucky to have great friends and mentors who helped me become a better teacher and optometrist. Yet, in the back of my mind, there was always a thought of coming back to ICO. A position opened, and I've been here now for three years. I've loved every moment of it.



**You recently received two Teacher of the Year awards and the Golden Apple award. What values do you try to bring to your teaching?**

Understanding and compassion. Every student learns differently. You can't have the same approach with everyone. I try to adjust and adapt to make concepts simpler and more straightforward for our students. I think every professor can attest to this moment when lecturing: you look up from your notes, and just by looking around, you can tell, "Yep, you understand exactly what I'm saying," or, "You have no clue what I just said." When I get those blank faces, that just motivates me to get back to the drawing board to see how I can rework and rewrite the content.

I also try to be relatable. I want them to always keep asking questions and I try to be as available as possible whether that's through email, informally in the hallway, or, of course, in class.

**How do you see optometry changing in the next few years and how do you hope to be a part of it?**

Optometry is shifting towards a disease-based model. Ophthalmologists are overwhelmed with the number of patients and diseases they manage. Optometrists are prepared to handle many of the cases ophthalmologists see. The question is do we handle them? More and more the answer is yes. Especially at ICO, students are exposed to many different diseases and their management. I find it exciting not only that we are now managing all these conditions, but also just how well prepared our students are to take care of them. At ICO, there is a challenging workload, but it's for a reason. Our students need to know more because they will be treating and managing more complex cases every single year.

I get to be part of these developments every day by being a teacher at ICO. It's inspiring to see how the classes my colleagues and I teach are preparing students for the future.

In the end, ICO students are the future of this profession. We have to prepare them as well as possible. That's what it always comes back to for me. The other faculty members and I work hard for them because we know they will ultimately change our profession. The better prepared they are, the better off optometry is.

**What's one thing you would like incoming students to know about the field of optometry?**

Optometry isn't just contacts and glasses. There are so many optometric specialties that students can choose from. Mine originally was low vision. At that time, I was often treating patients where glasses and contacts were no longer enough. For them, vision had to be maximized with magnifiers and other technologies. I loved having that as my foundational work as a recent graduate, but I was also able to shift from low vision to ocular pharmacology because it was something I was interested in. It's amazing just how many different places your optometry degree can take you. Look at my own journey. My residency is in low vision, but when the opportunity came to teach ocular pharmacology, I said yes right away. That's the beauty of our profession — you get to choose what you're passionate about. You get to build your own journey.



## Homecoming 2022

For the first time in three years, we hosted Homecoming at ICO this September. Because this year is also an important milestone in the history of ICO, we worked hard to find the perfect venue. Homecoming took place amongst the lions at the Lincoln Park Zoo. (Don't worry, the glass protected our guests from getting too close to them!)

This zoo holds particular importance because of its historic significance. Founded in 1868, it has served as an iconic Chicago institution for many generations. We're only four years younger so it seemed fitting to celebrate together.

The Homecoming celebration began on Friday night with jungle-themed drinks and food in the courtyard. It was a great opportunity for students and alumni to mingle and get to know each other better.

After Friday's gathering, Saturday was jam-packed with events. The day started with the first 50-Year Club lunch in three years. This year's cohort included the Classes of 1970, 1971, and 1972. After lunch, there was a river boat architecture tour. Then the big reception was held! This started with an invite-only award ceremony. We recognized not only this year's alumni award recipients but also those from 2021 and 2020. We ended the celebrations on Sunday with a CE event on myopia management.

It was wonderful to see so many faces after such a long time. We hope you had a great time!

# HOMECOMING AT THE ZOO

## CELEBRATION AT THE ZOO



# FRIDAY NIGHT MINGLE



# Homecoming

## 50-YEAR CLUB LUNCH



All 50-Year Club members in attendance, including new 2022 inductees; (Back Row, L-R) **Burton Pinchuk, OD '72, Jordon Beller, OD '71,** president **Mark Colip, OD '92, Myrel Neumann, OD '62,** and **Peter Nelson, OD '67.** (front row, L-R) **Gerald Kolk, OD '72, Jeffrey Ritsema, OD '72,** and **Timothy Mellus, OD '72.**

## ALUMNI AWARDS CEREMONY



## ARCHITECTURE TOUR



# 2022 Alumni Association

## Award Recipients



**Michele Andrews, OD '92**  
Alumnus of the Year



**Bill Park, OD '77**  
Lifetime Service Award



**Molly Proud, OD '19**  
Young Alumnus of the Year



**Valerie Kattouf, OD '95**  
Excellence in Education Award



**Stephanie Johnson-Brown, OD '78**  
Humanitarian Award



**Rep. Theresa Mah**  
Distinguished Friend Award

We would also like to congratulate past award winners who were also recognized during this Homecoming.

### 2021 AWARD WINNERS

**Nicholas Colatrella, OD '96**  
Alumnus of the Year Award

**Tommy Elton, OD '11**  
Young Alumnus of the Year Award

**Seenu Hariprasad, MD**  
Distinguished Friend Award

**Muriel Schornack, OD '98**  
Professional Achievement Award

**Joseph McCray, OD '75**  
Excellence in Education Award

**Michael Cizek, OD '93**  
Humanitarian Award

**Sandra S. Block, OD '81, MEd, MPH, FAAO, FCOVD, FNAP**  
Lifetime Service Award

**Jeanette Varanelli, OD '97**  
Golden Gavel Award

### 2020 AWARD WINNERS

**Robert N. Lewenson, OD '80**  
Alumnus of the Year Award

**Abby Jakob, OD '14**  
Young Alumnus of the Year Award

**R. Michael Daley**  
Distinguished Friend Award

**R. Mark Hatfield, OD '79, MD, FACS**  
Professional Achievement Award

**Geoffrey W. Goodfellow, OD '01, FAAO, Dipl. ABO**  
Excellence in Education Award

**William A. Olivos, OD '95**  
Humanitarian Award

**Bernie P. Nevel, OD '55 (N. Ill. College of Optometry)**  
Lifetime Service Award

**Larry Van Daalen, OD '87**  
Golden Gavel Award

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# Essentials: Jordon Beller, OD '71

A lot was changing in optometry when **Jordon Beller, OD '71** joined ICO in 1967. "We were the very first ICO class to be taught a four-year curriculum. First year was taught based on a three-year curriculum. Then we switched in our second year," says Dr. Beller. These were years of unrest with the Vietnam War always present in the background. "I know at least one person who went to Canada to avoid the war."

By the late-60s, a 4-year OD degree was attainable at every American optometric institution. At ICO, these curricular changes included the addition of 800 clinical training hours. "My class was particularly small; 70 students graduated in 1971. With our 3 years of clinic, we got to see more patients and got to fit more contact lenses than anyone before us."

Dr. Beller was also the student body president, "We had a campus revolt of our own and threatened to stop going to the clinic. Most of what we were unhappy about was the lack of opportunity to have any input into administrative rulings, in particular, [how we dressed] in clinic. We wanted to wear white coats like other physicians. We wanted to change our image, especially in our own mind. We already had enough insecurities. We didn't need additional insecurity because of our clothes."

After he graduated, Dr. Beller set up practices in La Grange (his hometown), Darien, St. Charles, and worked with several optometrists as a specialty contact lens fitter. Now retired, he runs a vintage car museum the Beller Museum.

Here are a few of his essentials.



## SHOP LOCAL

I have had the opportunity to open and run several different practices. As a practice owner, I worked with every possible business in town. Humans run businesses, and many of them need an eye doctor. We both filled a need for one another, and together we built a stronger community.

To me, shop local also means get involved in local activities. When I was working in La Grange, I joined the Main Street Project. A large number of merchants got on the band wagon to improve the town. There are now 37 restaurants in the town of 25,000 people! Our work had a lasting impact in the community.







## ROOM TO GROW

I am a born collector. I have all my old toys. I have around 20,000 books and other publications, but my true love is vintage cars and all things automotive. I collect automotive art and subscribe to over 50 different publications. I author a journal on automotive advertising, and I collect cars.

The Beller Museum started 25 years ago as 2,000 square feet with seven or eight cars. It has now grown to 30,000 square feet and over 80 vintage automobiles. I don't think I'll grow my own collection anymore, but now I'm working with a restaurant where I may put a few cars. The restaurant is only a block away from me, so we'll be helping the local community.

My goal with this museum is to educate and to have as many "Oh jeez! I never knew that!" moments as possible. Bringing that knowledge and curiosity to a new generation is now my life's work. It's well worth the effort.

## A JEWELER AND AN OPTOMETRIST

Current students may not know how closely optometrists and jewelers worked together during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Like jewelers, to fit glasses, optometrists often used small hand tools and made minute repairs. My father graduated from NICO in 1934. He joined my grandfather's jewelry business at the age of 19 and practiced in La Grange for 47 years.



Dr. Beller receives his 50-Yr Club certificate.

## MAKING ENDS MEET

Before I was an optometrist, I was a car mechanic. I had my own gas station and worked for myself. I love cars, but I was physically exhausted trying to meet everyone's demands. I chose optometry to move away from such a stressful field.

During optometry school, I needed to find a way to continue making money. In addition to paid work, I used to work on and resell cars. I used to cruise the used car lots on State and 47th. I distinctly remember the cars I worked on and sold during that time period.

## AT HOME IN CHICAGO

I've had the opportunity to travel all over the US. I can't think of a place I'd rather be than Chicago. I am in love with Chicago and I love to show her off whenever I get the chance. I take guests sightseeing and show off the great restaurants. I want people to know why I love it so much. I can be anywhere, but Chicago moves at a pace I can handle.

## FOUNDATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

When I graduated ICO, I went into practice in August of the same year. I had one patient who followed me from ICO. He was 5 or 6 years old, and I fitted him with his first pair of contact lenses. Over 50 years later, he is now my lawyer and CPA. These lasting relationships are part of what makes optometry such a unique profession.

# Trending



March 18

**Kenny Ward** sits down with third years **Sylwia Prorok** and **Tea Dimo**. The first question to kick off this series is: "Did you Feel Prepared (for optometry school)?"



August 16

How exciting!! The second day of classes at ICO is officially starting. Good luck to everyone as we start this new quarter. We're excited to see what this quarter will bring!



August 17

Here's a little mid-week tidbit for everyone! For those who didn't know, we now have honeybees on our roof! The first honey has already been drawn, and we'll continue having honey throughout the season. We're excited to see our colleagues' passions converge with space that the College had!



June 16

The Class of 2022 has made it! Enjoy these highlights from commencement as well as a look back at the memories made along the way. Congratulations new doctors!



July 22

We didn't want to miss the opportunity to celebrate our students and colleagues who a few weekends ago attended the National Optometric Association (NOA) Convention in Anaheim, CA. Students **Reneta Simeon '24**, **Melisa Philogene '24**, **Alexis Abernathy '23**, and **Lydie Tubene '23** all attended. **Dr. Eric Harris** was also in attendance and gave a lecture on the diagnostic criteria of Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension.



September 8

A few weeks ago, we sat down with **Dr. Bhakhri** who recently won three teaching awards at ICO! Being such a popular teacher at ICO (and being the beginning of the fall quarter), we wanted to learn more about him. Keep watching to check out a few highlights from Dr. Bhakhri's interview.





### September 15

Congrats to ICO student **Manisha Parikh** who has been selected as the recipient of the 2022 VCS Morton W. Silverman Outstanding Student Paper-Project Award for her project "Risk Factors for Meibomian Gland Morphology Changes in Children Ages 4 to <18 years."

This is the second year in a row that an ICO student has been selected for this honor! Her research mentors include **Drs. Yi Pang** and **Lindsay Sicks**.



### September 20

Last week, we got to spend an hour with our latest group of residents. It was great to interact with so many old and new faces! Residents, even though you've already been here for a few months, we'd like to welcome everyone again. We're so excited to see what this year will bring!



### October 14

We are proud to be presenting over 40 research topics at the annual American Academy of Optometry meeting in San Diego later this month. Best wishes to all the faculty, students, and residents representing ICO!



### November 2

As things wind down and students return to campus after having been at Academy this week, we just wanted give a quick shoutout to our ICO team at this year's AOSA student bowl. Thanks to **Alex, Alek, and Ani** for representing ICO! ICO won fourth place out of 25 schools! Good job, you guys, making us proud!



### September 24

ICO, please join us in congratulating ICO Professor Emeritus **Sandra Block, OD, MEd, MPH, FAAO** on receiving the 2022 Henry B. Peters Award from the American Academy of Optometry Foundation (AAOF)!

In addition to being a beloved ICO professor, Dr. Block is known for serving students, the young patients of the Illinois Eye Institute and Princeton Elementary School, and children with special needs.

You make us so proud, Dr. Block!



### November 21

For those who missed it, we had our very first Pre-Health Professions Crash Course on campus this Saturday. We had an awesome group of students who joined us at ICO to learn about optometry and other health professions. It was a great way for students to learn about future opportunities and why representation in health care matters. This will be an ongoing event, and we're excited that the first session went so well!


A special thank you to @eyedoc\_eharris who led this great day. We appreciate all you do!





# Being Neighborly: ICO's Community Advisory Board

*By: Sheila Quirke*



**W**hen **Charles Mullen, OD** arrived in Chicago after being named Illinois College of Optometry's (ICO) fourth president in 1996, he brought with him over two and a half decades worth of experiences in some of America's largest urban settings on the Eastern Seaboard including Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.

Each of his previous positions influenced him, but one in particular from his first professional role as Special Assistant to the President for Clinical Development at the New England College of Optometry, his alma mater, really stuck, "It was in Boston where I learned about the importance of creating community affiliations. Seeing the importance of community and community leadership and how they can impact the educational experience always stayed with me," says Dr. Mullen, now retired and living in Pittsburgh.

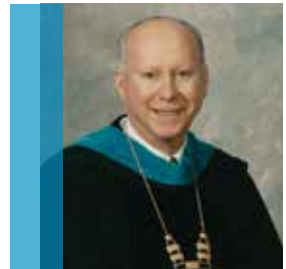
One of Dr. Mullen's first objectives at ICO was to "create a group of community leaders who valued interaction." The timing was right for Mr. Leroy Kennedy who was working in external relations at the neighboring Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) during that period, "There was very little community involvement when I started. A small group called the South Side Partnership existed, very informal, but ICO was not involved with that."



# DE LA SALLE INSTITUTE

It was in Boston where I learned about the importance of creating community affiliations. Seeing the importance of community and community leadership and how they can impact the educational experience always stayed with me.

*Charles Mullen, OD '70*



Dr. Mullen and Mr. Kennedy each saw an opportunity, as the objectives of their respective institutions aligned and ICO's Community Advisory Board (CAB) came into being in October of 1998. In his book, *The Road to Excellence: A Continued History of the Illinois College of Optometry*, Dr. Mullen wrote, "The recently created Community Advisory Board is comprised of eleven individuals, representing area churches, schools, community groups, government agencies and members of ICO Administration. (Its purpose) is to discuss areas of mutual concern and to formulate plans for improving the quality of life for all the residents of our community."

In 1998, Mr. Kennedy (who has since retired from IIT as its Vice President of Community Affairs) was one of those eleven people who first sat on ICO's CAB and had a front row seat for watching it take shape, "It was

important to expand the table and ICO did that. The Community Advisory Board allowed for a much broader base of individuals and organizations. The meetings were efficient and lasted just one hour, but it was the time in between meetings where things really happened."

Through connections made at the quarterly CAB meetings over the years, Mr. Kennedy described how the educational pillars of the local community – ICO, IIT, the De La Salle Institute, a private Catholic high school in Bronzeville, and the VanderCook College of Music began to collaborate and network with local churches, police, elected officials, and community groups to identify unmet needs.

From those connections, positive changes started happening. Vision screenings for CPS students and daycares were provided by ICO students, and

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The connections made at our meetings lead to further business opportunities, better utilization of ICO resources, and a community idea exchange.

*Mark Colip, OD '92*



## VanderCook College of Music

There is a collective energy and phenomenal synergy where benefits and opportunities are made available.

*Nicole Wheatly*

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ongoing meetings between the presidents of the three educational pillars of the community continued to identify needs and board members worked together to see how they could be met.

It is common for larger non-profits to talk the talk of community service, but not necessarily walk the walk. When new initiatives are created with the best of intentions, it can be easy to stray from original goals over time and instead start to focus on meeting standards on a paper or checking off tasks that do not match their stated intention. ICO's CAB has not fallen into that pattern. This could be because members of the CAB live and work in Bronzeville, The Gap, and the surrounding area, so all those needs being fulfilled positively impact the larger community, having an ongoing ripple effect. Sometimes those needs are personal and sometimes they are professional.

Nicole Wheatly is a community development consultant, real estate developer, and founder and owner of *Steps, Inc. Consulting in Bronzeville*. Mr. Kennedy invited her to join the board over seven years ago and sings its praises, "I don't know if it is divine intervention or strategy regarding who is invited to sit on the board, but I am honored to be a part of it. There is a collective energy and phenomenal synergy where benefits and opportunities are made available. The functions they host support families and seniors in the community. Everyone shares."

An example of that synergy and sharing that Ms. Wheatly identified continues to benefit her own family, "We were going downtown for music lessons for my son. It was a trip, but we did it every week. It was at one of the CAB meetings that I learned about VanderCook College of Music, one of Chicago's best kept secrets. It was so secret even I didn't know about it," Ms. Wheatly says, laughing.

VanderCook happens to be the only college in the United States solely focused on the training of music educators. What better place for music lessons for her talented son? "The board exists to help the community access resources," says Ms. Wheatly, "Every meeting is A+ and each member is provided the opportunity to share and spread the word."

One of ICO's stated values is to provide "service to the community." For a college of optometry, that is accomplished through the many ways that faculty, staff, and students make vision health and services accessible to the surrounding community, but with the formation of the CAB, the Administration has continued to push for other ways ICO can be not just a community resource, but a good neighbor.

**Mark Colip, OD '92**, serves as ICO's sixth and current President, and sees how Dr. Mullen's vision for the CAB continues to benefit both ICO and the larger community, "The connections made at our meetings



# URBAN OUTREACH FOUNDATION

There is a posture of humility and appreciation for the community which has endeared ICO to this community.

*Jonathan Banks*

lead to further business opportunities, better utilization of ICO resources, and a community idea exchange. ICO has the infrastructure to host these meetings that are something like a living bulletin board for community organizations. We host guest speakers, have check-ins with each member, and provide the opportunity for people to come together to share updates with one another.”

In discussing the work of the CAB, Dr. Colip reflected on its history, as he served as Dean of Student Affairs when it was created, “Dr. Mullen’s strategic plan identified a need for closer ties with the community. Our institution was isolated from neighbors, insulated from service outside of caring for our patients. Dr. Mullen brought the mentality of service to the community and how that was an opportunity for students to learn and provide in a different way. By recruiting community leaders and activists, we build ties that are helpful to ICO and vice versa. We are all stronger when we work together.”

Jonathan Banks is the Chief Operating Officer of the Urban Outreach Foundation and has sat on the CAB for the past four years after being introduced to it by Ms. Wheatly. He lives and works in the community and knows the importance of that connection, “The majority of ICO staff and faculty don’t live in the area, but they are connected and connected in an intentional way. You can only serve if you are in relationship

with the community. The posture of ICO’s leadership is not, ‘We’re here to help.’ It is not paternalistic. There is a posture of humility and appreciation for the community which has endeared ICO to this community. Institutions ‘giving back’ are not helpful. There has to be a partnership.” Mr. Banks sees ICO as “convening their power to elevate the community.”

While meetings total just three hours annually, Mr. Kennedy puts that in perspective when he acknowledged that the time in between meetings has the most impact, “There are the folks at the table and the folks that get you to the table. The community stays involved because of [ICO’s] detailed, accurate, prompt sharing of information. The table provides the opportunity to establish relationships, but the work matters.”

It is a tribute to Dr. Mullen’s original vision that almost 25 years later, ICO’s Community Advisory Board is still impacting Chicago’s Bronzeville and The Gap communities in ways large and small that goes far beyond vision screenings. Mr. Banks understands how this is possible and knows its value, “ICO creates the opportunity for relationships. It’s good to know your neighbors.”

# ALUMNI AMBASSADOR PROGRAM AT ICO

FOSTERING THE NEWEST GENERATION OF DOCTORS OF OPTOMETRY.

*Interview By: Nora Matland*

**T**here are many ways for an Alumni Ambassador to get involved. They can attend ICO events, attend career fairs, become a shadowing site for prospective students, and more. Our newest effort is to connect incoming students with alumni ambassadors even before they arrive on campus. Below are three perspectives from three representatives who have been part of the program.

## TEISHA JOHNSON

Senior Director of Admissions

Building this new ambassador program has been a shift from previous years. Previously, applicants would have to do the work of tracking down and engaging with ICO alums themselves. Of course, we connected students to shadowing opportunities whenever possible, but this is the first time we matched alumni with accepted students. And I think these initiatives bring our recruitment strategy to the next level.

The applicant pool these days requires a concerted effort to provide as many touchpoints as possible. We've always known that alumni have been essential to recruiting high-quality students. Students who have interacted with alumni are much more likely to deposit, and they have a better understanding of what makes the ICO experience so unique.

Alumni provide an outside voice that still understands the experience of being a student at ICO. Alumni can share unique stories from their own experience at ICO. Ultimately, it's the patient experience that will make you a great OD. No one can better clarify this to incoming students than current ODs.

We have included this program within a larger outreach initiative, and while your call is one of many, I think it can be the most important. You provide information on how the ICO curriculum prepared you to be an OD, but you also help students understand what paths they can take after their optometry degree. Not all applicants will pick up that phone call or respond to the messages you send, but I think that even that voice message you leave matters. To you it may just be a voicemail, but for an incoming student it's another indication that we're an institution that is thinking about their wellbeing.

We need as much support as possible to continue exposing students to ICO, especially different voices and different perspectives. It would be great to have more people from underrepresented backgrounds join as well.

We thank our alums for taking the time to share their experiences. They really do have a profound impact.



This is the first time we matched alumni with accepted students. And I think these initiatives bring our recruitment strategy to the next level.



**SAVANNAH SKIDMORE '26**

ICO First-year Student

It was easy for me to tell that ICO worked hard to build a strong community. Honestly, that was one of the biggest things that convinced me to come to ICO. I distinctly remember asking questions from different admissions schools, and the answers from ICO were almost immediate, while others took longer to reply. It made a big impact.



It was wonderful to be paired up with someone who had similar interests to my own.

Adding an alumni contact to the already great communication was icing on the cake. ICO purports to do a good job of connecting ICO to alumni. I was convinced that this was the case when I was connected to my alumni ambassador mentor. I remember saying to my parents, "Wow. They really care and the alumni care as well." It helped provide clarity for which optometry school was the best fit for me.

secure in my decision. It was wonderful to be paired up with someone who had similar interests to my own. I'm definitely interested in private practice and pursuing a residency. I was very happy to hear about my alumni connect's private practice experience and to learn about his residency. I haven't asked him a ton of questions yet, but I know that down the line I will get in touch. He'll be a good person to have in my corner.

A lot of the onus of networking falls on the individual. Building a network from day one made me feel even more

It's nice to see the sense of community they instill during the admissions process is an actual reality once you arrive at ICO.



When we contact incoming students, we show that we are truly invested in their future and success.

this gives incoming students an opportunity to better understand their options. Through this program, I can share my story and how I found my way. And if there is anything that I can do to inspire those entering the profession, I'm happy to. These students are at the very beginning of their journey. The

**STEVEN C. QUAN, OD, '16, FFAO**

Clinical Associate of Ophthalmology and Visual Science  
University of Chicago Medicine & Biological Sciences

When I think about this program, I think back to when I chose ICO. I'm from California, but decided to leave home because I wanted to explore something different. For me, Chicago had it all: a large city, with a strong sense of community that made it easy to feel like you belong.

world is their oyster. Anything I can do to help them achieve their goals is well worth my time.

We've also been through ICO's program. Through this, there's a shared sense of camaraderie. In other words, I get it. I get the struggle. I've also experienced it. Alumni can speak to how ICO got them to where they are. They can give the program color and depth because they're on the other side of this intense program.

I love mentorship and appreciate how my mentors helped guide me to where I am today. Now, I am lucky to be a mentor for others every day. It gives me a meaningful way to give back to the ICO community and to optometry as a profession. This program is special because it has a personal touch. Optometrists work in so many types of specialties, and

We're living proof of how strong the alumni network is. When we contact incoming students, we show that we are truly invested in their future and success.

In the end I stayed in Chicago. I really came to love it. I'm excited to tell students about this wonderful city too.

**BECOME AN ALUMNI  
AMBASSADOR**

If you are interested in joining the ICO Alumni Ambassador team, contact ICO's alumni office at [alumni@ico.edu](mailto:alumni@ico.edu) or **312-949-7080**.



# Class Notes

## 1940s

### 1945

**Barbara Jean Schear** celebrated her 100th birthday on July 16, 2022 with many friends and family.

## 1970s

### 1971

**Charles Brownlow** was inducted into the American Optometric Association Foundation's National Optometry Hall of Fame in June 2022.

### 1978

**Emeritus Professor, Dominick M. Maino** was the featured artist at the Triple R Gallery's June and July First Fridays art exhibitions in Chicago. Many of his images were prominently displayed during this showing. At the July event, one of Dominick's works caught the attention of an art collector and after an in-depth discussion of this work, the art collector decided to purchase the image. This photograph is printed on canvas and is of Christ on the Cross. Dominick has had an interest in photography for decades and frequently was a photographer for many of ICO's events. He was also recently interviewed for a story on National Public Radio concerning the Archdiocese of Chicago's Renew My Church program. This program has resulted in the closing of or the combining of many churches into new parishes. Dominick commented on how being a member of the parish's Music Ministry has helped to heal and bring

together the various church congregations. (100% of all profits from the sale of his art work has been donated to the Our Lady of the Rosary Music Ministry in Chicago).

## 1980s

### 1981

**Sandra Block** was honored at the American Academy of Optometry meeting in San Diego, CA as this year's recipient of the Henry B. Peters Award.

### 1987

**Millicent Knight**, of Dallas, Texas was honored with the Living Legend Award at the NOA meeting in July, and the NOA renamed its NOA Trailblazer Award to honor Dr. Knight.

## 1990s

### 1996

**Nicholas Colatrella**, was elected to the American Academy of Optometry Board of Directors in October 2022. Dr. Colatrella received his doctorate degree from the Illinois College of Optometry and performed a hospital-based residency in ocular disease through the Cleveland Veterans Affairs Medical Center. He is board certified by the American Board of Optometry and the American Board of Certification in Medical Optometry, and a Fellow in the American Academy of Optometry. He was also the first optometrist in the country to attain Diplomate status in Anterior Segment diseases from the American Academy of Optometry.

## 2010s

### 2016

**Lara Match** published a book in 2022, *Living the Art of Loving: A Picture Book*. "This surprisingly quick read contains over 50 illustrations with a few carefully chosen words. It describes how to listen well, prepare for gatherings, manage conflict, and move through suffering towards connection. Lara Match uses her heartfelt design language of endearing figures, emotive swirls, and dotted outlines to show the patterns of poignant moments we encounter with others. A pictorial translation of Chiara Lubich's *The Art of Loving*, this book offers techniques to create, elevate, and maintain our relationships at home, at work and with our best selves." – Amazon.com

## 2020s

### 2020

**Fran Mangahas and Luke Schmidt** got married on June 11th, 2022 and celebrated with many of their classmates from the Class of 2020 (**Jordan Langel, Ryan Eisel, Kyle Young, Eric Veverka, Alex Beachnau, Tracy Tran, Justin Ng, Pedram Pourhosseini, Mike Bannon, Stephanie Engebretson, Nicole Avgoulas, and Noel Arackal**). It was a great mini ICO reunion after not having physical graduation in 2020. Optometrists sure know how to party!

# In Memoriam

## 1940s

### 1944

**Kenneth E. Brill**, passed away peacefully on Sunday June 19th at the age of 99 years and 7 months. He was pre-deceased by his parents, Evarist and Hulda (Allinger) Brill and his beloved wife of 56 years, Mary Gilday Brill. He is survived by his three proud children, Julie Rasman, Suzanne Brill (Tom Curtis) and John Brill (Jody) along with four loving grandchildren Kate Current (J.T.), Bailey Kraemer (Josh), Callan Curtis (Zoe Josten) and Kennedy Curtis. He was "Four Pop" to his great-grandsons, Eli and Quinn Kraemer and great-granddaughter Josten-Curtis arriving in October.

Ken, an only child, was born in Kiel, WI and grew up in Milwaukee. He graduated from Washington High School and Northern Illinois College of Optometry. He practiced in Milwaukee first with his father and then in a solo practice for over 40 years. He was a huge sports fan from his kids' and grandkids' grade school games all the way up to the pros and was a life-long Badger fan in particular. Sports were followed very closely by his love of a good sheephead game!

### 1944

**Ben Tsutomu Chikaraishi** passed away on Monday, February 21, 2022, at the age of 100 in Lincolnwood IL. Although he had many health setbacks over his long life, Ben remained strong and lived independently with his wife Kiyoko right up to his time of passing. After one final stay in the hospital, he returned to the rehab center at Lincolnwood Place where he died peacefully with Kiyoko, his beloved wife of 76 years, and their family by his side.

Ben Chikaraishi, was born in Colusa, CA on September 10, 1921, to Saroku Chikaraishi (father) and Sato Oyama Chikaraishi (mother). His parents married in Japan and immigrated to the US in 1904. The fourth of five children, Ben spent most of his childhood in Stockton, CA, helping his father manage a hotel. Ben was the first of his family to attend college and he pursued an optometry degree at the University of California, Berkeley. Unfortunately, WWII interrupted his education and in 1942 Ben and his family were incarcerated in Rohwer Internment Camp in Arkansas as a result of the infamous Executive Order 9066. While at Rohwer, Ben practiced optometry at the camp hospital where he met Kiyoko Chino, his future bride.

In July 1943 Ben relocated to Chicago and finished his optometry degree at the Northern Illinois College

of Optometry. In 1945, he established his optometry practice in Chicago and was joined by his son Jim in 1974. Together they served many patients in the Japanese American community. He practiced for 41 years until his retirement in 1986.

In 1945, Ben married Kiyoko and they resided in Chicago until 1960 when they built a new home in Morton Grove, IL. There they raised their family and hosted innumerable gatherings over the next 57 years. In their later years Ben and Kiyoko were able to travel the world and take many gambling trips with the Midwest Buddhist Temple Golden Agers group. In 2017 they moved to Lincolnwood Place for Senior Living. Beyond his devotion to his extended family, Ben will be remembered as an avid fisherman, a bountiful gardener, and life-long loyal Chicago White Sox fan.

As patriarch, his advice and guidance were sought and valued by his family. But Ben will also be remembered for his civic and community contributions. He was a founding member of the Midwest Buddhist Temple in Chicago. There he served in many leadership capacities, including President of the Board of Trustees and Chairman of the Building Committee. The Building Committee was responsible for planning, fundraising, and overseeing the construction of the beautiful Midwest Buddhist Temple building which stands as an architectural icon in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood. Dr. Ben was also a driving force behind MBT's Ginza Holiday serving decades as the Ginza announcer ("and a good, good evening to you!"). Ben's self-taught investment expertise helped provide financial stability for the temple and that legacy benefits MBT even today. Just as importantly he helped create the Reverend Gyodo Kono Fund, in honor of MBT's founding minister, which has granted scholarships to many students seeking education in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. To support the Japanese American youth in the 1950s through the 1970s Ben helped create the Chicago Nisei Athletic Association (CNAA), which enabled Japanese American young people from all over the Chicago area to participate in various sports and organized leagues. Dr. Ben has been a positive influence in the lives of many, many people.

### 1947

**Alfred Henry "Al" Neitzke** passed away peacefully at 97 years of age on Wednesday, November 17, 2021 surrounded by his family at Perham Health, Perham, Minnesota.

Alfred was born on January 18, 1924 to Robert and Katherine (Riewer) Neitzke in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. He attended Detroit Lakes High School, graduated with

# In Memoriam

the class of 1942. Al enlisted in the United States Army and was stationed at Fort Snelling in St. Paul, Minnesota.

He attended the University of Minnesota. On January 3, 1946 Al was united in marriage to Maryann Kelty in Fargo, North Dakota. In 1947 he received his Doctor of Optometry from the Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago, where he was President of the Student Council. He then began his 50-year optometry practice in Wadena and Perham, Minnesota. He was a member of the MN Optometric Association for many years where he served as treasurer.

On August 29, 1987 Al was united in marriage to Irene Catherine Egan. Together they made their home in Wadena and Ottertail Lake MN. They enjoyed escaping MN Winter's at their home in Englewood, Florida.

Al was involved in his community and had many interests and hobbies. He was co-founder and director of the Mid Central Federal Savings Bank with Morris J. Ebner and served as Chairman of the Board for 47 years. He was passionate about golf, playing an instrumental role in the creation of the Wadena Golf Course where he served as president from 1957 to 1974. He was a lifetime member of the Wadena Lions Club.

The family cabin on Ottertail Lake was a special gathering place for his family. Watching others enjoy the special place he created brought him much joy. Al's love for his family was ever present.

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## 1950s

### 1950

**Paul F. McPheron**, age 93, of New London, died Thursday, April 16, 2020 at his home. He was born January 1, 1927 in Trenton to Lee Ellis and Anna Katherine Elliott McPheron. On October 11, 1953, he married Wanda Grace Wirsig in Donnellson.

He was valedictorian of the New London High School class of 1944, a graduate of University of Iowa, and Northern Illinois College of Optometry. For 43 years he was a self-employed optometrist in New London, retiring in 1984. Dr. McPheron served as a Seaman in the Navy ROTC during WWII. He was a lifetime member of New London United Methodist Church where he taught Sunday School and was a trustee; and also served on the Burge Cemetery board where he worked tirelessly. During high school he was an outstanding athlete in track, football, baseball, and

basketball. He enjoyed doing yardwork and working around the house. Paul and Wanda enjoyed all types of dancing and loved traveling, especially going on cruises.

Besides his wife, survivors include three sons; Jeffrey (Sherri) of Mt. Pleasant, Dennis (Margarita) and Robert (Julie) both of New London; one daughter Diane (Rick) Schnicker of New London; six grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. Preceding him in death were his parents, brother Dick, and sister Lois Caldwell.

According to his wishes, his body has been cremated. In keeping with Governor Kim Reynolds order during the COVID-19 health crisis, a private memorial service will be held at Elliott Chapel with inurnment at Burge Cemetery. Memorials have been established for the New London United Methodist Church and the Salvation Army.

### 1957

**Dr. Norman S. Patterson**, age 89, late of Frankfort, formerly of Tinley Park, IL, passed away peacefully August 14, 2022. US Army Veteran. Beloved husband of the late Shirley Patterson nee (Leebelt). Loving father of Steven (Tina) Patterson, Cindy (Tim) Douglas, and Jeff Patterson. Loving brother of his twin, the late Norbert (Lucille) Patterson, the late Dolores Hobbs (Orville Pagles and James Hobbs), and the late Melville (Charlene) Patterson. Loving grandfather of Melissa Patterson, Sarah Patterson, and Christopher (Traci) Somrek. Beloved uncle to many nieces and nephews and a great grandfather of Jazzy, Nala, Braden Patterson, Savannah, Ryan, Alexandria, and Charolette Somrek.

Norman was born July 1, 1933, to James and Sarah Ann Patterson nee Cully of Chicago, IL.

Dr. Norman Patterson was a well-respected optometrist in his Tinley Park practice for many years. He had a reputation of being able to fit contacts like no other optometrist. He was a graduate of the University of Illinois and the Illinois College of Optometry. Norman was also a member of the Tinley Park Lions Club. Norman loved boating and was enjoyed by many for his great sense of humor. Norman was loved by many friends, neighbors, and colleagues. We will miss his infectious laugh.

### 1958

**Paul Langehough**, February 17, Iowa City, IA. Paul attended the University of Iowa and was a graduate of the Illinois College of Optometry. Paul served in the U.S. Army from 1953 to 1955. On June 12, 1957 Paul married Ruth Guenther in Eldora, Iowa. They moved to Iowa City in 1958 where Paul joined the optometric practice of Drs. James and Philip Hottel. He became a partner and the practice grew into Eye Associates of Iowa City, where he practiced for nearly 40 years.

# 1960s

## 1969

**Ralph E. Parkansky**, Nashville, Tenn., November 17, 2022. Ralph is survived by his wife Linda of 53 years, twin daughters Kendra and Beth, 5 grandchildren, and numerous friends and optometric colleagues.

Ralph's optometric career was multi-faceted. It began with private practice in Collinsville, Illinois. Ralph then proudly served his country in the Navy's Medical Service Corps as an optometrist for 20 years, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Commander. His duty stations included both stateside and international sites. While in the Navy, Ralph earned a master's degree in physiological optics at the University of Houston College of Optometry. His thesis title was Temporal Tuning Effects in the Visual Evoked Response. Following the Navy, Ralph served on the faculty at the Southern College of Optometry for 19 years, obtaining the rank of Professor. Consistent with his life-long quest for more knowledge, Ralph later earned a master's degree in business administration.



# 1970s

## 1972

**Joseph Malee** of Palos Heights passed away on November 8, 2022. Dr. Malee was a Life member of the IOA/AOA and had been a member for 51 years.



# 1990s

## 1990

**Joseph William Johl** was born August 12, 1957, in Prairie du Chien, WI as one of 6 children to Alfred and Audrey Johl. Determined from the beginning, he paid for his first car and saved for college by working at the Country Kitchen in high school. In 1979 he completed a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Viterbo College, LaCrosse, WI. After which he was commissioned into the United States Air Force, with tours in Biloxi MS, Turkey, and CA. He married his college sweetheart, Gail Ann Reicks, on June 18th, 1983. While working nightshift as a critical care nurse in the emergency

room, he began Optometry school in Chicago, IL, graduating in 1990. His devotion to his family, work as an optometrist, and most importantly his Catholic faith included moves to Ankeny; Chariton; Fairfield; and finally Winterset in 2006. He was a member of the American Optometric Association, Knights of Columbus, Lion's Club, Opus Dei, and Regnum Christi, to name a few.

His pride and joy were his family, including his wife Gail, seven children, Mark Joseph, Maria Elizabeth, Benjamin Michael, Rebecca Anne, Matthew Joseph, Miriam Therese, and Anne Dominique. His life was a dedicated example of service to his family, extended family, friends, and church, through music, medical missionary work, and travels to Washington, DC for the March for Life. One of his many talents included singing for weddings, funerals, church, and numerous community events. He enjoyed cultivating the domestic church by spending time with family, gardening, and caring for his home in the country. Most importantly, he exemplified a life of great faith and was an inspiration to all. His 16 year-long journey with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy – Parkinsonism (PSP), included many obstacles and challenges which he met with great determination and support from his comrades at neurocycling and Rock Steady Boxing.

He died peacefully in his home on April 5, 2022.



# Friends of ICO

**Stuart Paul Richer**, passed on October 26, 2022. Dr. Richer was an active member of the CAPT James A. Lovell FHCC medical staff for 39 years before his recent retirement.

Dr. Richer earned his undergraduate degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology after which he completed a dual OD MS (physiological optics) at University of California at Berkeley in 1981 followed by a residency in low vision at the Kansas City DVA Medical Center. He was Chief of Optometry at DVA Medical Center, North Chicago for over 30 years. He has been involved in teaching optometry and medical students and postdoctoral fellows. In 1996 Dr. Richer earned his PhD in human physiology and biophysics from Chicago Medical and taught in many academic settings. Dr. Richer published numerous papers in prestigious journals from his 35 research projects and was a sought after speaker worldwide. Always involved in primary care, Dr. Richer had a special interest in aging, nutrients for macular degeneration, low vision glaucoma and cataract prevention.

# Vault

In this issue, we've taken a deep dive into the lives of our current patients, but patients have always been at the core of what we do. So, we wanted to take a step back and look at some of the other patients who have come through our optometric doors.



1872-2022

# Datebook

**EYE  
BALL  
MARCH 25**

## DECEMBER

**December 22 – January 2**  
Winter Break

## 2023

## JANUARY

**January 14**  
Casino Night

**January 16**  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
College/Clinic Closed

## FEBRUARY

**February 5**  
Winter CE Program

**February 24**  
Board of Trustees Meeting

**February 25**  
Winter Quarter Ends

**February 27**  
Spring Quarter Begins

## MARCH

**March 20 - 23**  
NBEO Part 1

**March 25**  
Eye Ball

**March 31**  
Quiz Bowl

## APRIL

**April 2**  
ICO & U of C CE Symposium:  
Neuro-Optometry

**April 4**  
NBEO Part 2

**April 7 – 9**  
Spring Break

## MAY

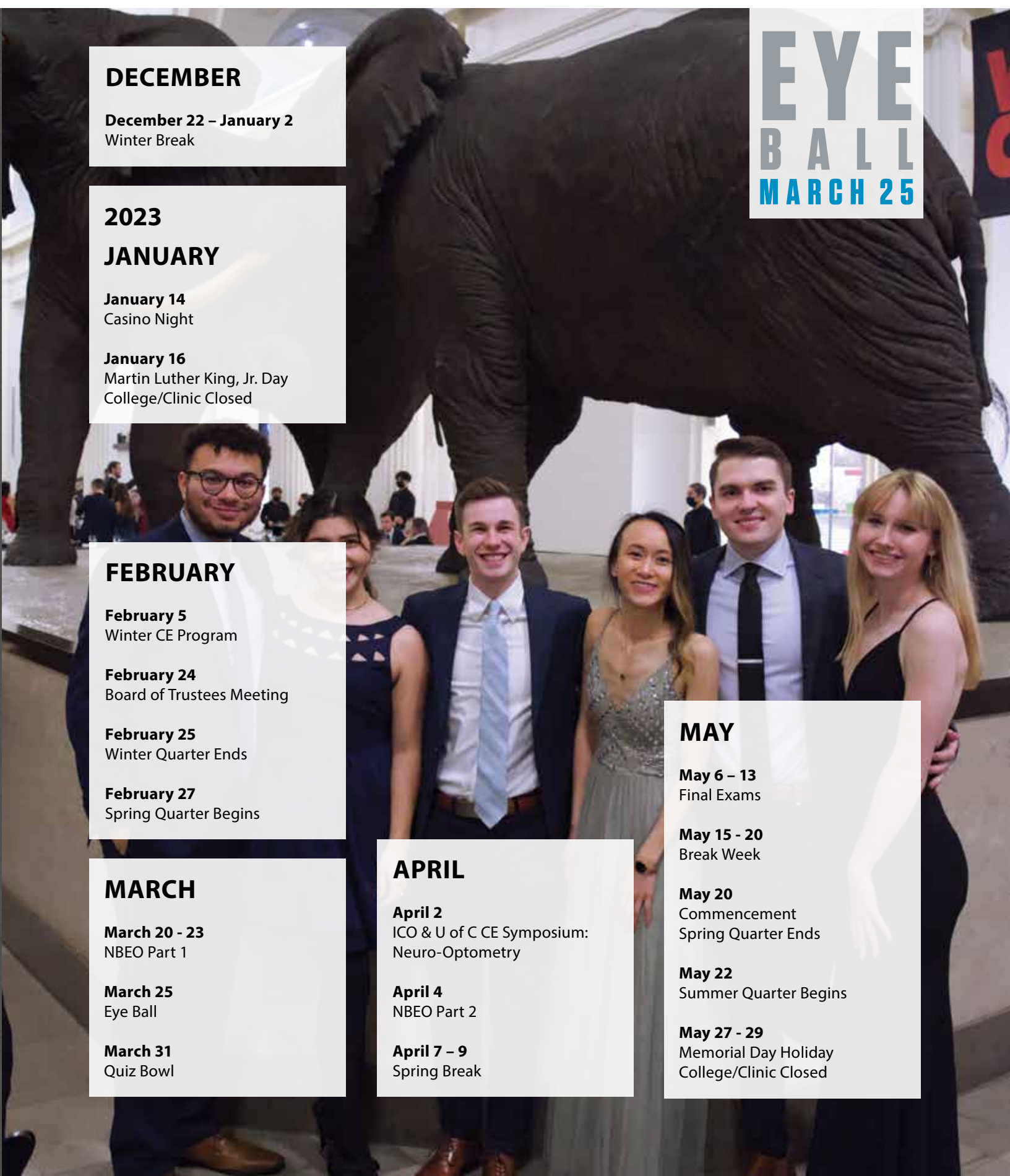
**May 6 – 13**  
Final Exams

**May 15 - 20**  
Break Week

**May 20**  
Commencement  
Spring Quarter Ends

**May 22**  
Summer Quarter Begins

**May 27 - 29**  
Memorial Day Holiday  
College/Clinic Closed





**Illinois College of Optometry**

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## Last Look



Current students *Jasdip Mann, '24* and *Amina Cheema '24* share a laugh with *Richard Rucoba, OD '49* and his close friend.