

ICO MATTERS

WINTER 2020 • V19 ISSUE 2



Living through the new normal:

+ a look back at a year of COVID

Inclusion at ICO
Alumni Award Recipients



MAGAZINE OF THE ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

Class of

2024



Testing

3.40
mean GPA

317
mean OAT

ICO

Admissions

125 enrolled

333
interviewed

911
applicants



77% female
23% male



Personal statistics

23 mean age

20-40 age range

Countries represented



8 Foreign Countries

Canada, Hong Kong,
Italy, Poland, St. Lucia,
South Africa, South Korea
and Syria

Ethnicity

49% Caucasian
41% Asian/Asian American
5% Multiracial
4% Black/African American
1% American Indian



undergraduate Majors

63%
Biological Sciences

12% Health Sciences
6% Chemistry
5% Psychology
8% Other

Cumulative GPA Distribution

≥3.70	22%
3.50 - 3.69	18%
3.20 - 3.49	31%
3.00 - 3.19	13%
≤2.99	15%

Features

10 Inclusion at ICO, in Optometry and in Healthcare

Institutions and communities are grappling with how systemic inequalities affect who has access to healthcare and to higher education. We look at how the IEI plays an important role in the Bronzeville community and the need for better representation at ICO and the IEI.

18 A Year of COVID

For nearly a year, we have been living with the coronavirus. We explore the measures we have put in place to ensure student and patient safety as well as the impact that coronavirus has had on optometrists and optometry students.

Mary Meaders takes temperatures of everyone arriving on campus during COVID.

On the Cover: Living through the new normal: a look back at a year of COVID

ICO MATTERS

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EDITORIAL

**Sr. Director for Strategy and Administrative
Technology Management**
Milissa Bartold, MA

Director of Marketing and Communications
Nora Matland

Creative Services Specialist/Sr. Graphic Designer
Brian Holloway

Close Up Photography
James Palmer Photography

Contributing Writers
Milissa Bartold, MA, Nora Matland, and
Connie Scavuzzo, MA

ADMINISTRATION

President
Mark K. Colip, OD '92

VP for Strategy and Institutional Advancement
Leonard Messner, OD

Dean of Student Affairs
Erik Mothersbaugh, OD '12

**Senior Director for Development and
External Affairs**
Vince Brandys, OD '90

Senior Director of Alumni Development
Connie Scavuzzo, MA

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President's Spotlight

"Diversity, Equity and Inclusion has been a major topic we have explored in-depth this year. One of the many strengths of ICO's educational program has always been the diversity of our patients and the varied pathologies we see regularly that enhance our students' experience. Anyone observing ICO's entering classes over the years has noticed an increase in the diversity of our student body. Recently, I heard an employee say, "at ICO, we celebrate our diversity every day." In this column, I try to share with you various perspectives, from respected individuals, on the issues at hand. I hope you enjoy reading the perspectives of key ICO alumni on this important topic."



Mark K. Colip, OD '92

Tracy Matchinski, OD '95, FAAO

*Assistant Professor
Illinois College of Optometry*

"Why are diversity, equity, and inclusion important for ICO?"

DEI (Diversity Equity & Inclusion) is complex and my understanding and application of all aspects of DEI are ongoing. As an optometrist and faculty member, I know it is critical to aggressively apply all aspects of DEI at ICO. By doing this, we can inspire ICO students to provide the highest level of care and reach their professional goals.

DEI is important throughout the whole ICO process: awareness of optometry as a profession, recruitment to ICO, ability to attend ICO, ability to participate at ICO and become an OD. The more an organization embraces DEI, the better that organization will be. Diverse backgrounds and life experiences will energize and enrich discussions and contribute to a better functioning organization. For ICO, this means a more dynamic education environment. Embracing DEI will contribute to a healthier campus culture, academic success and career readiness. Additionally, ICO needs to understand challenges students may be facing given their race/background and provide assistance as well as paths for success. It is important to recognize both barriers and advantages to create equity for all students. I am pleased to see ICO devoting time and resources to make this happen at ICO.

"How does DEI impact the healthcare that we teach and deliver?"

DEI impacts how we teach and how we provide care. It is important to help ICO students really think about professional opportunities and consider possibilities.

This may be having discussions about applying for a residency, providing a type of care when they graduate or thinking about research opportunities. Diverse representation and inclusion can help each of our students to see opportunities available in practice, research, policy development, industry, and education.

DEI is important in clinical care. Patients must be able to access and embrace their care. We need to show students how to work with all patients, be aware of what barriers patients may face and know ways to help patients navigate those barriers. In clinic, it can also be inspiring young patients to consider optometry as a profession. If a young patient is working with a student of the same race, that young patient can see the possibility of becoming an eye doctor.

Nana Owusu, OD '08

*President
Alumni Council*

"Why are diversity, equity and inclusion important for ICO?"

This is a topic that affects us all. Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are concepts rooted in the idea of caring for one another equally; it isn't political, it's humanitarian. As it relates to optometry, DEI allows for sharing of our skillset with our communities by providing all in need an opportunity to enjoy high-level ocular health care in an environment that is welcoming to all.

In order to accomplish this, it's important that we embrace the differences that make us special rather than ignoring them. Effective growth and development in diversity, equity and inclusion at ICO will yield a stronger team of caring student clinicians, staff, faculty members and administrators with a wide variety of talents and experiences. Ultimately,



this will lead to a greater ability for us to care for our diverse communities of patients, and allow for a more comfortable learning environment at the college.

"How does DEI impact the healthcare that we teach and deliver?"

It has been well documented that the representation of people of color across medical professional programs does not parallel the beautiful diversity of the United States. Further to this, the healthcare disparity is obvious and is ripe for strong efforts for repair. As the premier optometric institution, ICO has an opportunity to lead by example from the student to administrative level in making steps toward bridging the clear gap. Each of

Thomas Elton, OD '11

*Elton Eyecare Inc.
Edina, Minnesota*

"Why are diversity, equity, and inclusion important for ICO?"

DEI is important to ICO on two fundamental levels. The first being ICO can act as a pure incubation hub to attract, develop, and retain diverse talent and offer them the opportunities to serve the diverse communities that they represent.



"Our patients come from all different backgrounds: ethnic, racial, cultural, educational, religious, gender, sexual orientation, etc. In order for us to ensure that we can serve their needs from a medical perspective as well as a personal engagement perspective, we need to represent them."

Thomas Elton, OD '11

"Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are concepts rooted in the idea of caring for one another equally; it isn't political, it's humanitarian"

Nana Owusu, OD '08

our community deserves a high level of care and with an improved understanding of the special differences we have, as humans, clinicians will have an opportunity to improve the patient experience at all levels.

As an alumnus, I have been especially proud of President Colip and Dr. Nana Owusu's efforts in both fundraising and naming that our institution can do better around positive change in relation to DEI.

Secondly, having diverse individuals studying at and serving at ICO enhances the school by allowing it to foster higher levels of cultural and emotional intelligence. When we attract students and staff that are representative of the communities we serve, we leverage our individual diversity of thought and experience to collectively develop our entire ICO community.

"How does DEI impact the healthcare that we teach and deliver?"

DEI underpins most aspects of our patient care delivery. First, ensuring we have the providers who look like you, sound like you, and share your lived experiences providing you care is critical to making patients feel comfortable and represented. For example, as an LGBTQ provider, I know that my LGBTQ patients in particular feel more comfortable sharing personal information and trusting me with their care — more so than another provider who may not share their identity.

Patient care is at the forefront of what we do, we deliver patient value. Our patients are not monolithic. Our patients come from all different backgrounds: ethnic, racial, cultural, educational, religious, gender, sexual orientation, etc. In order for us to ensure we can serve their needs from a medical perspective as well as a personal engagement perspective, we need to represent them. We need to be representative of them. And that's why it's so critical as we focus on recruiting and educating up-and-coming doctors, that we keep the end state in mind: patient care and how we are developing doctors to actually serve the needs of a fundamentally changing society (ethnic, racial, etc).

DONOVAN L. CROUCH, OD '63

Crouch Family Alumni Scholarship

"I owe a lot to ICO and to the profession," says **Donovan Crouch, OD '63, DOS, FAAO**. "Without the education that myself, my two sons, **Craig Crouch, OD '90** and **Kevin Crouch, OD '94**, and my daughter-in-law, **Ashley Crouch, OD '94**, received from ICO, we wouldn't have the lifestyle we currently enjoy."

However, Dr. Crouch wasn't initially interested in optometry. "I liked math and actuary science," he says. He was drawn to the optometric profession because of his family optometrist, **Marion Parks, OD '43**. While shadowing in the practice of **Charles Leonard, OD '48**, he was hooked.

After graduating from ICO, he joined the practice of **Allan Lande, OD '40**, in Storm Lake, Iowa, and eventually became a partner. Over the years, the practice grew and relocated, but always stayed in Storm Lake where Dr. Crouch continues to practice to this day. "My kids worked in the office and were exposed to optometry at a very young age," says Dr. Crouch. While sons Craig and Kevin opted for optometry, son Charles chose to become a radiologist, and daughter Cyndee chose dental hygiene and expects to receive her PhD this year. "My wife Lois and I are very proud of the accomplishments of our kids," he says.

Dr. Crouch has generously supported ICO for many years and has never passed up an opportunity to be involved at his alma mater. He served on the ICO Board of Trustees for 15 years and was subsequently named Trustee Emeritus, an honor bestowed upon only a select few former trustees. He also served on the ICO Alumni Council for nine years and currently serves as an Emeritus Member of the Council. "I believe it is important to give back in any way we can as alumni," he says.

With the increase in competition among optometric institutions to recruit the best students, Dr. Crouch felt compelled to help ICO's admissions efforts. With a gift of \$50,000 to ICO, he established the **Crouch Family Alumni Scholarship** which is designated for accepted admissions candidates who demonstrate a need for financial assistance. "The goal is to offer the scholarship to candidates who may be on the fence about choosing ICO," says Dr. Crouch. Starting in 2021, one



Drs. Don Crouch, Kevin Crouch, Ashley Crouch, and Craig Crouch.

or more scholarships totaling \$5,000 per year for the next 10 years will be used for this purpose. "If the financial assistance helps them decide to attend ICO, then that not only makes an impact for the students, but also impacts the bottom line for the school. It's a win-win." ICO's Dean of Student Affairs, **Erik Mothersbaugh, OD '12**, couldn't agree more. "It is through scholarships like the **Crouch Family Alumni Scholarship** that we can significantly enhance our admission efforts and ultimately strengthen our entering class," he says.

From Dr. Crouch's perspective, establishing a scholarship for students is a practical way of paying it forward. "From my experience on the Board, I came to realize just how impactful these scholarships can be. And, I like the fact that you can decide how your contribution is going to be used," he says.

There are several ways to begin funding a scholarship in addition to a one-time, lump-sum gift. Some alumni prefer to make a pledge, making gifts over the course of five years, while others choose to designate funding from a charitable gift annuity. Donors can also determine the criteria for their named scholarship. "It was an easy process. ICO's Development Office was very helpful," says Dr. Crouch.

President **Mark Colip, OD '92** cannot thank Dr. Crouch enough for his thoughtful generosity to ICO. "Dr. Crouch is one of our most dedicated and supportive alumni – and also very humble. This scholarship will make a huge difference for ICO, and I am so very grateful to him," he says.



To inquire about establishing a scholarship, please email **Vince Brandys, OD '90** at vbrandys@ico.edu or **Connie Scavuzzo, MA** at cscavuzzo@ico.edu.

»»» Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Over the course of the past year, ICO has been undertaking a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiative to evaluate where we are at and to find areas where we can do better.

During the pandemic, the community ICO serves has been heavily and disproportionately affected. Daily, we serve a vulnerable population of patients. The pandemic only served to highlight that fact. In turn, it helped remind us to deepen our commitment to educate ourselves and our students, to equip them to the best of our abilities and to provide the care our community needs. Our very community has provided a rich classroom where we can actualize our commitment to equity in healthcare.

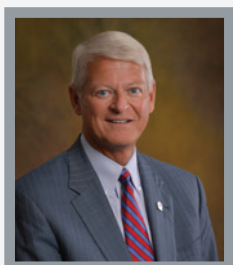
As ICO alums, you and I have benefitted from our incredible patient base. For those of us who didn't come from large urban settings, ICO may have been our first real encounter with the effects poverty and social inequities can have on the health and well-being of individuals. These patients became powerful teachers for us, both in educating us about various co-morbidities and ocular manifestations of systemic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes and in humanizing the cases for us. We had the chance to look into their eyes and see the failures of systems and structures that placed them at a disadvantage, from lack of access to quality health care to balancing precarious financial situations that challenge how they manage their health care concerns. Every one of these patients taught us something about diversity, equity and inclusion; and I would venture, if we reflect, they also taught us something about ourselves.

Each of these patients also taught us that we do not have to accept these structures as unchangeable, as simply the "way things are." DEI work is something we have to consciously commit to in all that we do. We all have particular contexts that affect who we are and what we do. We all need to be willing to take the time to learn about one another.

There are no shortcuts when it comes to creating lasting change. It may take years to see the fruits of our labors, and yet, that doesn't mean we don't do our part to contribute to the changes we want to see in our world. This pandemic has shown us in no uncertain terms that the disparity in health outcomes has gone on far too long.

Our work and learning about DEI will help us better attract students from all different types of backgrounds and help them to embrace their differences and channel their strengths into becoming the best optometrists possible. DEI does NOT in any way mean lowering standards. In fact, we must maintain and elevate standards so that we are attracting and graduating doctors of optometry who are well-equipped to serve their diverse communities. We know that our patients deserve the very best care possible and that includes meeting them where they are in their own DEI journeys as well. We recognize the privilege we have in serving our community and the way in which they have helped us to continue to strive to be the best at what we do.

Warmly,
Mark K. Colip, OD '92
President



Editor's Note

There's something so exciting about those first few days in a new office. Those first interactions with the campus are often the most memorable. However, my first few months were remote. Because I joined ICO in April, I was, like the rest of campus, working from a makeshift home office. I watched remotely as fourth-year students' names were called for commencement, as we welcomed the class of 2024, and as the communications team tried to orient me to life at ICO — all while never having stepped on campus.

As an office, we ask ourselves daily "Why ICO?" We try our best to tell ICO's story. But how do you tell the story of a campus you have never seen?

Over the months, what makes ICO so uniquely itself has become clearer to me. More than any other institution I have worked at, the two words that have stood out to me since joining ICO, is "ICO Family." Nowhere else have I found a school so in tune to one overarching goal. While working on this magazine, I've had the pleasure of connecting with alumni as well. I have so enjoyed getting to know some of the unique people who make ICO what it is today.

It makes my job all the more engaging being able to be a part of this wonderful community.

Nora Matland

Director of Marketing and Communications

Welcome Class of 2024

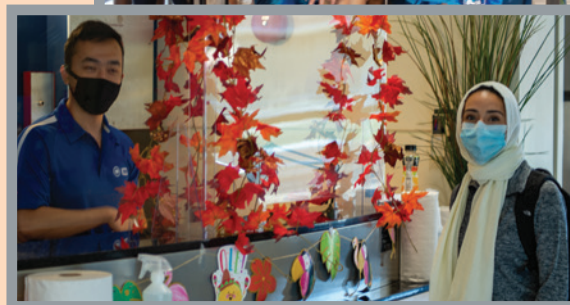
In August, we welcomed our newest class to campus. As in every year, they arrived with their cars packed to the brim and with many questions. As in every year, they said their goodbyes and settled well into the first few challenging exams and courses.

Unlike any other year, students wore masks as they moved in. Unlike any other year, their first quarter has been spent learning and interacting remotely as the entire college moved to hybrid learning.

New beginnings are always challenging, even more so during a pandemic. Starting optometry school during a pandemic takes strength and determination. The class of 2024 has done remarkably well. They made it through orientation, their first quarter, and are now making their first forays into the clinic through the Clinical Assistant Program.

They have shown flexibility and resilience throughout these first few months, and we're so happy to have them with us.

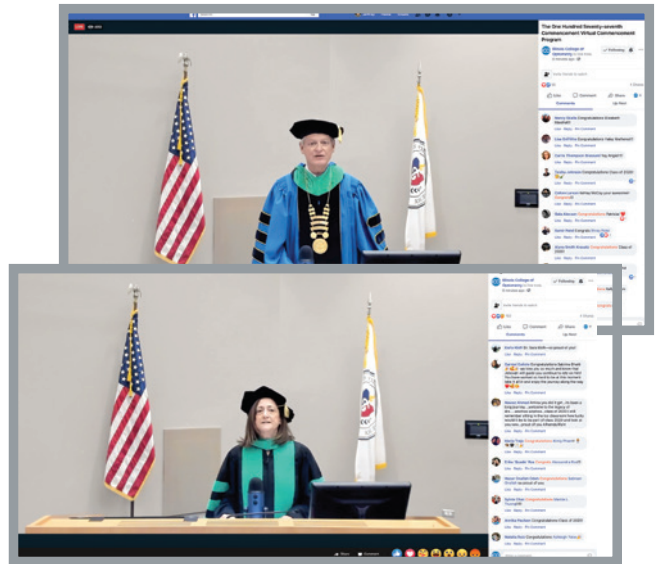
Class of 2024, we are so excited to see what these four years will bring.



Celebrating the Class of 2020

Commencement is always one of our favorite days at ICO. To see the class walk across the stage and take their place as ODs and ICO's newest alumni is always a joy. This year's class was extra special not only because of the year but because of all that this class has been through. Due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, we streamed commencement this year through Facebook Live. During the hour, our Facebook live stream had more than 800 comments. The outpouring of cheers and congratulations coming from the live chat was heard almost as loudly as if the audience were there in the room. Even within a digital context, students came together to celebrate their achievements and reflect on how far they had come during their four years at ICO.

Class of 2020, we have missed you on campus this year. You are now a member of ICO's expansive alumni network. We can't wait to see what you will do!



President Mark Colip, OD '92 addresses the Class of 2020. Sandra Block, OD '81 gave the commencement speech. Her address was on how even in the most adverse situations there can still be hope.

Recent ASCO Award Winners

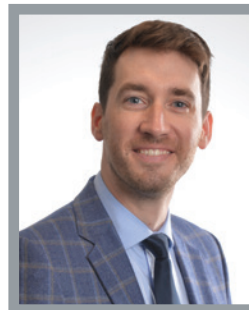
This year, **Janice E. Scharre, OD '76** became the first female to receive ASCO's Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr. Scharre spent 32 years at ICO, as the Chief of the Pediatrics Department and as the VP and Dean for Academic Affairs. After leaving ICO, she joined Salus University as the Provost.

Our very own **Erik Mothersbaugh, OD '12** received ASCO's Rising Star Award. Bringing in a new perspective as a recent grad, he has shaped this role and made it his own in these last few years.

We asked our president, **Mark Colip, OD '92** to share his thoughts:

"It is no surprise to me that two ICO alumni have been recognized with these important national ASCO awards.

Dr. Scharre is not only the first female to receive the ASCO Lifetime Achievement award, she was the first female appointed to serve as dean of an optometry school in the United States. She shattered the glass ceiling and was a seasoned academic leader. We both served on the President's Administrative Cabinet at ICO under Dr. Charles Mullen. I learned a great deal working with her and I felt a loss when she left ICO. She has been a leader for ASCO and the recognition was well deserved.



Erik Mothersbaugh, OD '12



Janice E. Scharre, OD '76

I first met Dr. Mothersbaugh at Augustana College before he even applied to ICO. I was thrilled when he chose to attend ICO. I could tell that he was destined for success and would become a leader in optometry. He was the first person I hired when I was named President of ICO, and he has been doing a wonderful job in his role as Dean of Student Affairs. Erik has a long and rewarding career ahead of him, and I am still thrilled that he chose ICO."

Moving Initiatives Online

Since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, things have drastically changed at ICO. However, we have maintained our commitment both to our current students and future students.

This quarter all lectures have been pre-recorded or streamed live while students still attend much smaller labs. Otherwise, ICO has been able to leverage its pre-existing tools to run all meetings.

During the summer, we moved Focus on Your Future online and put together a new pre-orientation series for our incoming class. The class of 2024's orientation was also held online.

It is not easy living through a pandemic, but we have been incredibly impressed by how well those around us have adapted.

For us, nothing will represent 2020 more than the boxed faces on Microsoft Teams. It's been amazing to see just how much ICO has been able to do during this past year!

Beth Karmis welcomes the Class of 2024.



Focus on Your Future participants go virtual with MS Teams.

ICO Board of Trustees New Appointees

Congratulations to the newest Board of Trustees members for 2020: **Tracy Matchinski, OD '95, FAAO** as Faculty Trustee and **Scott Jens, OD '91** as regular trustee. Both were elected in February 2020.



Tracy Matchinski, OD '95



Scott Jens, OD '91

Board of Trustees

Dwight H. Akerman, OD '80, MBA, FAAO – *Vice Chairman*
Vasvi A. Babu, OD '93
Rev. Torrey L. Barrett
Joseph L. Derezinski, MS
Karen A. Eng, OD – *Immediate Past Chairwoman*
Robert L. Fait, OD '68 – *Secretary*
Dwain L. Hahs – *Treasurer*
Scott A. Jens, OD '91
Jeffrey D. Johnson, OD '97, MBA
Osvaldo I. Lopez, MD
C. Michael LoPiano, MBA
Tracy L. Matchinski, OD '95, FAAO
Nana Owusu, OD '08
Steven Schneider
Jeff Smith, OD '83, MBA – *Chairman*
Jeanette C. Varanelli, OD '97, FAAO, Dipl.ABO, ABCMD
Charles Weis, CPA
Bryce Boente '22 – *Student Representative*

James R. Butler, OD '59 – *Emeritus Trustee*
Donovan L. Crouch, OD '63, DOS, FAAO – *Emeritus Trustee*

NEW ICO Alumni Council Members Elected

Congratulations to **Jennifer Harthan, OD '06, FAAO, FSLs** and **Philip Hasler, OD '86**, Colonel USAF (retired), for their election to the ICO Alumni Council.

Dr. Harthan became a full-time faculty member at ICO after completing her residency in Cornea and Contact Lenses in 2007. She is currently a professor and serves as Chief of the Cornea Center for Clinical Excellence in the Illinois Eye Institute. Dr. Harthan will serve as the Alumni Council's Faculty Representative, replacing **Sandra Block, OD '81, MEd, MPH, FAAO, FCOVD**, who recently retired from ICO. Dr. Harthan's long history as a faculty member and clinician will provide a unique perspective to the Alumni Council, along with a wealth of knowledge about ICO/IEI and a broad network of industry relationships.

Dr. Hasler, of Reedsburg, Wisconsin, is a retired Colonel in the Wisconsin Air National Guard. Currently, he practices at Davis Duehr Dean of the SSM/Dean Health System, a nationally recognized multi-specialty, comprehensive and integrated eye service network with 19 locations in southern Wisconsin. Dr. Hasler is honored to continue the legacy of his father, **James Hasler, OD '49**, who also served on the Alumni Council. He is especially proud that his daughter **Rachel Hasler, OD '17**, and son **Nicholas Hasler '23**, are following in his footsteps as the next generation of ICO alumni.

Welcome to the Alumni Council, Drs. Harthan and Hasler!



Jennifer Harthan, OD '06



Philip Hasler, OD '86

Alumni Council

Nana Owusu, OD '08 – *President*

Casey Hogan, OD '97, FAAO, FSLs – *Vice President*

Pete Russo, OD '87, FAAO – *Secretary*

Robin Rinearson, OD '77 – *Immediate Past President*

Jeanette Varanelli, OD '97, FAAO, Dipl.ABO, ABCMD

– *Alumni Trustee to the Board*

Donovan Crouch, OD '63, DOS, FAAO – *Emeritus Member*

Jennifer Harthan, OD '06, FAAO, FSLs – *Faculty Representative*

Bryce Boente '22 – *Student Representative*

Rachel Shackelford '23 – *Student Representative*

Mohamed Eid, OD '03

Col. Philip Hasler, OD '86

Stacy Hinkemeyer-Colatrella, OD '96, FAAO

Senior Director for Development and External Affairs



Over the years, **Vince Brandys, OD '90** has served in quite a few roles at ICO. He worked with continuing education, spent years in government relations and external affairs, and now has taken on the new role of Senior Director of Development and External Affairs.

"Having spent a large part of my career both in private practice and in Springfield/Washington, D.C. working to expand the scope of optometry, I have gotten to know many optometrists. I wanted the opportunity to connect with alumni more directly, and this was a great opportunity to do so. Just like the profession of optometry, ICO is an institution that has significantly changed over the years. This position allows me to represent both newer and older ICO alumni. I serve as a liaison between the College and its alumni. I serve both as a source of information, but also, by having a good understanding of both our alumni's and ICO's needs, I can cultivate alumni support for ICO's overarching mission. Especially during the pandemic, it's been important to open these lines of communication."



INCLUSION AT ICO, IN OPTOMETRY AND IN HEALTHCARE

ICO has a long-standing commitment to serving a population that has suffered from lack of access to care. As the years have unfolded, and the makeup of our neighborhood has changed, with rent and mortgage prices rising, the Coronavirus pandemic and recent social unrest has made it clear that in the U.S. there are still socioeconomic inequities that affect everyday life and well-being. There are still huge gaps in our country both in terms of access to care and access to higher education, and in particular for ICO, who ultimately receives a doctorate in optometry. These events require us to ensure that our institution continues to serve our community well.

With our patient population hovering around 50-55% African American and 30-35% Latinx, there is clearly a need for ODs and students who can easily cross cultural divides. According to data from ASCO, rates of Latinos pursuing an optometry degree have gradually increased, from 3% to 10%. However, the national average of African Americans pursuing an optometry degree continues to hover around 4%, with the highest percentage of applicants actually occurring in 2009-2010. This needs to change.

We sat down with **Lester Efiyanayi '21** and **Randi-Jo Francis '21**, two fourth-year optometry students, as well as **Dr. Leonard Messner**, Vice President for Strategy and Institutional Advancement and the head of the DEI task force, to discuss both ICO's role in the Bronzeville community as well as areas of improvement for ICO. Note: These interviews were held separately, but for ease of reading, have been combined. Interviews have been shortened for clarity.

What role do you see ICO playing in the Bronzeville community?

Dr. Messner: The Illinois Eye Institute has been a center of excellence for eye and vision care in Bronzeville and related communities for many many years. It's not unusual for us to have four generations of patients visiting the IEI. The patient population is loyal to us because we are loyal to them. We do the absolute best we can to take care of them.

Randi-Jo Francis: We play such an important role in the Bronzeville community. Our patients rely on us a lot. Actually, just today, I had a patient who had previously been diagnosed with a systemic condition by one of our attending doctors. Years later, this patient still remembered that attending doctor. When he saw the doctor today, the first thing he said was, "You were the very first person to identify this condition. I am treating it today in part because of you."

It's not just eye exams that make us an important part of the community. Before the Coronavirus pandemic, I remember working the security desk, and we would hold events in our lecture hall – both events related to general care (the diabetes support group), but also, we served as a space for the community to convene. For example, they held a middle school graduation ceremony in our lecture hall. I think it's so wonderful that we open up our facilities for those events as well.

Lester Efiyanayi: My connection to Bronzeville and mindset about Bronzeville has just completely changed from first to fourth year. Having been here now for four years and having seen so many patients in the clinic, I have gone from being completely immersed in the ICO community – soaking up as much learning as I could – to being very involved in the Bronzeville community both through community service and through relationships with community members. I feel now like I'm part of the community, not just someone who goes to school here.

With this patient population, we find a lot of different conditions, a lot of different people who walk through the door. So, you have to make sure you remind yourself to be relatable to the patient while at the same time being in control as a doctor because you always want to have their best interest in mind.

"Without role models serving as inspiration, it's hard to imagine yourself in a certain position or in a certain career. If you don't have anyone that you can relate to in that field, how likely is it that you will end up there?"

Lester Efiyanayi '21





"One thing I would like to note, I think representation is important, but I also think it's important that students exercise good cultural competency. No matter what race you are, the most important thing is to relate, to educate and to hold conversations."

Randi-Jo Francis '21

How do we ensure that ICO is looking at patient care holistically?

Randi-Jo Francis: Given the cases we see in the IEI, we need to be looking at a patient's overall wellness rather than treating one specific issue. We are often educating beyond just eye issues. We work with patients who have diabetes or hypertension. So, we are also teaching them about blood sugar levels and high blood pressure. We're often working with primary care providers. With all the information we need to give, it's even more important to relate to the patient – not only in terms of their ocular health, but also just focusing on a patient's overall well-being.

One thing I would like to note, I think representation is important, but I also think it's important that students exercise good cultural competency. No matter what race you are, the most important thing is to relate, to educate, and to hold conversations. We can't just be doctors trying to get XYZ done. We have to see the person in front of us.

Dr. Messner: Over a decade ago, we were actually the very first optometric institution to be awarded a Robert Wood Johnson grant – specifically because of the type of care we provided at the IEI. Working with a population that is often under or uninsured, we can often find serious cases even during routine checkups. These patients may come to us because they believe they need a new prescription (if you have blurry vision, it's very hard to work effectively.) But ultimately after the eye examination, we identified the patient's blurry vision as being due to diabetic retinopathy or some

other ocular manifestation of systemic disease. Because many of these patients had not seen a primary care provider for many years, many of these cases would have gone unnoticed without our involvement. Through something as innocuous as a vision screening, we were able to identify underlying systemic medical diseases that needed to be addressed by the healthcare system.

We were often the ones who connected patients to primary care providers. Because of that, we built partnerships with health centers throughout Chicago who were then willing to accept our patients, even though this before the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was passed which meant that nearly 15% of our patients were uninsured.

What has ICO done so far in terms of access to care?

Dr. Messner: One thing, perhaps not necessarily directly related to students but of great importance to patients, is the passing of the Affordable Care Act which has significantly improved access to care. The Affordable Care Act has been a huge leveler. After ACA was passed, we went from 15% uninsured to 5% uninsured. That's enormous. A 10% decrease is huge, especially for our population.

Access to healthcare is better after the Affordable Care Act was passed, and President Obama is largely responsible for that. And, you know, we'll see what happens as things evolve, but there are still issues – Medicaid, for example. So much of what our patients need is not covered directly through Medicaid.

That's one of the reasons we work so hard to garner support from foundations and individuals to try to bridge the gap between what Medicaid will pay for patient care and what it costs to treat the patients.

Why does representation matter? And how has our patient population affected you as a clinician?

Randi-Jo Francis: Having someone in front of you that looks like you really does matter. I can connect with many of my patients because I have family members who have diabetes, hypertension and other diseases that are endemic to many Black communities.

The patients have had such a large impact on how I have grown as a clinician. It's not often that they see a Black student as a clinician. The sense of appreciation I got from our patients made me want to work even harder. They really are the force that drives me to be the best clinician I can be.

When I leave the exam, they often end the exam with words like "Best Wishes" and "I'm praying for you." It's great to hear those types of words of encouragement.

Lester Efiyanayi: Seeing is believing. When I was a kid, the only role models I would see on TV were either in the entertainment industry or athletes. Without role models serving as inspiration, it's hard to imagine yourself in a certain position or in a certain career. If you don't have anyone that you can relate to in that field, how likely is it that you will end up there?

We have such a strong impact on patients. There just aren't many Black male optometrists. There are so many times when I have been in clinic and the patients tell me how appreciative they are to see a familiar face. It really does impact the community seeing people that look like them as future doctors.

Are there ways ICO has already committed to improving diversity at ICO?

Dr. Messner: In the past year, we have begun working with the Morten Group, a Chicago-based Black-owned firm, and we have gotten a much better understanding of the state of things in the College. We have all gone through a round of mandatory training sessions and now ultimately, we are developing a multi-year strategic plan based off of both those surveys and suggestions from the newly-formed DEI committee. I cannot stress this enough: this is not a hollow exercise for us. We want it to be something that is embedded within our institutional culture and that will continue to evolve, prosper and improve over the years. The DEI committee will be the driving force that will push our institution forward.

Randi-Jo Francis: One important aspect from the student side is that the class above us started the Black Student Union. When we first arrived on campus, they reached out to us. It was just so nice to have a group of students who could relate to us in literally all aspects of life – optometry school, even just socially. It was important for us to have that support group. We've continued that tradition – as soon as new students arrive, we reach out to them and welcome them to the BSU. It's good to have that connection and support.

Lester Efiyanayi: ICO's Focus on Your Future Program has served as a pipeline for students of color in underrepresented populations that have interest in the field of optometry. Many past participants of the program have shared that it was this experience that served as a major deciding factor in applying to ICO. Similar to how many schools of optometry participate in dual degree/articulation agreements with private undergraduate institutions, I believe that it is equally if not more important for the same institutions to invest in extending opportunities to individuals in communities of color. I can personally attest to there being a lack of exposure and representation in such communities.

While there is much work that needs to be done at both the local and national level, I believe ICO is heading in the right direction and should continue to be active in its approach towards achieving a true melting pot within our community.

Are there ways ICO has already committed to improving diversity in the IEI?

Dr. Messner: The Clinical Leadership Training Program is one example of where we have been able to promote from within and really ensure that we promote those who are best for the job.

We saw that often our best administrators were those who were brought up from entry-level positions. These people had the raw talent to move up from those positions to important upper or mid-level administrative positions. I am really proud of how well this program has run.

How have you seen ICO change over the years?

Dr. Messner: When I graduated from optometry school, I was part of a landmark class because one-third of our student body was female. At that point, that was unheard of. For a long time, the optometric student body was very homogenous. Over the years, our school has moved forward as our student population has changed. As more female students joined ICO, our female faculty expanded as well.

We need to continue to look for ways of diversifying our upper-level management. I think I speak for every Vice President and the President of our institution when I say that getting doctors and others into the highest levels of leadership is something that is very very important for this institution.

If you look at how we have changed in the last 50 years, you can see significant growth. We will only continue to grow. We take students' requests seriously because they reflect the growing demands in society.

At ICO, we've heard a lot of stories about how students found optometry, but the story we hear most often is that of an optometrist who served as a pillar in their community and who saw and believed in our future optometry students. Today's optometrists build the optometry classes of tomorrow. Let's make sure that when we do see those younger patients, we encourage them to do well in school, to continue striving for the best.

If they come in regularly, as they do at the IEI, mentor the patients you see. Help them reach their dreams and be important influences in their lives. Role models and mentors come from all over the place, but the one thing we know for certain is that they are essential for great success.

Close Up: Jonathan Dong, OD '16 and Iwona Dong, OD '16

Even before optometry school started, **Iwona Dong, OD '16** and **Jon Dong, OD '16** wanted to eventually open their own private practice. Dr. Iwona thought this would be in the Chicago area where she grew up and Dr. Jon knew he'd be coming back to the great Pacific Northwest. During their ICO orientation, they heard the statistic on how many couples come out of ICO but neither of them expected to find a spouse at ICO. They found each other anyway, though! After many trips between Chicago and Seattle for AAO meetings, AOA meetings and more, Dr. Iwona softened up to the idea of moving out to the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

One day, on the top level of the parking garage on a typical ICO student Target run, Dr. Iwona came up with the name and idea for See Saw Eyecare. We want our patients to SEE better than they ever SAW before!

Dr. Jon and Dr. Iwona's relationship developed over many hours of studying in the RC lounge and various local coffee shops. They were big fans of Jackalope, Bridgeport Coffee, and Overflow. They graduated in 2016 and both moved out to the PNW right away. Dr. Jon was employed at a local corporate optometry office. Dr. Iwona took more varied job opportunities in vision therapy, private practice, and OD/OMD clinics while working hard to attain the board scores she needed to attain licensure. Dr. Iwona got double the excitement when her OD license was active the same week as their marriage license!

After Krystian was born, they began taking steps to realize their dream of having a fun, family-friendly practice, focused on pediatrics and vision therapy, filling a big need in their area.

Although life with two kids under two (+ a practice) is a crazy mess sometimes, especially during a pandemic – they can't imagine living their life any other way now.





Interview by: Nora Matland
Photos by: James Palmer Photography



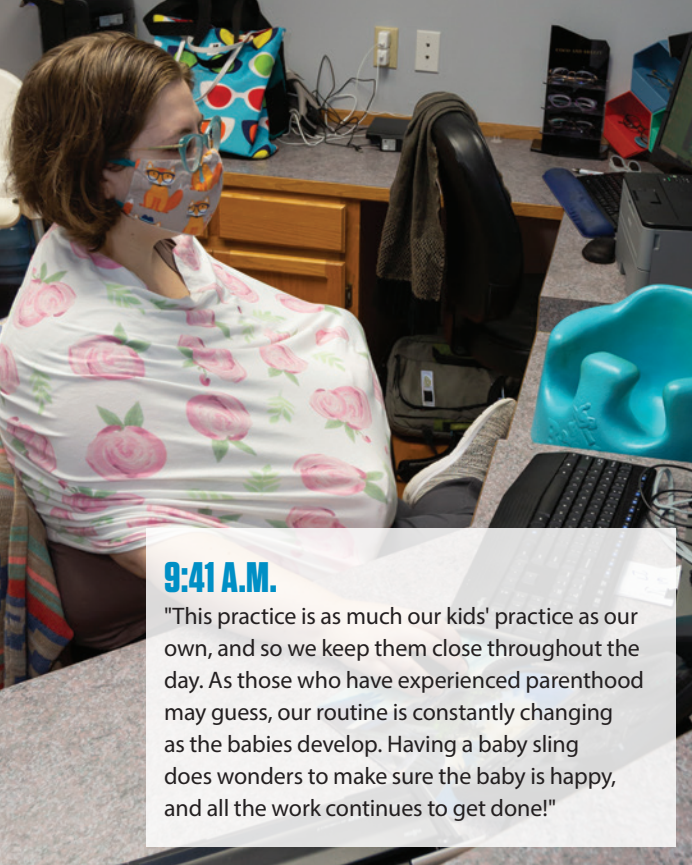
8:22 A.M.

"We make sure we are all fed before we head to the clinic. It makes for some very sleepy eyes some days, but that way we know we are starting the morning well. Dr. Jon makes most of our meals but Dr. Iwona does enjoy baking – and made a few loaves of sourdough bread between COVID's start and now. Krystian really enjoys the muffins in the morning!"

9:14 A.M.

"Off to work we go! We bring Krystian and Anastazja to work with us nearly every day. They are an important part of what makes See Saw Eyecare unique. Plus, what better playground is there for a kid than mom and dad's work? We are still definitely #ICOPrepared, only these days, it often translates to making sure we have packed all the necessities for a long day at work. Packing all our equipment to go to the clinic at ICO has definitely prepared us for carrying in two kids and all the baby stuff (cloth diapers/clothes/bottles/toys) we might need on a given day!"





9:41 A.M.

"This practice is as much our kids' practice as our own, and so we keep them close throughout the day. As those who have experienced parenthood may guess, our routine is constantly changing as the babies develop. Having a baby sling does wonders to make sure the baby is happy, and all the work continues to get done!"



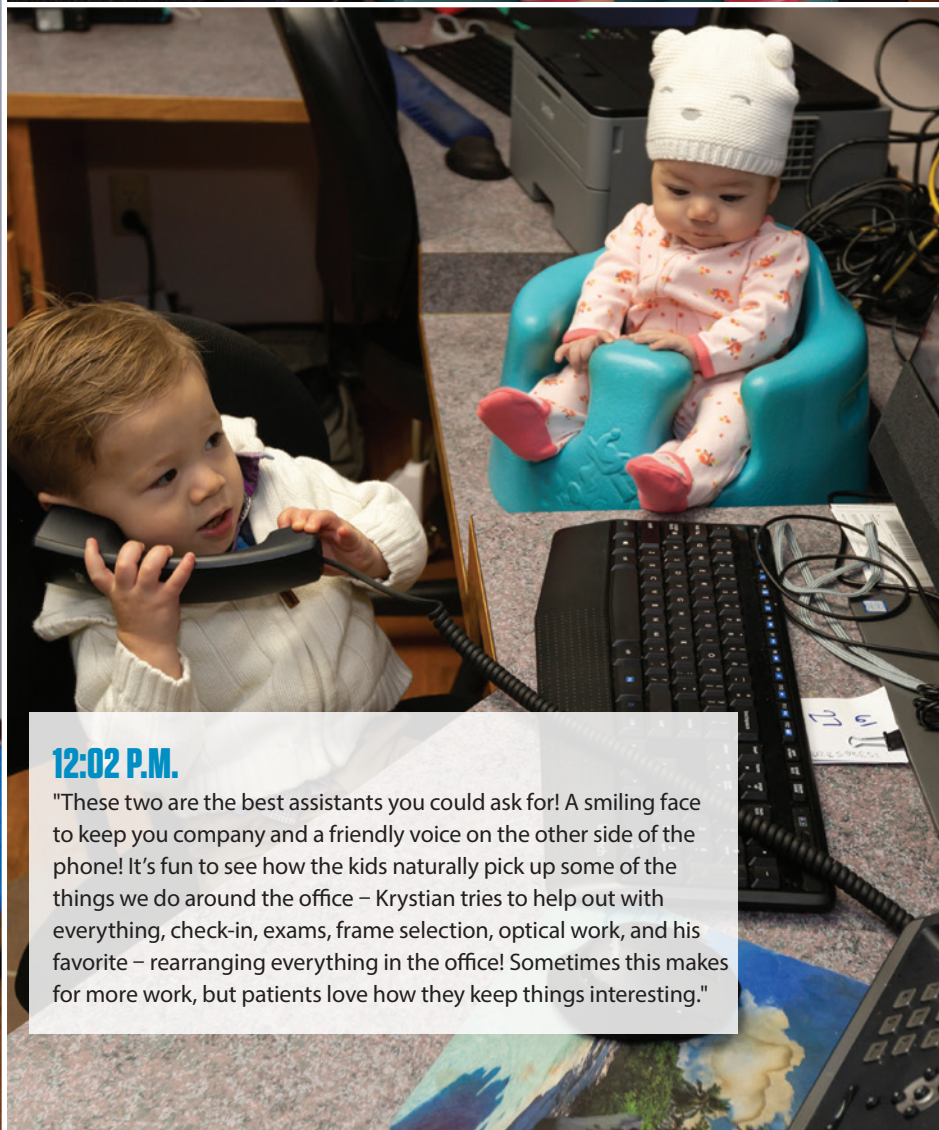
10:19 A.M.

"We purchased our clinic in September of 2019 as a primary care practice and although we are still seeing kids 0-99, most of our patients are under 21. We also get referrals from neighboring offices for patients with binocular vision challenges. Here, Dr. Jon is checking a patient's 3D vision (or stereoacuity)."



11:10 A.M.

"Because we specialize in vision therapy, we have lots of extra fun equipment to help patients of all ages improve their visual skills. Since we use our vision in a dynamic world, we get the body moving while working on some of those skills. Of course, sometimes it becomes a place for Krystian to get his wiggles out and work on his skills too!"



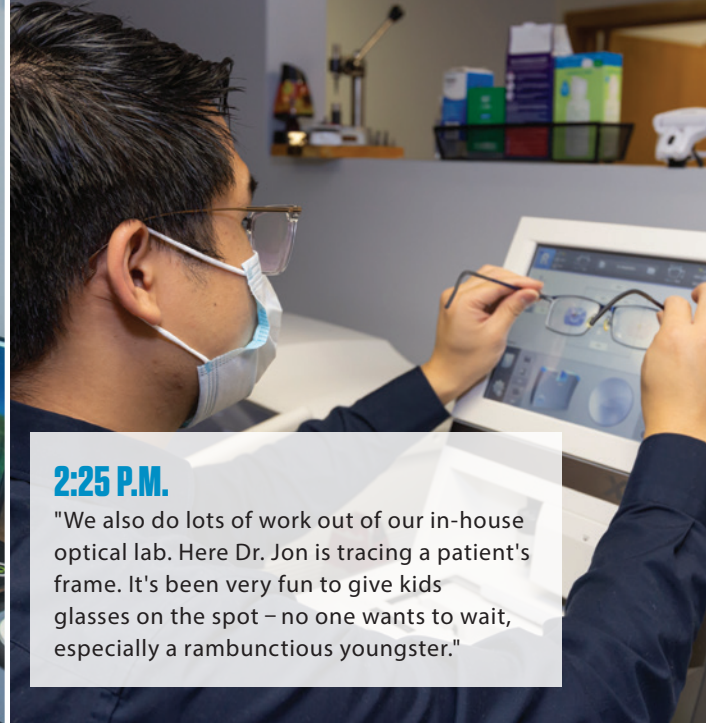
12:02 P.M.

"These two are the best assistants you could ask for! A smiling face to keep you company and a friendly voice on the other side of the phone! It's fun to see how the kids naturally pick up some of the things we do around the office – Krystian tries to help out with everything, check-in, exams, frame selection, optical work, and his favorite – rearranging everything in the office! Sometimes this makes for more work, but patients love how they keep things interesting."



1:30 P.M.

"We have begun integrating Vivid Vision virtual reality into many of our vision therapy sessions. These activities help patients engage in their vision therapy and give us a powerful tool to adjust demand in each procedure and monitor how those changes affect their progress."



2:25 P.M.

"We also do lots of work out of our in-house optical lab. Here Dr. Jon is tracing a patient's frame. It's been very fun to give kids glasses on the spot – no one wants to wait, especially a rambunctious youngster."



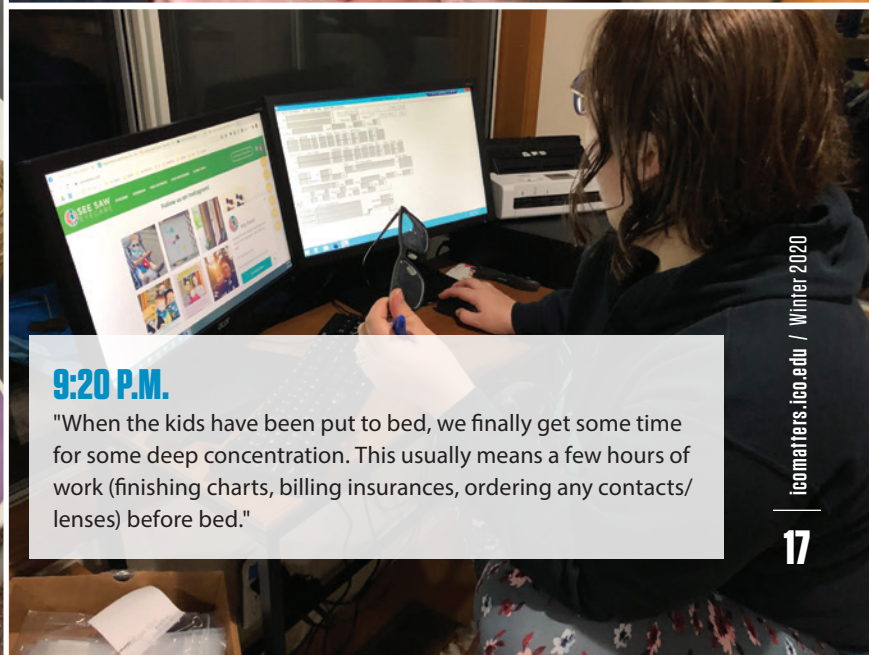
3:43 P.M.

"Krystian loves playing optician. Like most kids, he likes playing dress up except unlike others he dresses up his eyes instead of using clothes. He has picked up so much just watching the two of us. We've set this area up specifically to be at children's height so they can easily see themselves. It's where a lot of kids try on their glasses as well."



8:20 P.M.

"Once we get home, we have dinner and bath time. Then we make sure to do a bit of light reading. It's never too early for them to learn a bit about optometry!"



9:20 P.M.

"When the kids have been put to bed, we finally get some time for some deep concentration. This usually means a few hours of work (finishing charts, billing insurances, ordering any contacts/lenses) before bed."



Vianna Ha '22 and Macy Koepke '22

CORONA VIRUS CHALLENGES



In January of 2020, the world learned that a novel coronavirus had emerged and was infecting human beings. As infections rose, hospitals were confronted with staggering caseloads and limited resources. Early in the pandemic, a startling pattern emerged. The pandemic's affects could be traced along racial and socioeconomic lines.

As a clinical education program, ICO was immediately faced with a need to adapt how we educate our students and care for our patients. In particular, the clinical nature of our program called for more creative solutions. With all our didactic education already available in-person and online, we knew that pivot would be possible. Faculty quickly adapted to delivering the curriculum over remote technologies, and the academic calendar was adjusted to make labs that needed to be conducted in person possible. Academic Administration worked diligently to ensure that students continued to meet educational objectives as close to on-time as possible and that the Class of 2020 met all their program requirements to graduate in May.

While Academic Administration worked to meet our educational goals and requirements, the Illinois Eye Institute also recognized that closing was not an option.

One of our first challenges was evidenced by the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on people of color and those with medical comorbidities. Our patient population represents those at the heart of the pandemic impact. Many come to us with pre-existing conditions that place them at increased risk of adverse complications from COVID-19, but who also need to be monitored more closely due to vision threatening conditions such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

Under the leadership of IEI Chief of Staff **Dr. Michael Chaglasian**, the IEI developed and executed a plan to ensure that they would continue to meet the needs of its most vulnerable patients. The precarious conditions of many of our patients meant that "waiting it out" would not be viable either. As we all shifted to social distancing, face coverings and increased hand hygiene in our daily lives, it became quite clear that business would not go on as usual. The very nature of an eye exam places the doctor and patient in close proximity.



IEI employees adhere to public health measures.

Patients are at the heart and soul of ICO and IEI. They partner with us to provide an excellent education for our students and providers by entrusting their care to us. In turn, we commit to ensuring that the barriers they may face in other aspects of their lives do not stand in the way of their vision needs.

Over a period of several weeks, Dr. Michael Chaglasian and the IEI team strategized about how to continue to meet the needs of the many patients who required continuity of care during this time. While telehealth was one solution, it became quickly apparent that this could not be a comprehensive solution both due to the nature of the conditions under treatment as well as the lack of access that our patients had to the technology needed for the telehealth visit.

It was clear that in-person care needed to remain available to our patients. The IEI team developed a group of providers who would triage and provide care to those patients who could be adversely impacted by interruptions to care management. A staff team was also assembled to help meet the needs of these patients.

First and foremost, all consideration had to be given to safely conducting operations both for the patients and the providers. Coordination would become one of the key aspects to the plan: ensuring that the facilities were properly disinfected, sourcing and acquiring PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), developing and adapting operating protocols, and adjusting as new information emerged. The IEI

took a team approach to managing the situation, leveraging the skills of each person and area to help identify the best ways to achieve safe patient care.

For Dr. Chaglasian, one of the keys to being able to safely return to in-person visits was in “developing protocols for infection control and then training and retraining our providers, technicians and students.”

Another key was that “we went slow with fewer patients and staff” and ensured that we “dispersed our patient scheduling time, made full use of our space and spread out to ensure we were able to maintain proper distance.” Additionally, there has been a continued review of how things are working and ongoing retooling that relies on the feedback of the team to improve things such as patient flow and movement within the facility that came “from the front-line staff who know best how to manage our traffic flow.”

Diagnostic testing and imaging were another point of consideration as those rooms are smaller than the typical exam lane. The IEI team worked closely with the ICO Facilities team to ensure that proper safety barriers could be placed to improve safety for everyone when close proximity is required during patient care or interactions.

“One of the keys to being able to safely return to in-person visits was in developing protocols for infection control and then training and retraining our providers, technicians and students.”

Michael Chaglasian, OD



In June and early July, the IEI operated at about 50% of normal capacity. By August, 80% of the normal capacity was being scheduled. We are currently scheduling about 90% of our usual census.

As cases rise again, the IEI has learned a lot about how to manage the pandemic as safely as possible.

Dr. Chaglasian remains optimistic about being able

to continue to safely serve our patients, particularly those with vision-threatening conditions.

“Our safety protocols work quite well and should continue to work ... If you do the right thing you should be ok. If you feel you are going too fast, slow down to be safe.” He also acknowledges that “COVID fatigue” is a serious threat and something that must be continually managed to ensure that proper protocols continue being followed to allow us to safely continue serving patients whose needs do not lessen during these times.

There have been many lessons to learn during the pandemic. With a novel virus, scientists were learning in real-time, as

well. This reality was enough to put the world in a tailspin. Adhering to pandemic public health measures has impacted every aspect of our lives. Human beings are social by nature and things like social distancing and reducing in-person contact will have an effect. Large scale change, of any type, is a stressor. When you add in a rapidly-spreading and little-understood



Robert Carter ensures the cafeteria remains safe.



ICO Cafeteria

virus, it is without question that the stress level increases. Many found themselves unable to pursue their normal avenues of stress reduction as social gatherings were restricted and gyms were closed.

During this time, **Connor Robbs '22** and **Dr. Yi Pang** collaborated on a research project to consider the “Impact of Mental Health in Optometrists, Ophthalmologists and Students.” The study found that the top three self-reported factors that negatively impacted mental health were “worries about family/friends being infected with COVID-19, worry about being infected with COVID-19 myself and social isolation. The top three activities that helped maintain mental health were: outdoor activities, family time and exercise.”

The study showed that ophthalmologists, optometrists and staff had similar self-reported stress levels both before and during the pandemic, however, stress levels for students showed much higher levels both before and during the pandemic.

As the pandemic continues to unfold, science and medicine are finding ways to lower the risk of infection and adverse outcomes. Much has been learned, and a new normal is now in place. As medical science advances in knowledge and tools to manage the pandemic, one thing is abundantly clear: each of us has a role to play in the outcome. As a healthcare and educational institution, we are acutely aware that our actions matter. As a healthcare provider to vulnerable populations, our responsibility is even greater. Self-care and protecting mental health are important parts of managing our pandemic response and giving our patients the best care possible.

Connor Robbs and **Dr. Yi Pang's** research project the “*Impact of Mental Health in Optometrists, Ophthalmologists and Students*” found that **38.4%** of respondents reported symptoms of depression, anxiety, or both.



One thing the pandemic showed was how exceedingly small the world is and how quickly things can change. Things that were taken for granted have become a lot more important. While we all hope to a certain extent that things go “back to normal,” we also need to remember that life is lived moving forward. Through the pandemic we have learned to simplify things to the essentials, prioritizing the most urgent, identifying and caring for the most vulnerable, thinking about others and not just ourselves, delaying gratification in favor of the common good. What if we chose to carry that forward as our “new normal”?



Temetrice Rhea greets guests at the Fait Family Eyewear Center.



IEI Waiting Room

Trending



April 1

COVID-19 brings a lot of financial uncertainty for optometrists.

They're not financial experts, but two #MadeAtICO optometrists are going to talk about what COVID-19 means for optometrists (and future optometrists) from their perspectives, LIVE, right here on ICO's Instagram.

@**dr.ryancorte** and @**emothersbaugh** are going to tackle student loans, residency programs, private practice, and more - and answer your questions TOMORROW (04/02) at 7 pm Central (8 pm Eastern, 5 pm Pacific)



April 15

When social distancing keeps us physically apart, our ICO faculty remain connected to our students. #stayhomesavelives



April 16

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of **Hank Bertucci**. A 31 year veteran of CPD and Security Officer and a former Chief of Security of ICO for 20 years, Hank touched the lives of all of us in the ICO Community and we are grateful for his many years of service.



May 16

Join us here at 12 noon (central time) to celebrate our Class of 2020. Today's ceremony will be streamed via Facebook Live. **Congratulations Class of 2020!**



May 26

As we transition back to campus, **Dr. Colip** reflects on the past 8 weeks. Our transition online was rapid but successful because of our strong ICO community.



June 5

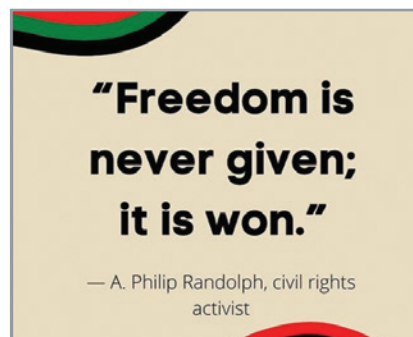
So much of our ICO community is hurting right now. The current climate is impacting many, and we know these issues reach far beyond the devastating killings of George Floyd and too many others.

We are committed to doing better.

In the coming weeks, we will be opening opportunities for you to talk about your concerns and hopes for the future -- starting with a student town hall today. We are currently working to identify dates to come together in June for discussion and support.

“Let's all commit to better listening, better understanding and then taking actions with regard to the fact that **Black Lives Matter**. I believe that when we work together on these important issues; 'we can do better' as a school, as a community and as a society.

Dr. Mark K. Colip,
President, Illinois College of Optometry



June 19

Thank you @ico_bsu for your post about the history of Juneteenth. Give them a follow. If you're in Chicago and want to commemorate Juneteenth, we've included a list of events compiled by State Rep Lamont Robinson. Link in bio.



July 17

Today marks the last day of our Focus on Your Future program. Since 2008, over 212 students have participated in this program and 13.5% of those graduates have eventually gone on to attend ICO!

We hope that even in a virtual environment our students have enjoyed their time with us. A special thank you to **Teisha Johnson**, Senior Director of Admissions, for organizing this program!

Trending



July 16

The Class of 2023 is officially back in the lab! After a few months of online classes and then a much needed break, it feels good to get back to hands-on learning. With only a few weeks to go until our skills assessment, it seems like we are all eager to get back to practicing. It's been nice to see friends again too! #ICOAitana #optometrystudent#illinoiscollegeofoptometry#ICOClassof2023



July 21

Student vlogger and Orientation Leader **Tiffany Tsoi '23** shares what her Spring and Summer quarters at ICO, including what in-person labs during COVID, look like.



September 12

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of **Floyd Mizener, OD '48** (MCO), PhD, DOS. Dr. Mizener served as a Marine in WWII before earning his optometric degree from Monroe College of Optometry, now Illinois College of Optometry.



Known for wearing his colorful, hand-painted suit jackets, Dr. Mizener always made it a priority to attend annual optometric conferences and ICO events, happily sharing his practice expertise with students and recent graduates. He will be missed by all who knew him. We extend our deepest sympathies to all of his family and friends. ICO President, **Mark Colip, OD '92**, remembers him fondly. "Dr. Mizener was a mentor, friend, and neighbor, and he will be missed. Over the years, he told me countless stories of optometry's evolution and the many proud impacts that he made to move the profession forward. He loved his profession, his country, his community, his family, and he loved his wife, Shirley. He was one of the toughest guys I knew. Rest in peace Dr. Mizener, you have earned it!" He will be missed by all who knew him.



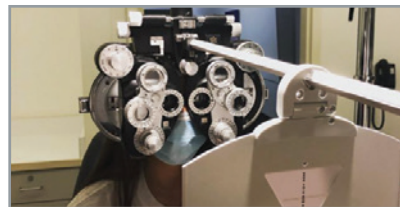
September 18

Even in the midst of a pandemic our students give back! As we well know, many Chicagoans do not have access to proper eye care. Partnering with 2020 Perfect Vision, our students provided free quality eye care to students on the West and Southside of Chicago, living out their optometric oath.



September 30

Registration for our Fall Continuing Education program is now live! Join us during the last weekend of October for over 12 hours of live online CE.



August 12

Yesterday, we launched a month-long campaign focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion as part of an ongoing campus-wide initiative. We are focusing specifically on growing scholarships and current campus initiatives including Focus on Your Future.



August 17

"Truly Blessed"

I've been fortunate to use this blog as a platform to spotlight individuals at ICO who have inspired me in some way and who have something we could all learn from. Today, I would like to introduce you to a member of ICO's Food Services team, Larry Sr.



November 27

There are so many ways our students are making a difference for our community. There are so many ways our patients make a difference in our students' lives.

This Thanksgiving may have felt different than any other, but part of Thanksgiving is also appreciating the connections we build. Here, those connections are saving lives.



Homecoming Updates

2020 Alumni Association Award Recipients

ICO is privileged to honor and recognize our 2020 ICO Alumni Association Award recipients. The criteria for each award involves one or more of the following attributes:

- Service and leadership on the ICO Alumni Council (a nine year commitment)
- Extensive leadership, support and service to the College and the optometric profession
- Excellence as a faculty member and scholarly contributions to the profession
- Humanitarian efforts in the recipient's home state, country and abroad
- Accomplished career and outstanding commitment and dedication to the College and to the profession

We appreciate the many ways our alumni and friends have represented and supported the College, the community, and the profession. **Congratulations to our 2020 awardees!**



(Top row: L-R)

Larry Van Daalen, OD '87
Golden Gavel Award

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

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

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

(Bottom row: L-R)

R. Michael Daley
Distinguished Friend Award

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

William A. Olivos, OD '95
Humanitarian Award

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

How to Nominate Someone

Award Nomination Process
January – March (annually)

Submit your award nomination as follows:

- Send an email to the ICO Alumni Office at **alumni@ico.edu**
- Include the name of the person you are nominating, the name of the award, and documentation supporting your nomination

All nominations are compiled by the Alumni Office staff and are presented to the ICO Alumni Council for deliberation during their annual Spring meeting. Successful candidates are contacted by the President of the Alumni Council, and award presentations are made during ICO's Homecoming in the Fall of each year.



Read about the achievements of each recipient by pointing your camera at the QR code.

www.ico.edu/post/2020-alumni-association-award-recipients-announced

Homecoming 2021



With the COVID pandemic continuing to restrict travel and limit group gatherings, **we have rescheduled Homecoming 2020.**

For the first time, we will combine this year's class reunion celebration with next year's. All class years ending in 0 or 5 as well as classes ending in 1 or 6, will have a big reunion in 2021.

More information will be available in the coming months.

In the meantime, to commemorate the 2020 reunion classes, please enjoy the photo albums below from ICO's Flickr site.

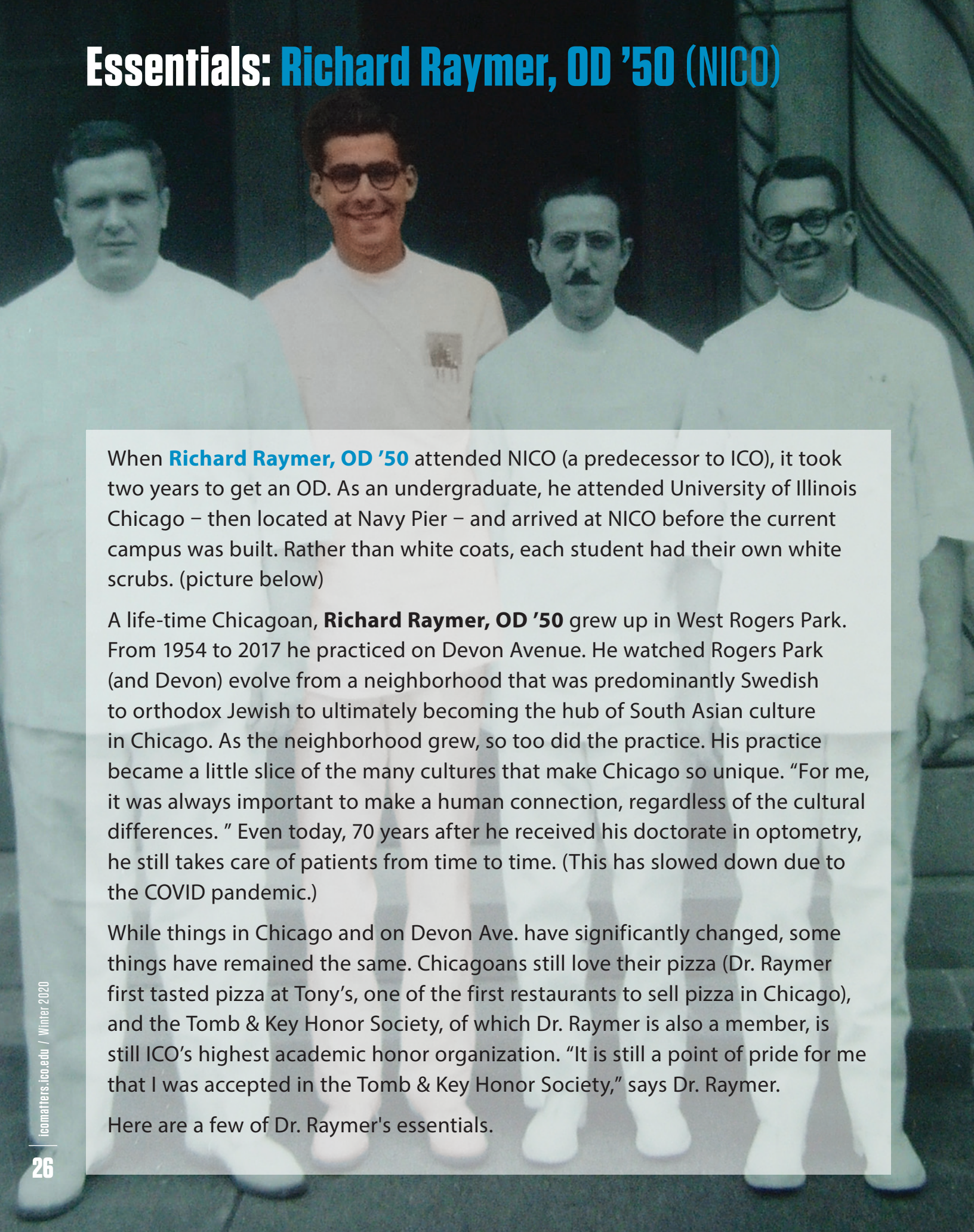
Looking forward to seeing you next year!

Point your camera at the QR codes to view each gallery.



www.flickr.com/photos/icophotos/albums

Essentials: **Richard Raymer, OD '50 (NICO)**

A photograph of four men standing side-by-side, all wearing white medical scrubs. From left to right: the first man has short dark hair and a neutral expression; the second man has dark hair, wears glasses, and is smiling; the third man has dark hair, a mustache, and a neutral expression; the fourth man has dark hair, wears glasses, and is smiling. They are standing in front of a dark, possibly stone, wall with some architectural details visible on the right.

When **Richard Raymer, OD '50** attended NICO (a predecessor to ICO), it took two years to get an OD. As an undergraduate, he attended University of Illinois Chicago – then located at Navy Pier – and arrived at NICO before the current campus was built. Rather than white coats, each student had their own white scrubs. (picture below)

A life-time Chicagoan, **Richard Raymer, OD '50** grew up in West Rogers Park. From 1954 to 2017 he practiced on Devon Avenue. He watched Rogers Park (and Devon) evolve from a neighborhood that was predominantly Swedish to orthodox Jewish to ultimately becoming the hub of South Asian culture in Chicago. As the neighborhood grew, so too did the practice. His practice became a little slice of the many cultures that make Chicago so unique. “For me, it was always important to make a human connection, regardless of the cultural differences.” Even today, 70 years after he received his doctorate in optometry, he still takes care of patients from time to time. (This has slowed down due to the COVID pandemic.)

While things in Chicago and on Devon Ave. have significantly changed, some things have remained the same. Chicagoans still love their pizza (Dr. Raymer first tasted pizza at Tony’s, one of the first restaurants to sell pizza in Chicago), and the Tomb & Key Honor Society, of which Dr. Raymer is also a member, is still ICO’s highest academic honor organization. “It is still a point of pride for me that I was accepted in the Tomb & Key Honor Society,” says Dr. Raymer.

Here are a few of Dr. Raymer's essentials.

EVERYBODY COMES TO DEVON

Devon Avenue captures the diversity of Chicago. There's something special about a place where so many cultures and beliefs come together and become part of your day-to-day. Optometry is about the connections we make with our patients. I have learned so much from those who came to my clinic, no matter where they were from.



ALWAYS FOUR ROWS UP

My wife and I had season tickets to the Chicago Symphony for nearly 20 years. For 20 years, we always had tickets in the same spot: 1st balcony, 4th row up. They were great seats. From where we sat, you could see the whole orchestra. When my wife passed, I bought her a seat in ICO's new lecture hall. I made sure to buy the seat on the fourth row up. Every time I come to ICO, I sit in her seat.



NOT AN EMPTY WALL IN THE HOUSE

I have always been a big fan of art. My wife and I collected outsider art – art developed outside of the mainstream art world or art institutions. A couple of the artists eventually made names for themselves.

THE FURTHER, THE BETTER

My wife and I committed to seeing as much of the world as possible – on Christmas, we went to Broadway shows, we saw much of Europe, but most importantly, every year we visited a developing country. Our absolute favorite place was New Guinea. Later we did the same with our grandchildren. Together we saw China, Tanzania, Kenya, Peru and Alaska. It's been wonderful to share these experiences with my four grandsons. We were even featured in the Chicago Tribune!



FAMILY FIRST

I have been blessed to have a wonderful wife and two lovely children. It has been very hard losing my wife and my daughter, but I have been so thankful for my son and his wife. For the past few months, they have been with me through my hip replacement. I have loved having them in the house and having the house filled with the soft sounds of Spanish in the background. (My son lives in Colombia. So, all of my family speaks Spanish!)

BRONZEVILLE BROWNSTONES

When I attended ICO our classes were held in brownstones near Michigan Avenue. The best (and most demanding) professor was Dr. Zunika. It sounds strange but Dr. Needles (one of the several of them) taught a course on how to use a pair of pliers! It is still a point of pride for me that I was accepted in the Tomb & Key Honor Society.



BOOTH ONE

The first condo we owned was built by the Ambassador East Hotel. Because the original intent was for the condo to be part of the hotel, they built a tunnel that directly connected us to the Ambassador East Hotel. The Pump Room (inside the Ambassador East Hotel) was one of the most popular restaurants in all of Chicago at that time, and Booth One not only seated Oprah Winfrey and Dustin Hoffman but Humphrey Bogart and Elizabeth Taylor as well. It was one of our favorite places to go out. (Especially in the winter! We never even had to go outside!)

Class Notes

1940s

1945

Harold Davis has retired from Davis Eyecare in Oak Lawn, Ill., after 75 years of practice. He also recently celebrated his 98th birthday.

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1970s

1976

Samuel Wapner was appointed to the Michigan Board of Optometry by Governor Whitmer.

1978

Stephanie Johnson-Brown was named the 2020 Optometrist of the Year by the Illinois Optometric Association.

1979

Joe Pederzoli received the Lion of the Year Award from the Alliance (Ohio) Lions Club.

Timothy Wingert, Dean of the University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry, was named a Fulbright Scholar to Poland by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. This is his 2nd U.S. Fulbright Scholar award to Poland.

.....

1980s

1982

Bruce Onofrey and **Leonid Skorin, Jr.** published the fourth edition of their textbook "Ocular Therapeutics Handbook: A Clinical Manual" released earlier this year.

1985

Samuel Forzley was elected Secretary/Treasurer of the Illinois Optometric Association.

Neil Margolis participated in a national summit on autism in October with 20 other renowned speakers. In December, he will also present on vision rehabilitation for post-concussion symptoms to a national chain of physical therapy providers.

1987

Millicent Knight received the 2020 Pleiades Award from the Optical Women's Association. She also was honored to be the commencement speaker for her alma mater, Augustana College.

Pete Russo was elected to his second term as Secretary of the ICO Alumni Council.

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1990s

1992

Michele Andrews was promoted to Vice President, Professional and Government Affairs, Americas, by CooperVision, Inc.

Don Furman was elected Secretary/Treasurer of the Iowa Optometric Association.

1997

Casey Hogan was elected Vice President of the ICO Alumni Council.

1998

Robert Assantes has joined Thomasville Eye Center in Thomasville, Ga.

1999

Rachel Caywood has joined the Dean McGee Eye Institute and the University of Oklahoma Department of Ophthalmology as a member of the Optometry Service.

Brian Kirschling was elected President of the Iowa Optometric Association.

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2000s

2002

Anthony Drew has joined the Shopko team in Beloit, Wis.

2005

Jeff Neighbors was elected Vice President of the Iowa Optometric Association.

Samantha Love (née Hair) celebrated five years of owning Clermont Family Eyecare in Clermont, Fla.

2006

Treacy Adamo was appointed to the board of clinical advisors for Visible Genomics.

2007

Ryan Ames was elected Treasurer of the Wisconsin Optometric Association.

Tessa Sokol was elected Vice President of the Wisconsin Optometric Association.

2008

Matthew Jones was elected President of the Illinois Optometric Association.

Nana Owusu was named 2020 Optometrist of the Year by the Manitoba Association of Optometrists. He was also elected President of the ICO Alumni Council.

Renée Phipps wrote a children's book, *Harry the Bear*. It was released in October and available to order online. The book is meant to make a visit to the optometrist a fun and easy experience for children. Order at www.prairieeye.com/childrens-book-harry-the-bear.

2009

Melissa Zarn Urankar was appointed to the advisory board of the Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association.

2010s

2010

Rumeet Dhaliwal welcomed baby Jugaad on May 8.

Zanna Kruoch (Resident) achieved Diplomate status in the AAO anterior segment section.

2012

Trichelle Jackson was named Young Optometrist of the Year by the Iowa Optometric Association.

2013

Bhawan Minhas received the 2020 Distinguished Service Award from Salus University, Pennsylvania College of Optometry, where she has served as a faculty member since 2014.

2014

Stephanie Sloan-Flamich and **Lucas Flamich** welcomed baby Norah on May 13.

Katie Davis Tarver was named Young Optometrist of the Year by the South Carolina Optometric Association.

2015

Elizabeth Walsh Czirr welcomed baby Emmy Rose in April.

Dixit Patel has announced the birth of baby Leia on September 9.

2016

Iwona Miltko Dong and **Jonathan Dong** welcomed Anastazja My Lan on July 2.

Sara (Davies) Starko celebrated two years of owning her private practice, Countryside Vision Care, in Alberta, Canada.

2020s

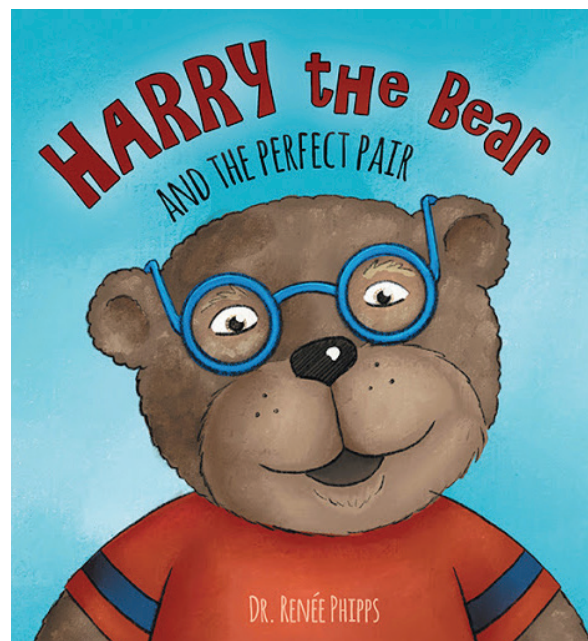
2020

Angie Biskupiak has joined Helena Vision Center in Helena, Mont.

Stephanie (Golon) Engebretson has joined North Shore Eye Health and Wellness in Cedarburg, Wis.

Sara Kloft has joined Eye Surgeons Associates, PC in Bettendorf, Iowa.

Jesse Mize has joined Ravenswood Eyecare in Ravenswood, W.Va.



Renée Phipps, OD '08
Her newest children's book is now available for purchase. Order *Harry the Bear* by pointing your camera at the QR code.

Got alumni news? Please share.

ONLINE:

icomatters.ico.edu/submit-a-class-note



CONTACT

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

In Memoriam

1940s

1948

Harry "Gene" Horner (MCO), Palatine, Ill., Aug. 28. He served in the U.S. Navy in WWII. He practiced in the Round Lake Beach area for 40 years.

Charles W. Kirk (NICO), Minneapolis, Minn., Aug. 5. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps. in WWII and in the U.S. Air Force in the Korean conflict. He practiced in St. Anthony Village, Minn., for 41 years.

Oscar Marquardt (NICO) Alamogordo, N.M., July 26. He established the first eye and vision clinic in Alamogordo County, where he practiced for 62 years. He specialized in vision therapy, and a vision therapy research fellowship endowment was developed in his name at SCO.

Claude McConnell (NICO), Davidson, N.C., Jan. 17. He served in the U.S. Air Force in WWII as a Technical Sergeant/Flight Engineer/Bombardier with the Eighth Air Force. He practiced in Davidson for 40 years before retiring.

Floyd Mizener (MCO), Darien, Ill., Sept. 7. He proudly served as a U.S. Marine in WWII. He established a practice in Downers Grove and renamed it Naper Grove Vision Care when he added a Naperville location. He dedicated 72 years to the optometric profession and nearly 70 years volunteering for the Downers Grove Lions Club. Throughout his career, he was instrumental in supporting causes and lobbying for legislation that helped the seeing and hearing impaired.

Maurice Palmer (NICO), Albion, Neb., Sept. 13. As an adolescent, he played clarinet under the direction of John Phillips Souza. He served with the Quartermaster Corps. of the Sixth Army during WWII, fighting the Battle of Leyte and receiving the Bronze Star. He served as mayor of Albion and practiced optometry until his retirement in 1994. He was then active in the cattle and hay industry until his death.

1949

Herbert Austin (NICO), Effingham, Ill., Apr. 20. He served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. He practiced optometry until retiring in 1986.

James Hammel (NICO), Yorba Linda, Calif., Sept. 16. He served in the U.S. Air Force, stationed at Whellus Air Force Base in Libya for two years. He then transferred to the U.S. Navy, where he served nearly 30 years as an optometrist. He retired from the Navy as a Commander in 1981. He later joined an ophthalmology practice until his 2nd retirement in 1991.

Russell Nielsen (NICO), Cedar Falls, Iowa, May 12. He served in the U.S. Navy during WWII in Naval Aviation. He practiced in Cedar Falls for 41 years until retiring in 1990.

1950s

1950

L. B. Adkins (NICO), Union, Miss., Nov. 2. He served for two years in the U. S. Navy Medical Corps. during WWII. He practiced optometry for 58 years and served as president of the Miss. Optometric Association and Southern Council of Optometry.

Donald S. Andrews (CCO), Barrington, Ill., Apr. 2.

Richard Glueth (NICO), Chestnut Hill, Mass., Mar. 11. He served his country during WWII and began his optometric practice in Harvard Square, Cambridge, where he had a long and successful career for 45 years.

Ralph Kirkwood (NICO), Dawson Springs, Ky., Mar. 30. He practiced in Dawson Springs for 38 years before retiring.

James Sexton (NICO), Mt. Pleasant, S.C., Apr. 17. He served in the U.S. Navy Air Corps. during WWII. He practiced optometry for several years before entering into the life insurance industry. He retired as an independent life insurance broker.

1953

William Brockhaus, Jr. (NICO), Janesville, Wis., Mar. 29. He practiced at Eyeworks in Janesville until his retirement.

1958

Ed Leadingham, Roswell, N.M., Oct. 7. He owned Leadingham Vision Center in Roswell with his two sons, **Ken Leadingham, OD '82** and **Greg Leadingham, OD '80** (deceased).

1960s

1968

Bruce Fosen, Ocala, Fla., Mar. 23. He was a Captain in the U.S. Air Force, stationed at Kincheloe Air Force Base in Michigan. He later joined the U.S. Army as a Major and was stationed in Nuremburg, Germany. He received the Army Commendation Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal. After his discharge, he joined Optical Express, with four practices in Florida.

Dale Palmer, Clarksburg, W.Va., July 14. He owned practices in Nutter Fort and Phillippi, W.Va., until 1993. He then joined the Louis A. Johnson V.A. Hospital in Clarksburg, where he retired in 2005. He was a former President of the W.Va. Optometric Association and was instrumental for obtaining therapeutic writing privileges for optometrists in the state.

1969

James Day, Chicago, Ill., May 15. He practiced in Hickory Hills, Ill. for many years and was a former faculty member at the Illinois College of Optometry.

Donald Ediger, Lincoln, Neb., Mar. 3. He served as a Captain in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He then opened a practice in Lincoln and retired after 43 years.

1970s

1973

Gary Lasken, Peoria, Ill., Sept. 15. He was a member of the Illinois Optometric Association for over 50 years, served as President from 1994-95, and was instrumental in the passage of the therapeutics bill in Illinois. He was a Captain of the Peoria County Sheriff's Auxiliary, where he served for 20 years. He practiced in Peoria for 46 years before retiring to Cape Coral, Fla.

Timothy Miller, Ottawa, Ill., May 31. A fourth generation optometrist, he opened a practice in Ottawa in 1975 and

retired after 39 years. He was past president of his local Rotary Club and was a proud Paul Harris Fellow.

1974

David Davenport, Watertown, Wis., Aug. 24. He owned two practices in the Whitewater and Fort Atkinson communities. He was part of a Barbershop Chorus and traveling Statesmen Men's Choir.

Brian Hammes, Fond du Lac, Wis., Apr. 13. He founded Family Focus Eye Care Center in Fond du Lac, now with four doctors and 30 staff. He served on the board of the Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) for many years and served as its President in 2000. He was named WOA's OD of the Year in 2004.

1980s

1987

Carolyn Odette, Houston, Texas, July 25. She practiced in Houston from 1989 to 2016. She was a clinical Instructor in the Cornea and Contact Lens and the Adult Clinics at the University Eye Institute of the University of Houston College of Optometry.

1988

Kenneth Schroer, Cincinnati, Ohio, Aug. 17.



ICO Alumnus and co-founder of the National Optometric Association (NOA), **Dr. C. Clayton Powell**, died on October, 23 at the age of 93. Dr. Powell was a Morehouse College classmate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and was the only black student in his 1952 class at ICO (then

called the Chicago College of Optometry). He was extraordinarily active in optometry school and went on to give Black optometrists a powerful organized voice in the profession when he founded the NOA. He was dedicated to recruiting more Black students to the profession, and his leadership inspired every member of the NOA.

Dr. Powell has served his community in many ways, sitting on multiple boards and sponsoring a scholarship for Black ICO students following in his footsteps.

ICO President, Dr. Mark Colip, remembers first meeting Dr. Powell nearly 30 years ago and was immediately impressed by his determination to get all optometry schools working to get more underrepresented minorities into schools. "I learned a great deal from him and our conversations over the years. He was so passionate." Dr. Colip reflects. "I last saw him at the NOA 50th Anniversary celebration in Atlanta during the summer of 2019. He was so pleased and proud to see the NOA reach such a milestone anniversary."

Dr. Powell's work extended beyond optometry as he was an active member of his community, several fraternities, and the local Atlanta chapter of the NAACP. He also published a book chronicling his life and his beloved city of Atlanta. He is survived by his wife, Deborah Powell, three children and four grandchildren. We wish them peace during this time of remembrance.

Vault

Things have changed with the emergence of telemedicine and other optometric technologies. The ICO Library has a collection of antique optometric equipment on display serving as a reminder of how far optometry has come.



Phoropter - 1910



Universal Ophthalmometer - 1904



"The World's Greatest Ophthalmic Chair" - 1922



Compact Acuity Projector - circa 1940



Graphic Eye Test Chart - 1930

Datebook

COMMENCEMENT
MAY 15

NOTE: This calendar is subject to change based on the evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

DECEMBER

December 21 - January 2
Winter Break

2021

JANUARY

January 18
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
College/Clinic Closed

FEBRUARY

February 21
Winter CE Program, virtual

February 22
First Day of Spring Quarter

MARCH

March 16 - 29
NBEO Part 1

APRIL

April, Date TBA
Annual CE Symposium: Cornea and Ocular Surface Disease
ICO Campus

April 2 - 4
Spring Break

MAY

May 1 - 8
Final Exams

May 10 - 16
Break Week

May 15
Commencement

May 17
Summer Quarter Begins

May 29 - 31
Memorial Day Holiday



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Last Look



ICO's 2020 Commencement was 100% virtual.