UCLA breaks ground on the Edie and Lew Wasserman Building

On Thursday, October 14, 2010, a festive groundbreaking ceremony in Stein Plaza marked the beginning of construction of the new Edie and Lew Wasserman Building, the third building of the vision-science campus first envisioned for the Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI) in the 1960s. The structure, which will also house the Edie and Lew Wasserman Eye Research Center, was named to honor the Wassermans’ life-long commitment to blindness prevention.

Designed by Richard Meier & Partners Architects—the same architectural firm that created the Getty Center—the Edie and Lew Wasserman Building will be a major research and patient-care center uniting and expanding existing surgical facilities, promoting vital research, and revolutionizing the treatment of patients with eye diseases.

Standing among the ceremonial shovels and piles of dirt symbolizing the start of construction, UCLA Chancellor Gene Block emphasized the Wassermans’ longstanding partnership with JSEI and their belief in UCLA’s mission.

“The Edie and Lew Wasserman Building has been nurtured and shepherded from an idea to a twenty-first century institution, and today marks the final piece of the plan now taking shape,” said Chancellor Block. “When it opens in 2014, the Edie and Lew Wasserman Building will be the culmination of a bold plan that began in the 1960s, and it represents the dream of three visionaries—Lew Wasserman, Jules Stein, and Chancellor Franklin Murphy.”

The welcome addition of the Edie and Lew Wasserman Building in Stein Plaza is a symbolic culmination of a relationship formed more than 80 years ago between Lew Wasserman and Jules Stein, and a testament to their shared mission of eradicating preventable blindness.

The initial vision of the Institute has its roots in the 1960s, when Lew Wasserman, Jules Stein, and then—UCLA Chancellor Franklin Murphy, imagined a trio of facilities dedicated to restoring and preserving eyesight. The Jules Stein Eye Institute—the first of the three buildings in Stein Plaza—opened its doors in 1966 led by Founding Director Bradley R. Straatsma, MD, JD. In the years that followed, burgeoning programs rapidly filled the Institute’s once-ample space and, in 1989, Stein Plaza expanded with the creation of the Doris Stein Eye Research Center (DSERC).

The Edie and Lew Wasserman Building: A Vision Realized

Construction has begun on the Edie and Lew Wasserman Building, a major new research and patient-care facility at UCLA. Named to honor Edie Wasserman and her husband, the late Lew Wasserman, the new facility is designed to meet the Jules Stein Eye Institute’s (JSEI) growing needs, further ensuring JSEI’s development into the leading eye research and treatment center of the 21st century.

The six-story, 100,000-square-foot building provides three dedicated floors for the Edie and Lew Wasserman Eye Research Center. The Center will include operating rooms as well as expanded refractive, oculoplastic, and cataract services. Each practice area will offer procedure space and clinics, which will allow patient exams, testing, and surgery to all be conducted in one locale.

A Shared Vision

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"It represents a project that caps off years of planning to ensure the judicious use of several exceptionally generous donations given for the ultimate benefit of the public," noted Chancellor Block. "The Edie and Lew Wasserman Eye Research Center will add much needed space, revolutionizing important facets of surgical training, allow faculty to continue research inquiries leading to important new medical treatments, and extend UCLAs commitment to provide patients with modern, holistic services in a world-renowned medical center."

"It is critical UCLA continues to expand its ability to serve Los Angeles and provide facilities that keep the medical center ahead of the curve," asserted Chancellor Block. "The addition of the Edie and Lew Wasserman Eye Research Center will do just that—its an iconic building based on a public and private partnership, and it will be a beautiful addition to the campus."

After Chancellor Block completed his remarks, Bartly J. Mondino, MD, Director of the Jules Stein Eye Institute, took the stage and expressed his delight in having Edie Wasserman and members of the Stein, Wasserman, and Oppenheimer families present at the groundbreaking. He thanked the families for their unflagging support, involvement, and partnership with JSEI since its inception. Dr. Mondino then spoke of the Wassermans dedications to JSEI adding, "All of us at the Jules Stein Eye Institute are deeply grateful for Lew Wasserman's extraordinary vision and devoted friendship, and for Casey Wasserman's commitment and driving force to construct a facility in his grandparents' name. The new Edie and Lew Wasserman Eye Research Center will have an enormous impact on vision science. It will be an architectural masterpiece and a fitting legacy."

As delineated by Dr. Mondino, three floors of the six-story Edie and Lew Wasserman Building will comprise the Edie and Lew Wasserman Eye Research Center. The center will expand JSEIs existing facilities, allowing faculty to grow, and enable the creation of revolutionary new programs that will dramatically change the way patients with eye diseases are treated.

"The center will house a state-of-the-art outpatient surgical center, which will replace operating rooms in the JSEI building. The preoperative, operative, and post-operative areas will comprise approximately 11/2 floors. The Edie and Lew Wasserman Eye Research Center will also expand JSEIs Orbital and Ophthalmic Plastic Surgery Division and Refractive Surgery Center.

"Moving these high-volume clinical services to the new building will provide patients with one-stop shopping in a single locale for exams, testing, and surgery," explained Dr. Mondino. "It will also free-up space in the original building for expansion and consolidation of JSEIs Vision Science Laboratories, which will facilitate new research, such as gene therapy, for treating eye diseases."

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony on behalf of the Wasserman family, Casey Wasserman, the only grandson of Lew and Edie Wasserman and the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Wasserman Foundation, provided the day's final remarks: "Today, Jules Stein, Franklin Murphy, and Lew Wasserman are smiling," Casey Wasserman began. "That five chancellors are behind the making of this building is indicative of how long this process has taken. UCLA is a great institution and the Jules Stein Eye Institute's extraordinary leadership is the cornerstone of the community and medical center."

"Today would be Coach John Wooden's 100 birthday," Casey reflected, "and one of his famous quotations is applicable for this event: 'Don't mistake activity with achievement.' Today's groundbreaking is the first step in the process to this new building becoming a world-class facility and the Jules Stein Eye Institute becoming the leading eye center in the world."

"Pointing out his grandmother Edie Wasserman in the audience, Casey stated with emotion, 'I made a promise to my grandmother that if it was the last thing I do, she was going to see a shovel in the ground. She's 95 years old, and I am proud to say, 'Grandma, I've kept my promise.' He then added with a smile, 'Now my grandmother just needs to wait until the building's completion in 2014!'"

"With his grandson Casey by her side, Edie Wasserman was presented with a shovel and, putting shovel to dirt, symbolically broke ground on the Edie and Lew Wasserman Building, furthering the dream of both the Steins and the Wassermans—to stop preventable blindness through the eradication of eye diseases."

Wasserman Building: A Vision Realized continued from page 1

JSEI began seeking more ways to increase its capacity in the late 1990s. JSEI Director Bartly J. Mondino, MD, notes that the push to construct a new facility found a crucial ally in Casey Wasserman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Wasserman Foundation.

"Casey Wasserman spearheaded efforts to construct a facility in honor of his grandparents and has been a driving force in the development, planning, and execution process of the Edie and Lew Wasserman Building," explained Dr. Mondino.

The Wasserman facility completes Stein Plaza’s triumvirate of buildings and will be located opposite DSERC and adjacent to JSEI, at the Westwood Village gateway to UCLA's southern campus. Official construction of the new building is expected to continue through October 2012. After tenant improvements for the various departments, the Edie and Lew Wasserman Eye Research Center is scheduled to open officially in March 2014.
**Firefighter Paul Torres Supporting JSEI Indigent Children and Families Program**

When you ask 36-year-old Paul Torres why he became a firefighter, he responds that he finds great joy and reward in helping people and making a difference in their lives. Staying true to that kind and generous character, Paul and fellow members of the Ventura County Fire Department donated $6,778 to the Jules Stein Indigent Children and Families Program.

Paul's close association with the Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI) was unforeseen. When the eight-year firefighting veteran was called to a house fire on April 5, 2010, he had no reason to suspect he would be seriously injured and ultimately lose his eye. Firefighters arrived on scene just after 5:00 p.m. to find a two-story home engulfed in flames. The fire, which destroyed the residence, was started when smoldering material from a toaster oven re-ignited in a trashcan.

Paul was outside defending a neighboring structure, when propane canisters inside the home exploded. Hundreds of rounds of ammunition began going off. Paul was struck in the right eye by a piece of shrapnel. “It felt like a sucker punch. I instantly went down,” describes Paul. Transported to Los Robles Regional Medical Center, Paul underwent surgery to stabilize his eye. He was then airlifted to Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center and seen by JSEI ophthalmologists Jean-Pierre Hubschman, MD, and Sophie X. Deng, MD, PhD.

Explains Dr. Hubschman, “When I saw Paul, his prognosis was already extremely poor, but Dr. Deng and I wanted to do everything we could to save his eye.” To obtain optical access to the back of the eye during surgery, Dr. Deng inserted a temporary artificial cornea. Dr. Hubschman then performed a vitrectomy (removal of some or all of the vitreous humor) to try to restore the retina’s normal anatomy. The damage, it turned out, was too great, and the eye had to be eviscerated.

“The doctors were straightforward with me from the beginning,” asserts Paul. “They made a heroic attempt, and I received excellent care from start to finish.” JSEI Orbital and Ophthalmic Plastic Surgeon Mehryar Taban, MD, subsequently fitted Paul with a custom-made prosthetic eye, restoring the eye’s natural appearance. Three months after the accident, Paul had fully recovered and was back on duty. His co-workers were welcoming and most happy to have him back, and he was pleased to be back.

“Prior to returning, I completed a physically demanding training program for my comfort and for my co-workers to demonstrate what I was again capable of doing,” explains Paul. “Although I had to learn how to adjust in the dark and lost some peripheral vision, there was no impairment to my depth perception, and my vision is excellent.”

Exemplifying a brotherhood of support, firefighters Jamie Liddell and Mike Mejia had organized a charity golf tournament to provide financial assistance to Paul during his rehabilitation. As he was quickly back at work full-time, Paul insisted he didn’t need the money but urged that the event go forward to benefit instead those who lost eyes and could not afford prosthetic replacements. On September 27, the Paul Torres Golf Tournament was held with all proceeds going to the Jules Stein Indigent Children and Families Program.

Reflecting on his experience as both a first-responder and a victim, Paul self-effacingly notes, “As firefighters, we do our little part.” He then emphasizes, “When you’re on the receiving end, however, you see how compassion and support are crucial in helping you move forward and stay positive. I am so grateful. Quintessential heroes serving the community in inmeasurable ways, Paul and his fellow firefighters’ generous gift will help adults and children without financial means to have the eye surgery they so greatly need.

**Philanthropy**

**Thomas H. Pettit Endowed Vision Fund**

James D. Shuler, MD, was a medical intern at UCLA in the Emergency Room when he first met his future mentor, Thomas H. Pettit, MD, Jules Stein Eye Institute’s (JSEI’s) first chief of the Cornea-External Ocular Disease Division. Dr. Shuler was on-call when a woman with a simple laceration arrived. The patient was Dr. Pettit’s daughter. At the time, Dr. Shuler had been selected for JSEI’s residency program, and knowing Dr. Pettit’s excellent reputation, he was nervous about this unusual situation. Dr. Shuler recalls how the legendary ophthalmologist put a young intern at ease, allowing him to close his daughter’s wound. “I realized that he was so into teaching and passing what he knew to others—that meant a lot to me.”

The Thomas H. Pettit Endowed Vision Fund has been established with a lead gift from Dr. Shuler and fellow JSEI alumni David B. Cohen, MD, Donald E. Dickerson, MD, John D. Hofbauer, MD, Andrew Maxwell, MD, PhD, Lee T. Nordan, MD, and Randall J. Olson, MD, all of whom studied under Dr. Pettit and went on to be successful. The Pettit Fund will support the activities of the Cornea and Uveitis Division, with the ultimate goal of creating an endowed chair through future contributions. Following this lead gift, additional contributions were provided by Robert K. Maloney, MD, a member of the volunteer faculty, and by L. Lothaire Bluth, MD, an alumnus of the residency program.

Plans for the endowment honoring Dr. Pettit have been enthusiastically embraced by the Department of Ophthalmology, which has made a substantial contribution to the fund, as have members of the full-time faculty. Dr. Pettit was one of the founding members of JSEI, joining the full-time faculty of the Department of Ophthalmology at UCLA in 1963. He served as JSEI’s associate director, until he retired, from 1971 to 1991. He passed away in 2005.

Dr. Shuler recalls Dr. Pettit best as a dedicated teacher and a consummate clinician and surgeon. “Dr. Pettit's unconditional and unselfish support of trainees and faculty, including myself, nurtured countless ophthalmic careers. We are excited to see the Thomas H. Pettit Endowed Vision Fund continue to expand and build upon his legacy at JSEI and within the Cornea and Uveitis Division.”

Gary N. Holland, MD, Jack H. Skirball Professor of Ocular Inflammatory Diseases and current Cornea and Uveitis Division Chief, was recruited by Dr. Pettit to join the JSEI faculty. Before then, Dr. Pettit helped him write his first research paper when he was a UCLA medical student. “It is our hope that additional alumni and Dr. Pettit’s friends and colleagues will continue to grow the endowment and achieve this goal.”

“The field of cornea has just changed enormously, and building this program, that started with Dr. Pettit, is a very good investment,” says founding JSEI Director Bradley R. Straatsma, MD, JD, who recruited Dr. Pettit to JSEI. Dr. Shuler encourages others who knew Dr. Pettit to honor his legacy by donating to the fund. “There are very few physicians who really deserve that kind of respect and have an endowed chair named after them, and Dr. Pettit is one of those few physicians.”

For information regarding making a donation to the Thomas H. Pettit Endowed Vision Fund, contact Pamela Bash, Director of Development, at (310) 206-6035. To read more about the Thomas H. Pettit Endowed Vision Fund, please visit the philanthropy section on our website at www.jsei.org.
Dr. Bradley Straatsma, recipient of the 2010 Laureate Recognition Award

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) presented its highest honor, the 2010 Laureate Recognition Award, to Bradley R. Straatsma, MD, JD, Professor of Ophthalmology Emeritus and Founding Director of the Jules Stein Eye Institute, for his distinguished career and exceptional contributions to ophthalmology. Widely acclaimed as a pioneer in the study of peripheral retinal disease, investigations of tumors, and research on ophthalmic conditions such as diabetic retinopathy and cataract, he received the award on October 17, 2010, during AAO’s annual meeting in Chicago.

Among Dr. Straatsma’s many accomplishments is his service in leadership positions in nearly all the major ophthalmic academic and educational entities, including the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology; the American Board of Ophthalmology; the Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology; the American Ophthalmological Society; and the Academy Ophthalmologica Internationals. He also served as a member of the International Council of Ophthalmology and president of the International Council of Ophthalmology Foundation. In 2003, the Straatsma Award for Excellence in Resident Education was established in his honor through the Academy, the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology and private funds.

In recognition for his commitment to teaching and education, and for his professional leadership on many fronts, we acknowledge the debt we all owe to him for his remarkable achievements,” said Randy Johnston, MD, president of AAO. “Dr. Straatsma is truly recognized worldwide as a leader in ophthalmic research, clinical care, and education. Few individuals have had such a great impact on the field of ophthalmology, with his record of accomplishment, commitment, and integrity.”

New Division Chiefs Named

The Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI) is pleased to announce the appointment of Joseph L. Demer, MD, PhD, Leonard Apt Professor of Ophthalmology and Professor of Neurology, as Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus Division Chief and Kevin M. Miller, MD, Kolokotronis Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology, as Comprehensive Ophthalmology Division Chief. Both positions are effective July 1, 2010.

Dr. Demer joined JSEI in 1988 as Comprehensive Ophthalmology Division Chief—a position he held until his recent appointment. He also directs the Ocular Motility Clinical Laboratory, and chairs the EyeSTAR Training Program (Specialty Training and Advanced Research in Ophthalmology and Visual Science). Dr. Demer’s clinical practice focuses on pediatric and adult strabismus, nystagmus, advanced magnetic resonance imaging of the eye socket and cranial nerves, and children’s eye diseases. He has a longstanding research interest in the role of the brain and extraocular muscles in the control of eye movements and visual perception. He received the prestigious Friedenwald Award from the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology and an Alcon Research Achievement Award for his work on the extraocular muscles and orbital connective tissues.

Dr. Miller, the new Comprehensive Ophthalmology Division Chief, joined the faculty in 1991 after completing his residency training in ophthalmology at JSEI. He is the recipient of the Paul Vicari Endowed Cataract Research Fund at UCLA and a Senior Honor Award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Dr. Miller’s clinical practice focuses on cataract and refractive surgery and the rehabilitation of eyes with complex anterior segment problems. His research interests are in the areas of refractive cataract surgery, intraocular lenses, ophthalmic optics, and surgical outcomes. He works with industry to bring products, instruments, and lenses to market. He has his own humanitarian device exemption from the US Food and Drug Administration to implant Morcher artificial iris segments in eyes with congenital or acquired iris defects.

Investigator Award for her project, “Diagnosis and Staging of Limbal Stem Cell Deficiency (LSSD) Using In Vivo Laser Scanning Confocal Microscopy.” The award was announced on August 3, 2010. Dr. Deng’s study seeks to create a sensitive and accurate test to detect the early signs and classify the severity of LSSD, which causes loss of vision and functional blindness without early diagnosis and treatment.

Joseph Caprioli, MD, David May II Professor of Ophthalmology, presented the Arthur Light Lectures, “The Importance of Rates in Glaucoma” and “Neuroprotection for Glaucoma: Fast or Fugue?”, at the 3rd Annual Fall Cataract/ Glaucoma Symposium at Loyola University Chicago, on September 11, 2010. The Jewish Guild for the Blind’s 2010 Alfred W. Bressler Prize in Vision Science was awarded to Martin Friedlander, MD, PhD, Professor of Cell Biology at The Scripps Research Institute. The award was presented at the Alfred W. Bressler Vision Science Symposium in New York, on October 8, 2010. Dr. Friedlander, who is an alumnus of the Jules Stein Eye Institute, was honored for his extraordinary work with cell biological research and clinical issues of retinal disease.

The American Glaucoma Society announced that Joel A. Giacconi, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology, was the recipient of the 2010 Mentoring for Advancement of Physician Scientist Award, on August 17, 2010. The $10,000 grant award is given to clinicians at early stages of their academic careers to facilitate their glaucoma research interests.

The American Academy of Optometry announced that Barbara Weissman, OD, PhD, Professor of Ophthalmology, was the recipient of the Alumni Association 2010 Alumnus of the Year Award from the School of Optometry, University of California, Berkeley. The award was presented at the school’s alumni meeting on October 2, 2010, in recognition of Dr. Weissman’s distinguished service to the profession of optometry.

Honors and Awards
The annual Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI) retreat was held on October 8–10, 2010, at the UCLA Lake Arrowhead Conference Center. Co-sponsored with funds from The Vision Science Training Grant from the National Institutes of Health/National Eye Institute and JSEI, the retreat attracted more than 80 basic scientists and clinical researchers, who participated in scientific discussions, learning activities, and unforgettable social events.

Guest speakers based their presentations on this year’s conference theme, “INSPIRE.” Mr. Brian Bushway, from the World Access for the Blind, gave an inspiring talk filled with life experiences and educational activities; B.S. Manjunath, PhD, from the University of California at Santa Barbara, gave an informative presentation and demonstration entitled, “Image Informatics Challenges in Building a Retinal Connectome;” Ms. Diane Kierce, a graduate lecturer from the UCLA Department of Philosophy, stimulated discussion with her topic, “The Ethics of Playing God;” and Steven Barnes, PhD, a visiting researcher at UCLA and Professor of Physiology & Biophysics and Ophthalmology at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, presented on his research, “Inhibition of Rate Retinal Gaglon Cell Excitability and Cell Calcium Mediated by Somatostatin Receptor Subtype 4.”

The guest and JSEI speakers, as well as approximately 30 poster presentations, sparked animated discussion and generated the opportunity for potential research collaborations. The conference closed with awards presented to vision science fellows Carlos Lopez for the best poster and Michael Bridges, PhD, for the best oral presentation.

International Meeting on AIDS-related CMV Retinitis

To address a growing problem resulting from the AIDS pandemic worldwide, the Jules Stein Eye Institute, in association with the Francis I. Proctor Foundation for Research in Ophthalmology, organized an international meeting of experts on AIDS-related CMV Retinitis. The purpose of the meeting was to establish guidelines for the evaluation and treatment of this blinding infection and to adapt treatments that have been developed in the West to resource-poor areas of the world.

Held in September 2010 with support from the American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR), the Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation, and income from the Herb Ritts, Jr. Memorial Vision Fund endowment at UCLA, the meeting was attended by individuals from various parts of the world who are involved in the treatment of CMV retinitis and other HIV-related eye diseases. Participants reviewed the scope of the problem and formulated recommendations on the most appropriate procedures for identifying individuals with CMV retinitis, treating them, and monitoring the effects of those treatments. These guidelines will be published and distributed to patient-care facilities throughout the developing world and will, additionally, facilitate continued collaboration and cross-comparison of clinical research into AIDS-related CMV retinitis and its treatment.
Joseph Horwitz, PhD
Oppenheimers Brothers Professor of Ophthalmology

Dr. Joseph Horwitz has spent most of his adult life at UCLA. He received his bachelor’s degree in physics and his doctorate in biophysics at UCLA, followed by one year of postdoctoral laboratory work. He joined the Jules Stein Eye Institute as an Assistant Professor in 1971. His groundbreaking research on normal and cataractous lens proteins has earned him numerous awards, including the Proctor Award—one of the highest awards in ophthalmology, two Alcon awards, and a 10-year merit award from the National Eye Institute. He is also the recipient of an endowed chair in ophthalmology.

We asked Dr. Horwitz about his career and his favorite activities when he is not wearing his laboratory coat.

What attracted you to the vision science field?
In the 1960s and 1970s, understanding how light interacts with the visual pigments was a major field of interest. I was interested in seeing what happened with rhodopsin—a pigment in the retina that allows the eyes to see in dim light—so I contacted the basic scientists at the Jules Stein Eye Institute. Dr. Joram Heller, who was working on the biosynthesis of rhodopsin, introduced me to the founding director of the Institute, Dr. Bradley Straatsma. He offered me a position and I’m still here 40 years later.

What do you most enjoy about your career?
I most enjoy the hands-on research. I’m really a laboratory rat. I like to do experimentation myself. I also feel very fortunate to have had two directors, Dr. Straatsma and the current director Dr. Mondino, who gave me absolute freedom to pursue the areas that I wanted to investigate.

What is/has been your greatest challenge?
The greatest challenge is to convince people that your research is worthy of funding and to get grants from places such as the National Eye Institute to support your work. I have been pretty successful throughout my career in this area.

What do you consider to be your most important professional contribution?
My most important professional contribution happened in 1992 when I discovered that alpha-crystallin, a structural protein in the eye that plays an essential role in keeping the lens clear during normal aging, is also a molecular chaperone. This discovery not only contributed to understanding the development of cataract, but also has implications for other diseases and conditions. Scientists have found that alpha-crystallin exists in many tissues in the body and seems to be involved in degenerative neurological diseases like Alzheimer’s and multiple sclerosis. There is even some indication that it may be important in age-related macular degeneration. So this finding was a major contribution to many fields, and was really the highlight of my career.

Is there anything else that you’d like to accomplish?
A year ago, my laboratory and Dr. Wayne Hubbell’s laboratory at the Jules Stein Eye Institute collaborated in the development of a new technique that uses very high pressure to measure protein structure. This technology is something that I investigated during my graduate years, but it was never applied successfully before. So this is very exciting and should keep me in my laboratory coat a while longer.

How do you like to spend your time when you’re not at the Institute?
I like to travel to exotic places like Galapagos, Antarctica, Vietnam, and Egypt. I also like to collect science equipment that the university plans to throw away and donate it to high schools, especially high schools in deprived areas. In fact, I was recently declared Science Benefactor of the Decade by one of these high schools. And, as you can see from the photo, I like to spend a lot of time with my two grandchildren, Elliot and Sawyer.
Special Thanks to Alumni and UCLA Department of Ophthalmology Association Members!

The UCLA Department of Ophthalmology Association thanks its 2010–2011 dues paying members. Annual dues provide the resources to support the annual Research Grant Awards, Jules Stein Eye Institute Clinical and Research Seminar, Video Library Project, Alumni Directory, reception at the Annual American Academy of Ophthalmology Meeting, and other important alumni events. If you would like to become a member, registration forms can be found online at www.jsei.org or requested by contacting us at alumni@jsei.ucla.edu. Thank you!

Alumni Volunteer to Mentor New Residents

At the 2010 Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI) Clinical and Research Seminar, Robert Alan Goldberg, MD, Secretary-Treasurer of the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology Association, announced the formation of the new Community Mentorship Program for JSEI residents.

“Jules Stein residents already have been assigned faculty to help them with academic or clinical challenges, but the JSEI Community Mentorship Program will function as a way to augment and enhance the existing faculty preceptor relationship,” said Dr. Goldberg.

Through their community mentors, JSEI residents will gain valuable insight into the complex world of business creation and management, community networking, and healthcare policy activism at the local, state, and federal levels. Residents may also benefit from the mentors’ professional, social, or business contacts that could be valuable for career planning, whether they pursue an academic or community practice.

“From the standpoint of the community mentors, the program will serve to reconnect these alumni in a very tangible way with their alma mater and their own residency experiences. For some mentors who do not routinely have the opportunity to teach medical students and residents, this experience will provide a refreshing and perhaps eye-opening glimpse into the mindset of a bright, young, and idealistic ophthalmologist-in-training,” said Bartly J. Mondino, MD, JSEI Director.

More than 30 alumni and volunteer clinical faculty members submitted applications to participate in the program. “We were thrilled with the overwhelming interest,” said Dr. Goldberg. “We look forward to continuing the Community Mentorship Program well into the future to build a bridge between established and up-and-coming new ophthalmologists.”

In Memoriam

George L. Miller, MD, passed away on August 27, 2010, at the age of 74. Dr. Miller completed his residency training at the Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI) in 1970 and entered private practice in the San Fernando Valley. He joined the UCLA clinical faculty in 1983, participating in the Department of Ophthalmology’s teaching programs at JSEI until his retirement in 2001. He was an outstanding ophthalmologist who generously gave back to UCLA in acknowledgement of all he received throughout his personal education and training. He is survived by his four children.

Community Outreach

JSEI Affiliates Hosts Holiday Volunteer Recognition Luncheon

Cherie Hubbell, Chair of the JSEI Affiliates, hosted the Affiliates 11th annual holiday luncheon on Monday, December 6, 2010, at the Regency Club honoring the JSEI Affiliates Advisory Board members, program volunteers and special guests.

“The strength of the JSEI Affiliates program depends on our dedicated volunteers whom we recognize at this special annual recognition event,” Ms. Hubbell remarked. “The Affiliates accomplished new levels this year in each of our community outreach programs—results that would not have been possible without the commitment of our advisory board and dedication of our volunteers.”

If you would like information about joining or volunteering with the Jules Stein Eye Institute Affiliates, please contact the Jules and Doris Stein UCLA Support Group at (310) 825-4148.

Walking to Prevent Blindness

Several hundred walkers gathered at UCLA’s Dickson Court on Sunday, October 24, 2010, for the Foundation Fighting Blindness’ (FFB) 4th annual VisionWalk. The event, supported by both the Jules Stein Eye Institute (JSEI) and volunteers from the JSEI Affiliates, raised more than $75,000 for retinal eye disease research.

Along with approximately 300 VisionWalk participants, the JSEI team donned matching “Volunteers with Vision” visors and strolled the 5-kilometer loop through UCLA’s beautiful north campus. JSEI Affiliates Board member and program volunteer Jill Stuart joined fellow walkers with her yellow Labrador Retriever, Summer. “Supporting vision science research is an important cause. FFB’s VisionWalk is an inspirational event and a fun way to become involved,” she said.

The Foundation Fighting Blindness is a non-profit organization committed to funding research to prevent, treat, and cure retinal degenerative eye diseases. A lead sponsor of VisionWalk, the Jules Stein Eye Institute has participated in research on a number of inherited retinal diseases and received grants for continued study of vision loss treatment and prevention.
The Edie and Lew Wasserman Building Groundbreaking Ceremony: A Fitting Legacy

On October 14, 2010, with the onset of construction imminent, philanthropists, faculty, staff, and architects attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Edie and Lew Wasserman Building, a $115.6 million project designed by Richard Meier & Partner Architects. Three floors of the six-story, 100,000-square-foot facility will be dedicated to the patient care and research programs of the Jules Stein Eye Institute. The remaining space will be occupied by the David Geffen School of Medicine’s Neurosurgery Department and Institute of Urologic Oncology.

Members of the Wasserman family in attendance included (left to right) Casey and his wife Laura Ziffren Wasserman, Jeff Parker, Edie Wasserman, Carol Ann Leif, and Lynne Wasserman.


JSEI Director Dr. Bartly Mondino (wearing hard hat) with (from left) Ms. Helaine Miller, JSEI CAO Mr. Jonathan Smith, and JSEI Board of Trustee member, Dr. Andrea Rich

Casey Wasserman spoke about the fulfilled promise to his 85-year-old grandmother Edie Wasserman of seeing a shovel in the ground for the construction of the building named in honor of Edie and her late husband, Lew Wasserman.