We’re Gonna Beat Trachoma

Sheila West is on a mission and making significant research advances on the way.
Dear Wilmer Family,

This year we are witnessing the tangible emergence of our newest building. Built entirely with philanthropic dollars, this beautiful structure, Wilmer’s fourth building, will set a new standard for vision research and ophthalmic surgery. We are counting down the days to our move-in next summer.

Recently, the press has been full of articles on “sustainable philanthropy.” In traditional philanthropy, a donor supports a good cause, such as giving eyeglasses to the poor; once the funds are depleted, the program ends. In sustainable philanthropy, donations act as seed funds, establishing a self-supporting enterprise that benefits others long after the initial funds are used.

Created with $3 million from grateful patients and foundations, the Wilmer Eye Institute is a perfect example of sustainable philanthropy. Last year, we provided more than $2.7 million in uncompensated care — plus eye surgery for the poor, funded by an endowment. We now annually provide care to the Baltimore region’s indigent worth about what it cost to create the Institute! We can absorb this loss because of the payments we receive from insurers and patients who do pay for our care, and because our doctors are willing to accept lower salaries than they typically would receive out in practice. Yet demand outstrips supply, and providing eye care to the indigent and working poor in our community represents a major challenge for Wilmer. We are not alone. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that, in 2007, 45.7 million Americans had no health insurance.

We who work at Wilmer are pleased to be able to help as many people as we do. We know how gratifying it is to care for those whose only way of repaying us is the joy they experience when they see.

My best wishes.

Peter J. McDonnell, M.D.
William Holland Wilmer Professor and Director
As a pediatric oncologist in Japan, Noriko Esumi became frustrated treating children with leukemia and other cancers because of the gap between physicians’ understanding about basic biological mechanisms and what was happening in her patients’ bodies. Now, as a molecular biologist at Wilmer, she’s determined to flesh out the genetic underpinnings of macular degeneration.

Her research focuses on regulation of gene expression within the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE), a layer of cells that nourishes and supports light-sensing mechanisms within the retina. Esumi already has defined some regulatory mechanisms of a gene called VMD2, which, when mutated, causes a disorder called Best disease that threatens central vision. She plans to build on that by further exploring how abnormal regulation of VMD2 and other important genes in the RPE might contribute to age-related macular degeneration.

On recommendation from Wilmer’s senior faculty, Director Peter McDonnell recently awarded Esumi seed money from the Institute’s Director’s Discovery Fund.

McDonnell says the fund provides him with monies to use as “venture capital,” investing in young professors’ futures. “With increased competition for external funding, often people with brilliant ideas lack the resources to explore them,” McDonnell says. “Dr. Esumi is a particularly brilliant, young assistant professor. The implications of her research are enormous, with the potential to dramatically change how we think of some retinal diseases.”

Esumi says since some of her National Eye Institute funding has been cut due to federal budget pressures, the gift is essential to growing her own research group by hiring technicians to help conduct some of the laboratory experiments. “This will dramatically accelerate the pace of discovery in my laboratory,” Esumi says. “As a young faculty member at Wilmer, I am incredibly grateful to those donors who have helped create the Director’s Discovery Fund, and to my senior faculty who have confidence in my abilities.”

In every one of the 19 years that U.S. News & World Report has been ranking the nation’s best hospitals and specialty care, the Wilmer Eye Institute has been in the top tier of ophthalmology programs. As the magazine’s editors said in their 2008 “America’s Best Hospitals” edition, “any good hospital should be able to handle everyday procedures and conditions,” but the patient who’s the target of the rankings is the one “who truly needs outstanding care.”

And that, of course, has been Wilmer’s mission from day one. We’re as proud as we have ever been of our impressive showing in this survey year after year, and of the outstanding faculty, nurses and staff who consistently put us there.

Meet the Wilmer development team: Danielle Grepps, Kim Morton, Suzy Williams and Elizabeth Bower. Not pictured is Liz Griffin.
Stephen J. Ryan credits his chief residency at Wilmer in 1969 as being the key and foundation to his successful career in ophthalmology. Now Ryan, president of the Doheny Eye Institute in Los Angeles, is giving back through a named endowment fund to help support a new generation of chief residents, currently referred to as the assistant chiefs of service.

“Dr. Ryan is one of Wilmer’s most famous alums,” says Wilmer Director Peter McDonnell. “He left Hopkins to become the first full-time chair of ophthalmology at the University of Southern California—as the only full-time faculty member—and built what was a low-profile department into one of the top programs in the country if not the world. Then he was prevailed upon to become dean of USC’s medical school. His whole career has been about medical education, mentoring, and inspiring others to rise to the next level.”

The Wilmer assistant chief of service has long been a highly respected and demanding position. The ACS not only is a practicing clinician but also acts as an educator and role model for medical students and residents. Historically, those who have held the position have become some of the nation’s leaders in the field.

Ryan wanted to ensure that the ACS could set aside time for mentoring the residents under his or her leadership.

About 10 years ago, Ryan approached former Wilmer Director Morton Goldberg about helping support the position and began making donations toward that end. Then, when McDonnell (another former assistant chief of service and former USC faculty member) returned to Wilmer in 2003, he approached his former boss about heading a $1 million campaign to create an endowment for the ACS. With Ryan’s personal and matched donations kick-starting the campaign, the goal was reached.

Says Ryan, “Among the things that keep Wilmer on top are its commitment to education and the strong support of the director. This endowment will provide income to help the ACS carry out the mission of educating the great group of Wilmer residents.”

A celebration and inaugural naming will occur May 1, 2009, with Ryan, a trustee of Johns Hopkins Medicine and member of the Johns Hopkins Society of Scholars, in attendance.

“We strive, year after year, to identify someone who, like Dr. Stephen Ryan, clearly embodies the qualities and skills that make for a strong leader and an excellent clinician, teacher and role model,” McDonnell says. ■
When Ruben Adler, a recognized world leader in vision research, learned that he might be terminally ill, one of the first things he did was meet with Wilmer Eye Institute Director Peter McDonnell. Adler wanted to make sure that the work of the young postdoctoral students and fellows in his institute lab would not be disrupted by his death.

“He was remarkably selfless,” says McDonnell. “He was a dream faculty member. If all Hopkins faculty were like him, you wouldn't need department chairs. He had a great sense of the whole and was heavily invested in the success of his colleagues.”

Adler, the first Arnall Patz Distinguished Professor of Ophthalmology, died on Dec. 31, 2007. He was 68. A native of Argentina, Adler received his medical degree from the University of Buenos Aires School of Medicine in 1963. He moved to the United States in 1977 and joined Wilmer in 1982. He became a professor of ophthalmology and neurosciences in 1991 and was named the first holder of the Patz professorship in 1993.

Adler was deeply interested in preventing and treating retinal diseases. Among his many contributions to eye research was his participation in the discovery of CNTF, a unique neurotrophic factor. He was the first to hypothesize that such growth factors could play a key role in the prevention and treatment of photoreceptor degenerations. He and his colleagues at Wilmer's Retinal Degeneration Center were pioneers in the development of tissue culture methods for retinal photoreceptors. The center has used an extensive array of cellular and molecular techniques to probe the effects of genetic and micro-environmental factors on these retinal cells.
The Shape of Things to Come

“Noble life demands a noble architecture for noble uses of noble men.”
– Frank Lloyd Wright
The anticipation is, literally, building.

Just one year after ground-breaking festivities marked the turning point between vision and reality, the Wilmer Eye Institute’s emerging new home for outpatient surgery and research is making a strong statement. For those who will occupy the space, that statement, in every sense of the word, is light.

Slated to open next summer, the 207,000-square-foot structure rising on the corner of Broadway and Orleans Street was conceived not only as an ultra-modern center where more than 14,000 people annually can receive sight-sparing operations from Wilmer’s world-renowned surgeons. It’s also been designed to fast-track discoveries that are far more likely to happen when clinicians, geneticists, biochemists, molecular biologists, epidemiologists and surgeons—all bent on curing blinding eye diseases—can bounce ideas off each other by simply strolling to the lab next door.

Cure may be a bold goal indeed, but the scores of men and women whose gifts are providing 100 percent of the funding for construction understand exactly what’s at stake. Named for its lead donors, the Robert H. and Clarice Smith Building and the Maurice Bendann Surgical Pavilion of the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins testify to the quality
The sculpture will combine graceful lines that will blend with the surrounding architecture, with an upward thrust that would symbolize the unending struggle for knowledge and understanding that is the essence of research.

– John Safer

of care Wilmer patients have always received.

Morton Goldberg, Wilmer’s former director who has dreamed and labored over the plans for this building for over a decade, sees a unifying theme: Wilmer’s donors grasp only too well what it means to face the prospect of life robbed of sight. Robert Smith’s mother-in-law, for example, was treated at Wilmer for macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in U.S. adults over the age of 55.

So too was a man whose contribution of artwork will be so breathtaking that, in Goldberg’s words, “this building will be unique, not just at Johns Hopkins, but in Baltimore. It will be a destination.” John Safer, like so many of those who turn to Wilmer for hope, learned a decade ago that the culprit behind his then-failing vision was macular degeneration. The world-renowned artist—who was described by art critic Frank Getlein as “a monumental sculptor in the tradition of Phidias, Michaelangelo and Rodin”—was operated on by Goldberg for his AMD and later needed the skill of Wilmer eye surgeon Oliver Schein for cataract surgery as well. As a result of these operations, says Safer, he’s been able to continue his work. Thanking Goldberg and McDonnell for recent well-wishes they sent, the sculptor wrote, “the best birthday present is that I can read the card.”

So when Goldberg suggested that a Safer sculpture would be just the thing to adorn Wilmer’s new building, the octogenarian agreed to create what will be an unforgettable tribute to all who carry on the Institute’s mission of seeking new knowledge in the battle against vision loss.

Named Quest, Safer’s design is a 35-foot flame of polished steel that will stand near the building’s Broadway entrance in the five-story, light-flooded T. Boone Pickens Atrium. Its undulating lines, which Goldberg likens to a strand of DNA, also set the stage for other architectural elements being incorporated throughout the building, such as echoing curvilinear shapes in the terrazzo that will run the length of the atrium’s first floor. The six-ton sculpture will rise on a circular terrazzo plinth that Safer and chief building architect Adam Gross designed together.

And that’s just the beginning. Works by building namesake Clarice Smith, an acclaimed painter of modern life who’s exhibited both nationally and internationally, will add grace and warmth to the building’s main level. Meanwhile, paintings by esteemed New York artist Wolf Kahn, known for blending realism and Color Field in what’s been called a fusion of color, spontaneity and representation, will enliven the clinic area.

“Robert Smith wanted this to be a building that people would always remember,” says Wilmer Director Peter McDonnell, “and every inch has been thought through to the nth degree, from the architectural competition at the start to the most recent gift from the Smiths.
of mature trees that will be planted outside. It will be both an inspiring, beautiful environment and a space built to increase efficiency and maximize interactions among our researchers and surgeons.”

For patients, who will park just outside and enter through welcoming glass doors on the building’s south-west side, the surgical experience will no longer involve the time-wasting moves between rooms and floors now required in Wilmer’s century-old original building. Instead, patients will be guided in a logical flow from the spacious entrance and registration area, to nearby pre-op rooms, to 21st-century operating rooms designed with all suspended equipment—including operating microscopes and teaching videography—to keep the floors free of obstacles. Recovery rooms, which can also double as pre-op rooms if need be, are sited near a separate exit to the parking lot so patients won’t have to retrace their path through the building once they’re discharged.

“We’ll be able to do 50 percent more procedures per day,” says McDonnell, “because everyone—surgeons, nurses, staff—will be right next to each other. Each operation will take much less time and, as a result, the experience will be far more patient friendly.”

That same thinking underlying the creation of these commonsense clinical neighborhoods defines the very essence of the new research floors.

“There was a time,” explains McDonnell, “when brilliant people working alone made the important discoveries. Today, we need the intersection of many disciplines: genetics, public health, biochemistry. The challenge we’ve had with our older buildings is that we’d put a senior investigator in one place because it was available but then we’d have to put junior investigators working on related research in other places because we had no adjacent space. Some of our faculty could go for months, even years, without even seeing each other.”

No more. Researchers working in the Smith Building will arrive through the northeast entrance, angled precisely toward the Wilmer dome and sheathed in reflecting glass to mirror its eminence in the history of modern ophthalmology. They’ll cross the octagonal vestibule with its bluestone pavers and pass through the William R. and Norma Kline Tiefel Lobby, where the main leadership wall honors the donors whose generosity has made everything possible. And then, turning left, they’ll enter the sun-drenched atrium.

Spanning the building from the north end to the south, where light pouring in from skylights five stories above the floor will play off the gleaming planes of the Safer sculpture, the glass curtain walls of the labs and the glass rails of the grand staircase, the atrium embodies the very idea of breakthrough. It takes center stage between the offices lining every level along the east wall and the research labs on the west, all placed to promote walking around and what McDonnell calls the “unplanned interactions” so likely to launch new ideas and understanding of the myriad causes of blindness.

For John Safer, there could be no better place to display *Quest*. “The sculpture,” he says, “will combine graceful lines that will blend with the surrounding architecture, with an upward thrust that would symbolize the unending struggle for knowledge and understanding that is the essence of research.”

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**Not To Be Missed**

The two-day building dedication, set to coincide with the 80th anniversary of Wilmer’s first dedication, will take place October 15-16, 2009. Festivities will include a formal dedication, day of science and community celebration.
We’re Gonna Beat Trachoma

Armed with $12.1 million courtesy of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Sheila West and a far-flung cohort of colleagues are doing battle with the world’s leading infectious cause of blindness—and they’re aiming to win.
The blonde woman in the photos wears a denim jumper and a plain T-shirt. She is surrounded by African women and children, smiling widely and swathed in brightly colored clothing. The landscape appears parched and dusty, and in some shots you can see children shouldering enormous water jugs. Back in Sheila West’s office at the Wilmer Eye Institute, those scenes seem as remote as the Sub-Saharan villages West visits regularly to treat people infected with trachoma, a blinding eye disease that affects some 84 million people each year.

In 2007, West was awarded a five-year, $10 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to uncover ways to eliminate trachoma. In October 2008, the Foundation gave her an additional $2.1 million, allowing West to expand her research to include other neglected tropical diseases. Working with a consortium of researchers from the Wilmer Eye Institute, London’s School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; the University of San Francisco; and the World Health Organization (WHO), West will focus on improving known treatments for trachoma, which include surgery and antibiotics.

Trachoma is the world’s leading infectious cause of blindness. The disease is now a problem mainly in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia—places where clean water and access to medical care are seriously lacking. Because trachoma is easily spread via flies, clothing and bedding, children in particular are infected over and over again. These prolonged episodes lead to scarring of the upper eyelid, which contracts the lid and causes the eyelashes to rub across the cornea. “It’s not only painful, but leads to corneal blindness,” explains West. And it’s largely irreversible. “These eyes that are blind from trachoma are not good candidates for corneal transplants, even if such a technology were available in these countries, and it’s largely not.”

Despite intense competition for grant money, West says it wasn’t difficult to convince the Gates Foundation to fund her research. “Unlike the National Institutes of Health, which is largely interested in the impact of diseases in the United States, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation considers operational research for the global burden of disease,” she says. That includes what’s known as “neglected tropical diseases,” such as leprosy, lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis and trachoma. “By themselves, these are not the killers that malaria and HIV are, and for that reason are neglected. But taken together, they’re responsible for considerable morbidity,” explains West. She hopes her research will find enough overlap in control of these diseases so that medical treatments may rid communities not just of trachoma, but possibly co-existing conditions as well.

The Gates Foundation responded to West’s approach, which focuses on improving known effective treatments for trachoma. Although West shies away from the word cure, she will say, “We can eliminate blinding trachoma, but we need some answers before we can say that it’s going to be by 2020 [the goal set by the WHO]. That’s where the grant came in.”

Specifically, the Gates grant will tackle two aspects of the four-pronged treatment approach endorsed by the WHO, known as the SAFE strategy: the S stands for surgery to correct the in-turned eyelashes; A is for antibiotics to treat the infectious community; F and E are for face-washing and environmental change, like the provision of clean water, to try to interrupt...
the transmission of trachoma.

West’s team is concentrating on the S and A components. “Despite surgery that we know corrects lashes, in a program setting we have a huge problem of recurrence,” she explains. “We feel a lot of that is due to surgical technique.” With a shortage of ophthalmologists in rural Africa, the surgery is being performed by medical assistants, ophthalmologic nurses and paramedical personnel, with less than ideal results.

Part of the grant will fund a clinical trial to determine whether a new device developed by Wilmer plastic surgeon Shannath Merbs will decrease the recurrence rate of trachoma. The trial, slated to begin in 2009 in Tanzania, will follow 1,400 patients over two years. An enthusiastic West says, “It shows how you take a high-technology area like plastic surgery, focus on a problem in a third-world area, and come up with a new approach that nobody’s thought of.”

West will also aim to answer the questions of how many people need to be treated with antibiotics and how often in order to eliminate trachoma in highly affected communities. A generous donation of the drug azithromycin, or Zithromax, by Pfizer means that communities can now be treated with a single-dose oral pill or liquid—a huge advantage in the fight against trachoma.

West, who is fluent in French and Swahili, has spent most of her 24-year Wilmer career “trooping around in these villages in Africa.” Her work there has left some indelible impressions that few other Americans can imagine. “The kind of instability and horrific stories that the U.S. tends to see in Africa are so far from my experiences,” says West. “I have people who have been with me since 1986 in Africa. They are among the hardest working people I have ever encountered.” She knows many African ophthalmologists who have forgone international careers to devote themselves to improving the eye health in their communities. “I see a country of motivated health professionals who work hard and bring pride to their job, whether it’s sitting in an office doing data entry, whether it’s out in the field flipping eyelids or trying to get Zithromax to the far corners of these villages.”

Part of what keeps West going are the impressive results of trachoma programs like hers. Follow-up surveys to a Zithromax program in Ghana revealed no evidence of trachoma—making it the first African country to essentially eliminate the disease. The Gambia will likely follow suit. “It’s happening,” says West. “We just need to speed up that process.

“When I started out my career, trachoma was the second leading cause of blindness worldwide; it was a huge problem in so many countries. And I may actually be able to retire when this is no longer a public health problem,” she says. “To know that I was part of an effort for the global elimination of a blinding eye disease is truly exciting.”

Seeing what can be done with even limited resources gives Sheila West hope for the rural African communities where she works to eliminate trachoma. The Gates Foundation has provided her team with one vehicle to bring medical care to these remote villages, and West has raised funds for another van. However, she could desperately use a third. “We are just holding our third vehicle together with baling wire and duct tape,” she says.

Part of the job is getting there

In Tanzania, Sheila West confers with members of her team and village residents.
A Donation Funds Time to Learn

Aliki Perroti has long been recognized as a substantial private and public philanthropist in her native country. She is a daughter of Theodoros Koustantopoulos, an internationally renowned civil engineer who was a major force in post-World War II Greece after his wartime refusal to assist or cooperate with the Nazis during the occupation resulted in the confiscation of his construction company and exposure to personal danger.

Perroti established and solely funded the Konstantopoulos Hospital in memory of her father and her mother, Maria. This modern, 285-bed public hospital was built in an underserved Athens neighborhood. With its highly skilled and dedicated medical and professional staff, the hospital provides needed health care across a broad spectrum of specialties to patients regardless of their financial means, and functions as a highly regarded and integral pillar of the health care system of Greece—not unlike Johns Hopkins in its history and standing.

Additionally, Perroti established and funded the Dimitris Perrotis College of Agricultural Studies at The American Farm School in Thessaloniki, Greece, in memory of her husband, and the college's state-of-the-art Aliki and Dimitrius Perrotis Library there which serves the Thessaloniki community as well as student and faculty needs.

Long a friend of Johns Hopkins and a grateful beneficiary of its services, Perroti has been particularly impressed with the Wilmer Eye Institute. Among her most recent contributions to Johns Hopkins is funding to establish the Aliki Perroti Scholarship at Wilmer. She established the scholarship in gratitude for the care and friendship of Walter Stark, director of the Cornea and Cataract Service. The Perroti Scholarship will support bright young physician-scientists, like Kalliope Stasi, who will train under Stark's mentorship.
Two women, united through their passion to push boundaries, help advance a way to reverse corneal damage.

Although Kalliopi Stasi enjoyed caring for patients in her solo ophthalmology practice in Athens, Greece, she missed the laboratory research she’d enjoyed while pursuing her doctorate. “I yearned to advance patient care by formulating and investigating new research questions based on my clinical cases,” she says. After spending several years in the United States, training with some of the country’s leading eye centers, Stasi came to Wilmer in July for a clinical fellowship in cornea, cataract and refractive surgery under Walter Stark, director of the Cornea and Cataract Service.

Now, as the recipient of the Aliki Perroti Scholarship, Stasi’s salary will be supported for a year as she pursues a research project with Stark and Assistant Professor Roy Chuck, identifying and characterizing stem cells that have the potential to regenerate the surface of the cornea.

Taken from the limbus (the eye’s white outer coating), these “mother cells” can develop the properties of cells that line the outermost layer of the cornea. When that outer eye surface is destroyed, the corneal surface becomes cloudy or scarred and then cannot properly refract light, significantly affecting sight. The hope, says Stasi, is to isolate stem cells from a patient’s healthy eye, grow them in culture, and transplant them to the damaged eye.

The Perroti Scholarship also puts Stasi in a good position to apply for a National Institutes of Health K08 Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Award, which helps student scientists become more successful with translational research.

“I look forward to introducing my dear friend, Mrs. Perroti, to this year’s brilliant Perroti scholar, Dr. Stasi, who has already shown so much promise in her work,” says Stark. “Mrs. Perroti has been a great champion for excellence in medical education and research in her home country as well as here at Johns Hopkins. We are thrilled to have her name forever linked to the Wilmer Institute name.”
Like many children, Nicholas Iliff wanted to pursue a career different from that of his father. Charles E. Iliff III, was considered one of the pioneers of oculoplastics, the surgical restoration of the function and appearance of the eye. While Nick’s older brother, W. Jackson Iliff, followed their father into ophthalmology, Nick decided to go into general surgery. Halfway through his internship in surgery at Johns Hopkins, though, he realized that pursuing a specialty just for the sake of being different from Dad wasn’t a good enough reason. His true love was indeed ophthalmology. Perhaps this is not so surprising for a boy who grew up watching home movies of his father’s eye surgeries and listening to him discuss his work at the dinner table.

In May 2008, Nick became the inaugural recipient of the Charles E. Iliff III, M.D., Professorship in Surgical Ophthalmology. The endowed professorship was made possible in part by Helen J. Iliff, a retired pediatric cardiologist who also goes by her professional name, Helen Ossofsky. Helen, an alumna of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, desired that her stepson, Nick, be
the first recipient of the professorship named for her late husband and established to give back to the place that, she says, “shaped [her] life.”

At the Wilmer Eye Institute, the Iliff name is renowned. During his 50-year association with Wilmer, Charles Iliff became internationally recognized for his groundbreaking work in oculoplastics, cataract surgery and corneal transplantation. His career at Wilmer began in 1942, following his graduation from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 1939. Even after going into private practice, Charles maintained strong ties with Wilmer as an assistant, then associate, and finally full professor of ophthalmology in 1973. At the time of his death in 1997 at the age of 86, Charles was a professor emeritus of ophthalmology at Hopkins.

But the late Dr. Iliff was so much more than a list of impressive accomplishments, says his son Nick. “He was extremely well-liked by everybody—colleagues, friends, family. And he cared tremendously about his patients.” His father earned a reputation as a surgeon who could handle seemingly hopeless cases. “He was a very upbeat person, very much a can-do kind of person,” says his son.

“His patients left feeling that their problems were solvable.” Coupled with his superb surgical skills, Charles’ friendly demeanor earned him the respect and affection of his patients and his community, says Nick. “He’d go to the hardware store and everyone would call him Doc. He was a special person.”

It was these qualities that Helen wished to honor when she endowed the professorship in his father’s name, says Nick. “What Helen wanted and the reason she wanted it was my father was this sort of interesting personality. He taught a lot about what it means to be a physician that transcended writing papers or doing research and some of the things that are so important and so much a part of Hopkins and Wilmer.” While the late Dr. Iliff will certainly be remembered for operations and instruments that he pioneered—some of which his son still uses today—“that’s not what he wanted to be known for” or how his family remembers him, says Nick.

Per the donors’ wishes, the Charles E. Iliff III, M.D., Professorship in Surgical Ophthalmology is specifically a clinical professorship, meant to support surgical work and teaching rather than lab research. The permanent position will provide him more time to teach residents and an oculoplastics fellow, attend clinical meetings, and write, says Nick, as well as more flexibility and time with patients. “I’ve always spent the vast majority of my time on patient care, so it wasn’t that I had to change what I do,” he says.

Nick’s hope is that the professorship he now holds will provide continuity for future members of the Wilmer community. When he retires, the position will go to the next leader in eye surgery at Wilmer. Growing up, he recalls hearing his father talk about his colleagues and the early days of the Institute: “Not only the people who worked at Wilmer but the people who made Wilmer what it is today. What they started really is in the fabric of what Wilmer is. And I think these professorships strengthen that fabric and make sure that that continuity is there.”

He’d go to the hardware store and everyone would call him Doc. He was a special person.
The scientists and staff of the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins gratefully acknowledge our partners in philanthropy listed below. The generosity of these friends supports a tradition of collaboration and far-reaching investigation as, together, we pursue the complex challenges of eye diseases. While our space here is limited, our thankfulness is not. Although gifts of any amount are gratefully received, only gifts totaling more than $100 in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, could be listed in this report. If any donor was accidently missed, please contact the development office at 410-955-2020.

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Mr. Charles J. Batchelor
Mr. and Mrs. William H. Gates III
Mr. William H. Gates and Ms. Helen E. Yoo
Mrs. Janet C. Gehrein
Mr. and Dr. Nahum Gelber
George & Theresa Laniado Fund
Georgetown Lions Club District 22-D
Drs. Philip V. and Marjorie W. Gerdine
Ms. Linda Gerson
Mr. and Mrs. Carl S. Gewirz
Dr. Howard D. Gilbert
Mr. Irving Gilston
Mr. James H. Gipson
Mrs. Catherine M. Gleeson *
Mr. and Mrs. Mrs. Jeffrey Goldberg
Dr. Rufus C. Goodwin
Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd E. Goodwine
Gordon Foundation
Ms. Shirley K. Gouaux *
Mrs. Florence Hill Graff
Dr. and Mrs. Sanford D. Greenberg
Ms. Shirley M. Greene
Mrs. Shirley K. Griffin
Ms. Margaret V. Griffith
Mr. Willard Hackerman
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Hall
Mr. and Mrs. John L. Hammersmith
Dr. Barbara Snyder Hawkins
Mr. George S. Hawn
Hess Foundation, Inc.
Ms. Dorothy A. Heyl
Hilb, Rogal and Hobbs Company
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Hills
Mr. Randolph Hinz
Mr. and Mrs. Michael D. Hobbs
Ms. Dorothy Holler
Mr. and Mrs. David L. Holman
Mr. and Mrs. Peter M. Holt
Dr. David P. Honey *
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Horn
Mr. Antoni Horodowicz
Mr. James A. Hourihan
Howard & Martha Head Fund, Inc.
Mr. Steve Hronec
The Hultquist Foundation
Mrs. Mary S. Humelsine
Mr. Craig B. Huston *
Mr. Earl M. Hyde, Jr.
Mr. Christopher Ihde
Faculty Feats
A sampling of FY08 honors for Wilmer physicians.

William R. Bitman
IT Director


Michael Boland, M.D.

- Received an unrestricted gift from the Microsoft Be Well Fund to be used to support research into using a personal health record to improve patient adherence to medications

Diana V. Do, M.D.

- American Academy of Ophthalmology Achievement Award
- The Jean Lacerte Lecturer, Les Journees Ophtalmologiques de L'Universite Laval (JOUL), Quebec, Canada

Henry Jampel, M.D., M.H.S.
the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Professor of Ophthalmology

- Senior Achievement Award, American Academy of Ophthalmology

David L. Guyton, M.D.
the Zanvyl Krieger Professor of Pediatric Ophthalmology

- Presented the John E. Brown Memorial Lecture, Ohio State University, titled “Strabismus Complications from Local Anesthetics”
- Mildred Weisenfeld Award, Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
- Presented the Jules Stein Lecture, Jules Stein Eye Institute, UCLA, titled “Changes in Strabismus over Time …”
- Presented the third Eugene R. Folk, M.D. Memorial Lecture, Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, titled “Ocular Torsion Reveals the Mechanisms of Cyclovertical Strabismus”

Roy Chuck, M.D., Ph.D.
the Tom Clancy Professor of Ophthalmology

- President, Chinese American Ophthalmological Society
- Golden Key and Golden Apple Awards for China
- Elected to the Johns Hopkins Medical School Council
- Visiting professor; University of California San Francisco; Washington University St. Louis; Indiana University; Boston University; Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University; Beijing Eye Center and University; Sun Yat Sen Eye Center Guangzhou University; Al Tawam Hospital Johns Hopkins International, Abu Dhabi, UAE; University of Pennsylvania
- Elected to the editorial boards of the Journal of Refractive Surgery, Lasers in Surgery and Medicine, Current Opinion in Ophthalmology
- Appointed to the American Academy of Ophthalmology Committee on Refractive Management and Intervention

Lori Grover, O.D.

- Named chair of the AOA Low Vision Rehabilitation Section

Rahul Khurana, M.D.

- Ten Outstanding Young Americans Award

Jeremy Nathans, M.D.

- The 2008 ($1.4 million) António Champalimaud Vision Award, referred to as the “Nobel Prize for Vision,” the largest monetary prize in the field of vision and one of the largest scientific prizes in the world
James Handa, M.D.
the Robert Bond Welch Professor of Ophthalmology

- Named the Robert Bond Welch Professor of Ophthalmology
- Named an editorial board member of Investigative Ophthalmology and Vision Science
- Presented the Jeffrey Berger Memorial Lecture, Scheie Eye Institute, Philadelphia
- Keynote Speaker, University of California-Davis Ophthalmology Symposium, Napa Valley

Michael Grant, M.D., Ph.D.

- Presented the keynote address, “Evidence-Based Management of Orbital Fractures” at the third AO European Advanced Symposium on Orbital Reconstruction, April 2008
- Elected a director of the American Society of Ocular Trauma

Peter Campochiaro, M.D.
the George S. and Dolores D. Eccles Professor of Ophthalmology

- Special Scholar Award, Research to Prevent Blindness

Emily W. Gower, Ph.D.

- Ernest & Elizabeth Althouse Scholar Award, Research to Prevent Blindness

Albert Jun, M.D., Ph.D.

- Inaugural Wilmer Professors Research Grant Recipient ($100,000)

Susan B. Bressler, M.D.
the Julia G. Levy, Ph.D. Professor of Ophthalmology

- Gertrude D. Pyron Award, American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS)
- Named the Goodwin M. Breinin, M.D. Visiting Professor, New York University Medical Center
- Senior Honor Award, American Society of Retina Specialists

Harry A. Quigley, M.D.
the A. Edward Maumenee Professor of Ophthalmology

- Invited to give the prestigious Jackson Lecture at the American Academy of Ophthalmology (2009)
- Elected president for a four-year term of the Glaucoma Research Society, an international body of specialists in that disease

Teaching Awards Chosen by the Medical Students

Esen Akpek, M.D.
Faculty Teaching Award

Houman Hemmati, M.D.
W. Richard Green House Staff Teaching Award

Nicholas T. Iliff, M.D.
Best Attending Faculty Teacher

Vivian Rismondo, M.D.
Allan D. Jensen Part-Time Faculty Teaching Award

Henry Wiley, M.D.
Best Fellow Teacher

Peter J. McDonnell, M.D.
Director and William Holland Wilmer Professor of Ophthalmology

- Prof. Moacyr Alvaro Gold Medal for Outstanding Service, XXXI Congress of Ophthalmology, São Paulo, Brazil, March 2008
- Doheny Society of Scholars Induction and Medal, Doheny Eye Institute, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, March 2008
- Susruta Lectureship, West Virginia University, May 2008
Quan Dong Nguyen, M.D., M.Sc.

- Senior Honor Award, American Society of Retina Specialists
- Presented the Jean Lacerte Lecturer, Les Journees Ophthalmologiques de L’Universite Laval (JOUL), Quebec, Canada
- Guest of honor and invited speaker, Macula: Advances in Diagnosis and Therapy (MAT), Torino, Italy
- Guest of honor and invited speaker, Jornadas Nacionales de Oftalmologia, Annual Meeting of the Argentinian Academy of Ophthalmology and the third International Symposium of the Argentinian Society of Retina and Vitreous, and Uveitis, Buenos Aires
- Guest of honor and invited speaker, the 27th meeting of the Mexican Retina Society, Acapulco
- Guest of honor and invited speaker, 2008 meeting of the Korean Retina Society, Yonsei University School of Medicine, Seoul

Jennifer E. Thorne, M.D.

- Special Scholar Award, Research to Prevent Blindness
- Appointed deputy director of the Coordinating Center for the Studies of Ocular Complications of AIDS (SOCA)
- Appointed to the AUPO Board of Managers for Fellowship Compliance
- Named to Best Doctors in America, 2007–2008

Michael X. Repka, M.D.

- Presented the Marshall M. Parks Lecture at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology

Walter J. Stark, M.D.

- G.B. Bietti Medal, Italian Society of Ophthalmology

Stan Vinores, Ph.D.

- Invited keynote speaker for the Conference of the Argentine Chapter of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (Investigación en Visión y Oftalmologia), Cordoba, Argentina, 2008
- Invited keynote grand rounds speaker at Boston University School of Medicine

David Zee, M.D.

- Invited speaker of the German Ophthalmology Society; the Neuroophthalmology Society of Australia; Singapore National Eye Hospital; oculomotor research symposiums in Nantes, France, and in Seeon, Germany; the Pan American ENT Congress in Quito, Ecuador; and the Barany Society in Kyoto

Oliver D. Schein, M.D., M.P.H.

- Keynote speaker (James Key Lecture) at the biannual research meeting of the Contact Lens Association of Ophthalmologists
- Appointed vice-chair for quality and safety, Wilmer Eye Institute

2007 Best Doctors

Baltimore Magazine

Neil M. Bressler, M.D.
Susan B. Bressler, M.D.
Peter A. Campochiaro, M.D.
Roy S. Chuck, M.D.
James P. Dunn, M.D.
Daniel Finkelstein, M.D.
David S. Friedman, M.D.
John D. Gottsch, M.D.
David L. Guyton, M.D.
James T. Hanga, M.D.
Nicholas T. Iliff, M.D.
Henry D. Jampel, M.D., M.H.S.
Peter J. McDonnell, M.D.
Neil Miller, M.D.
Harry A. Quigley, M.D.
Oliver D. Schein, M.D., M.P.H.
Sharon Solomon, M.D.
Walter J. Stark, M.D.
Jennifer E. Thorne, M.D., Ph.D.
Robert S. Weinberg, M.D.
Philanthropy Summary

Commitments include cash received and pledges made, life income gifts, grants, planned gifts, and bequests made during FY08.

### By Use

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<th></th>
<th>$(Millions)</th>
<th>% of total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Commitments</strong></td>
<td>$44.9</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Programs</td>
<td>$25.3</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endowment</td>
<td>$17.1</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital (Building)</td>
<td>$2.5</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
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### By Transaction Type

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<tr>
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<th>$(Millions)</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Commitments</strong></td>
<td>$44.9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Gifts</td>
<td>$20.1</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
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<td>New Grants</td>
<td>$16.8</td>
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<td>Gifts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledges</td>
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<td>6.2%</td>
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Wilmer Residents

2008-2009

3rd Year

Anna Demetriades
Benjamin Frankfort
Davinder Grover
Anup Kubal
Anup Kubal
Divya Srikumar
Elaine Wu

2nd Year

Esther Chang
Hoaman Hommati
Ilya Leyngold
Ala Moshiri
Shameena Sikder
Derek Welshie
Adam Wenick

1st Year

Bryn Burkholder
Nguyen Ha
Bryan Lee
Sophie Liao
Allison McCoy
Daniel Paskowitz
Fasika Woreta

Assistant Chief of Service

Alex Leder
We’re in your neighborhood

**HOSPITALS**
- Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins
- Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

**OUTPATIENT CENTERS**
- Wilmer Eye Institute at Columbia
- Wilmer Eye Institute at Frederick
- Wilmer Eye Institute at Green Spring Station
- Wilmer Eye Institute at Odenton
- Wilmer Eye Institute at White Marsh
- Wilmer Eye Institute at Wyman Park Medical Center

**Information & Referrals**
- 410-955-5080
- 877-477-9519
- www.wilmer.org

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**Designer:** Vladimir Rajevac

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Sightline Subscription  
600 N. Wolfe Street, Wilmer 112  
Baltimore, MD 21287-9015

wildev@jhmi.edu  
410-955-2020  
410-955-0866 (fax)

The mission of the Wilmer Eye Institute is to use and develop the finest scientific evidence to promote improved ophthalmic care and the reduction of visual disability in a collaborative environment that combines compassionate patient care, innovative research, and the training of future leaders in ophthalmology and visual sciences.