Pride and Prejudice: The Emory Ophthalmology Residency Program

by Geoffrey Broocker, MD

From the days of Phinizy Calhoun on, the Emory Ophthalmology training program has always developed strong clinicians and surgeons. The venues for training, initially centered at Grady, have grown to include an equally strong VA Medical Center component. The diversity of patients and levels of difficulty managing their eye diseases alone created the milieu for experience and wisdom well ahead of our counterparts at most training centers around the country. For reasons that were not clear at the time, our program was not considered top tier nationally. So how has Emory entered the “Top Ten” training programs (by survey of chairs and program directors—Ophthalmology Times) for over a decade? Reputational scoring is a tough nut to crack, but we have done so, and consistently.

The inspiration occurred in 1988, when Thomas M. Aaberg, Sr., MD was named chairman of our department. Dr. Aaberg promoted the concept of education and training. Previously, Emory’s reputation of strength in training revolved around its fellowship programs. Dr. Aaberg was focused on the residency. He recruited faculty, many of whom excelled in teaching, as well as providing clinical care. His emphasis was to have a full-time resident educator at Grady Memorial Hospital, where (at that time) the residents spent more than half of their 36-month training. I was hired in the fall of 1988 and named the program director. The concept of a full-time resident educator and program director was novel and controversial (from a chairman’s funding perspective).

Continued on page 3
Dear Alumni and Friends,

This issue of Emory Eye features one of Emory Eye Center’s great strengths: its training programs. With an insightful and witty article written by Geoff Broocker, you will see what makes us great in regard to our educational ventures: our caring. With top rankings by Ophthalmology Times for “Best Residency Program,” we are indeed sought-after as a place to go for residency training and fellowships. In fact, our emphasis on these fine programs has increased with this year’s addition of a resident, giving us six new residents each year.

In the past six years alone, eight of our residents went on to complete fellowships here. They include Cameron Stone (res. ’96-99, retina fellow ’99-01), Brian Sippy (res. ’97-00, pathology fellow ’00-01, retina fellow ’01-03), Valérie Biousse (res. ’99-02, neuro-ophthalmology fellow ’96), Brad Randleman (res. ’99-02, cornea fellow ’03-04), Stewart O’Keefe (res. ’99-02, retina fellow ’02-04), Suzanne Hewitt (res. ’00-03, cornea fellow ’03-04), Chris Banning (res. ’02-05, cornea fellow ’05-06) and Chris Bergstrom (res. ’02-05, retina fellow ’05-07).

Taking this a step further, of those resident program graduates above who remained as fellows, Valérie Biousse and Brad Randleman are now faculty members. Of course, many of our residents who go elsewhere for fellowships come back to us to serve as faculty. Two of our ’99-02 residents have done so: Jiong (Freeman) Yan (fellowships at Jules Stein and Moorfield Hospital in England) and Sunil Srivastava (fellowships at the NEI and Duke). They both joined us in 2004 and 2005, respectively. Additionally, two of our VA faculty, Steve Urken (’92-95) and Douglas Blackmon (’00-03) returned to Emory after fellowships elsewhere in glaucoma and cornea, respectively. For a complete list of new faculty, please see page 12.

Our teaching remains a great strength at Emory Eye Center. Those graduates who have chosen to remain—or to come back to us—are the greatest testament to this exemplary program.

With warmest regards,

Tom Aaberg Sr., director and chairman
Emory Eye Center
The experiment worked. Over the next few years, we became a national paradigm for residency selection and training. In a self-generating fashion, the trainees coming to Emory were consistently strong academically and were great people too.

Of course these comments need to be taken with a grain of salt—I play for the home team! We need data to measure and confirm the above boasting. Since 1988, during the ophthalmology matching process, our program has never gone above the nineteenth pick to fill our match. In two or three of our matches, we filled in seven or fewer picks. Unless a program’s match is orchestrated, this is extremely unusual. Our trainees are “hot” items nationally when it comes to subspecialty fellowships and even private practice opportunities. In the interval 1993-2004, 70% of our residents (first year out) chose the route of fellowship; 18% chose private practice; 4% chose the military; and 8% went into academic medicine. Nearly 75% of our fellowships matched were the residents’ number one choice!!! In what is considered the top corneal/refractive fellowship, we had Emory residents in consecutive years and three in five years!! The quote from one of their preceptors was, “Keep ’em coming!” Roughly one-third of our former trainees went academic after fellowship. Some have become program directors (Maria Aaron here at Emory, Amy Hutchinson, here at Emory and previously at MUSC, and Terry Kim at Duke) and section heads. Our private-practice based former trainees have exceeded national percentages for staying in one or two jobs (even in “volatile” environments, like Florida).

With rare exception, we can be extremely proud of our Emory residents, both past and present. There are few work environments in which they cannot thrive. In fact, half of our current clinical faculty trained as Emory residents during the Aaberg era. They are not only fantastic additions to the department clinically, but they are also responsible for perpetuating the excellence in training. Alumni support is growing steadily (but let’s do better!). As I stated previously, reputational scoring is a tough nut to crack. Hello, Emory “Nutcrackers!”

A dozen of our finest resident alumni serve right here at Emory Eye Center. Here they in the Learning Resources Center following a fall 2005 faculty meeting. (Missing: Douglas Blackmon and Steve Urken)
Alumni

2005 Graduating Residents

Our newest alumni and where they are now:

Chris Banning
Cornea Fellowship
Emory Eye Center

Kevin Barber
Private Practice
Gainesville, Ga.

Chris Bergstrom
Retina Fellowship
Emory Eye Center

Hunter Cherwek
Orbis International

Keith Shuler
Retina Fellowship
Duke University

Class Notes – Fall 2005 – Spring 2006

- Maria Aaron (res. ’96-99) was elected to the program director’s council of the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology. She has three children: Christina, 4; Ashley, 3; and a son Michael, 1 year.


- Kyle Balch (res. ’94-97) says about his Gainesville, Fla., location, “The fish are biting—and Urban Meyer [University of Florida’s new football coach] is in town!”

- Curtis D. Benton, Jr. (res. ’45-48) serves on the Medical Assisting Advisory Board.

- Douglas Blackmon, MD (res. ’00-03) has recently joined the VA in Atlanta, after completing his cornea fellowship in 2004 at Duke. He then served as assistant clinical professor of ophthalmology at Duke.

- Bruce I. Bodner (res. ’75-78, cornea fellow ’78-79) was awarded the “Distinguished Humanitarian Award” by the Lions of Virginia Foundation. He is medical director, Lions Medical Eye Bank and Research Center of Eastern Virginia and has received the “25-year award.”

- Carol Boerner (res. ’78-81) is now chief of surgery, Valley Regional Hospital, a small rural hospital affiliated with Dartmouth. Although she is semi-retired, she finds the work in Claremont, N.H., intriguing and very different from her previous practice in Boston.


- James Crandall (glaucoma fellow ’04-05) and wife Alice Bashinsky, MD, have a new baby girl, Virginia Elizabeth.

- Carlos E. Diaz (ophthalmic pathology fellow ’97-98) has gone into partnership with Thurmond Eye Associates in Weslaco, Texas. In June 2005, he married Alma Vasques of Weslaco.

- Randy Epstein (cornea fellow ’84-86) was promoted to full professor at Rush Medical College in 2004 and received the Senior Achievement Award from AAO in 2005. He celebrated his 25th wedding anniversary with wife Kayla at the Athens Olympics, and he recently turned 50.
David J. Harris, Jr. (cornea fellow ’86-87) was appointed to the FDA’s Ophthalmic Devices Panel in 2005.

Richard Hector (cornea fellow ’82-83) has two daughters in college. Megan is a junior at the College of William and Mary, and daughter Clare is a freshman at the University of Wake Forest.

Susanne Hewitt (res. ’00-03, cornea fellow ’03-04)) was inducted into the Cornea Society (2004). She has published seven papers in the last two years and presented at ASCRS in May 2004. She has gone into private practice with North Fulton Eye Center in Roswell, Ga., where she recently received the distinction of Circle of Excellence.

Amy Hutchinson (ophthalmic pathology fellow ’92-93, res. ’93-96) volunteered one week of her time in April 2005 in Machala, Ecuador, to serve with a group of oral surgeons from Emory, under the auspices of Healing the Children Northeast and El Cielo Para Los Ninos (of South and Central America). The sole ophthalmologist there, she performed more than a dozen surgeries during that country’s healthcare strike.

Deborah Simon Kelly (res. ’96-99) and husband Paul have a new daughter, Michelle, born in April 2005, who gives them endless delight.

Terry Kim (res. ’93-96, chief resident ’95-96) and wife Ellie now have two children: Ashley, 7 years, and Kayley, 1 1/2 years old. He received the AAO Achievement Award (2005).

Laura King (res. ’83-86) graduated as a Woodruff Leadership Academy Fellow (2004-2005) through Emory’s prestigious leadership program. She has recently left Emory and has taken on a new role as medical director with Wellcare, which manages Medicaid’s “Georgia Healthy Families” program.


Fred H. Lambrou, Jr. (’82M, res. ’83-86) received the James W. Clower, Jr., MD, Community Service Award during the Florida Society of Ophthalmology annual meeting in Boca Raton, Fla., in December 2005. The award is presented in recognition of contributions of time and service to the community.

Jess C. Lester (res. ’58-61) was selected one of the “Best Doctors in America” (2004).
John C. Hagan III (res. ’72-75) received the Missouri State Medical Association’s 2005 Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes physicians who have served the MSMA in multiple roles. He serves as editor of Missouri Medicine and is a reviewer of the International Journal of Cataract and Refractive Surgery. Additionally, he was awarded the Honorary Medical Alumni Award of the University of Missouri Medical Alumni Organization. Proceeds from his estate will be used to establish a retina chair in ophthalmology at Emory.


Robert K. Maloney (cornea fellow ’89-91) was the subject of “Marketing Vision: Eye Doctor of Elite Blazes New Trail in Selling Surgery,” a 2004 Wall Street Journal article.

Edward C. Mattison’s (res. ’69-71) son Craig finished his residency in anesthesia at Emory. He is the newly-appointed chief of anesthesia, Kaiser Permanente Hospital System in San Francisco.

Timothy W. Olsen (retina fellow ’94-96) has received an NEI/National Institute on Aging R01 grant (The Subproteome in Age-Related Macular Degeneration) for $1.5M. He published in IOVS, AJO, Retina and Ophthalmology, all in 2004, and presented several lectures in the same year. In 2005 and early 2006, he has published some six articles.

Arthur C. Perry (’73M, res. ’74-77) is medical director of the Mericos Eye Institute (Scripps Memorial Hospital and Scripps Foundation for Medicine and Science). Daughter Paige (28) teaches high school English; son Phillip (26) does product implementation for a start-up wireless digital communication company; and son Blake is applying to medical school.

Brad Randleman (res. ’99-02, cornea fellow ’03-04) and Kimberly Foster were married last year and are expecting a baby girl in July.


Fumio Shiraga (visiting professor ’98-99) is on the retina committee for ARVO.

Norman F. Stambaugh (res. ’51-54) is now living in Appleton, Wisc., to be near his daughter. He was living in Florida but had a reaction to chemo and has been confined to a wheelchair and walker and is living in an assisted living facility. His wife Ann died in November.

Leiv M. Takle, Sr. (’69M, res. ’70-73) reports that he has a new dog that answers to “Gypsy” or “No!”

John A. Wells III (’86M, res. ’88-91) was recently named to the Secretariat for State Affairs of the AAO. He is representing Georgia, and South and North Carolina.
Chair Search

As many of you already know, a search for a new chair has been underway for a few months now, under the direction of Tristram Parslow (William Patterson Timmie Professor and Chair, Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, Emory). Among the applicants at present are nine external candidates and two internal candidates. The following are listed in the order in which they will speak to the Emory Eye Center faculty:

- Joan O’Brien, MD (University of California, San Francisco)
- Peter Campochiaro, MD (Wilmer Eye Institute)
- Todd Margolis, MD, PhD (University of California, San Francisco)
- Hans Grossniklaus, MD, MBA (Emory)
- Oliver Douglas Schein, MD, MPH (Wilmer Eye Institute)
- Marco M. Zarbin, MD, PhD, FACS (UMDNJ – New Jersey)
- Edward Buckley, MD (Duke University)
- Daniel Martin, MD (Emory)
- Douglas A. Jabs, MD (Wilmer Eye Institute)
- Paul Sieving, MD, PhD (National Eye Institute)
- Robert Weinreb, MD (University of California, San Diego)

Faculty Retreat

Eye Center faculty and administrators came together for a spring faculty retreat on a Friday and Saturday in March 2005. Chairs Hans Grossniklaus, Henry Edelhauser and Nancy Newman put a Herculean effort into the event, which took months of advance planning and research. Faculty and administrators collaborated and compiled vast amounts of departmental information for attendees. Issues and solutions were presented over the two-day event, and faculty came away with more thorough knowledge about their fellow faculty members—and specific plans for the near future. One example of an action item identified at the retreat and since completed is the publication of three brochures of the Eye Center’s speakers for 2005-2006, both Vision Research Seminars and Grand Rounds.

Retina Chip

Beginning in 2005, an expanded clinical trial conducted by Optobionics Corporation involving the implantation of a retina microchip allowed Emory Eye Center and the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Rehabilitation Research & Development Center to implant the device in several patients. The patients all have retinitis pigmentosa, with moderate-to-severe vision loss. Only three centers in the United States have been chosen to conduct the expanded trial: Emory and the VA Rehabilitation R&D Center in Atlanta, Rush University Medical Center’s Department of Ophthalmology, and the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins Medical Center.

At Emory Eye Center, retina specialists Thomas M. Aaberg, Sr. and Jiong Yan have performed the retina chip surgery on seven patients. Pre- and post-surgery patients are evaluated by a team of researchers working at the Eye Center and the VA Rehabilitation R&D Center, including Ronald A. Schuchard, PhD and Claire Barnes, PhD.
Residents Weekend 2005

Residents Weekend was held June 4 and 5, 2005, and the scientific session featured guest lecturer Kirk H. Packo, MD, chairman of the department of ophthalmology and director of retina service, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago.

Following a comic video titled, “Who’s Doing What in Ten Years” and the ensuing laughter, Leiv Takle, Sr., MD (res. ’70-73, ’69M) presented the awards for the Best Second- and Third-Year scientific session presentations. Dr. Hunter Cherwek (third-year) and Dr. Marc Spirn (second-year) won the best-paper awards. Dr. Takle also presented two awards of his own. He gave the awards for the second-best papers to Dr. Keith Shuler (third-year) and Dr. Leiv Takle, Jr. (second-year).

HOW DID WE HELP?

In the aftermath of Katrina

Emory Eye Center is not unique among Southern medical centers that have seen their share of patients following Hurricane Katrina. Our residents at Grady have attended to numerous victims. One particular patient has stood out.

Some three weeks after Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, one of the many Louisiana residents who were hurt in the devastating storm found his way to Emory Eye Center. Mark Piorrier of Port Sulphur was a barge worker prior to the storm. During the storm, Mr. Piorrier found himself hanging onto a rooftop after riding out the storm, but when a tree fell, it broke his back, resulting in paralysis.

He was rescued some 36 hours later, was taken to Houston, and ultimately ended up at Grady, where he was seen by a team of physicians. After being helped there, he landed at Shepherd Spinal Center in Atlanta and finally, at Emory Eye Center, where Baker Hubbard performed a lensectomy and vitrectomy on the eye that had been injured by debris that Mr. Piorrier encountered in the torrents of water he navigated.

What does Mr. Piorrier think? “They tell me I won’t walk again, but I guarantee you I will,” he says proudly. And that strong will to live, coupled with his resourcefulness, may just get him there.
Faculty awards and honors

- **Valérie Biousse** was named the Cyrus H. Stoner Professor of Ophthalmology. She also was awarded the University Teaching Fund (grant of $5,000) for the creation of an ophthalmoscopy workshop.

- **Jeffrey Boatright** is a PI for an R01 grant, “Direct gene therapy in retinal degeneration animal model.” He also traveled to Capitol Hill as part of an ARVO delegation to fight for research funding for the NEI.

- **Henry F. Edelhauser** received the Proctor Medal and delivered the Proctor Lecture at the annual meeting of ARVO in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., on May 2, 2005. Dr. Edelhauser, the director of research for Emory Eye Center, was honored with ARVO’s highest honor for his groundbreaking work on the physiology of the corneal endothelium and for “elegant translational research from basic science to clinical applications.”

- **Hans Grossniklaus** was appointed a permanent member of the NIH Study Section AED. He is chair of the strategic planning committee for the American Association of Ophthalmic Pathology (AAOP).

- **Baker Hubbard** was elected to the Retina Society.

- **Amy Hutchinson** was awarded a Wallace Coulter Foundation seed grant for $100,000 in 2004 and won the AAO’s Honor Award in 2005.

- **Scott Lambert** is the principal investigator in the NEI’s IATS (Infant Aphakia Treatment Study). Emory is the lead center for the grant and the data coordinating center. Thirteen clinical centers will participate in the five-year U10 grant. The study will randomize infants with unilateral congenital cataracts to treatment with an intraocular lens or a contact lens following cataract surgery and then assess their visual acuity at one year of age. In addition, in 2005 Dr. Lambert won an award for Best Cataract Paper at the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus.

- **Nancy Newman** won Emory School of Medicine’s Dean’s 2004 Teaching Award in the field of Neurology/Ophthalmology. Only seven faculty members received the Teaching Award.

- **Brad Randleman** (res. ’99-02, cornea fellow ’03-04) received the Claes Dohlman Society Award in recognition of outstanding performance in a cornea fellowship program. It was presented in fall 2004.

- **Doyle Stulting** won the prestigious Paton Award for 2005, presented at AAO in Chicago. The award is the Eye Bank Association of America’s highest honor for corneal physicians.

In Memoriam

August Vincent Gafford (res. ’48-51) died May 12 following a brief illness.

Bitsy Law McPherson, who served in research for some 39 years at Emory Eye Center, died in January 2006 from complications from a fall.
New Two-Year Fellowship in Neuro-Ophthalmology

A new two-year neuro-ophthalmology fellowship begins in July. “The beauty of the new fellowship is that it can be tailored to the particular fellow,” says Nancy Newman, MD. It is specifically designed to be a flexible two-year training program for either ophthalmology- or neurology-trained physicians, individually tailored to the particular needs and interests of the applicant. One of the fellowship years will remain a traditionally-focused year of academic neuro-ophthalmic training, while the other year will be customized to the particular fellow.

For the neurology-trained fellow, there will be one intensive year of general medical ophthalmology, with special emphasis on retina, glaucoma, pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus, and oculoplastics. For the ophthalmology-trained fellow, there will be an opportunity for a year of training in neuroradiology, diagnostic neurological analytical thinking, and additional surgical training.

Further opportunities for customizing neuro-ophthalmology training include involvement with neuro-otology and its various techniques of examination; studies at the Rollins School of Public Health in epidemiology, statistics and clinical trials; involvement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and a clinical research or basic science research year. The estate of Virginia Lebos of Griffin, Ga., will help endow one of the fellowships.

New Computers in Retina Lanes

Each of the retina lanes at Emory Eye Center is now equipped with computers. These computers are networked with the Eye Center’s OIS system in photography. The retina specialists are now able to view the Fas and fundus photographs immediately after they are shot. The advantages are tremendous: first, the patients are assured of their privacy. The attending docs have access to previous images to follow the history of the disease. And residents and fellows have easy access to the images both for study and for case presentations.

The new OIS photography system, and the computers, were made possible by gifts from the Bernard E. and Edith B. Waterman Charitable Foundation and the R. Howard Dobbs Foundation.
Eye Center Alum & Faculty Member Volunteers Time in Ecuador

Amy Hutchinson (ophthalmic pathology fellow ’92-93, res. ’93-96) spent one week last April (2005) in Machala, Ecuador, working hard with a group of oral surgeons from Emory’s School of Medicine, with direction from Steven Roser, DMD, MD. Under the auspices of Healing the Children Northeast, based in New York City, and South and Central America-based El Cielo Para Los Ninos (A sky for the children), Amy and others paid for their own travel and hotels in order to help children who desperately needed surgeries. She was the sole ophthalmologist on the mission.

“Because there was a healthcare strike—and surgeons could not perform surgery—in addition to the fact that healthcare is private and many simply can’t afford it, our surgeries were very welcome,” she says. “Unfortunately, the country’s limited resources don’t give those in medical need much hope. It was extremely rewarding to be able to do this.”

Eye Center Faculty and Residents Provide Needed Service in Ethiopia

Cornea specialist Diane Song, along with residents Hunter Cherwek (res.’ 02-05) and Kevin Barber (res. ’02-05) journeyed to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November 2004 as part of The Carefree Foundation’s work in that country. The foundation helps provide quality healthcare to underserved populations throughout the world. Bringing in equipment and medical supplies, five attending physicians and three residents worked to man the two-week ophthalmology clinics in that country’s capital. More than 200 cataract surgeries were performed, along with numerous laser and pediatric procedures, including pediatric cataract removal. As Dr. Song puts it, “The Ethiopian doctors know very well how to do the procedures, but what they lack is equipment.” Between corporate funding for the equipment shipped there and the funding of The Carefree Foundation, willing physicians have the ability to go fill these needs all over the world.
New Faculty

Camille Hylton received her medical degree from Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, Conn. She completed her internship at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, Pa., and her ophthalmology residency at the Wilmer Eye Institute at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md. She subsequently completed her fellowship in glaucoma at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, Fla.

Her clinical and research interests include the management of congenital glaucoma and hypotony. She is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Jiong Yan received her medical degree from Louisiana State University in New Orleans, Louisiana. She completed her internal medicine internship at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and her ophthalmology residency at Emory University. She completed her two-year medical and surgical vitreo-retina fellowship at Jules Stein Eye Institute-University of California, Los Angeles. She also completed an honorary fellowship in the field of retinal dystrophy and degeneration under guidance of Professor Alan Bird at Moorfields Hospital in London, England.

Dr. Yan’s clinical and research interests include diabetic retinopathy, macular disease, retinal detachment, macular degeneration, and inherited retinal disease. She is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Sunil Srivastava received his B.S. from Cornell University, College of Arts and Sciences, Ithaca, New York, in 1994. His medical degree was received from State University of New York, Buffalo, New York, in 1998. He completed his internship in internal medicine at Saint Vincent’s Hospital, New York, New York, in 1999 and his ophthalmology residency at Emory Eye Center in 2002.

Dr. Srivastava completed his uveitis and ocular immunology fellowship at the National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health, finishing in 2003, and completed a vitreoretinal fellowship at the Duke University Eye Center in 2005.

He is board certified in ophthalmology and is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology. His interests include uveitis and ocular inflammatory diseases, age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal vascular diseases and retinal detachments.
Paul Wong, PhD, joined Emory in 2004. He received his doctoral degree at the University of Ottawa (biochemistry), having received postgraduate training at the NEI, where he was a Fogarty Postdoctoral Fellow. He previously served as associate professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Alberta. His research includes molecular, genetic, and bioinformatic approaches to studying retinal biology and the process of retinal degeneration (involution) and disease. His current focus includes the assembly of the first human fovea/macular transcriptome.

In addition, he uses more classical genetic approaches to identify candidate genes for clinically defined macular degenerations. He uses a differential screening approach to tease out those genes that change their levels of expression during light-induced retinal degeneration (LIRD) in rats.

His study of the biology of the genes that cause retinal degenerations may lend some insight into what happens in the retina during an active degeneration process. By understanding the processes by which retinal cells die, he hopes that better treatments and therapies can be developed for individuals affected with inherited retinal disorders.

Our Master’s Program under New Leadership

As many of you know, our Master’s Program, under the able leadership of Paul Larson, MMSc, MBA, COMT, COE, and previously under the founding leadership of Mary Gemmill, has graduated many fine ophthalmic technologists. The Master of Medical Science in Ophthalmic Technology (MMSc) program was instituted in 1994 at Emory. No other U.S. program provides graduates with a master’s degree and the opportunity to take the national COMT certification exam through JCAHPO. In fact, Emory’s program has been training ophthalmic medical personnel for more than 25 years, with some 35 graduates from the program.

Paul Larson came to Emory Eye Center from beautiful Napa, Calif., where he worked in a private practice. “The program at Emory is a plum program,” he says, “and it was the one place in the country I’d have moved to join!” For more information: http://mmsscomt.emory.edu

Donna Leef and Paul Larson each received a special reward from ATPO (Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology) for their service to the organization. It was presented in Chicago in October, during ATPO’s 20th Annual Scientific Session.

Lindy Dubois, a 1994 graduate of the program, is editor of Clinical Skills for the Ophthalmic Examination: Basic Procedures (Slack, Inc., 2006). Its second edition has just been published. Lindy has worked at the Eye Center since 1993.
All eyes are on us—again!

Once again, our national presence has been publicized by both U.S. News & World Report (top 20) and by Ophthalmology Times (Best Clinical Program – 7th).

Additionally, four of our physicians have been selected for inclusion in the directory Top Docs (Castle Connolly, 2005). Of the 118 physicians listed in 30 specialties in Atlanta, three of the five ophthalmology slots went to our Emory faculty: Thomas Aaberg, Sr., Scott Lambert and Doyle Stulting. Nancy Newman earned one of the five listings in the neurology section. The rationale for selection in this national listing is peer nomination. More than 250,000 physicians were surveyed. Congratulations to these fine physicians!

LUCENTIS

Emory Eye Center is a part of the SAILOR (Safety Assessment of Intravitreal Lucentis fOR AMD) Trial, evaluating the use of Lucentis™ (Genentech), the new AMD drug which is currently in a priority review from the MARINA and ANCHOR trials. Those pivotal trials showed that the drug improved or maintained vision for the majority of patients. It may be FDA-approved by late June or early July.

The SAILOR trial is a Phase IIIb clinical study of Lucentis for patients with all subtypes of new or recurrent active subfoveal wet AMD. Conducted at more than 100 sites in the United States, it is evaluating the safety of two different doses of Lucentis, administered once a month for three months and thereafter as needed based on re-treatment criteria.

“The Lucentis data is unprecedented in the history of AMD treatments because it is the first therapeutic option that gives patients the hope for improved vision in AMD,” says Eye Center retina specialist Baker Hubbard (res. ’95-98). “We’re very excited to have been part of the trials of Lucentis and look forward in the future to making this available to patients with newly-diagnosed wet AMD.”

Magruder Eye Institute Still Growing After All These Years

Brock Magruder, Sr. (’53-56M, honorary alumnus) father of our previous Alumni President Brock Magruder, Jr. (’81 C, ’85M, res. ’86-89), has expanded his Orlando Magruder Eye Institute recently into another Orlando suburban area. Founded in 1963, the successful enterprise now has four offices in the metro-Orlando area and built the new replacement facility in Kissimmee in 2005—a 7,000 square-foot building. The new building almost doubled the previous square footage.

In 2004 Magruder opened a location in Lake Mary, north of Orlando. Magruder Eye also serves Orlando’s northwest suburbs with a facility in Apopka. Additionally, last summer they signed a new deal to provide care to Florida’s burgeoning WellCare Medicare HMO patients.
Marilee Sanders, Dan Martin (res. ’87-90), Leiv Takle (res. ’70-73) and John Gilligan (res. ’63-66) enjoy a moment together.

Michael Pulliam (res. ’72-75), Elaine Pulliam, and Hans Grossniklaus of Emory Eye Center.

Susanne Hewitt (res. ’00-03, cornea fellow ’03-04), Doug Blackmon (res. ’00-03), Brian Sippy (res. ’97-00, pathology fellow ’00-01, retina fellow ’01-03) and David Badawi (fellow ’99-00).

Zack Bridges (res. ’92-95, retina fellow ’95-97) catches up with Tasos Costarides (res. ’94-97).

Nicholas Engelbrecht (retina fellow ’00-02) and Sean Pieramici (res. ’01-04) enjoy the festivities.

Eye Center’s David Woolf with David Saperstein (retina fellow ’93-95) of Seattle.