

Wilmer Eye
Institute



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Wilmer

A Year to Remember

The Wilmer Eye Institute Centennial

IMAGINATION | INNOVATION | IMPACT

AS I SEE IT ...

Dear Friends,

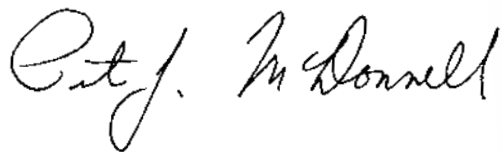
What a year it was! 2025 marked 100 years since the founding of the Wilmer Eye Institute, and we chronicled the occasion throughout the year with celebrations and exhibits, commemorative publications and historical online posts.

Over the past year, we celebrated Wilmer's founding, and we also acknowledged the tremendous strides we've made over the past century — in our understanding of diseases of the eye and diseases that affect the eye, through the education of the thousands of residents and fellows who have gone on to become world leaders in ophthalmology, and through the development of treatments that are transforming lives every day.

As we enter our second century, the lessons of the past continue to illuminate our path forward. Today, we are not only advancing our understanding of the causes of major eye diseases and how they progress over time, but also gaining insights into how, in individual patients, we can predict whether these diseases are likely to progress and at what rate they will do so. This constitutes a major advance toward the goal of precision medicine, in which each of our patients will receive personalized care tailored to his or her situation. In collaboration with our colleagues throughout Johns Hopkins University, we are harnessing modern day technologies, from AI to nanomedicine, to develop new tools and techniques to not only preserve vision and eye health but reverse vision loss.

We are deeply grateful to all those who entrust us with their care, and for the generous support of those who have contributed to our ability to advance and deliver that care. We look forward to continuing our mission and to sharing with you what we learn about that most precious of senses — sight.

Yours sincerely,



PETER J. McDONNELL, M.D.

Alan and Marlene Norton Director of the Wilmer Eye Institute

William Holland Wilmer Professor of Ophthalmology





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ON THE COVER: Courtney Kraus, M.D., with Maggie Cowell and Bernie Cowell Murray at the Wilmer Eye Institute Centennial Gala, June 14, 2025

FY25 WILMER BY THE NUMBERS

CARING FOR PATIENTS



10 Clinical Locations



285,237
Patient Visits
Annually



15,358
Major Surgeries
Annually

12,753
Same-Day
Appointments



313,825
Phone Calls

POWERED BY COLLABORATION*



- 43** Scientists
- 68** Physician-Scientists
- 34** Optometrists
- 14** Clinical Fellows
- 1** Assistant Chief of Service
- 21** Residents
- 31** Nurses
- 469** Staff/Technicians
- 100** Students
- 781** Grand Total

* Full-time staff

DEDICATED TO RESEARCH



5 Core Research Centers

Animal Module for Wilmer Core • Bioinformatics Center • Biostats Center
Drug Delivery and Nanotechnology • Microscopy and Imaging

14 Endowed Rising Professorships

The Rising Professorship Program, established in 2021, provides stable funding to jump-start the research careers of promising young faculty.



HIGHLIGHTS

BRIGHT SPOTS IN 2025

WILMER NEWS

- ▶ **Meghan Berkenstock, M.D.**, was named medical director of Wilmer's Harford County satellite location.



- ◀ **Amanda Henderson, M.D.**, joined **Henry Jampel, M.D.**, as co-medical student educator director.



- ◀ **Sezen Karakus, M.D.**, was named associate director of The Jerome L. Green Sjögren's Disease Center at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.

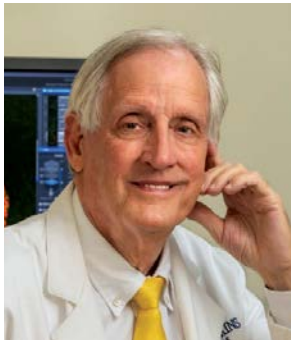


- ◀ **Michael Sulewski, M.D.**, was named director of Wilmer's Residency Program. (See page 32 for more.)



- ▲ **Edward Kuwera, M.D.**, and **Isa Mohammed, M.D.**, were named associate directors of Wilmer's Residency Program.

AWARDS AND HONORS



◀ **John Gottsch, M.D.**, received an Emmy Award for Musical Composition/Arrangement from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Suncoast Chapter for his work *Ocklawaha: Tales My Father Told*.

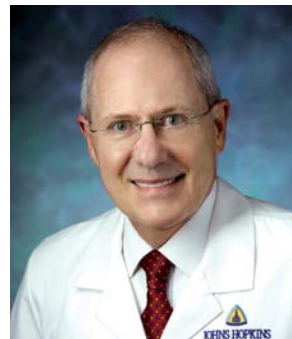
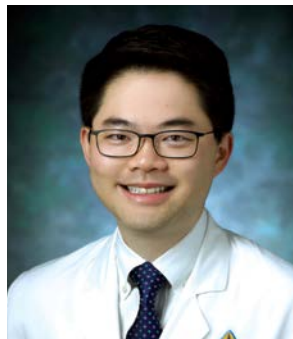


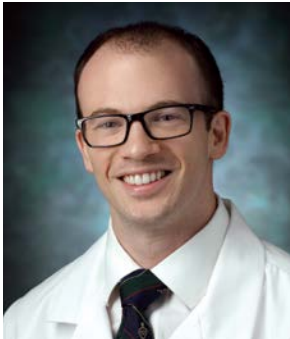
◀ **Neil Bressler, M.D.**, was named to the *Ophthalmologist Power List 2025*, which recognizes individuals whose influence and achievements are a continuing source of inspiration and admiration among their peers. This marks the sixth time Bressler was included in the list.



◀ **Laura Ensign, Ph.D.**, and **Justin Hanes, Ph.D.**, were among the world's most cited researchers on the annual Highly Cited Researchers list compiled by Clarivate Analytics.

▼ **Bryce Chiang, M.D., Ph.D.**; **T.Y. Alvin Liu, M.D.**; **Harry Quigley, M.D.**; and **Bo Wang, M.D., Ph.D.**, were recipients of 2025 Johns Hopkins Discovery Awards.





◀ **Drew Carey, M.D.; Mona Kaleem, M.D.; Courtney Kraus, M.D.; Nicholas Mahoney, M.D.; and Shameema Sikder, M.D.**, were named “Top Doctors” by *Washingtonian* magazine.



◀ The Maryland E-Innovation Initiative (MEI) announced funding to help support the work of **Kunal Parikh, Ph.D.**, a world-class innovator in the field of nanomedicine. Matched by an earlier bequest from the T. Boone Pickens Foundation, the funding will support the nomination of Parikh as the Boone Pickens Rising Professor of Ophthalmology. It represents the sixth award to Wilmer by the MEI Fund.



◀ **Yassine Daoud, M.D.**, and **Jithin Yohannan, M.D., M.P.H.**, were named to *Newsweek*’s list of America’s Leading Doctors 2025.

AWARDS AND HONORS, CONTINUED



◀ **Justin Hanes, Ph.D.**, was elected to the National Academy of Engineering. Hanes was recognized “for developing innovative technologies that improve drug and gene delivery, resulting in multiple approved products.”



◀ **Edward Kuwera, M.D.**, fellowship program director for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Adult Strabismus, was inducted into the 2025 Distinguished Teaching Society of Johns Hopkins.



◀ **Courtney Kraus, M.D.**, received the 2025 Outstanding Emerging Leader Award from the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus.



◀ **Anupam Garg, M.D., Ph.D.**, was named a 2025 HEED fellow.



▲ **Neil Bressler, M.D.; Peter Campochiaro, M.D.; Charles Eberhart, M.D., Ph.D.; and Harry Quigley, M.D.**, were included in the *Research.com* 2025 Ranking of Best Scientists in Medicine.

FACULTY PROMOTIONS

Ashley Campbell, M.D.

Associate Professor

Corinne Casey, O.D., F.A.A.O.

Assistant Professor

Alex Christoff

Associate Professor

Laura Di Meglio, O.D.

Assistant Professor

Sherry Narang Kalla, M.D.

Assistant Professor

Jacob Kanter, M.D.

Assistant Professor

T.Y. Alvin Liu, M.D.

Associate Professor

Jeff Mumm, Ph.D.

Professor

Bryce St. Clair, O.D., M.P.H.

Assistant Professor

ANNOUNCING

The Alan and Marlene Norton Directorship

AT THE WILMER EYE INSTITUTE

By Amy Entwisle



For the past 22 years, **Peter J. McDonnell, M.D.**, has held the title of the William Holland Wilmer Professor of Ophthalmology — a title that has been held by each of the five individuals who succeeded Dr. Wilmer as chairpersons of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Now, thanks to a generous gift by Wilmer alumnus Alan Norton and his wife, Marlene, to that title will be added the Alan and Marlene Norton Director of the Wilmer Eye Institute.

The endowed directorship will provide Wilmer's directors in perpetuity with a source of funds to support junior faculty as they launch their careers, as well as to address other critical needs of Wilmer's teaching, research and patient care missions.

Norton, who completed his residency at Wilmer in 1972, spent two years with the National Institutes of Health, where he conducted research on the electrophysiology of the retina and published more than a dozen research articles in peer-reviewed journals.

“This support will help ensure that our trainees, currently and in the future, will have an experience at Wilmer that is second to none.”

– PETER J. MCDONNELL



Peter J. McDonnell

He served as a visiting faculty member at the Stein Eye Institute at UCLA for more than 20 years. He also had his own ophthalmology practice and served as a consultant to three hospitals in his subspecialty of retinal diseases.

This extraordinary gift comes as Wilmer celebrates its centennial and on the heels of a number of substantial contributions to Wilmer by many of its alumni.

“This support will help ensure that our trainees, currently and in the future, will have an experience at Wilmer that is second to none and will continue our institute’s tradition of training the future leaders of our field,” says McDonnell.

“I know I speak for all of us at Wilmer, for those who will lead our institute in its second century and for the young people who will benefit from this wonderful gift, when I offer my most sincere appreciation to Alan and Marlene Norton.” ●

Per Bang-Jensen,
Ishrat Ahmed and
Peter J. McDonnell



A New Rising Professorship Targets Retinitis Pigmentosa

By Joan Cramer

Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology **Ishrat Ahmed, M.D., Ph.D.**, works tirelessly to understand the process by which inherited retinal diseases progress. Her target is retinitis pigmentosa. And she hopes that research might someday lead to novel therapeutics that would interrupt the disease's degenerative process and prevent catastrophic vision loss.

"I see many patients in clinic with this condition; it usually starts when they are young, and can be debilitating," says Ahmed, whose research background includes work on neurodegenerative diseases such as Huntington's and Parkinson's.

On April 29, 2025, after only 18 months as a Wilmer faculty member, Ahmed

was named the inaugural Retina Rising Professor of Ophthalmology. She is the 14th faculty member to be awarded one of these endowed rising professorships, an innovation suggested by former Wilmer fellow Jonathan Javitt, M.D., and championed by **Peter J. McDonnell, M.D.**, the Alan and Marlene Norton Director of the Wilmer Eye Institute and the William Holland Wilmer Professor of Ophthalmology. The Rising Professorship Program was established in 2021 to provide stable funding for promising young faculty in order to jump-start their research careers.

"It's an incredible opportunity for young physician-scientists like me," Ahmed says. "It allows me time and funding, for things like cutting-edge technologies,

to more rapidly advance my research for the benefit of future patients.”

The Retina Rising Professorship was endowed by Per Bang-Jensen, businessman and longtime Wilmer patient and supporter. In remarks at the April award ceremony, Bang-Jensen called it “a wonderful way to provide perpetual support for retina research at Wilmer.”

Bang-Jensen has long supported the work of Wilmer’s **Peter Campochiaro, M.D.**, an esteemed retina surgeon and the George S. and Dolores D. Eccles Professor of Ophthalmology, and **Harry Quigley, M.D.**, the A. Edward Maumenee Professor of Ophthalmology and a world-renowned glaucoma specialist.

“Mr. Bang-Jensen wants to help provide new treatments for retinal diseases for which there are currently few treatment options,” Campochiaro says. “An ideal way to do that is his sponsorship of the Retina Rising Professorship supporting the outstanding work of Dr. Ahmed.”

Ahmed is a “Hopkins product, through and through,” McDonnell said at the April event. She earned her B.S., M.S., and M.D./Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins, and completed her residency at Wilmer. “As a resident, she was a faculty favorite, and as a new faculty member, she has hit the ground running,” McDonnell says.

Bang-Jensen has long been interested in how to “generate the next generation” of great ophthalmologists, Quigley says. “In fact, Mr. Bang-Jensen’s exact words were that he wanted to support the career of somebody who would become the next Peter Campochiaro, and Ishrat Ahmed was the perfect candidate. She’s on target to do some really important things with regard to how genetic expression in cells in the retina leads to disease.” ●

HOW TO SUPPORT THE WILMER EYE INSTITUTE

Your donations directly impact the Wilmer Eye Institute’s mission to transform medical outcomes in the field of ophthalmology through collaboration and innovation, resulting in compassionate, leading-edge, patient-informed care.

TYPES OF GIFTS

Cash Gifts: Gifts of all sizes made by check or credit card provide immediate support to the Institute. Gifts can be made outright or pledged over a period of up to five years.

Matching Gifts: Many employers offer a matching gift program. Complete the employee’s section of the matching gift form provided by your employer and mail the form to us. We will take care of all the other details and paperwork.

Memorial and Tribute Gifts: Memorial and tribute gifts are a wonderful way to commemorate family, friends or even a special physician. Any gift can be made in memory, or in honor, of an individual.

Stocks and Securities: Giving stock and other appreciated securities directly to the Wilmer Eye Institute offers an appealing mix of tax benefits and direct support for Wilmer. Appreciated securities are those that are worth more today than when you acquired them. Advantages include an immediate income tax deduction on the fair market value of your stock gift and avoidance of capital gains tax.

Gift Planning: Our Office of Gift Planning can provide you with resources to help fulfill your philanthropic wishes in coordination with your overall financial and estate planning. For more information, visit giving.jhu.edu/giftplanning.

Leading the Way in Artificial Intelligence

In 1975, William Wood, M.D., then a recent graduate of the Wilmer Eye Institute's Residency Program, brought specialty retina care to Lexington, Kentucky (his home state), when he founded Retina Associates of Kentucky. At the time, the central and eastern parts of the state didn't have a retina specialist; today, the practice encompasses 10 physicians who practice at nine locations. Wood, a member of the Board of Governors at Wilmer, then went on to co-found the Surgical Retina Fellowship, a program offered through his practice and the University of Kentucky, to educate promising young retina specialists. It was Wood's time at Wilmer that motivated him to build his own multifaceted career. At Wilmer, he was inspired by faculty members

who delivered top-notch patient care, performed valuable research and engaged in teaching — tenets that Wood went on to incorporate into his own ophthalmology practice for four decades.

Now retired, Wood has chosen to partner with Wilmer to make an impact in the clinical application of artificial intelligence (AI) in ophthalmology. To do this, Wood and his wife, Jennifer, have established The William Wood, M.D., and Jennifer Wood Clinical Artificial Intelligence Fund, an endowment that will support a junior faculty member conducting research in AI and ophthalmology at the James P. Gills Jr., M.D., & Heather Gills Artificial Intelligence Innovation Center at Wilmer.

By Jennifer Walker

“The Gills Center may be the first of its type,” Wood says. “We hope our gift will help Wilmer be the leader once again to transform every aspect of ophthalmology through the clinical use of artificial intelligence, the benefits of which include enhancing diagnoses, improving treatment and monitoring, preventing disease and accelerating drug development.”

The Woods’ gift, which will be matched by Wilmer, comes at a time when it is especially critical to help young researchers obtain funding for their work. In today’s climate, assistant professors are often competing with senior faculty for National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants, a significant roadblock to funding for those who are early in their careers, says **Peter J. McDonnell, M.D.**, the Alan and Marlene Norton Director of the Wilmer Eye Institute and the William Holland Wilmer Professor of Ophthalmology.

“Having this support for an assistant professor means they can explore their brand-new ideas a decade sooner than if they had to wait for a grant from NIH,” McDonnell adds. “This will dramatically speed up the work that our young faculty are testing and exploring when it comes to artificial intelligence at Wilmer.” ●

“We hope our gift will help Wilmer be the leader once again to transform every aspect of ophthalmology through the clinical use of artificial intelligence, the benefits of which include enhancing diagnoses, improving treatment and monitoring, preventing disease and accelerating drug development.”

– WILLIAM WOOD



William and Jennifer Wood at the Wilmer Eye Institute's Centennial Gala on June 14.



VISIONARY IN MEDICAL ILLUSTRATION

Before cameras could capture the finest details of the inside of the eye, the responsibility of recording the intricacies of ocular anatomy and pathology fell to artists whose tools were not lenses and sensors, but pencils, brushes and extraordinary powers of observation. This rare combination was embodied by Annette Smith Burgess, who could document the minutiae of the eye to such levels that her sketches and paintings have remained educational tools nearly a century after they were created.

Burgess was recruited by Dr. William Holland Wilmer in 1926 to become the institute's first ophthalmic illustrator, a role she held for more than three decades. She had previously studied under Max Brödel, the father of medical illustration and founder of the Department of Art as Applied to Medicine at Johns Hopkins Medicine.

"Mrs. Burgess was unique in the world," says **Morton F. Goldberg, M.D.**, the Joseph E. Green Professor of Ophthalmology and Director Emeritus of the Wilmer Eye Institute. "The tiny things she painted were

absolutely accurate and precise. Nobody else could do that then; nobody else could do that now."

Without digital photography or advanced scanning technologies, capturing the internal structures of the eye was a formidable challenge. Observers were often allowed only brief glimpses through the ophthalmoscope. Burgess would spend hours carefully observing the eyes of Wilmer's patients — both normal and abnormal features — for just a few seconds at a time. She memorized the details, and then took what she saw to paper.

By Jon Bleiweis

Opposite page:
Annette Smith Burgess, from an article in the 1953 edition of *The Johns Hopkins Magazine* titled "Art in Medicine."
Photo credit:
Werner Wolff

“She had the most amazing visual memory,” Goldberg says. “That’s why I admire her so much. She was the world’s expert at observing, understanding, remembering, painting and drawing over and over until she finished the job.”

These illustrations served multiple purposes: They helped explain conditions to patients, educated medical students and doctors, and provided a clinical record to track patient progress over time. Many of her paintings were featured in *Atlas Fundus Oculi*, William Holland Wilmer’s 1934 color atlas of the retina and choroid, which remains one of the most admired and authoritative texts on the subject today.

At Wilmer, Burgess mastered the use of the direct ophthalmoscope to visualize the retina and choroid — structures that make up the fundus of the eye — as well as slit-lamp microscopy to examine the anterior chamber. This diagnostic tool uses a specialized microscope (the slit lamp) to examine the detailed structures of the eye — particularly the front part, including the cornea, iris and lens — by directing a narrow beam of light into the eye, allowing for close inspection and diagnosis of various eye conditions.

To draw the external eye, Burgess used nothing more than a bright flashlight to illuminate the eyelids, eyebrows, eyelashes and the colored and white portions of the eye. To capture the retina, she guided the patient’s gaze through 12 meridians to carefully observe and capture every nuance of the retina’s structure, ensuring accuracy in color, shape and location. Her work showcases not only the complexity of the eye but also the exceptional skill and dedication required to illustrate its hidden intricacies.

Burgess’s images have withstood the test of time and remain vivid illustrations of ocular disease, says **James Handa, M.D.**, chief of Wilmer’s Retina Division and the Robert Bond Welch, M.D. Professor of Ophthalmology. He says her work is remarkable both in its accuracy for capturing ocular anatomy and disease, and for how challenging this endeavor was.

“I think any ophthalmologist who sees her work will appreciate how amazing the images are, how they accurately depict disease and eye anatomy, and how much she contributed to ophthalmology,” he says. “For me, seeing her work makes me really proud to be a part, albeit minuscule compared to her, of Wilmer.” ●

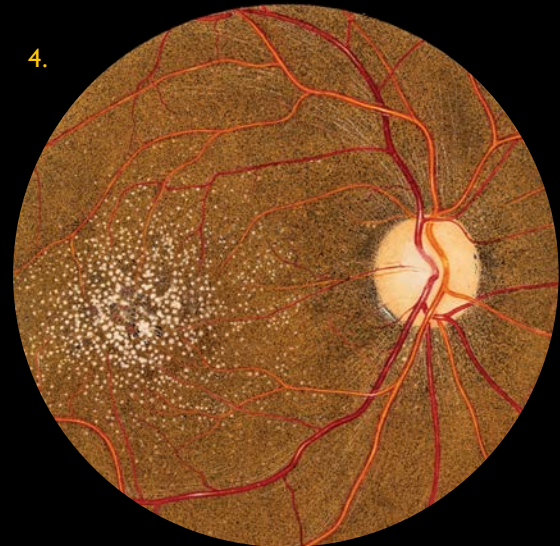
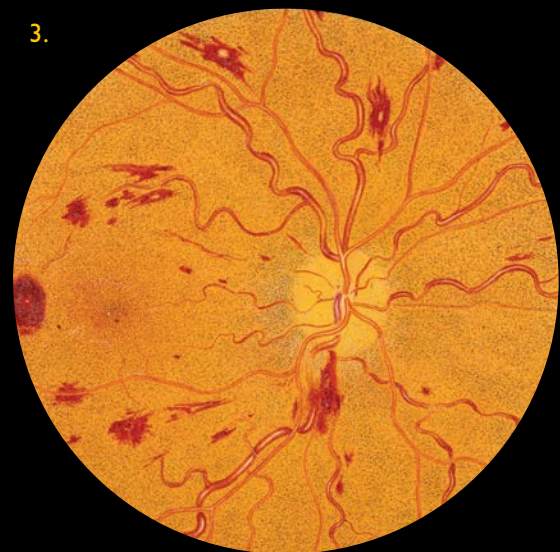
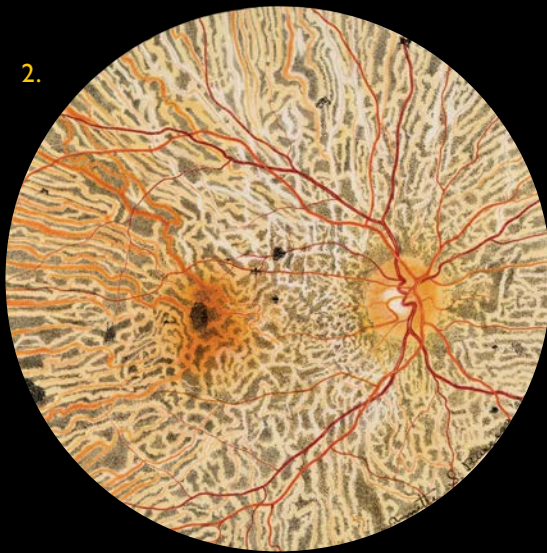
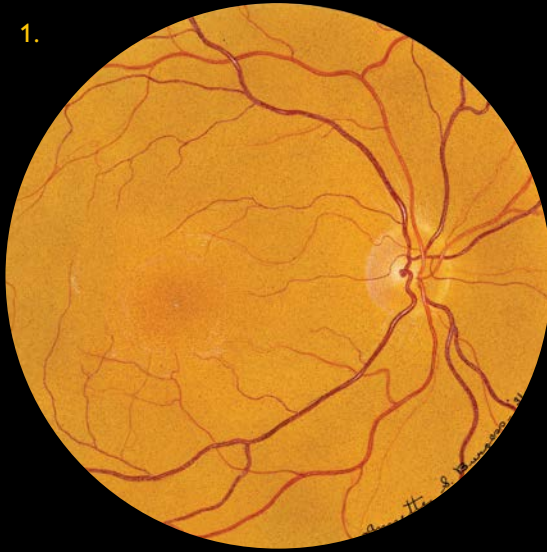
THE LEGACY OF ANNETTE SMITH BURGESS

Annette Smith Burgess left Wilmer more than 800 original paintings — many unpublished — which the institute has preserved since the 1920s. A new exhibit, created with the Department of Art as Applied to Medicine at Johns Hopkins, showcases select works and honors Burgess’s legacy.

Located on the fourth floor of Wilmer’s Maumenee Building, “A Century of Wilmer Illustrations: The Legacy of Annette Burgess,”

features two original watercolor paintings and 14 color reproductions from *Atlas Fundus Oculi*, William Holland Wilmer’s 1934 color atlas of the retina and choroid.

The exhibit also has about 70 previously unpublished Burgess paintings on display, as well as 16 works by other Wilmer illustrators. Artifacts related to the creation and publication of the atlas at the nearby Hoen lithography company are also featured.



1. NORMAL FUNDUS Lightly pigmented, orange-red fundus of right eye in a blond 23-year-old male. Normal macula (white dot) with surrounding macular light reflex (on left) and optic disc (on right) with normal venous and arterial branching patterns. 1931.

2. PIGMENTARY DEGENERATION OF THE RETINA Sclerosis of choroidal vessels with pigmentary degeneration of the retina, also known as retinitis pigmentosa. This 35-year-old male had progressive loss of both night vision and peripheral vision. His family pedigree was consistent with X-linked recessive inheritance. 1931.

3. CHRONIC LYMPHATIC LEUKEMIA Chronic lymphocytic leukemia can manifest in the retina through leukemic infiltrates, hemorrhages and vascular changes. This drawing of a 28-year-old female shows dilated, tortuous veins, dot and blot hemorrhages, Roth spots (hemorrhages with white central spot), and microaneurysms. 1929.

4. DRUSEN Drawing depicts a 47-year-old African American female with normal visual function bilaterally and numerous small white solid-looking drusen (aging spots) in and around the macula. 1928.

The Fight of His Life

By Amy Entwisle

An amateur boxer, 23-year-old John Paredes was used to shielding himself from blows to the face. But nothing prepared him for the injury he sustained one day in February 2024, while lifting weights at the gym. He was doing arm extensions, which involved pulling up on a weight attached to the floor by a carabiner. His arm was fully extended when the carabiner suddenly detached from the floor. Like a slingshot, the lanyard hit him in the eye.

The pain was unbearable. Paredes' vision was blurry, and he couldn't open his eye completely. He drove himself to an urgent care clinic, where an exam revealed a cut below his eye and some blood in the eye, but no fractures of the orbital bone surrounding the eye. He was given medication for the pain and sent home. He remembers thinking, "Okay, I'm hurt, maybe it will take some time to heal, but no bones are broken."

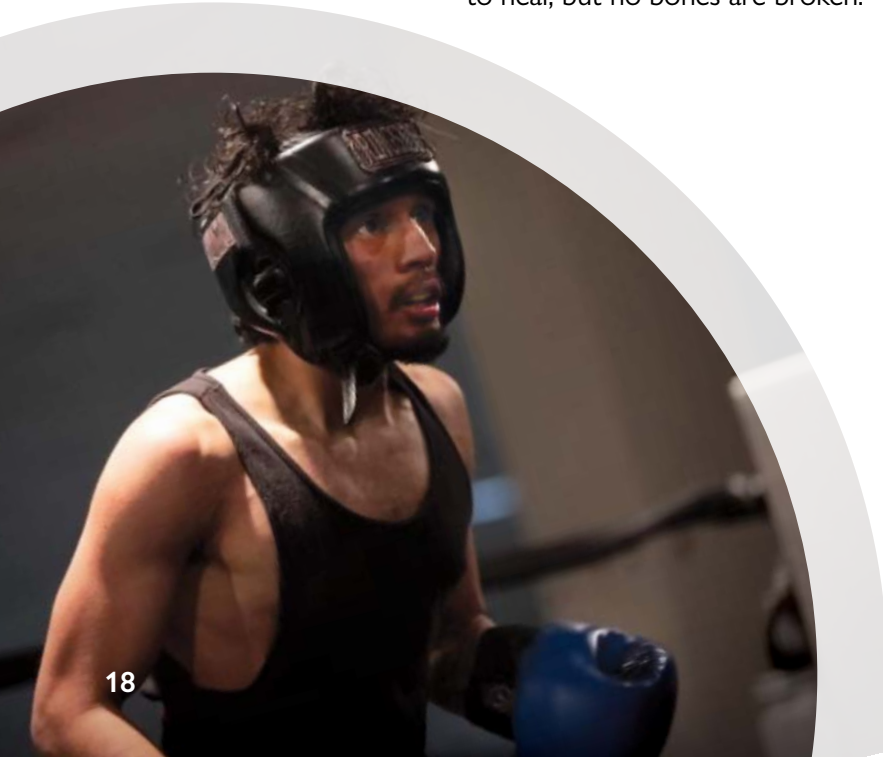
An IT tech, Paredes tried to work, but the pain continued to worsen. He sought care at an eye care center in his community, where he was found to have elevated eye pressure. The doctor prescribed eye drops to lower the pressure, but when it continued to rise, he was referred to the Johns Hopkins emergency department for complex subspecialty ophthalmologic care.

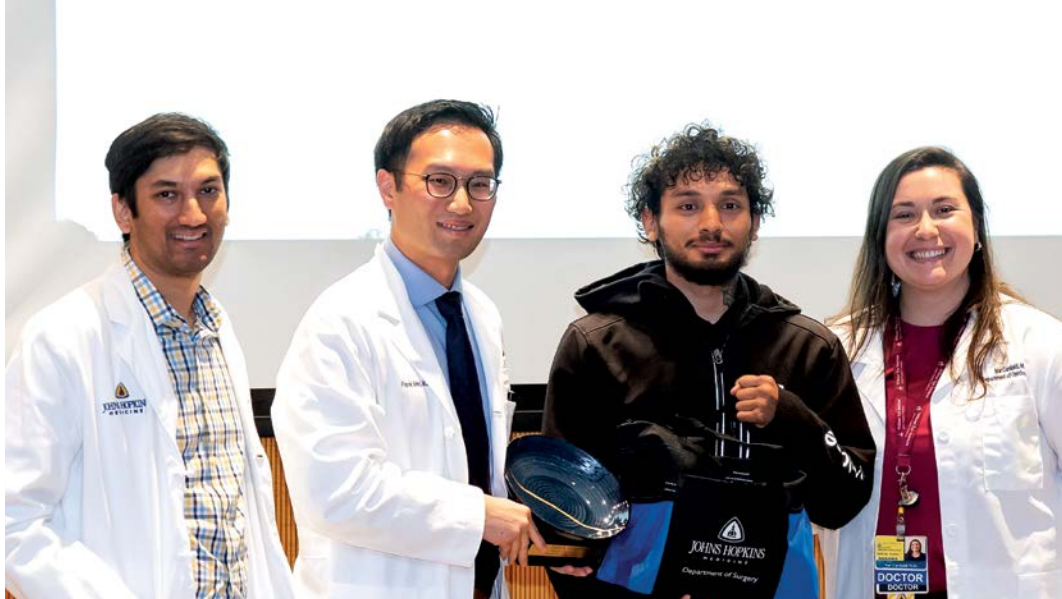
Paredes was examined by **Omar Halawa, M.D.**, then a third-year ophthalmology resident at the Wilmer Eye Institute, who found Paredes' eye pressures to be extremely elevated, up to 60 mmHg (normal eye pressure is around 20 mmHg or less). He also had damage to the drainage channels of the eye, inflammation and bleeding in the eye and damage to the delicate structures that hold the eye's natural lens in place.

As glaucoma fellow **Nur Cardakli, M.D.**, explains, "When the balance of fluid production and fluid drainage is disrupted, eye pressure can become elevated, and when the elevated eye pressures cause damage to the optic nerve, glaucoma occurs."

Halawa prescribed several rounds of topical eye drops as well as intravenous medications to bring down Paredes' eye pressure, but the pressures continued to be uncontrolled — and he still couldn't see out of the injured eye.

At the time of his injury, he had been preparing for the Golden Gloves tournament, one of the biggest contests for amateur boxers. Now, not only were





John Paredes, third from left, with Anupam Garg, Chris Cho and Nur Cardakli at the Johns Hopkins Trauma Survivors Day celebration, May 21, 2025.

his hopes of competing threatened, but his eyesight was threatened as well.

Halawa conferred with Cardakli, then a fourth-year ophthalmology resident, who recommended emergency glaucoma surgery to relieve the pressure and prevent irreversible vision loss. Given Paredes' young age and the concern for damage to the lens structures, he underwent combined retina and glaucoma surgery at Wilmer's Bendann Surgical Pavilion. First, retina specialist **Jacob Light, M.D.**, a Stephen J. Ryan Assistant Chief of Service, performed a vitrectomy, removing the damaged lens and the vitreous jelly in the back of the eye to make space for a glaucoma implant. Then Cardakli, working with Stephen J. Ryan Assistant Chief of Service **Jasdeep Sabharwal, M.D., Ph.D.**, inserted the implant to improve fluid drainage and help keep Paredes' eye pressure controlled for the long term.

The day after the surgery, Paredes' eye pressure was well controlled, to the point of not requiring eye drops or oral medications. The ophthalmology team was then challenged with the next task — implanting an intraocular lens in Paredes' right eye to help him see more clearly. "Without a lens to

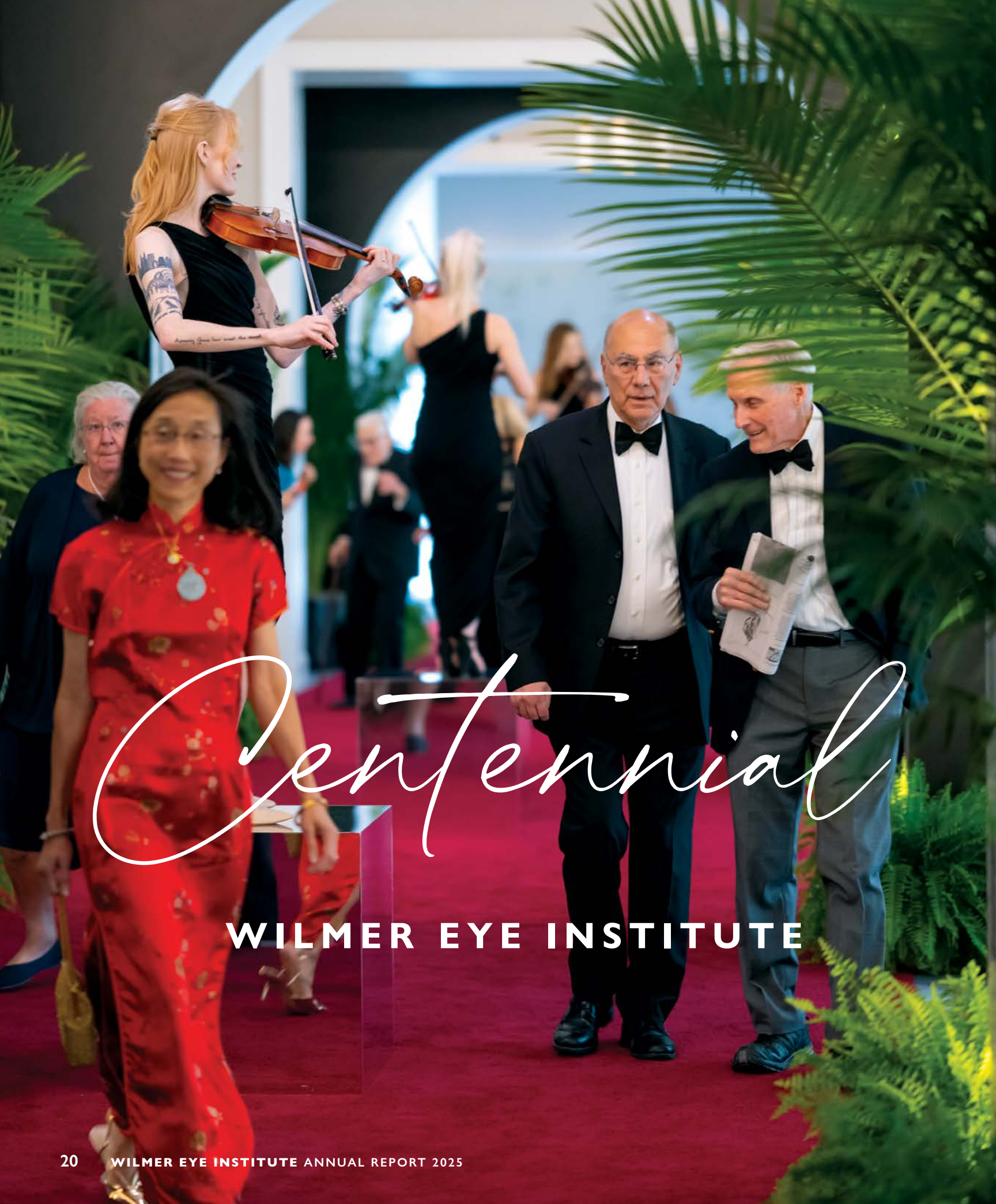
focus images on the retina, vision is extremely blurry," says Cardakli.

After giving sufficient time for healing after the first surgery, measurements were obtained to decide the best possible lens to implant into Paredes' eye. Because the lens structures that ophthalmologists typically rely on to secure the lens implant in place were damaged by the original injury, Light sutured a special type of lens implant to the sclera, or the eye wall.

Within a month, Paredes' vision had returned to what it had been before his injury.

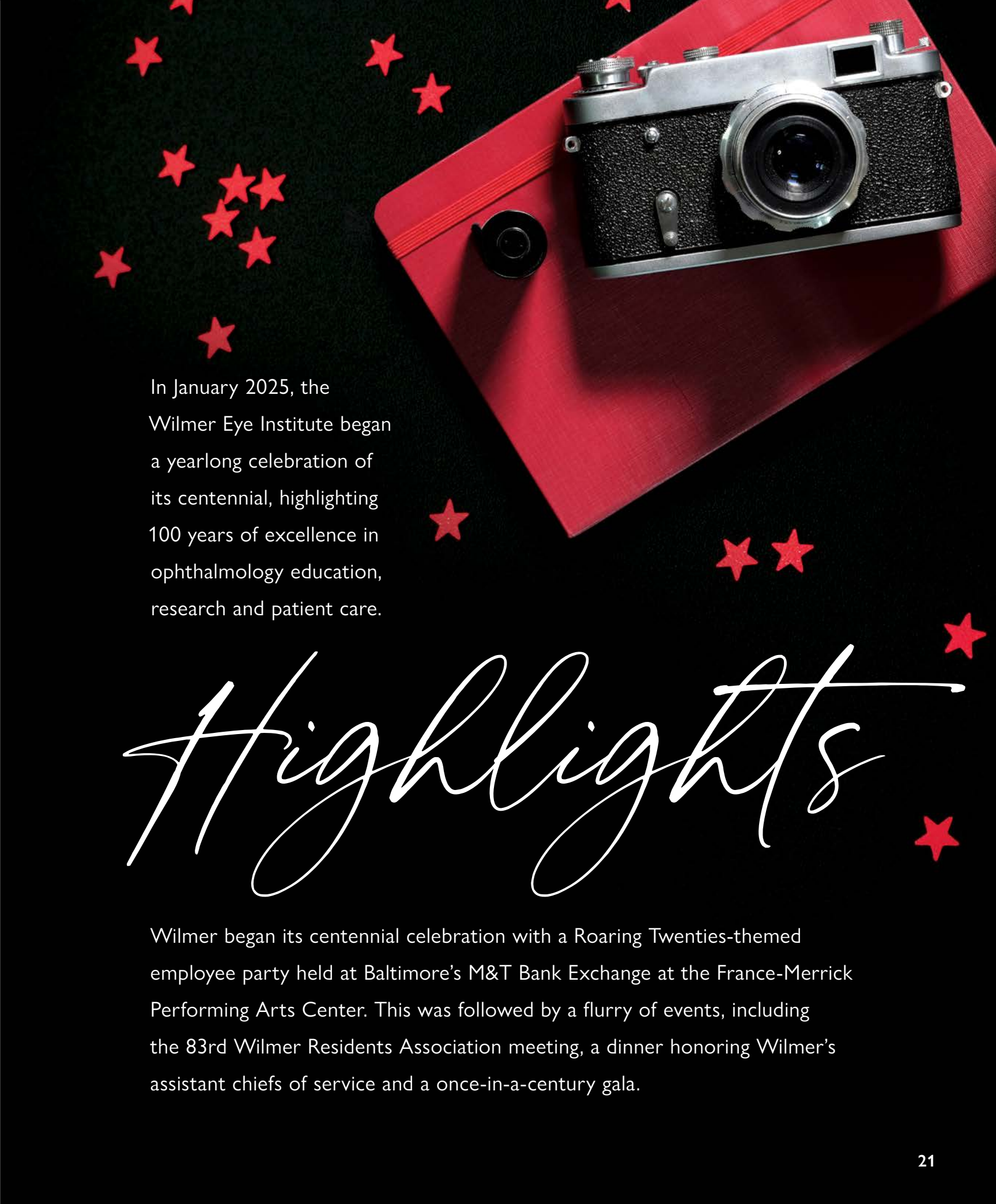
Cardakli recently re-evaluated Paredes in the clinic, where his eye pressures remain well-controlled. Importantly, testing showed no evidence of damage from the high pressure to the optic nerve — a testament to the prompt intervention and complex care coordination he received at Wilmer.

In spring 2025, Paredes was able to return to boxing, competing in the Golden Gloves competition he'd been preparing for when the accident happened. He made it to the championship, and it was, he says proudly, a close fight: "I didn't win, but the fact that I was able to box is a miracle." ●



Centennial

WILMER EYE INSTITUTE

A vintage camera with a black textured body and silver accents is positioned on a red notebook. The camera is angled towards the right. The notebook is open, and a lens cap is visible on the left page. The background is black, decorated with several red stars of varying sizes scattered across the top and right sides.

In January 2025, the Wilmer Eye Institute began a yearlong celebration of its centennial, highlighting 100 years of excellence in ophthalmology education, research and patient care.

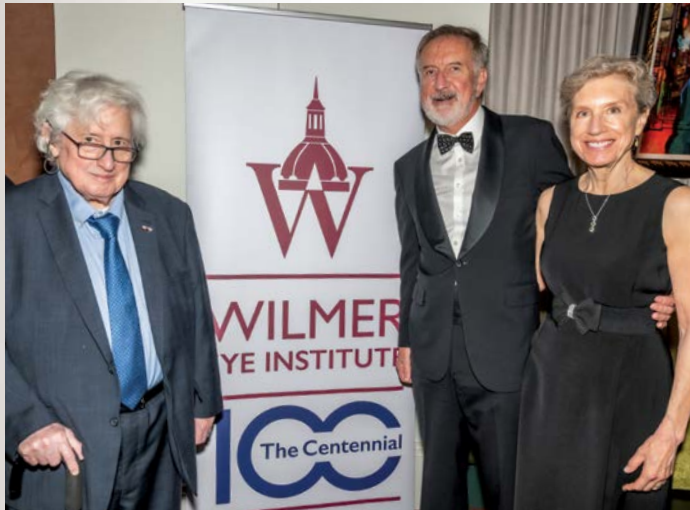
Highlights

Wilmer began its centennial celebration with a Roaring Twenties-themed employee party held at Baltimore's M&T Bank Exchange at the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center. This was followed by a flurry of events, including the 83rd Wilmer Residents Association meeting, a dinner honoring Wilmer's assistant chiefs of service and a once-in-a-century gala.

Employee Celebration

On April 4, Wilmer employees gathered at Baltimore's M&T Bank Exchange for a much anticipated centennial celebration. The venue had been transformed into a stunning, three-level speakeasy, and employees arrived dressed in their finest Roaring Twenties attire. The crowd enjoyed great food, music, dancing and fun.





Allan Jensen, Wilmer Class of 1974, Wilmer Director
Peter J. McDonnell 1987; Jan McDonnell

ACS Dinner

On June 12, Wilmer alumni, faculty and guests assembled at The Ruxton in Harbor East for the annual dinner honoring Wilmer's assistant chiefs of service through the years.



Keneth Kenyon 1978 and
Morton F. Goldberg 1967



Narine Viruni 2023, Romel Light, Jacob Light 2024,
Frank Mei 2025, Harmony Mei



Kapil Mishra 2023, Silvia Montaner, Akrit Sodhi 2010



Thomas V. Johnson, III 2020



Peter J. McDonnell 1986, Eugene de Juan, Jr. 1983, Arun Patel 1986, Marco Zarbin 1988, Mauro Campos, postdoctoral researcher, 1991



Neil Miller, Fasika Woreta, Henry Jampel. Woreta was the recipient of the 2025 Neil R. Miller Faculty Teaching Award.

WRA Meeting

The 83rd Wilmer Residents Association (WRA) Clinical Research Meeting, held June 13, brought together experts from across the country to learn about the work of the current residents. Alumni Mauro Campos, M.D.; Eugene de Juan, M.D.; Arun Patel, M.D.; and Marco Zarbin, M.D., presented a group panel discussion, and **Michael X. Repka, M.D., M.B.A.**, delivered the Wilmer Memorial Lecture. Later, staff, faculty and guests gathered at The Center Club to celebrate Wilmer's graduating residents.



Reeda Bou Said, Derick Ansah, Anthony Gonzales, Elise Mike, Nur Cardakli, Chris Cho, Muhammad Ali (background) and Suzie Kim

The Centennial Gala

On June 14, the institute commemorated its 100th anniversary with a centennial gala at the Marriott Waterfront Hotel in Baltimore. The evening brought together a group of distinguished guests, including emcee and award-winning broadcast journalist Chris Wallace, legendary singer-songwriter Art Garfunkel, U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin and numerous Wilmer alumni who have gone on to become global leaders in ophthalmology.

The celebration featured a series of videos and exhibits that paid tribute to the institute's rich history and the individuals who have advanced its mission to preserve and protect vision worldwide. "Time and again, the Wilmer Institute has shone as a stellar embodiment of the university's core values, discovering and sharing with the world the light of truth and knowledge that once lay out of view," said Johns Hopkins University President Ronald J. Daniels, J.D., LL.M., in his remarks to the audience.



Johns Hopkins University
President Ronald J. Daniels



Bernie Cowell Murray



Jan and Peter McDonnell



Mariellen Brickley-Raab, Nakul
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Carol and Arun Patel

The Centennial Gala

CENTENNIAL GALA HONORARY CO-CHAIRS AND SPONSORS

We offer our deepest gratitude to our gala sponsors, honorary co-chairs, and all those who contributed to making Wilmer's centennial gala an unforgettable experience.



Landon King, executive vice dean for the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Kevin Sowers, president of the Johns Hopkins Health System and executive vice president of Johns Hopkins Medicine; Wilmer Director Peter J. McDonnell; Theodore DeWeese, dean of the medical faculty and CEO, Johns Hopkins Medicine; Johns Hopkins Hospital President Redonda Miller



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A Bright Future for Retina Fellows

By Joan Cramer

William and Patricia Bright fell in love with Wilmer nearly 50 years ago, and their Wilmer physicians have over the years helped them retain their vision despite the challenges of aging.

“The care has always been exquisite, and you can just feel the love,” says Patricia, who, with her husband, decided to express their gratitude by creating an endowment to support one of Wilmer’s four prestigious Medical and Surgical Retina Advanced Special Training fellowships.

The endowment will afford the Bright Fellow extra funding to allow them to pursue research and other goals. The Brights are making the gift in honor of two of their esteemed Wilmer physicians: **Ashley Behrens, M.D.**, division chief of Comprehensive Eye Care and the Edward St. John Professor of Ophthalmology, and **J. Fernando Arevalo, M.D., Ph.D.**, chair of ophthalmology at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center and the Edmund F. and Virginia B. Ball Professor of Ophthalmology.

“Training the next generation of retina specialists is incredibly important to our mission, so I am deeply honored,” Behrens says. “While my specialty is in cornea and

refractive surgery for cataracts, I rely heavily on our retina experts, especially the fellows, who handle a lot of our emergency cases and are always available to see patients.”

A distinguished retina surgeon, Arevalo says he, too, was surprised and humbled by the honor. “The Brights are a delightful couple and they wanted to help provide support for training the next generation of retina specialists to do what I do now,” he says.

The inaugural recipient of the fellowship, **Anupam Garg, M.D., Ph.D.**, is a Wilmer trainee who has already distinguished himself as an outstanding clinician, dedicated educator and outstanding researcher, says **James Handa, M.D.**, chief of the Retina Division and the Robert Bond Welch, M.D. Professor of Ophthalmology.

“After completing his residency and serving as assistant chief of service, Garg hopes that his research will apply new imaging techniques to animal models and human subjects to gain insights into retinal physiology and pathology. The work will integrate scientific approaches gained from his Ph.D., clinical expertise, and projects accomplished at Wilmer with new

techniques that he will learn from clinician-scientist awards,” says Handa.

Inspired by her mother, who taught her to give “without expecting anything in return,” Patricia says she and her husband have always shared a passion for philanthropy. William Bright is a prominent West Virginia entrepreneur — he founded more than 30 successful companies — and the couple is well-known for their generous support of medical research and other causes. They even led and heavily funded a campaign that saved their local rural hospital.

“I am very lucky to have a wonderful husband who’s made a comfortable income, and our reward is the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives,” Patricia says.

They’ve raised their three daughters to live by words attributed to the great cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, which Patricia says adorn every room of their Summersville, West Virginia, home: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” ●



William and Patricia Bright

“...our reward is the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives.”

– PATRICIA BRIGHT



Pradeep Ramulu and mentor Sheila West at the 2019 ceremony honoring Ramulu as the Sheila K. West Professor of Ophthalmology

An Old Friendship Inspires an Enduring Legacy

By Jennifer Walker

In the late 1990s at Johns Hopkins University, **Pradeep Ramulu, M.D., M.H.S., Ph.D.**, the Sheila K. West Professor of Ophthalmology, was working on his Ph.D. in biochemistry, and Kiran Rao Paramatmuni, M.D., was an undergraduate studying public health. They had a family connection — Ramulu’s mother, Aruna, is second cousins with Paramatmuni’s father, Kanta Rao — and they developed their own friendship while socializing with other students at one of the apartments near the medical campus. “Kiran was very quiet, but also kind and polite,” says Ramulu, now chief of the

glaucoma division at the Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins Medicine. He remembers Paramatmuni as being wise beyond his years, noting, “You knew he would be a really good doctor.”

Paramatmuni, who went on to specialize in infectious diseases, died in 2023 due to complications from a liver transplant. Although he ultimately studied medicine at a different institution, his parents, Kanta Rao and Vanaja, chose to support the Wilmer Eye Institute and Johns Hopkins in his name. A planned gift through their estate will establish the Kiran Rao Paramatmuni Rising Professorship and

“We are thrilled that this generous gift from the Paramatmuni family, bestowed in honor of Kiran Rao Paramatmuni, will empower our young investigators and their pathbreaking research.” – RONALD J. DANIELS

the Kiran Rao Paramatmuni Scholars Program at the Wilmer Eye Institute. Ramulu’s father, Yammanuru Ramulu, M.D., was instrumental in inspiring this gift, suggesting to the family that this would be an ideal way to honor Kiran.

“His parents chose Wilmer to execute the professorship in the name of Kiran Rao Paramatmuni to continue his legacy,” says Yammanuru Ramulu.

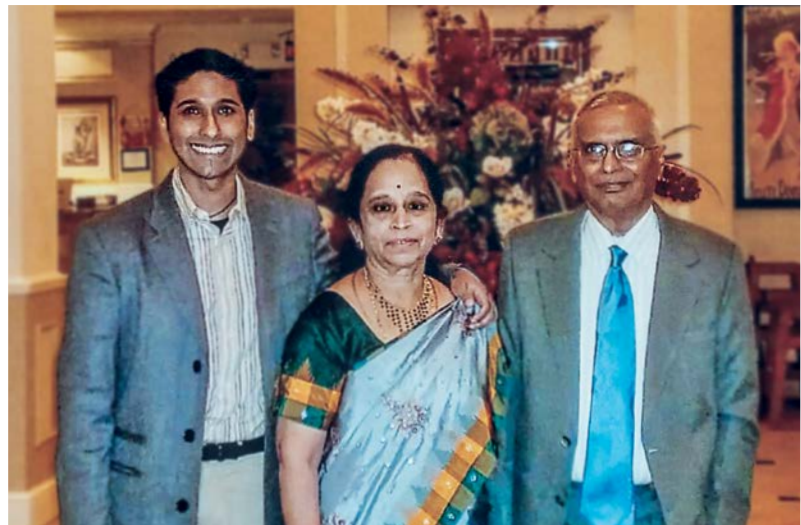
The rising professorship will support a faculty member with a primary appointment at Wilmer who holds a joint appointment at another Johns Hopkins University school. “These combinations of disciplines are rare,” says Pradeep Ramulu. “But there’s a great history of this work at Johns Hopkins, including work that bridges ophthalmology and Kiran’s focus of infectious disease.”

As an example, he cites his own mentor, **Sheila West, Ph.D., Pharm.D.**, the El-Maghraby Professor of Preventive Ophthalmology, who has been a world leader in advancing the prevention of trachoma, an infectious disease that can lead to corneal scarring and blindness. She holds a joint appointment in epidemiology at Johns Hopkins’ Bloomberg School of Public Health. Another example is the work of **Kunal Parikh, Ph.D.**, who holds a joint appointment at the Whiting School of Engineering, involving leveraging nano-technology to develop better materials

and drug delivery systems — which span a wide range of applications, from eye surgery to cardiovascular disease.

This gift will give a young faculty member with interdisciplinary expertise the resources to make similar large-scale contributions to the field.

“We are thrilled that this generous gift from the Paramatmuni family, bestowed in honor of Kiran Rao Paramatmuni, will empower our young investigators and their pathbreaking research,” says **Ronald J. Daniels, J.D., LL.M.**, president of Johns Hopkins University. “This gift will support the connections between disciplines, divisions and schools that we know supercharge discovery and the sharing of knowledge across our One University.” ●



Kiran Rao Paramatmuni with his parents, Vanaja and Kanta Rao Paramatmuni

A Pinnacle in Residency Training

By Joan Cramer

Since 1925, the Wilmer Eye Institute Residency Program has been one of the world's foremost training grounds for aspiring ophthalmologists. Last year, there were 650 applicants for just six positions. And the program's graduates — among them recipients of prestigious research awards such as the Lasker Award; American Academy of Ophthalmology presidents; and chairs of ophthalmology departments around the country — have always been among the top educators, researchers and physicians in the field.

Looking ahead to the next 100 years, program leaders plan to redouble their efforts, says **Michael Sulewski Jr., M.D.**, the James P. Gills, Jr. and Heather Gills Rising Professor of Ophthalmology who in 2025 became the residency program's new director.

"It's a great honor," says Sulewski. "I have always loved teaching — training the next generation is one of the most important things we do. It makes it even more enjoyable that our residency

program is valued and cherished by all of our Wilmer faculty. We plan to continue to expand the program, be the top choice for future academic leaders and improve the tools we provide to ensure their success."

Sulewski had already been serving as associate residency program director when he was tapped to succeed his mentor, **Fasika Woreta, M.D., M.P.H.**, the Eugene de Juan, Jr., M.D. Professor of Ophthalmic Education, who has now been named vice chair for education. In that role, she is involved in overseeing all of Wilmer's trainees, from medical students to residents to fellows.

In 2021, Sulewski and his father, Michael Sulewski, Sr., M.D., himself a renowned educator and ophthalmologist who completed his fellowship at Wilmer, both won the resident surgical teaching awards at their respective institutions, Sulewski at Wilmer and his father at Scheie Eye Institute, University of Pennsylvania.



“Michael clearly inherited his father’s gift for teaching — he is just naturally gifted at it — and having someone of his caliber ready to step into this role really made it easy for me to transition to my new role,” says Woreta, a beloved and dynamic educator who during her six years as director (plus five years before that as associate program director) helped implement a host of exciting innovations, from the use of ever-improving technology that allows residents to perform simulated surgeries before operating on patients

to the addition last year of a new research-focused residency position.

“Under the leadership of glaucoma division chief **Pradeep Ramulu, M.D., Ph.D.**, the Sheila K. West Professor of Ophthalmology, we were able to secure National Eye Institute funding for the StARR (Stimulating Access to Research in Residency) program, which enables a resident to take a dedicated year for mentored research to help launch their career as a physician-scientist,” Woreta says. “In doing so we

Michael Sulewski, second from left, with residents Yesha Shah, Khala Webb, Nathan Pan-Doh and Maggie Hsu

expanded the number of our residents from five to six each year, which is really important because of the busy clinical load of our residency.”

Wilmer residents serve as frontline physicians in one of the busiest fully resident-staffed eye clinics in the country, the Patient Access Center for the Eye (PACE). “The experience is invaluable as residents advocate for patients with the most advanced eye disease and provide world-class care in our surrounding East Baltimore community,” Woreta says, adding, “Over the past decade, we’ve seen a lot of changes, including a permanent PACE director and more hands-on faculty involvement.”

“I have always loved teaching — training the next generation is one of the most important things we do.”

– MICHAEL SULEWSKI JR.

More residents are also presenting their research findings at national meetings, as well as working as patient advocates, whether it be advocating on their behalf in the PACE clinic or lobbying on Capitol Hill during the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s Mid-Year Forum every spring in Washington, D.C. “I am so proud of what they are achieving,” she says.

Woreta is especially delighted by what she describes as a “cultural evolution at Wilmer” under the leadership of

Peter J. McDonnell, M.D., the Alan and Marlene Norton Director of the Wilmer Eye Institute and the William Holland Wilmer Professor of Ophthalmology — one that rewards faculty who are passionate and talented educators, as exemplified by the School of Medicine’s new clinician educator track and a new emphasis at Wilmer on recruiting physician educators. Both Sulewski and Woreta themselves hold endowed professorships supported by former Wilmer physicians who were gifted teachers and were passionate about the institute’s educational mission.

“Our faculty has always put trainees first,” she says. “I can’t tell you how gratifying it is to be part of that tradition.”

Woreta also points to an expanded education infrastructure, as exemplified by her own new job as Wilmer’s vice chair for education (a position created in the past decade), plus two new associate residency program directors, assistant professors of ophthalmology **Isa Mohammed, M.D.**, and **Edward Kuwera, M.D.**, as well as education champions in every division. They are all prepared to support Sulewski in his new role.

“We recruited Michael in 2020 because of his passion for surgical education,” Woreta says. “And after just a few months, all of us knew, residents and faculty alike, that he was not only an exceptional surgeon but a gifted educator. He is already bringing new energy and ideas to the residency program. It’s an exciting time for Wilmer residents and for education at Wilmer.” ●

IN MEMORIAM: **TED REIVER**

By Peter J. McDonnell, M.D.

Ted and Ann Reiver were among the first people to greet me when I returned to Johns Hopkins in 2003 to be the director of the Wilmer Eye Institute. They came as part of the Lions' annual visit to Wilmer each Fall and to receive an update on the progress being made by our Low Vision and Visual Rehabilitation team, which the Lions support.

A Delaware businessman, Ted had one of those thousand-watt smiles and an ebullient personality. He was a past district governor and international director of Lions Clubs International. The Lions are known as a service organization, and Ted embodied the word "service." I recall him speaking before his fellow Lions and sharing that his father had passed away, leaving to Ted his prized coin collection. Ted told us that he had decided to honor his father's memory by selling the collection and gifting the proceeds to the Lions Low Vision clinic to help those suffering from impaired sight. All of us in the room were moved to tears by Ted's heartfelt comments and manifest desire to serve others.

It was clear to me that Wilmer would benefit from having wonderful people like Ted and Ann on my Wilmer Board of Governors, and I will always be grateful that they agreed to serve. For two decades, they have been generous with their advice and never missed one of our meetings or special events, making the long drive from Delaware and back.

The only time I ever questioned Ted's judgment was when he came to one of our board meetings and gleefully showed me photos of him walking down the side of a gigantic glass and steel skyscraper, rappelling like a soldier in the special forces. That he did this as a challenge to raise funds for a charity should have come as no surprise. We were fortunate to have Ted and his ever-present better half, Ann, join us for our Centennial Gala in June.

Wilmer and the patients we care for lost a great friend when Ted passed away in July. ●



Ted and Ann Reiver

“Ted told us that he had decided to honor his father’s memory by selling the collection and gifting the proceeds to the Lions Low Vision clinic to help those suffering from impaired sight. All of us in the room were moved to tears by Ted’s heartfelt comments and manifest desire to serve others.”

– PETER J. MCDONNELL

2025 EVENTS

CURING COATS FUNDRAISER FEBRUARY 22

The 2025 Curing Coats event took place at the Smole family home in Clarksville, Maryland. **James Handa, M.D.**, and **Akrit Sodhi, M.D., Ph.D.**, gave remarks on behalf of Wilmer, sharing updates on their research and advances in Coats care. The event raised \$18,740. The Smoles continue to be tireless advocates for Wilmer and Coats disease research and treatment, rallying their community and advocating for patients from across the country.

James Handa, left, provided an update on research for Coats disease. ▶



BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING APRIL 29

During the spring meeting, Wilmer Director **Peter J. McDonnell, M.D.**, presented board member Mariellen Brickley-Raab with the Aida de Acosta Root Breckinridge Award for her friendship and loyal support of the Wilmer Eye Institute, and **Jefferson Doyle, M.D., Ph.D., M.H.S.**, and **Mandeep Singh, M.D., Ph.D.**, shared updates on the work of the Genetic Eye Disease Center at Wilmer.

A NEW RISING PROFESSORSHIP APRIL 29

Ishrat Ahmed, M.D., Ph.D., became the inaugural Retina Rising Professor of Ophthalmology. A dedication ceremony and reception were held in the atrium of the Robert H. and Clarice Smith Building. Speakers and dignitaries included Landon King, M.D., executive vice dean, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine; William J. Stromberg, trustee, Johns Hopkins University; and longtime Wilmer supporter Per Bang-Jensen, who generously endowed the rising professorship. (See page 10 for more about the rising professorship.)

Landon King and Ishrat Ahmed ▶



KTEF PRESENTATION OF GRANTS SEPTEMBER 19

Representatives from the Knights Templar Eye Foundation (KTEF) awarded 2025–2026 KTEF Career Starter Grants to postdoctoral research fellows **Yingxue Cao, Ph.D.**, and **Sangeetha Kandoi, Ph.D.**



▲ Scott Lapp, right eminent grand commander, Maryland Knights Templar; George Christoff, very eminent deputy grand commander, Maryland Knights Templar; Sangeetha Kandoi; Marcie Lapp, incoming president of Social Order of the Beauceant of Cockeysville, Maryland; Seth Blackshaw; Thomas Morrison, eminent grand captain general, District of Columbia Knights Templar, state chairman KTEF-DC; Yana Li; Gary Kennedy, chairman, Maryland Knights Templar; John Austin, right eminent Mid-Atlantic department commander, Grand Encampment of Knights Templar USA



▲ Marianne Ri; Yingxue Cao; Thomas Morrison, eminent grand captain general, District of Columbia Knights Templar, state chairman KTEF-DC; Marcie Lapp, incoming president of Social Order of the Beauceant of Cockeysville, Maryland; Scott Lapp, right eminent grand commander, Maryland Knights Templar; George Christoff, very eminent deputy grand commander, Maryland Knights Templar



WORLD ASSOCIATION OF EYE HOSPITALS ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 7-11

The 19th annual World Association of Eye Hospitals (WAEH) meeting took place in Lausanne, Switzerland, and Paris, France. Themes included low vision care, innovations in ophthalmology and hospital design, and AI and data in eye health. Wilmer presenters included, from left, Rahul Shah, M.H.A.; Cathy Kowalewski, M.B.A.; Lindsey Schwartz, and Megan Ward, M.B.A.



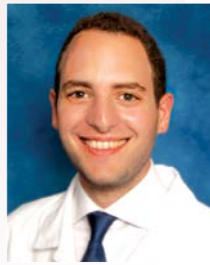
WILMER RECEPTION AT THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 18

Wilmer alumni and faculty members gathered at Plancha at the Four Seasons Orlando in Florida for a reception hosted by the Wilmer Residents Association. They celebrated guest of honor, AAO President **Michael X. Repka, M.D., M.B.A.**, the David L. Guyton, M.D. and Feduniak Family Professor of Ophthalmology — and raised a glass to a century of innovation, excellence and connection at the Wilmer Eye Institute.

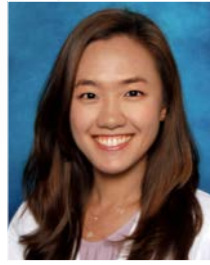
RESIDENTS 2025-2026



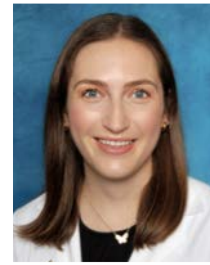
Joana Andoh



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Maggie Hsu



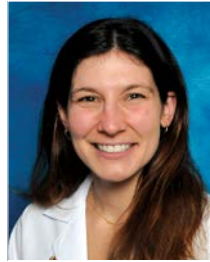
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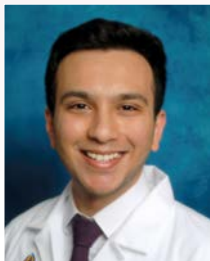
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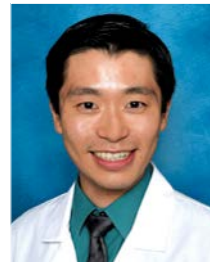
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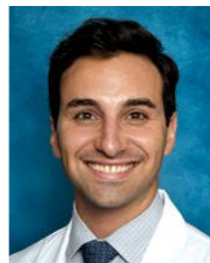
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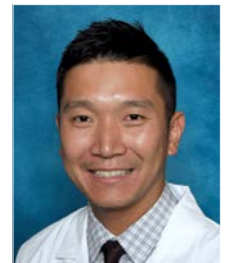
Jeremy Shapiro



Nicole Tsai



Khala Webb

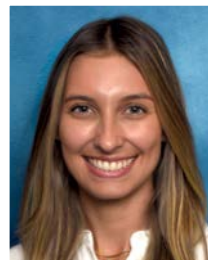


Peter Weng

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Mackenzie Coyne



Anna Konstantinidis

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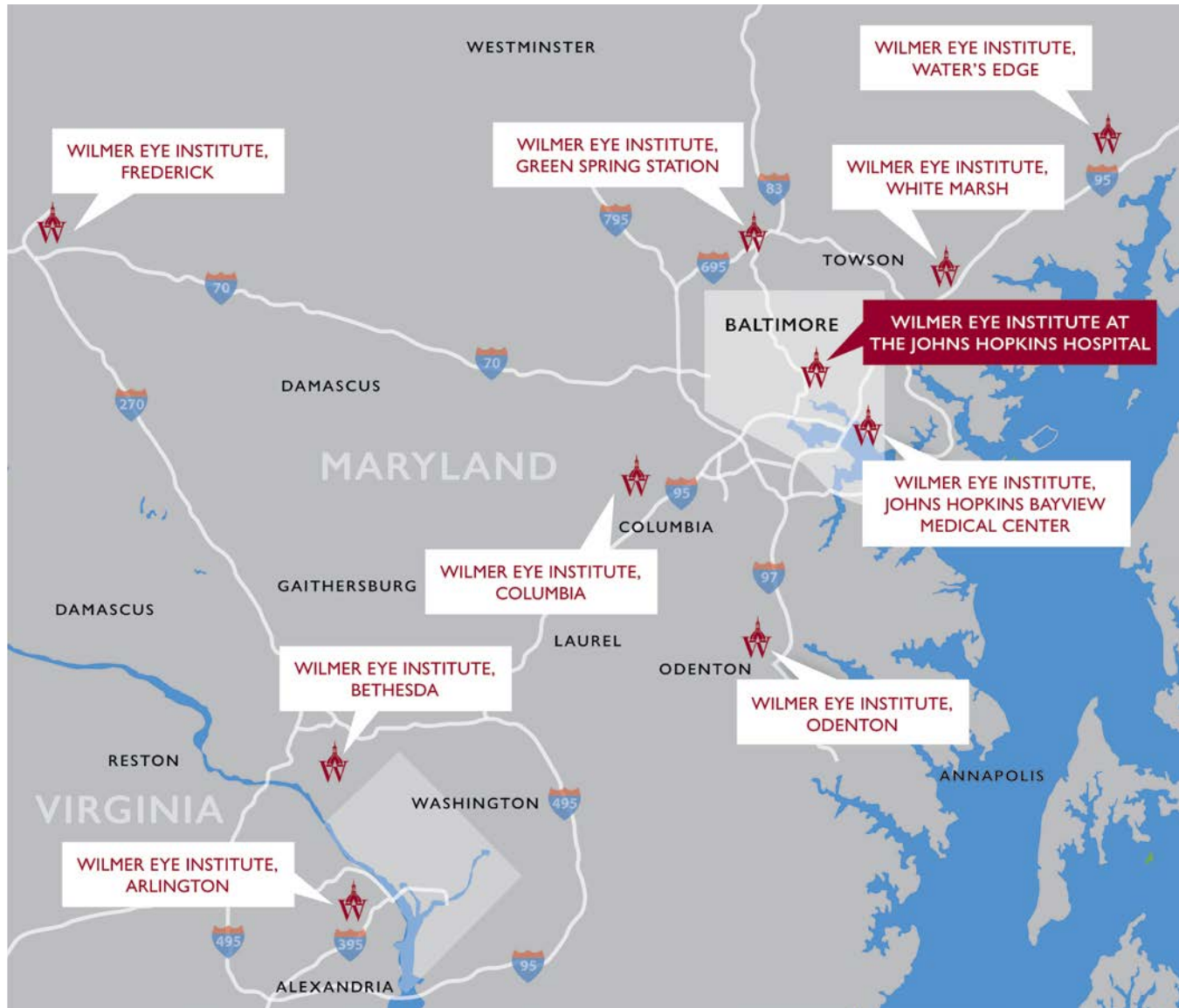
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