

ICO MATTERS

SUMMER 2023 • V22 ISSUE 1



ICO and the OD/MD Alliance



Commencement 2023

Op-Ed: Why Research Matters

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EDITORIAL

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Talking Heads

"How has research changed at ICO in the last three to four years?"

Mark K. Colip, OD '92

President

"Research activities at Illinois College of Optometry have expanded remarkably in the past few years. The growth has led us to make plans for the construction of the Dr. Newton K. Wesley Research Center here at ICO. More on that later. Under the capable leadership of Yi Pang, OD, PhD, Assistant Dean for Research, the depth and breadth of research topics being investigated by ICO faculty, residents and students is something that makes me very proud.

Prior to Dr. Pang's involvement, if an applicant asked me about serious research opportunities at ICO, I had to advise them that research was really not a key focus at ICO. Today, I can proudly give a very different answer. ICO faculty are pursuing research protocols in various areas throughout the year. They are contributing to our knowledge base and advancing the development of new technologies that will improve patient care in years ahead.

In this issue of *ICO Matters*, and in future *ICO Matters*, we will feature a peek behind the curtain at some of those research projects in our new 'Research Highlight' section. Make sure to tune into the faculty discussion on myopia research on page 18. (You can find that discussion in *ICO Matters* online or on our YouTube channel)



Mark K. Colip, OD '92

Research now touches every stage of a students' optometric journey. Just last week I was recruited to sit as a research subject/patient for some work being done with a new imaging system. The faculty member conducting the study was well informed, professional, and emphasized how this technology would improve patient care. Our students can also get involved. Student interest has risen so much that we now have appointed Dan Roberts, OD, PhD, as Director of Student Research to guide and direct the highly accomplished ICO students conducting these remarkable studies. The students also have opportunities to develop studies of their own. As an example, eight ICO students had the wonderful opportunity to offer presentations at the prestigious ARVO Conference this spring. I'm told that is the highest number of ICO student presenters at ARVO ever! We can all be very proud of the impact being made by our colleagues and friends.

Look for details on our construction progress with the Dr. Newton K. Wesley Research Center and for an opening of the new research center very soon. We hope you will tune into the coming *ICO Matters* to learn much more about this initiative."



Yi Pang, OD, PhD, FFAO

*Professor
Associate Dean for Research*

"Research at ICO has significantly improved in the past few years in nearly every aspect including publications, presentations, external research funding, and student research involvement.

"Research would not have been able to grow so significantly without the involvement of the entire ICO community."

Yi Pang, OD, PhD, FFAO

Many of the research activities have not only doubled but tripled or quadrupled. There are many new research initiatives including the Summer Research Program, several research awards, and the degree recognition 'Graduated with Research Honors' a prestigious title given to students who conducted significant research while at ICO. Research would not have grown so much without the involvement of the entire ICO community.

ICO has unbelievable faculty members. ICO faculty work so hard not only as researchers but also as mentors for student researchers. I want to tell everyone, 'We have the BEST faculty!' ICO also has extraordinary leadership. Our president, Mark Colip, OD '92 my dean, Stephanie Messner, OD and other PAC members, Len Messner, OD, Christa Ojeda, Erik Mothersbaugh, OD '12, and Dan Ren have supported research in countless ways. Finally, without our amazing research supporting staff, Elyse Nylin and Jessica Martinez, we would not be able to conduct so many high-quality clinical trials and research projects."

“Student interest [in research] has risen so much that we now have appointed Dan Roberts, OD, PhD, as Director of Student Research to guide and direct the highly accomplished ICO students conducting these remarkable studies. The students also have opportunities to develop studies of their own.”

Mark K. Colip, OD '92



Jennifer S. Harthan, OD '06, FFAO
*Professor
Chief, Cornea Center for Clinical
Excellence*

“The better question might be, ‘How has it not changed?’ Everywhere you look, research at ICO has expanded. Before, ICO was doing maybe a project here

or there, but this college-wide concerted effort to build out research is something more recent. More faculty are involved, more students are involved, and we’re taking on larger multi-center research projects. We’re collaborating more and with larger institutions. We’re building a research suite where we can take on multi-year-long projects.

We have built a reputation for producing excellent research. We’re able to produce high-quality, high-volume research and we’re able to get it done effectively. A couple of years ago, we might have had to initiate a conversation.

Now partners are reaching out to us. Our clinic has always been one of the best in the nation, but now we have built a great clinical research reputation as well. This opens all kinds of opportunities. For example, I personally have been involved in several multi-center research projects. I’m currently working on a large project with UIC. We also have a strong partnership with the Mayo Clinic. We are working with industry partners, other academic institutions, and larger hospitals. These partnerships just wouldn’t have existed even a few years back.

Lastly, the type of funding that we’re getting now has significantly increased. We didn’t have the amount of NIH grants that we do now. We’re doing more investigator-initiated trials, and we’re able to get the needed funding. No matter where you look, research has expanded. The ideas are bigger. The scope is bigger. But importantly, the support we need to make these big projects a reality has remained constant. And our focus on treating patients to the best of our ability is only heightened with these new research projects.”

“For example, I personally have been involved in several large multi-center research projects. I’m currently working on a large project with UIC. We also have a strong partnership with the Mayo Clinic. We are working with industry partners, other academic institutions, and larger hospitals. These partnerships just wouldn’t have existed even a few years back.”

Jennifer S. Harthan, OD '06

STUDENT EVENTS AT ICO

Chicago winters can be tough for anyone, but this must be especially true for our third years studying for NBEO Part I. After months of studying, and with Part I of Boards behind them, these students geared up for a jam-packed Spring Quarter. Here are just a few traditions that ICO students celebrated this Spring Quarter.

Eyeball 2023

We're sure that more than a few students kept their sights on Eyeball while slogging through their winter exams. This year it was held at the Geraghty. Students swapped their scrubs for black ties and danced the night away swathed in blue light.

There were two prizes given out at the event. Congratulations to **Marissa Garrels '25**, **Angela Nuccio '25**, and **Caroline Kaczowka '25** for winning the Student Association Creative Essay Scholarship, and congratulations to **Ryan Mannion '26**, **Courtney Carmain '25**, **Ally Schroeder '24**, and **Ria Shah '23** for winning Colleagues of the Year!



INSTA
EXTRA



Quizbowl

Lauren Van der Reyden '25 won this year's student quizbowl. A nice pair of cat ears accompanied her trophy pictures. ICO students took the lecture hall by storm dressed up as every animal imaginable. They wore giraffe and zebra onesies, and even a lobster could be found in the mix. Of all the class years, we have to say that the Class of 2025, Lauren's fellow second years, celebrated the loudest after her win. Congratulations Lauren!

Lauren will now represent ICO at this year's AOSA's Student Bowl. ICO consistently places as one of the top three teams in the nation. Maybe this year we might even bring the Ventura Cup back home to ICO!



INSTA
EXTRA



Practice Opportunities Symposium

Our 26th annual Practice Opportunities Symposium was held on March 31, 2023. No event so clearly shows the diversity of career opportunities in the field of optometry, and we were happy to see so many curious faces ready to learn more from our alumni. Over four sessions, students rotated through topics of interest. Then, students had the opportunity to interact with alumni during our post-session networking event.

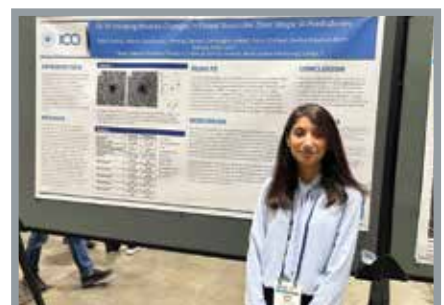
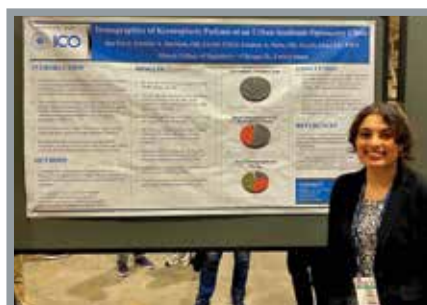
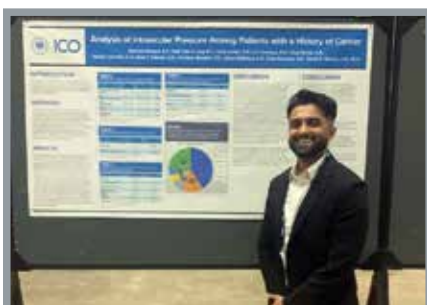


RESEARCH AT ICO

As our "Talking Heads" can attest, research has grown significantly over the past few years. That also means more research opportunities for students throughout their time at ICO. Here are two ways students are participating in research at ICO:

Record Number of Students at ARVO

This year, ARVO welcomed more ICO students than ever before! Eight students, alongside faculty mentors, presented their work at the premier research conference for vision and ophthalmology. Students from every class year presented to an international crowd. What you may not know by attending these talks is how these students became authors on the posters. Some participated in the Summer Research Program, others used their third-year independent study to focus on research topics, and one even became a co-author by taking on a work-study job. It's amazing to see our research grow and we're very proud of ICO's representation this year!



In Focus

Summer Research Program

Congratulations to **Tracy Burk '26**. She has been selected as this year's student researcher. In collaboration with **Jennifer Harthan, OD '06**, she will spend the summer collecting data and participating in journal club meetings. Dr. Harthan will be acting both as a sounding board and as professional support throughout the summer. Now in its fourth year, we can see how these opportunities reach far beyond one summer at ICO. Past participants have published work and have built on this experience during their third-year research project. It's great to see this program continue to grow. Tracy, we look forward to seeing what the summer will bring!



BUILDING DIVERSITY

We are committed to building a student community that reflects our nation as a whole. To bridge the gap between our national makeup and our current student body, we have undertaken initiatives large and small to build student diversity. Here are examples of these projects.

White Coat Project: ICO's Pre-Health Crash Course

We have now officially held two pre-health crash courses for local college and high school students. These courses include full-day workshops packed with a ton of information. By partnering with Chicago Scholars as well as some of our neighboring schools, we have now taught over 100 students about the optometric profession. Once they complete this course, they are invited to shadow in the IEI where they can continue to deepen their knowledge of optometry.

One of the goals of this course is to raise awareness of the many medical fields beyond an MD. So far, ICO has hosted an optometrist, a clinical psychologist, a pharmacist, a public health professional, a dentist, and an organic chemist! Being able to identify with these professionals is important for many students. For many, it's easier to imagine yourself in these professions when those presenting look like you.



Chicagoland High School Visits

With the student application pool becoming tighter and tighter, we know we need to reach students earlier. Now, we are interacting with high school students as well! One of our most recent alumni, **Connor Robbs, OD '22** has already hosted six high school groups at ICO. This is a great way for

those already interested in the STEM field to gain awareness of optometry before they plan out their university courses. We hope we'll be seeing a few of them as applicants in four years' time!



Blindspot Reimagined

Many of you may fondly remember your time in the ICO basement in the '90s. As we mentioned a few issues back, through the generous support of **Scott Jens, OD '91**, we have now been able to bring an updated version of this tradition back. The Blindspot was officially dedicated as a physical space on campus where all students, but in particular LGBTQ+ students, could gather and learn. This is a space dedicated to conversation and community building, much like the original Blindspot. We're excited to see how this space will grow. The surround sound, donated by several Class of '86 alums (**Jeffery Thomas, OD '86, Joseph Marchionna, OD '86, Colin Howe, OD '86, Maureen Whelan, OD '86, Michael Martin, OD '86, Joseph Ales, OD '86, Christopher Troyka, OD '86, Daniel Satterlund, OD '86** and **Philip Hasler, OD '86**) will surely make this an even more exciting place to hang out.



RESEARCH IN OPTOMETRY

PATIENT/DOCTOR PARTNERSHIP

BY MILISSA BARTOLD

At ICO, we have the great fortune of having a complex patient base that helps us strive to do more each day. Many of our patients come from socio-economically vulnerable populations and have lacked access to adequate health care throughout their lives. As a result, we find ourselves treating ocular conditions that are secondary to systemic diseases that have gone untreated or undertreated. Some come to us even before they see a primary-care doctor. Others struggle to pay for costly medications, and it's never easy to follow a treatment plan, when you might be a shift worker whose schedule constantly changes. While it is not the decision that we might hope they make, we are aware that it is the reality in which they live.

This challenges our providers to come up with new and better ways of meeting the needs of their patients. It also means our providers need to stay current on how the management of systemic disease such as hypertension and diabetes interact with ocular health so that they can be partners with our patients who may be more likely to come see us since their vision is affecting their ability to work, even though the underlying cause might be systemic. We meet them where they are and go from there.

As a mission-based institution, that premise is at the heart of what we do every day. We educate students to become excellent clinicians who strive so every patient they meet will receive optimal care.

But all knowledge has limits. Optometry has evolved substantially over its history. In addition, advances and changes in health care as well as lifestyles have played a significant role in challenging optometry to continue to evolve. One constant stays: all of this is done to best meet the needs of the patients in front of us. Many of these projects have been realized with the support of the Associate Dean for Research, **Dr. Yi Pang**.

“Research at ICO/IEI has grown so much over the last 15 years.” says Dr. Pang “We have clinical trials and new research treatments in various areas including myopia management, glaucoma, dry eye disease, amblyopia, strabismus, binocular vision, and contact lens. The dedication of faculty to research and patient care is the key reason that research has robustly increased at ICO. IEI has more than 85,000 annual patient visits, which makes ICO research in all areas of eye and vision care vigorous.”

At ICO, we have an academic and clinical interest in advancing the field. We understand and accept our role in ensuring that the knowledge base is carefully transmitted and expanded to meet the field's needs. This also means involving students as often as possible in clinical research. Among these students is **Manisha Parikh**, a fourth-year student who spent a summer researching and working on a poster titled “Meibomian Gland Atrophy and Dry Eye Measures in The Pediatric Population Using the Keratograph 5M.” She continued this research as a third-year project and has presented her findings at two conferences.

She says, “I am very grateful to have partaken in ICO/IEI's robust clinical research in the last three years. It was amazing to see how many patients we were able to provide clinical care for. I remember the first time I performed iLux dry eye treatment on a pediatric patient, the look of astonishment on their face when I finished the first eyelid was a memory I would never forget. I was surprised by the numerous research opportunities provided at ICO and I would highly recommend current and future ICO students to participate. The research experience I gained at ICO was invaluable as it helped me critically evaluate how to best treat my patients. I plan to continue my research journey after my time at ICO, knowing it will make me a more well-rounded clinician.”

Making sure science stays current with patient needs is the responsibility of all of us. At ICO, we are proud of our participation in clinical research, and we know this research changes the lives of our patients. Over the past several years, we've seen tremendous growth in not only our research topics, but also in the financial support we've been able to receive.

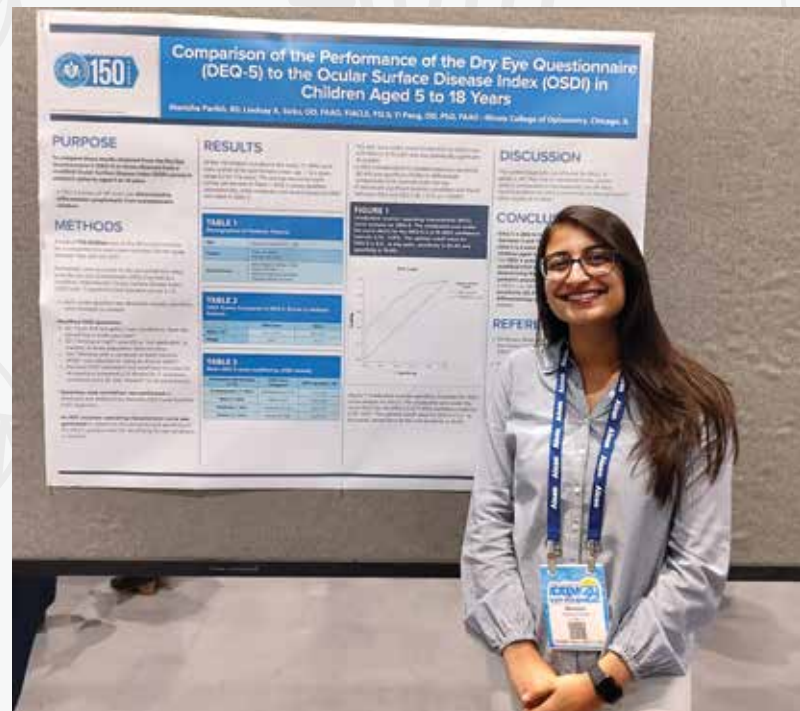
"ICO's external research funding has dramatically increased. It's 10 fold more than 15 years ago," says Dr. Pang. ICO receives research funding from NIH, private foundations, and industry. The high research quality and the caliber of our research faculty and supporting staff are the reasons that funding resources seek out ICO. The research projects and clinical trials provide our patients with new treatments. In addition, research provides a big financial relief for many of our patients. We provide free eye and vision treatments for our research patients.

Many of our patients live in our neighborhood and have been coming to us for generations. We have become their trusted partners in eye health care, and in some cases, in helping them manage their overall health needs by connecting them to resources. As a result of this relationship, we're also able to partner with our patients in research, something that many of them might not otherwise take part in based on personal experience or cultural legacies of what the connotation of research may be for them.

"The patients that are seen at IEI are very unique - we see so many types of ocular conditions and diseases you won't see anywhere else. We also see many patients that cannot be seen anywhere else, and that makes the patient visits even more valuable," Manisha Parikh comments, "The clinical experience at IEI is amazing, it trains us, as students, to be well-versed in treating all types of conditions as well as to be able to think on our feet. Being able to truly impact our patients' lives makes working at IEI so important. I didn't realize how many patients we could provide clinical care to but seeing the vast network of IEI patients, it really did broaden my view of optometry. I feel IEI has done a great job providing affordable and thorough exams for everyone in our community."

"IEI has more than 85,000 annual patient visits, which makes ICO research at all areas of eye and vision care vigorous."

Yi Pang, OD, PhD



Manisha Parikh '24 presents her research poster at Academy 2022, in San Diego, California.

Daniel Ren, Chief Operating Officer for the Illinois Eye Institute shared this about the uniqueness of our patient population. "For more than a decade, the IEI has witnessed a greater influx of patients with advanced eye disease. We estimate that 30% of the IEI's patient population are children and adolescents whereas 70% of the IEI's patient population are adult or senior patients at serious risk of vision loss due to underlying health issues (hypertension, obesity, diabetes). 85% of our patients come from within the City of Chicago, with most being from Bronzeville, the South Side, Southwest Side and the West Side of the city." Our patient base is racially diverse and medically underserved. It is estimated that more than 90% are African American/Black or Latinx.

By partnering with us in these studies, our patients can receive treatment offerings that may not otherwise be accessible to them based on cost or proximity. For us, this partnership allows our providers to study and explore new treatments and therapies and gain better understanding of the clinical complexities of our patient population and ways in which we may be able to supply better outcomes. Oftentimes, within our very walls, we can find the diversity and complexity of cases we need to begin a new study.

Close Up:

Robin Rinearson, OD '77

Robin Rinearson, OD '77, was not actually intending to become an optometrist. She had her heart set on veterinary school. She had applied and been accepted but was \$500 short when the fall semester tuition rolled around. "I worked three jobs that summer to go on to vet school. In those days, you could only access student loans based on specific qualifications. I did not qualify for student loans; so, I didn't go to vet school."

Unbeknownst to her, her father **Ralph Swetlow, OD '50** (CCO) had secretly sent in an application to ICO and paid the first years' tuition. So, she ended up in ICO's Class of 1977. The rest, as they say, is history.

For over 40 years, Dr. Rinearson ran a successful practice in Bailey's Crossroads, VA. "I practiced developmental and pediatric optometry for most of my career. I was working with people with either learning disabilities or people on the autism spectrum or with patients with various other developmental disabilities." After decades of hard work, she was ready to retire and explore the world. Then the pandemic hit.

During the pandemic, her nephew Jake, who has cerebral palsy, was laid off from his job. A year later he was still unemployed. "Our practice managed to stay open during the entire pandemic. We were open, and no one got sick. After the first few months, there wasn't any requirement for workplaces to stay shut if you could follow CDC guidelines. Jake's former employer stayed open and continues to make products, but they made no accommodations for Jake or any of the other 17 special-needs adults who were working there." So, Dr. Rinearson took matters into her own hands and decided to pivot. She opened an ice cream shop.

Jake's Ice Cream has now been open for a year and half, and very soon, Jake's Gourmet Popcorn will also open.

Here are just a few snapshots from her life as an ice cream store owner who employs a whole team of special-needs adults:

Interview by: Nora Matland

Photos by: Nancy Rosenbaum Photography



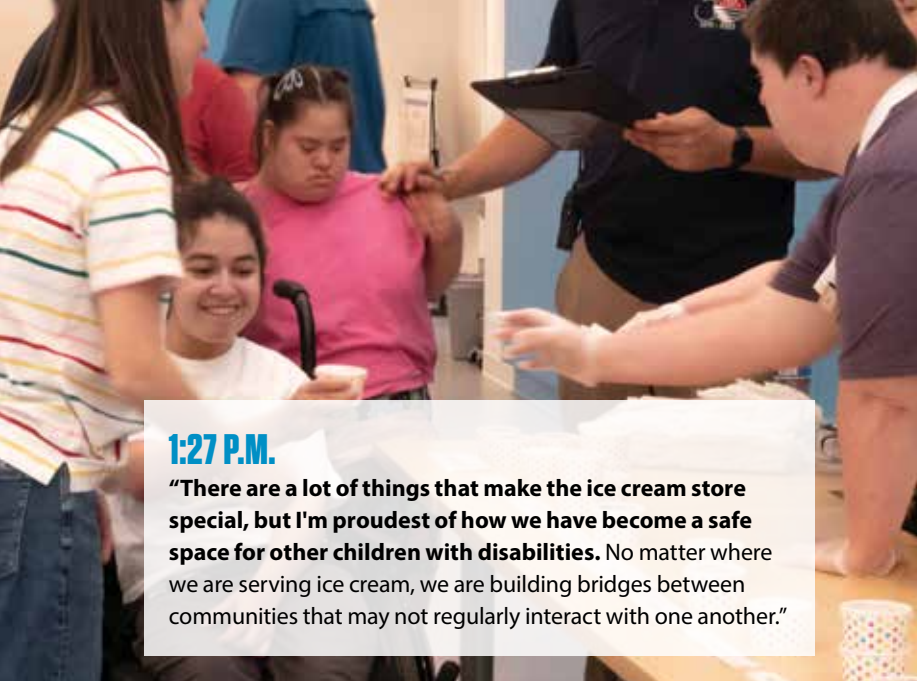
10:35 A.M.

"My day-to-day varies quite a bit depending on the store's needs, but one role that I am often tasked with is as the go-to driver. On this team, only 3 of us can drive. Often I'm both the business manager and the logistics manager."



11:15 A.M.

"Today, we're hosting an ice cream party at a school for special needs children. I always make sure to bring a few of our team members along. I want the children to see what they are capable of."



1:27 P.M.

"There are a lot of things that make the ice cream store special, but I'm proudest of how we have become a safe space for other children with disabilities. No matter where we are serving ice cream, we are building bridges between communities that may not regularly interact with one another."



2:00 P.M.

"Time to head back to Jake's. For a lot of these special events we'll create custom flavors. We're leaving a few of these flavors for their next big event."



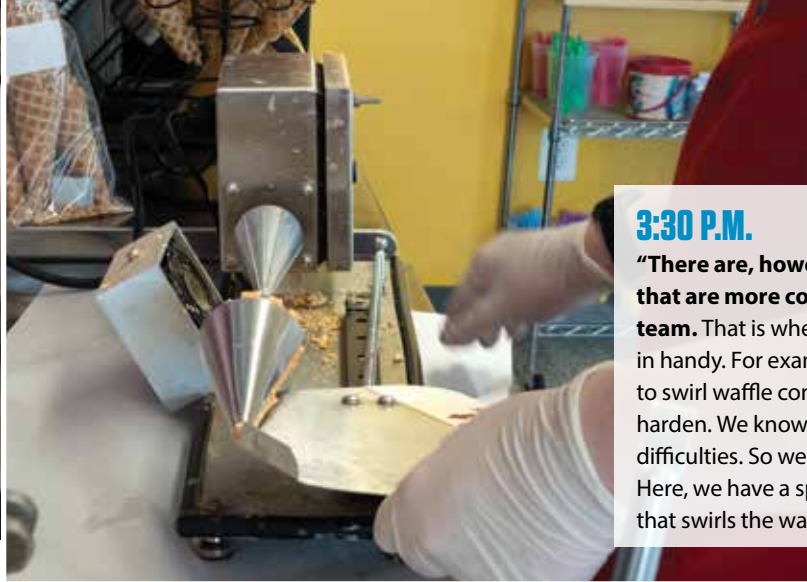
2:37 P.M.

"I've been running Jake's Ice Cream for around a year and a half. Currently, we employ some two dozen adults with disabilities. The first 11 people I hired were actually former patients of mine."



2:45 P.M.

"When we hire for the store, we bring our team in knowing they have a whole lot to learn. We work side-by-side with them until they finally can perform all kinds of tasks. They scoop the ice cream. They make cake pops. Everyone learns how to run the register. They take full ownership of their tasks and learn much more than they would in many other settings."



3:30 P.M.

“There are, however, certain tasks that are more complicated for the team. That is where devices come in handy. For example, it is difficult to swirl waffle cones before they harden. We know they might run into difficulties. So we find workarounds. Here, we have a special machine that swirls the waffle cones for us.”



4:00 P.M.

“On Saturdays, Jake still comes in for his weekly shift. I started this to help Jake out, but it has become so much larger than one person. We’re building access to so many people in the community.”



4:52 P.M.

“We are serving up mission and community, but if I can say so myself, we’re also serving up some great ice cream. If you’re ever in Virginia, stop by! It’d be great to connect with ICO alums especially over a bowl of ice cream!”



6:00 P.M.

“There are a lot of things I’ve learned from running an optometric business that I’ve applied to this business. The most important has been the ability to work through lots of paperwork and complex regulations. I’ve had to be persistent to make the ice cream shop and popcorn shop viable businesses. The extensive business knowledge that I gained as a practice owner has helped make these dreams a reality.”



Op-Ed:

Advocating for the Use of Research to Best Meet Patient Needs at ICO and, By Extension, the Field of Optometry

BY SHEILA QUIRKE



IEI patient Rolande Surpris with Lindsay A. Sicks, OD '10. In this video, she shares how her eye exam at ICO leads to her diagnosis of diabetes. Hear her story.

Every student at the Illinois College of Optometry (ICO) learns the importance of treating the patient in front of them. Practice and experience, though, teach ICO students that those patients in front of them are the ultimate variable. No two patients are alike, yet it is only looking at the patterns and similarities between patients that conclusions can be drawn and advancements in the field of optometry can be made through research.

Research is a pact or agreement between patient and provider or scientist; consenting entities agree to look at a health problem and pool resources to try and solve it. Ultimately, research is intended to improve the lives of patients. That same goal lies at the core of ICO's mission to "Develop highly qualified clinical optometrists through excellence in optometric education who will strive to 'seek that all will receive optimal healthcare.'"

At ICO, the Illinois Eye Institute (IEI) is the clinic where that optimal healthcare is provided. Each ICO student will cycle through clinical rotations at the clinic that offers near incomparable exposure in academic environments to a high volume of rich, complex, and diverse patients. By the numbers, here is a look at ICO's patient base:

- Over 35,000 unique patients annually
- Over 85,000 patient visits annually
- An estimated 40% of the patient base (about 15,000) are adult patients at risk of vision loss due to underlying health conditions like hypertension, diabetes, and obesity
- 65% of patients are Black and 30-35% of patients are Latino

“Historically, medicine has overlooked the role of structural barriers to good health among Black Americans. Instead, genetics, individual choice and even race have been blamed.”

Kat Stafford

- Over 8,000 children receive vision care through ICO partnerships with Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Department of Public Health; the vast majority of those children are Black or Latino and more than 70% of them require eyeglasses and about 20% of them have underlying health issues that impact the child’s vision
- 85% of IEL patients live within the City of Chicago, primarily in Bronzeville, and the South, West, and Southwest Sides
- In the past 10+ years, a greater number of IEL patients have been diagnosed with advanced eye disease
- The patient base of IEL include a mix of people living below the poverty line and the medically underserved.

A different type of research exploring the health disparities experienced by Black Americans has recently been published in a series of articles appearing in May 2023 by the **Associated Press** (AP). The findings are sobering, but not at all surprising to the faculty, staff, and students of ICO.

The fourth of the five-part series entitled *High Blood Pressure Plagues Many Black Americans. Combined with COVID It’s Catastrophic*, focused on the prevalence of hypertension amongst Black Americans. Statistics detail a very different picture between rates for hypertension between Black and White Americans:

- 48% of White adult Americans live with hypertension compared to 56% of Black adult Americans
- 75% of Black adults in America are likely to develop hypertension by age 55 compared to 55% of White men and 40% of White women
- 32% of White adults with hypertension are successfully managed with medication compared to 25% of Black adults

Kat Stafford, the investigative reporter who authored the series wrote, “More and more, researchers acknowledge that high blood pressure and other ailments that strike Black Americans disproportionately can, in great measure, be traced to the inequities of Black life in America.” Later in the AP article, Ms. Stafford noted that, “Historically, medicine has overlooked the role of structural barriers to good health among Black Americans. Instead, genetics, individual choice and even race have been blamed.”

It is impossible to ignore the correlation between the ocular diseases treated by ICO’s faculty and students within the patient base of IEL, many of which are exacerbated by the high numbers of patients impacted by the systemic issues of diabetes, hypertension and obesity, and the health realities detailed in the AP series about how America’s disparity in health care negatively impacts Black people. The contrast is literally Black and White.

As a profession, optometry has always been shaped by advances in science, cultural changes and shifts in health care, and by working to understand how different lifestyles impact ocular needs. This has never been truer than in this moment. Optometry must continue to evolve as a field of study and a profession to continue to best meet the needs of our patients, especially as America’s demographics continue to shift to become more racially and ethnically diverse.

In its 150-year history, ICO has maintained an academic and clinical interest in advancing the field of optometry. With its complex patient base, ICO is in a unique position to once again act as a leader within the field of optometry to address these known racial disparities to prioritize and champion the care of the most vulnerable patients, Black and Brown Americans, who also happen to be ICO’s patient base.

One way this is accomplished is through ongoing research alliances with respected health care organizations like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Mayo Clinic. ICO has leveraged its unique position as an academic institution within a Black community to best serve the needs of its patients at IEL while also providing unmatched opportunities for training and education for its students.

The other way this is accomplished is through the regular interactions the faculty, staff, and students of ICO have with patients as they work to gain and maintain their trust. The relationship ICO has with the Bronzeville community in which it exists is a dynamic one that cannot be understated. The trust between medical provider and patient is never assumed, but earned, daily, as it has been for decades. Our patient base has relied on us for generations.

ICO is training a new generation of optometrists to be aware and responsive partners in care with a vulnerable and too often underserved patient base. We will continue to do this mission-driven work, as it serves both our students and our patients.



Interview with: Nora Matland

Q & A

Tracy Matchinski, OD '95

Associate Professor of Optometry

One of the most popular groups on campus is SVOSH. Yearly they hold many health screenings and help in distributing eyeglasses to people in the community. **Tracy Matchinski, OD '95** is one of the faculty leads for this organization and also serves as the Coordinator in the Low Vision and Rehabilitative Services. We sat down to learn more about low vision rehabilitation and her activities in SVOSH.

Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got into optometry. What drew you to ICO?

I'm moderately myopic, and I vividly remember my optometrist fitting me for contact lenses so that I could continue playing college basketball without worrying about glasses. I was fascinated by the idea of helping people improve their vision and the impact that good vision can have on a person's quality of life.

I was born and raised in Chicago, but I ended up leaving for college. I interviewed at quite a few optometry schools, but I kept returning to ICO, because of my family, but also because of how great the clinic is here.

My time at ICO was so special, and it's where I made some of the most meaningful friendships of my life. We've been through so much together - weddings, funerals, vacations, and more. The community that ICO has built fosters lasting connections. It's a bond that I cherish deeply, and I feel truly grateful to have made such wonderful friends during my time at ICO.

What's one thing you would like incoming students to know about the field of optometry? (And your specific area of optometry)

Low vision rehabilitation is all about helping people who have lost some or all of their vision to improve their functional abilities and live their best lives. In other words, we maximize their remaining vision. We can't fix the health of their eyes, but rather we focus on how they can best utilize the vision they have left. That can involve using all kinds of services, devices, and technology. This includes magnification devices, assistive technology, or even smartphone apps that help people with vision impairments achieve their specific goals.

When we work with patients at the low vision rehabilitation clinic, we start by determining what their goals are. For some, it might be reading large print or using a computer, and for others, it might be effectively navigating airports or their environments at home. Once we understand their goals, we use our knowledge to help them find the best solutions. Every patient is different, and so we use all the information we have available to find the best solution for them. What makes low vision rehabilitation interesting is just how many tools we have available to help patients. It's easy to be passionate about what you do when you are making such an impact with each patient.

You're very active in the VOSH community. Why do you think these organizations are important? Why do you choose to participate in them?

I've been fortunate to meet many amazing people who have selflessly given their time and energy to help others. My mentor, **Alfred Rosenbloom, OD '48** got me interested in VOSH (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity). I did my first VOSH trip with him to Morocco.

We too easily get stuck in our day-to-day routines; we don't always recognize the impact we are having. On VOSH trips locally or internationally, something as simple as a routine refraction can be incredibly impactful. Throughout my many years of practice, I've witnessed countless moments where simple skills have changed people's lives for the better.

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

Optometry has opened a wealth of opportunities for me to connect with people from all over the world who share my passion for helping others. I've been able to build



a strong network of colleagues who are dedicated to improving people's eye health and advance the profession of optometry globally.

Optometry is truly a special field. Every day, we have the privilege of helping to maintain ocular health, help people see better, feel more comfortable, and live their lives to the fullest. It's a profession that allows us to make a real difference in people's lives, and it's one that offers a great work/life balance.

What knowledge do you want to impart to ICO students?

Emphasizing just how much of an impact we have is one of the most important lessons that I want to impart to our students. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I challenged our students to find community organizations we could work with to provide relief. They found several organizations, and at every clinic we did, we easily worked with over 100 patients. Through SVOSH, we were able to provide comprehensive eye care and new eyeglasses to people who were struggling financially and who otherwise would not have been able to afford it.

Another thing I want to emphasize is just how close knit our optometric community is. Optometry is a small field, but it's one that's incredibly powerful. We share a common goal of improving people's eye health, and it's a truly rewarding experience to be able to work together towards that goal. It's an honor to be a part of this community, and I'm grateful every day for the opportunity to help people through optometry.

Research Highlight:

Effect of Low-dose Atropine on Binocular Vision and Accommodation in Children Ages 6 to 17 Years

Take aways from a recent myopia study led by **Dr. Yi Pang** and fourth year student **Rachel Breliant**.

As many as five billion people may be myopic by 2050. Put differently, nearly 50% of the world's population may have myopia by 2050. With those statistics, myopia is not only a public health issue, but a pandemic.

These alarming statistics are readily confirmed in the IEI as well. We have seen both the rates of myopia and disease progression increase. A few years ago, the average onset age was around 8 years old, now we see children as young as 5-6 years old with myopia. In fact, we have even diagnosed children as young as 2-3 years old.

At IEI, we approach treating myopia from many different angles. IEI has finished and continues to conduct numerous clinical trials on myopia management, including studies on orthokeratology, low-dose atropine, and special-design spectacle glasses. In this article, we will focus on the side effects from the daily use of low-dose atropine on myopia children.

It is known that low-dose atropine taken as a daily eye drop can slow myopia progression. The optimal dosage is still unclear. Traditionally, atropine is used to dilate the pupil and treat amblyopia. When we suggest these eye drops to parents, their question is often, "What are the side effects from this treatment?" We set out to answer how low doses of atropine (0.01%, 0.03% and 0.05%) affect children's vision to see far and near, their binocular vision measurements, and the pupil dilation. We measured the children's habitual

visual acuity at distance and near, dissociated phoria at distance and near, negative and positive fusional vergence, near point convergence stamina and fragility, accommodative lag, and amplitude of accommodation.

We compared how low-dose atropine affected those functions at 30 mins, 60 mins, and 24 hours after the eye drop application with the patient's baseline. We tested 46 children aged 6 to 17 with these low-dose atropine eyedrops and measured the side effects of this drug. The participants were randomized into four groups: placebo (n= 10), 0.01% (n=13), 0.03% (n= 11), or 0.05% (n= 12) doses of atropine.

What we found is that all three concentrations of atropine eye drops have no significant effect on accommodation, binocular vision measurements, or visual acuity compared to our control group. For those children with a treatment of 0.01% the pupil only slightly enlarged at 60 mins with no change at 30 mins and 24 hours. Children with the

0.03% and 0.05% dosage had enlarged pupils with more effect at 60 mins which had partially recovered at 24 hrs. In conclusion, it is relatively safe to use all three concentrations of atropine in children.

Besides all the available myopia treatment options, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of outdoor activity and visual hygiene. The best thing for a myope to do is to distance themselves from unnecessary screens. Spending time outside and giving your eyes a rest from screens significantly helps in slowing down myopia onset and progression. Lifestyle is an important factor to both the slowing down or speeding up of myopia progression.



We have even
diagnosed children
as young as 2-3 years
old [with myopia].

You can find the full findings at Breliant R, Pang Y, Bandstra A, Kattouf V. "Effect of Low-dose Atropine on Binocular Vision and Accommodation in Children Ages 6 to 17 Years." *Optom Vis Sci.* 2023 Jun 6. doi: 10.1097/OPX.0000000000002031. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 37278695

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Learn more about myopia research and current treatments.



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Visit icomatters.ico.edu/survey and take the 2023 ICO Matters Readership Survey today. Your feedback will help ensure ICO Matters is giving you what you want from your alumni publication.

To be eligible for the drawing, you must complete the survey by July 31, 2023. The drawing will be the following week.



What types of stories do you want to see covered?



Better Together: ICO and the OD/MD Alliance

By: Sheila Quirke

Anyone who watched American television in the 1970s or 1980s will remember an advertising campaign for peanut butter cups. The series of ads featured a variety of clumsy collisions that resulted in one person's chocolate bar landing in another person's jar of peanut butter.

The mishaps resulted in the undeniably exquisite combination of chocolate and peanut butter, "Two great tastes that taste great together!" It is a Generation X tagline that has withstood the test of time. The alliance between Illinois College of Optometry's ODs and the University of Chicago's MDs is a lot like that, only much less sticky.

All kidding and nostalgia aside, in 1997, **Charles Mullen, OD**, ICO's fourth president, forged an alliance with the neighboring University of Chicago Hospital and Department of Ophthalmology that has flourished in the decades since. For over twenty-five years, the two institutions have worked to improve care and access to services for Chicago's South Side that Dr. Mullen recently described as the 'gold standard' of vision care.

After creating similar alliances between academic and medical institutions in Boston and Philadelphia, Dr. Mullen arrived at ICO in 1996 and inked the agreement between the two organizations soon after. That agreement still stands and continues to serve ICO students, faculty, patients, and the local community.

An ICO alum who has benefited from the foresight of Dr. Mullen's vision of ODs and MDs working in tandem is **Steven Quan, OD '16**. Dr. Quan moved from his home state of California after graduating from UCLA. "I left Los Angeles to explore other cities in the country," says Dr. Quan, "The East Coast came off more tense and formal, whereas Chicago felt like the perfect adventure away from home. The day before my interview, I met two ICO students at the Green Line station and they volunteered to show me around the city – true Midwestern gents. I loved the sense of family and community here, combined with the endless food and entertainment options you hope for in a big city."

Dr. Quan initially assumed he would go into private practice, but after spending more time at ICO and being exposed to a variety of paths open to him, including medical optometry, his thinking began to shift, "The landscape is changing. Before ICO, I didn't have much insight into optometry in medical settings. As a student, I had the chance to see a lot of complicated cases in the South Side and appreciated having direct access to ophthalmologists on campus. I took this further by serving as an assistant for the Retina Clinic under a work-study program."

He was hooked.

While optometry remained his calling, Dr. Quan's career goals had shifted from private practice to medical practice. After completing his optometric residency at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, he returned to Chicago with his wife, fellow ICO alum **Adrienne Quan, OD '16**, and accepted a position with the University of Chicago, which was opening a new clinic in the suburbs.

It was an exciting time for Dr. Quan, "The department was expanding its services, and I was given the opportunity to manage a new satellite clinic, teach, and pursue research. I did a little of everything at the time: primary care, pediatrics, contact lenses, post-op, systemic co-management. I provided patients with education and served as another access point for them at the hospital. We have a huge patient base and since projections and global and marketplace trends show there may not be enough ophthalmologists and optometrists to meet future demand, it's imperative our professions work together to help patients get the care they need."

That is exactly what Dr. Mullen had envisioned. "It's not magic," says Leonard Messner, OD, Professor and Vice President of Strategy and Institutional Advancement at ICO. He was present at the meeting between Dr. Mullen and Dr. J. Terry Ernst, MD, PhD, and then Chair of

"This MD/OD partnership has stood the test of time. With the volume of patients we have, we couldn't do it on our own. We have a mission to serve patients and the community, and this partnership makes that possible."



Seenu Hariprasad, MD

Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the University of Chicago when the alliance was struck in 1997, "There was a shared vision of collaboration between optometry and ophthalmology. Charlie set up the first models of integrated training in Boston and Philadelphia. It is a unique partnership, and I don't believe any other academic institutions have that kind of ongoing binding agreement."

An interesting anecdote demonstrating the power and innovation of Dr. Mullen's concept and how welcome it was to a recognized leader in ophthalmology occurred that day but is only known by those who were 'in the room where it happened.' Dr. Messner shares, "Terry began the conversation by telling Charlie that he had read his papers (published in the Archives of Ophthalmology) and agreed with his vision of an integrated model of patient care between optometry and ophthalmology practicing at their highest levels of competence and then said, 'I just happened to bring along a draft affiliation agreement between our institutions and was hoping that you could take a look at it.'"

"There are grand rounds, an expanded number of ODs at the University of Chicago clinic, established optometry residency programs, and a fully integrated model of care. **ICO benefits, University of Chicago benefits, but most importantly, patients benefit.**"



Leonard Messner, OD

Dr. Messner has witnessed that mutually beneficial partnership evolve over the years, "We are twenty blocks away from one another and it is a two-way street. There are grand rounds, an expanded number of ODs at the University of Chicago clinic, established optometry residency programs, and a fully integrated model of care. ICO benefits, University of Chicago benefits, but most importantly, patients benefit."

Dr. Quan is in a unique position in that he has experienced the ways in which the academic alliance Dr. Mullen created works for all, including patients, "There is so much redundancy in health care today and siloed specialties. While there has always been politics around scope of practice between ODs and MDs, especially depending on the state in which you practice, we cut through it here. When ODs and MDs can practice at their highest level of training, the patients benefit. Because we are all in the trenches working together, it helps with the culture and adds to the trust."

Most importantly, this academic model between the disciplines enables patients to more easily access the care they need. Dr. Quan explains, "This model of cooperation drastically cuts down patient wait time, improves medical literacy, enables patients to better understand their care needs through access to ODs, which all leads to better outcomes for a complicated patient base."

Seenu Hariprasad, MD is the Shui-Chin Lee Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Science at the University of Chicago and serves as Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology. He works closely with both Drs. Messner and Quan in his position. He has become a champion of the unique alliance between ICO and the University of Chicago, "This MD/OD partnership has stood the test of time. With the volume of patients we have, we couldn't do it on our own. We have a mission to serve patients and the community, and this partnership makes that possible."



Dr. Hariprasad mentors ICO students at the Illinois Eye Institute every Thursday. This has been his routine for 18 years.



In September 2022, Dr. Hariprasad was awarded the prestigious Friend of Optometry Award from the ICO Alumni Council – the first time it had been granted to an ophthalmologist. Following the ceremony, Dr. Messner reached out to Dr. Mullen via email to “virtually” introduce him to Dr. Hariprasad and update him on the OD/MD collaboration initiated during his tenure as ICO’s president.

The email exchange is a moving tribute to the ideals of collaboration and collegiality and how both have resulted in improved patient care. Dr. Hariprasad took the opportunity to detail for Dr. Mullen a few of the accomplishments:

- Four University of Chicago faculty running advanced care clinics at the Illinois Eye Institute;
- Four full-time ODs hired by the University of Chicago;
- An optometry residency at the University of Chicago, supported by ICO;
- Joint Continuing Medical Education programming with attendance of over 200 community ODs; and
- ICO students rotating through University of Chicago Clinics.

These are five concrete examples of the power of the OD/MD partnership struck in that ICO office twenty-five years ago, but perhaps even more striking is how this alliance has shaped the career of Dr. Quan, “I am a physical manifestation of it. My life’s work is to educate others about the benefits of ODs in medical settings, to promote optometry as a means to address gaps in care and meet patient demand. When ODs and MDs practice and learn from each other in academic medical centers, a mutual trust and respect grows that will ultimately improve our ability to serve patients everywhere.”

“We have a huge patient base and since projections and global and marketplace trends show there may not be enough ophthalmologists and optometrists to meet future demand, **it’s imperative our professions work together to help patients get the care they need.**”



Steven Quan, OD '16

The OD/MD alliance is working in just the manner Dr. Mullen intended. Like peanut butter and chocolate, the melding of these professions creates something new and dynamic that makes each of the separate entities and their respective organizations better for it, all while benefiting patients.



CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Take a deep dive into the ICO and University of Chicago partnership with Dr. Messner and Dr. Hariprasad. Learn how this partnership came about in the 90s through the shared vision of Dr. Charles Mullen and Dr. Terry Ernest. See how this partnership has grown and why this partnership matters.



Trending



January 9

We wanted to start the new year off right with some new year's good vibes. Kylie Donohue and boyfriend Hugh Burke recently co-wrote a children's book called "The Way We Play." All proceeds will go to a nonprofit called Open Hearts Big Dreams which works to increase the child literacy rate in Ethiopia.



January 25

If you weren't able to tune into our live webinar, we wanted to let you know that it's still available on our YouTube channel! Watch this informational webinar featuring a Q&A session with four ICO students from Years 1 - 3. We'll cover everything from living in the Residential Complex to working on unique cases in the clinic.



January 27

We wanted to end this week on a positive note. Today we continue to celebrate our long-standing partnership with Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Department of Public Health by welcoming 12 CPS students to our pediatrics unit. These students had full eye exams and picked out glasses. It was great to see both their excitement for their new glasses and for the IEI equipment.



Thanks to our students and staff for helping out, and thanks to the CPS students for stopping by! You're welcome any time.



February 3

As the oldest optometry school in the nation, we have the largest alumni base of any optometry school. Our alumni understand just how different ICO's clinical education is and how that education makes you a better doctor.

We try to get students and alumni to connect as often as possible, starting even before you arrive on campus. Our next webinar (Feb 15) will be all about alumni and their experience at ICO.



March 2

In case you missed it, this month ICO had the privilege of collaborating with our very own NOSA and BSU to celebrate and promote local black-owned businesses by hosting our first-ever Black History Month Expo!



March 19

At ICO, we pride ourselves on providing students with the opportunity to not only study optometry, but to actively gain valuable experience in the field, through our world-class clinical facilities and extensive clinical program.

In this webinar (recorded 03/15/23) Dr. Erik Mothersbaugh, Dr. Jaymeni Patel and Dr. Anne Rozwat sat down to answer questions and have an in-depth discussion about ICO's clinical program, what applicants can expect, and how ICO provides students a unique advantage.





March 20

Today's an important one at ICO, as our third-year students are entering their first NBEO exam. We've seen how hard you've all been studying and know you'll make us and yourselves proud. Good luck, everyone—you've got this!



March 23

At ICO, we take pride in our field. We don't just believe that eye care is a human right; we believe in providing care that supports our community.

So we found it only appropriate that we take a moment to highlight: what we do, how we do it, and why we believe more people should get involved in one of the world's fastest-growing healthcare professions.



April 30

Time flies when you're learning about eyes. We can't believe it's already been a week since Dr. Eric Harris invited students from the Chicago Scholars program to ICO for his second 'Pre-health Professions Crash Course' event! Alongside guest speakers, Dr. Harris hosted a series of lectures, Q&As and clinical workshops to offer attendees a chance to explore optometry and various other health professions while considering their future.



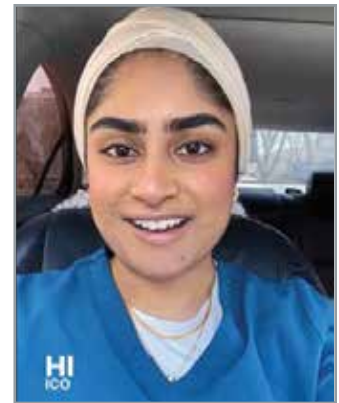
March 29

The best thing about studying in Chicago? The whole city is your campus! Chicago has so much diversity—of people, culture and... seasons! Spring is a great time to get out and about, and if you want to see something seasonally exclusive, you should go check out the cherry blossoms in Jackson Park. You can also stop by the iconic Museum of Science and Industry (one of the few remaining buildings from the World's Columbian Exhibition) while you're there!



April 18

We're pleased to announce that, starting Wednesday through Friday, ICO Class of 2023's Kashifa Ansari will be taking over our Instagram. She'll be giving us a glimpse into her life as a practicing Muslim and optometry student while she prepares for Eid al-Fir and the end of Ramadan.



We'd like to thank @futuresdr.k.ansari for taking time out of her busy schedule to personally share her experiences and for helping us to highlight this culturally significant week.



May 5

In case you missed it: last night saw us host the official opening of ICO's very own student hangout—The Blindspot! We had a fantastic turnout, with over 90 students stopping by to grab some food and drinks while checking out the newly renovated space!

We want to give a huge thanks to ICO's Queer Eye Club (who not only hosted the event, but were instrumental in pushing for this change), the Jens family for their amazingly generous donation and to a group of Class of '86 grads for donating a Sonos sound system that is sure to set the mood for many gatherings to come!



May 9

Today is National Teacher Appreciation Day! ICO gratefully recognizes the lasting contributions and tireless efforts of all our faculty and residents. Show your appreciation or say thanks to a teacher that has impacted your life in the comments below. #teacherappreciationday





Interview with: Nora Matland

with

Heather McLeod, OD '06

Associate Professor of Optometry;
Director of Residency Programs

Over the decades, the number of graduates participating in residencies has grown. In this Q&A we sit down with **Heather McLeod, OD '06**, who serves as ICO's Director of Residency Programs. She provides valuable insights into residency programs, and how they benefit recent graduates. There are numerous reasons to pursue a residency, with the primary one being the opportunity to enhance your knowledge and expertise in the field of optometry.

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

I've always liked science, especially biology. I just didn't know what I wanted to do with it as a career. In college, I quickly realized that being in a lab all day was not my cup of tea.

I discovered optometry through my family optometrist, **Susanna Fostiak, OD '77**. Shadowing her made me realize optometry was a wonderful way to use science every day. She was an ICO grad. So, I applied to ICO. It was actually the only optometry school I applied to.

After graduating, I did a residency in ocular disease at SUNY College of Optometry. Then, I joined the faculty at SUNY. After a few years in New York, my husband proposed, and I returned to Chicago. At ICO, I've worked in primary care, urgent care, and retina clinics. I served as the coordinator of the ocular disease and primary care residency, and then in 2019, I became the Director of Residency Programs.

Why do you think residency is valuable?

Residency made a huge impact on my career, and when I ask others, they all tend to agree.

Residency allows you to try out new things, advance your clinical skills, and expand your career opportunities. When you take that optional year of advanced training, it opens the door to so many different types of practices. Whether it is in a hospital, academia, a VA, an MD/OD practice, or any tertiary kind of practice, these organizations are looking for residency-trained individuals. Not only that, because you are residency trained, you can easily switch from one type of practice to another.

Very recently, I was talking to a former faculty member, and she is a perfect example of exactly the types of opportunities that residency opens up. She's worked at ICO, but now she works at a hospital. She's done private practice. She's done corporate. She's done it all. She was very clear that the reason she's been able to switch between so many modes of practice is because of her residency. That ICO residency opened the doors to each of these opportunities.



We have a lot of students who choose to stay on to do a residency at ICO, why do you think that is? What do you think draws residents to our clinic?

We have a really high percentage of ICO students who apply to our ICO on-campus programs as well as our affiliate programs.

Our clinic keeps you on your toes. You never know who will walk in and what might be troubling them. The cases can be quite varied, you could encounter anything from a chemical burn to a retinal detachment. We see a lot of inflammatory diseases. In other words, the things that you read about as being uncommon, you see them not uncommonly at ICO. It is easy for students to say, "You know, I've been here. I've been a student, but I understand there's so much more for me to learn. I know that the concentration of disease just won't exist in other places as it does at ICO." At ICO, the more you see the more you realize how much more there is to learn.

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

The scope of optometry is increasing. More and more people are practicing full-scope optometry, which includes a lot of medical care. As our population ages, as the baby boomers get older, they'll need more medical care. Our ophthalmologists love to do surgery and want to do surgery. They would rather have us do the general exams. Residency-trained optometrists know when someone needs to be referred immediately and when it can wait. We're happy to do a lot of the pre- and post-op exams. Ophthalmologists can concentrate on their niche, and we take over the rest. It's a beneficial relationship for both parties.

These days, hospitals don't even consider optometrists who aren't residency trained because they know that residency-trained optometrists can just jump in.

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

I want them to know that residency can (and should) be an essential part of their optometric journey. As a resident, you're increasing your clinical confidence by seeing all these complex cases. Not only that, residency forces you to say "yes" and try things that you may not have realized you would want to do. You're expanding your optometric knowledge, but also you're lecturing, doing research, writing publishable-quality papers, presenting posters. You get to try all these things out, and then maybe, just maybe, you end up saying, "Oh, actually, this is for me."

My residency is what ultimately led me back to ICO. I love working in academia. Every day is different: one day I could be lecturing, the next, I could be coordinating or teaching in a lab, and then the day after, I'm teaching in clinic.

It also means I get to be part of the ICO community. I know we say it so much, but ICO really does have this family feel to it, and especially being at ICO as long as I have, having worked with the students and faculty for as long as I have, I've made wonderful relationships here, and I can't imagine not seeing these people every day.



Hear Dr. McLeod's entire interview.



ICO COMMENCEMENT 2023

By Nora Matland



Janis Jurkus, OD '74
delivers ICO's 180th
commencement address

On Saturday, May 20, **ICO's 180th Commencement** took place at Chicago Symphony Center. Degrees were conferred upon **118 new Doctors of Optometry.**

Commencement week is always an exciting week and a cause for celebration. When asked what the Class of 2023 was proudest of, over and over again, the answer was, "We made it through, and we made it through as a class."

There was also a sense of disbelief that it was all over so quickly. "It feels surreal. The past few years flew by." "Sometimes we never thought we would get here," they said, "It feels like the end of a journey. I feel capable, but nervous."

"We've been through thick and thin together. Even when times get tough, we're all there for one another," said **Paul Eros, OD '23**. The support systems that exist at ICO are hard to replicate, and it's something that every graduate commented on in their interviews. The other was their own growth, "I can see how much more confident I am as a doctor. I'm just so ready to help people," said **Irene Zaman, OD '23**.

The Class of 2023 was only seven months into their optometric education when the pandemic hit. That meant that much of their optometric education was conducted remotely. This year's commencement speaker **Janis Jurkus, OD '74** commented on this, "The Class endured over 597

lecture hours and 161 quizzes and finals remotely. In the clinic, as a group, the Class of 2023 completed over 180,000 patient encounters."

Dr. Jurkus was also asked to reflect on how optometry has changed. She put particular emphasis on how many women have joined the profession. "When I graduated, I was the only woman who graduated in a class of 138 students. There were five women in the whole school." This year's graduating class is almost 70% female. Dr. Jurkus added, "Just this year, there are now 50% men and 50% women in the field of optometry."

Perhaps the most memorable aspect of this graduation was the overwhelming joy with which the attendees welcomed in the Class of 2023. The audience shouted out graduates' names and cheered for two minutes straight, ending with a standing ovation. "I have to tell you, I've been doing commencements for 35 years. We've had some great celebrations, but you just pushed us over the top with that one. Thank you all," said **Dr. Mark K. Colip** as he ended the ceremony.

Congratulations, doctors. You've been through a lot to get here, and we know that your future will be bright.



Brigitte Cianfrone, OD '23,
snaps a group photo.

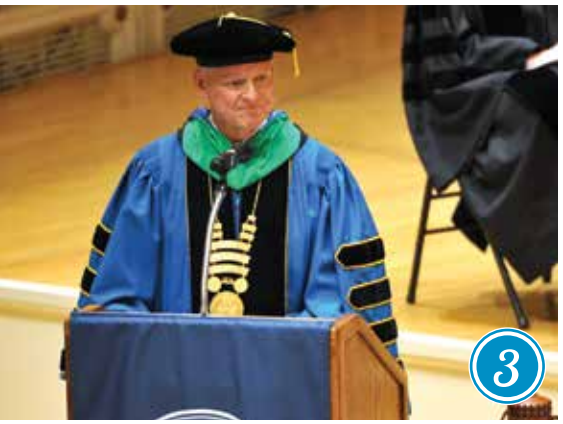


1



2

- 1** John Baker, OD, carrying the presidential mace led the processional.
- 2** Dean Stephanie Messner, OD, recognizes Chloe Bainbridge, OD '23 as this year's valedictorian.
- 3** ICO President Mark Colip, OD '92, addresses the Class of 2023.
- 4** Raman Bhakhri, OD, administers the optometric oath.
- 5** Casey Hogan, OD '97, President of the Alumni Council, welcomes the class to the Alumni Association.
- 6** ICO's graduate and faculty chorus singing the Alma Mater.



3



4



5



6



Relive Commencement on ICO's YouTube channel.

Download over 450 photos on ICO's Flickr page.

ALUMNI AMBASSADOR HIGHLIGHT

Nana Owusu, OD '08

Board of Trustees Member

Immediate Past President Alumni Council

Why do you think it's important to be an ICO alumni ambassador?

I am an alumni ambassador because I want to give back. Most ambassadors loved their time at ICO, and we want to connect with current students. We're a gentle reminder of the good things that lie at the end of all that hard work.

Whatever mode of practice we are in, we can provide our insights. When we have the chance to guide and formally mentor, it makes the students' experience richer, and it makes our profession stronger.

What's one thing you'd want people to know about being an ICO alumni ambassador?

We have the largest alumni base of any optometry school in the nation. Every year, we graduate more graduates than pretty much any other optometry school. That means not only do we have more people leading a variety of practices – whether that be private practice, working in a corporate setting or an educational setting – but we also have students interested in many different specializations. We need all kinds of ambassadors. We need to make ourselves as accessible as possible. We serve as guideposts when students feel like they're forging their path alone. When we support future optometrists, we're supporting the future of our profession.

What knowledge do you hope to impart to those you mentor?

One thing I always emphasize is the excellence of their ICO optometric education. I remember how stressful optometry school could be. The curriculum is so jam-packed, sometimes you wonder if it's all worth it.



Dr. Owusu addresses 50-yr club members at ICO's Homecoming.

The College prepared me to run the practice I run today. It's nice to be on the other side, reminding current students that it's all worth the hard work.

Speaking as a Canadian, I'm also there as a "local guide." Optometry's scope of practice changes from state to state and region to region. There are resources to find the information yourself, but it helps to have someone guide you through the thorny details.

Why is it important for you to continue your connection with ICO?

The reason I do all of this is because my experience at ICO was so impactful. There are so many people who were my mentors, including ICO's current president, **Mark K. Colip, OD '92**. They guided me towards what I wanted to accomplish. This program is not an easy program, and there were times when I also struggled. The type of community that we build, the support systems ICO has, whether that be tutoring or a one-on-one with Beth, we get through this program as a team. When I graduated, I knew that my mentors had a large part to play in my ultimate success.

Those people were great to me, and while it was a fantastic experience, I also believe it can always be better. If there are ways I can improve on this formative experience, I'm ready for that challenge. I'm involved in so many things because I want to make sure that current ICO students have the best possible experience. It's a rewarding part of my career, and I'm proud to be part of the ICO community.

GREGORY KOURI, OD '93

DRS. LEONARD AND STEPHANIE MESSNER SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT

"I couldn't be where I am today without Len and Stephanie Messner. Only with their guidance would I be able to practice at the level I do today," says **Greg Kouri, OD '93**. "They've given their heart and soul to so many people. I wanted to acknowledge their contribution in some significant way."

The **Drs. Leonard and Stephanie Messner Scholarship Endowment** was established to thank the Messners for their significant contribution to the profession. This scholarship will be awarded to a third- or fourth-year student who demonstrates interest in retinal disease and/or neuro-ophthalmic eye diseases. Endowed during ICO's 150th celebration, this was a perfect moment to reflect on how far the profession has come, not only in the last 150 years but in the last 30 years.

When Dr. Kouri joined the Class of 1993, optometry was at a crossroads. At ICO the Messners played an elemental role in shifting to a full-scope medical model. Dr. Kouri says, "We emulate those we admire and love the most. They were worthy of that in my world. Even then, I knew how important they would be in changing our profession."

In the 90s it was not common to do a residency, but Dr. Kouri knew he wanted to continue his education with the Messners. "As both a student and a resident, I remember having conversations about how optometry would evolve. We were going to be primary healthcare providers, and through us, our patients would be referred to the secondary and tertiary systems. Today, this is the reality, highly skilled optometrists are a meaningful part of the medical system. We've earned the respect of our colleagues in ophthalmology. They see what we can do, and recognize we work better together."



Drs. Leonard and Stephanie Messner at ICO's Homecoming 2022.

"Dr. Greg Kouri is an exceptional human being," says **Mark K. Colip, OD '92**, who worked with Dr. Kouri in establishing this scholarship. "We served our residency together. He was like a sponge during residency. After residency, he would often call and talk to Len or Stephanie especially if he ran into a particularly challenging case." These interactions slowly but surely built a deep bond between them.

In South Dakota, Dr. Kouri now runs a legacy practice founded by an ophthalmologist. Over the years, the practice partners saw how much better ODs and MDs operate when they work in tandem. Today he leads the practice. "We have made what we were only dreaming of back then a reality."

"Greg has always been able to rise above petty turf battles between some ODs and OMDs," says Dr. Mark Colip. "He really wants to promote full-scope practice for optometrists. We are now working on bringing ICO externs and residents to his practice. We know they will benefit from working in such a progressive environment."

Dr. Kouri ends, "It's meant the world to me to have the Messners' friendship, and I'm grateful every day to have them in my life." Given how huge the Messners' impact has been, Dr. Kouri opened this scholarship to anyone who wants to give. See instructions below.



For those interested in giving to the endowed scholarship, you can go to ico.edu/make-a-gift. Select "Tribute Gift" and add the Messners' names in the box.

For questions, call the **Development Office** at **312.949.7071** or development@ico.edu.

Class Notes

1970s

1973

Douglas Kiessling retired after a fulfilling fifty-year career – congratulations Dr. Kiessling!

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1980s

1984

Marshall B. Ketchum University (MBKU), an independent, private, non-profit, accredited educational institution in Fullerton, California formally introduced **Julie A. Schornack, MEd** as its next president to lead the university following a highly attended inauguration event on Friday, April 28, 2023. The event welcomed over 200 guests including faculty, students, local dignitaries, family and friends to honor the university's second president. The ceremony was followed by a 10-year anniversary celebration at the MBKU campus, which commemorated the milestone of the university's expansion and name change in 2013.

Dr. Schornack is not only the first-ever female president at MBKU, but also a long-standing faculty member of over 35 years. During her time with the university, she has witnessed first-hand many impressive graduating classes, worked with extraordinary faculty and influenced a number of education and industry developments that have positively impacted the school's trajectory. She plans to harness her experience and knowledge to carry out a vision focused on people, programs and places. These key areas of focus will support admissions and enrollment, identifying ways to continue to curb the high cost of education while still delivering a premiere healthcare education and improving campus infrastructure. Her vision takes inspiration from the past and centers around excitement for the future.

The event included a traditional ceremony welcoming the university's president into her new position. Members of the Board of Trustees, faculty, student body and close colleagues stood by Dr. Schornack's side in unity to highlight her remarkable journey, service and leadership in a manner that touched each and every guest in the room. Following the ceremony, guests gathered on campus to celebrate Dr. Schornack and to recognize the 10-year anniversary of MBKU becoming a university and

changing its name from the Southern California College of Optometry to reflect its expansion to also include a school of Physician Assistant Studies and College of Pharmacy.

To watch the full inauguration ceremony, visit: <https://ketchum.edu/livestream>.

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1990s

1992

Donald Furman of Forest City, IA was recently installed as President of the Iowa Optometric Association at its annual congress held at the Marriott Downtown Hotel in Des Moines.

Dr. Furman currently practices at Family Eye Care Center in Garner, Britt, and Forest City, IA with his partners, Drs. Trichelle Jackson and Haley Mathews. Dr. Furman has been practicing optometry for 31 years having graduated from the Illinois College of Optometry in 1992.

Dr. Furman and his wife, Melinda, live in Forest City.

.....

2000s

2005

Shinu Varghese, '05 and **Robert Richardson, '78** visited **Jordan Beller's, '71** museum after seeing his feature in our 2022 issue of *ICO Matters*. Dr. Varghese is the current owner of Dr. Beller's practice and had never had the opportunity to meet him after purchasing the practice from Dr. Richardson. How wonderful to see that *ICO Matters* can bring together generations of ICO Alumni!



2006

Christopher DeAngelis, was selected as the Senior Allied Health Provider for the 2022 Military Health System Leadership Excellence Award. This award is competitively selected across U.S. Navy, Air Force, and Army licensed independent providers. He was presented the award by the Assistant Secretary of Health Affairs and Navy Surgeon General. CDR DeAngelis currently serves as the Dean of the Tri-Service Optician School in Yorktown, VA.

2010s

2011

Kyle Ross, president and chief optometrist at North Shore Eye Health and Wellness in Cedarburg, WI, received recognition in June 2023 for his continued commitment to professional development at a recent meeting of Cleinman Performance Network in Grapevine, TX. Ross, celebrating five years in the network, demonstrates a dedication to not only creating a healthy and beneficial work environment at North Shore Eye Health and Wellness, but also maintaining a high level of patient care and satisfaction at his eye care practice, according to a Cleinman Performance Network press release.

As a member of the network, a wisdom-sharing group of peer optometrists from across North America, Ross "shares, receives and puts into practice valuable knowledge which highlights and contributes to the best practices in vision care and eye health, benefiting the patients at North Shore Eye Health and Wellness."

2014

Lauren Dyak, was recently named Young OD of the Year by the Georgia Optometric Association.

**Got alumni news?
Please share.**

ONLINE:
[icomatters.ico.edu/
submit-a-class-note](http://icomatters.ico.edu/submit-a-class-note)

CONTACT
Alumni Development
alumni@ico.edu



THIS YEAR, ICO

surpassed its fundraising goals by 24%. Help us sustain this success as we close off this anniversary year. Support ICO in building its future, and help shape the future of optometry.

Education + Research

CAMPAIGN GOAL:

\$1.5MM

RAISED TO DATE:

\$1.86MM

Patient Care

CAMPAIGN GOAL:

\$750K

RAISED TO DATE:

\$930K

Service to the Community

CAMPAIGN GOAL:

\$250K

RAISED TO DATE:

\$310K

INITIAL GOAL:

\$2.5MM

RAISED TO DATE:

\$3.1MM

ico.edu/150th

In Memoriam

1940s

1946

Donald Lawson (MCU) was born on April 10, 1923 to Charles Lawson and Jessie Handsor on Windsor, Ontario, Canada. He passed away on October 23, 2022, surrounded by friends and family. He began his practice in Evanston in 1947 with four other physicians and had a thriving optometric practice. He was very active in developing a tutoring program in the Evanston school system and served on the advisory committee of the Evanston Child Care Center.

1947

Orlou Reitz Raeber Burkemper, (NICO), 96, died peacefully on February 15, 2023, surrounded by family. Dr. Reitz was the first optometrist in Waterloo. She began her practice in September 1947 and for 20 years was the only eye doctor serving the community. During her professional career, Dr. Reitz became active with the humanitarian organization Volunteer Optometrists in Service to Humanity.

1949

Herschel York (NICO), age 100, passed away peacefully on November 27, 2022, beloved husband of the late Jewel York, nee Golden, cherished father of Clifford York, Cathy (Arthur) York Richards, and the late Susan (Sheldon) York Wittenberg, loving grandfather of seven grandchildren, great grandfather to seven great grandchildren.

Morris Ossias Mission Viejo (NICO), passed away on February 4, 2022, just 3 months shy of his 102nd Birthday. He served in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II, and was stationed at an air base near Fairbanks, AK, working with the Air Force's weather predictors, to provide information useful to our forces in the Pacific theater.

Michael Joseph Kacere Sr. (NICO), was born on May 17, 1922 in Cedar Rapids, IA and passed away peacefully on Feb. 1, 2023 at the age of 100 surrounded by his loving family. Mike was a World War II veteran who served in the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1942 until 1945. He was a navigator on the B-17 bomber and completed 25 missions in the European theater of operation. After the war, Mike decided to use his G.I. Bill to become an optometrist.

Lester Caplan (NICO), of Rancho Mirage, CA, passed away on Friday, December 2, 2022 at the age of 98. Lester was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II and then began his professional career as a Doctor of Optometry as a private practitioner in Baltimore, MD. After the passing of his first wife, he had another successful career as an academic at the University of Alabama where he was Assistant Dean and retired Professor Emeritus. He became a leader in public health optometry at the local, state and federal level. He is recognized as the father of optometry in the Indian health service. He made many trips to the reservations out west to ensure that Native Americans were getting proper eye care.

Arthur Rubin (NICO), passed away peacefully on November 27, 2022 at the age of 95. Dr. Rubin had been a member of the Illinois and American Optometric Associations, and the Rock Island County Optometric Society. He had been a Fellow in the American Academy of Optometry, and served on the Illinois Optometric Executive Board and the Illinois Vision Service Plan.

Alfred A. Gossan (NICO), of Escanaba, age 95, passed away on September 8, 2022. He spent a year at Wilson Community College before joining the U.S. Navy in 1945, where he worked in the eye clinic at Chelsea Naval Hospital and was inspired to begin a career in optometry.

Joseph Philip Roumain ("Doc") (NICO), 98, was born in Baton Rouge, LA on August 18, 1924, and passed away peacefully on October 19, 2022. He volunteered for the military and served in the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II, where he flew missions to Okinawa. He was an active member and past president of the Lakeshore Lions Club with perfect attendance for 60 years and was also a member of the chamber of commerce.

.....

1950s

1950

Jule Lamm, (NICO), died peacefully at his home on February 11, 2023 at 99 years old. During Jule's senior year, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was later sent to the Pacific where he flew C-47 (DC3) and C-46 planes, transporting people and supplies to far-flung outposts. For several decades, Jule piloted teams of nurses

and doctors on monthly medical missions to a clinic he helped establish in rural Sinaloa, Mexico. After retirement Jule volunteered as an optometrist for the Venice Family Clinic, Santa Monica Schools and The Jules Stein Mobile Eye Clinic, providing eye exams for preschool students across the region.

Robert E. Haradon (NICO), age 99, of Wilmington, NC passed away on June 4, 2022. Bob grew up in Taunton, MA and served in the U.S. Coast Guard for 3 years during World War II. In 1950 he graduated from the N. Illinois College of Optometry, after which he owned and operated his optometric practice in Taunton, MA for about 33 years. Then he was one of the founders and practiced at EyeCare-EyeWear Associates, also in Taunton, before retiring in 1989.

Art Hillman (NICO), passed away on September 8, 2022, at 96 years old. After being discharged from military service in Italy during World War II, he went to University of Miami and then to Illinois College of Optometry on the G.I. Bill after which he set up practice in North Miami Beach, Florida. After about 25 years of practice, he retired from optometry to pursue other areas of interest as a 911 Operator, Post Office Claims Clerk, Parking Enforcement Officer of Orange County, Arbitrator for the Better Business Bureau Lemon Law, Mediator for the Division of Florida Land Sales and best of all, Mediator for Orange County.

William Hoffman (NICO), of Columbia, MD, formerly of Pittsburgh, PA, passed away on September 10, 2022, at age 98. He served as a radio operator in World War II, and then settled in Pittsburgh working as a self-employed optometrist.

1951

Wallace Benjamin Siff (CCO), 93, of Hollywood, Florida passed away on January 4, 2023.

1955

William Gosnell (ICO), passed away on January 24, 2023. William was born and raised in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. He attended Bartlesville High School, Central Christian College, Northwestern Illinois and Illinois College of Optometry where he graduated Cum Laude. Dr. Gosnell was in private practice for 60 years. He served as President of the Optimist Club, Englewood

Lions Club, Independence Bass Masters, Vision Service Plan Missouri Charter and the Greater Kansas City Optometric Society. In the middle of his career, he also authored a book, *Handbook of Ocular Therapy*.

Ronald O. Davis (NICO), passed away peacefully at home in Rancho Palos Verdes, California on February 6, 2023. He was 98 years old. He served our country in the U.S. Navy during World War II throughout the South Pacific as a morse code operator on the USS Barnes aircraft carrier. Dr. Davis graduated from the University of Washington and later graduated from the Illinois College of Optometry. He returned to Seattle and founded Davis Optical in the University District in 1955 where he joyfully practiced optometry until his retirement. Dr. Davis was a pioneer and leader in the Seattle optometric community. He trained many young local optometrists over the years and served generations of patients.

1960s

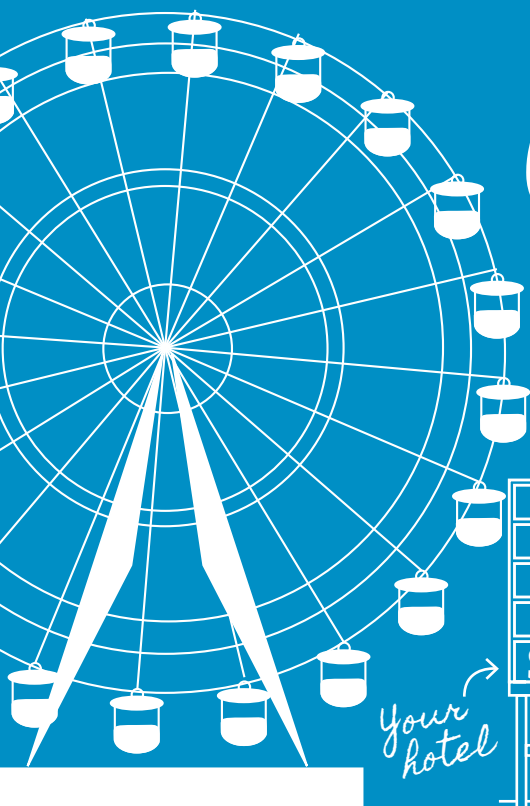
1968

Richard P. Chlapecka (ICO), age 91, of Hines, IL, formerly of Warrenville, IL, passed away on April 19, 2023. Richard was a U.S. Air Force Veteran. Richard was a graduate of Illinois College of Optometry, Class of 1968 and practiced in West Chicago for 35 years. Richard remained active in his local rotary club.

1970s

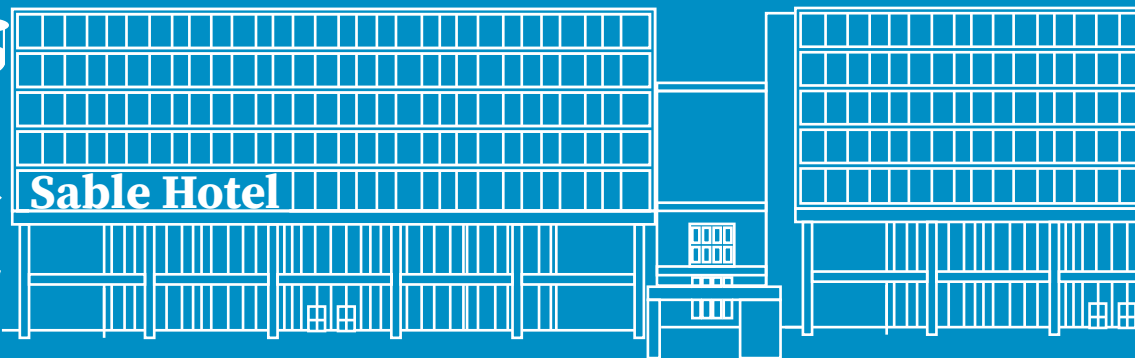
1975

Arabel Ellen Hatfield (ICO), passed away on February 4, 2023, at Charleston Memorial Hospital after a short illness. She served as a president of the West Virginia Optometric Association. "Dr. A" practiced optometry in Logan at Hatfield Eye Care Associates with her father, **Coleman C. Hatfield, OD**, until her retirement. She also worked with her brother, **Dr. R. Mark Hatfield, OD, MD**, at Retina Consultants PLLC until her death.



Celebrate the past and future of **ICO**

your
hotel



ICO HOMECOMING

SEPTEMBER 8-10, 2023 • ALL ALUMNI AND FAMILIES ARE INVITED!

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2023

5:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Shuttle service provided to/from host hotel and ICO campus

6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Ahoy! It's an alumni student mingle!

Including food stations, bar, photo booth, DJ and karaoke, raffle, and campus tours (casual attire)

ICO Courtyard

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2023

11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Shuttle service provided to/from host hotel and campus

Campus tours

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

50 Year Club Luncheon

Recognizing 50+ years of service in the profession (business casual, suits optional)
ICO Library (by invitation only)

Alumni Ambassador Appreciation Reception

Recognizing our dedicated alumni volunteers (casual attire)
ICO Courtyard (by invitation only)

2:00 p.m.

Chicago Architecture Tour

Leaves promptly at 2:15 p.m. from Navy Pier

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Alumni Association and Leadership Circle Award Reception

Sable Hilton, Navy Pier

6:00 – 10:00 p.m.

Class Reunion Dinner

Including photo booth, dinner, cocktails, and live band (evening cocktail attire)
Great Lakes Ballroom, Sable Hilton, Navy Pier

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Continental breakfast and sign-in
Lecture Center Foyer

Continuing Education:

Low Vision Management

6 hours of COPE accredited CE
ICO Lecture Center



Play the Park Link

One-day passes are available for unlimited rides at Navy Pier. Good for Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.



Reservation Link

A limited number of rooms are available at our host hotel, **The Sable on Navy Pier**, 900 E Grand Ave.

Discounted rates start at **\$299/night**. The room block will be available until **August 16, 2023** or until full.

Datebook

ICO
OLYMPICS
AUG 19



JULY

July 10-14

Focus on Your Future Program
ICO Campus

July 29-August 5

Summer Quarter Final Exams

AUGUST

August 8

NBEO Part 1 Exam

August 10-12

Class of 2027 Orientation

August 14

First Day of Fall Quarter

August 19

ICO Olympics

August 26

Parents' Orientation,
President's Welcome and
White Coat Ceremony

SEPTEMBER

September 2-4

Holiday: Labor Day

September 8-10

ICO Homecoming

September 28-October 1

IOA Annual Meeting
Schaumburg, IL

OCTOBER

October 11

AAO Annual Meeting
New Orleans, LA

October 28-November 4

Fall Quarter Final Exams

NOVEMBER

November 13

First Day of Winter Quarter

November 22-26

Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

December 5 & 7

NBEO Part 2 Exam

December 21-January 3

Holiday Break



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Last Look



Dr. Charles Mullen and Dr. Terry Ernest celebrate the foundation of the ICO/University of Chicago partnership. It's still going strong over 25 years later. (See page 20.)