

Spring 2024

EYE

UCLA Department of Ophthalmology
Stein Eye Institute and Doheny Eye Institute
UCLA Health



Research | Patient Care | Education | Outreach



Stein Eye Institute



DOHENY
EYE INSTITUTE

EYE MAGAZINE

is a publication from the UCLA
Department of Ophthalmology.

Stein Eye Institute and
Doheny Eye Institute
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Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Through our collaboration with the Doheny Eye Institute, and with our affiliated hospitals, the Stein Eye Centers, and the Doheny Eye Centers UCLA, the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology is pursuing excellence in eye care and vision research. Our Department is committed to fostering inclusion, innovation, and advancement of knowledge in the field of ophthalmology.

Through our collective efforts, our Department is making substantial contributions to eye health. In this issue of *EYE*, we highlight how our Cataract and Refractive Surgery Division is advancing the treatment for cataracts—the leading cause of blindness—both here at home and abroad.

Our faculty continue to be honored for their leadership, and I congratulate Dr. Wayne Hubbell, Jules Stein Chair in Ophthalmology, who was recognized for his contributions to vision science in the journal *Applied Magnetic Resonance*, which devoted its entire September 2023 issue to Wayne's achievements, including site-directed spin labeling that was pioneered in the Hubbell laboratory.

New advances in laboratory-based research by Drs. Alfredo Sadun, Steve Barnes, and Greg Field are also highlighted in this issue. The work of Drs. Sadun and Barnes, believed to be the first to show the role of abnormalities of quantum mechanics in a human disease, shows how quantum mechanics triggers a process that leads to sudden and irreversible blindness in individuals with Leber hereditary optic neuropathy. And Dr. Field's study identifies a critical period for providing gene therapies for retinitis pigmentosa, a group of inherited eye diseases, to best limit or halt vision loss.

We also introduce three new faculty members, two of whom were international retinal fellows at the Stein Eye Institute, and the third who completed her ophthalmology residency training at Stein Eye and whose academic interests include studying perioperative cataract outcomes and factors driving healthcare costs.

For 34 consecutive years UCLA Health has been recognized on the *U.S. News & World Report* national honor roll of best hospitals, and UCLA Stein Eye and Doheny Eye Institutes are ranked #1 in California and top five in the nation for ophthalmology. But with that said, our motto is "Never let it rest until good is better, and better is best!"

Thank you for your trust in us, and for all we do together for the betterment of eye health.

With warm regards,

Anne L. Coleman, MD, PhD

Bradley R. Straatsma, MD, Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology
Chair, UCLA Department of Ophthalmology
Director, Stein Eye Institute
Affiliation Chair, Doheny Eye Institute



FEATURE

Seeking to Perfect Cataract Surgery and Its Outcomes

The extraordinary advancement of tools and techniques for cataract surgery has converted what was once a grueling operation and recovery process into an easy half-hour outpatient procedure that provides a quick recovery and clear vision.

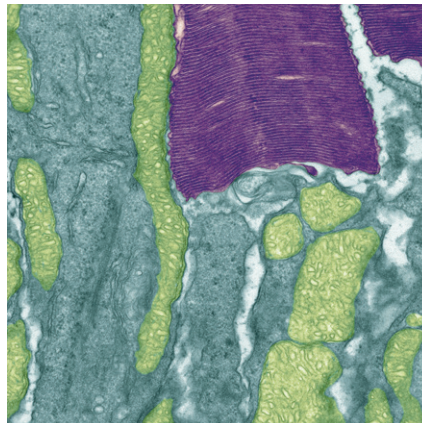
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Discoveries at the Stein Eye and Doheny Eye Institutes Lead to Better Understanding of Diseases and Their Treatment

A study by Dr. Alfredo Sadun reveals how abnormalities of quantum mechanics trigger a process leading to Leber hereditary optic neuropathy. And Dr. Greg Field has identified a critical window for achieving an optimal gene therapy outcome for retinitis pigmentosa.

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The UCLA Department of Ophthalmology was honored for its commitment to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, specifically in its planning and execution of initiatives focused on people.



For 34 consecutive years, UCLA Health has been recognized on the *U.S. News & World Report* national honor roll of best hospitals. UCLA Stein Eye and Doheny Eye Institutes are ranked #1 in California and top five in the nation for ophthalmology.

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SEEKING TO PERFECT Cataract Surgery and Its Outcomes

Decades of refinement have shaped a new era of a life-changing surgery, with more improvements on the way.

In 1974, when a patient was diagnosed with cataracts—the clouding of the clear lens of the eye that causes blurred vision, sensitivity around lights, and ultimately blindness without treatment—they faced a lengthy and painful surgical procedure to replace their cloudy natural lens with a clear artificial implant, three uncomfortable days in the hospital with their head blocked in place with sandbags, and several weeks of recovery at home before they could return to daily activities.

SKIP AHEAD 50 YEARS to the current state of cataract surgery to witness the experience of UCLA alumnus **Randy Schekman, PhD**, a cell biologist at UC Berkeley, and co-winner of the 2013 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine, whose cataract surgery was the exact opposite of the long, high-stress procedure from five decades earlier.

“I had started to notice my vision was deteriorating measurably,” says Dr. Schekman. “I had difficulty focusing, and colors were fading. When it got to the point when I was having trouble reading the numbers on my phone, I realized it was time to get it done.”

His surgery was performed by **Kevin M. Miller, MD**, chief of the Cataract and Refractive Surgery Division, in a pain-free 20-minute procedure, where a synthetic intraocular lens was inserted into the eye with a microsurgical incision the size of a sesame seed. Dr. Schekman returned home early that same afternoon.

“My vision improved right away,” says Dr. Schekman, “and after a day, my left eye was so good I stopped wearing my glasses. Two days later, I was driving again.” And a few weeks later, Dr. Schekman had the same procedure done on his second eye.

“In 2024, more than four million Americans will have newly diagnosed cataracts, and all of them will ultimately need surgery. Progress in refining our methods has, in a generation, vastly transformed the procedure with improved technology and faster recovery times, and with better results for our patients.”

KEVIN M. MILLER, MD

The extraordinary advancement of tools and techniques for cataract surgery has converted what was once grueling into a routine outpatient experience that involves about a half-hour in the operating room, multiple options for lenses best suited to the patient, and a return home within a few hours—with vision already corrected.

In 2024, 75 years after the first artificial lens was inserted into the eye and almost five decades after the first foldable lens opened a new era in microsurgical treatment of cataracts, ophthalmologists at the UCLA Stein Eye Institute continue their work to advance the materials, methods, and training for lens-replacement cataract surgery.

“Perhaps no other procedure in medicine is so life-changing in so short a time as cataract surgery,” says Dr. Miller, Kolokotronis Chair in Ophthalmology.

“In 2024, more than four million Americans will have newly diagnosed cataracts,” Dr. Miller says, “and all of them will ultimately need surgery. Progress in refining our methods has, in a generation, vastly transformed the procedure with improved technology and faster recovery times, and with better results for our patients.”

New methods, rapid progress, societal needs

Procedures to remove cataracts date back more than 2,000 years, but the aggressive technique used then—known as “couching”—had poor outcomes that usually resulted in blindness. In the early 20th century, advancement in methods and tools produced only modest results and required thick glasses to replace the removed lens. (Among the most notable patients of this era was impressionist artist Claude Monet, whose cataract surgery in 1923 was only partially successful. The effect of his cataracts and surgery caused Monet’s paintings to be increasingly abstract during the last three years of his life.)

As surgical tools and methods improved, progress in cataract surgery continued throughout the 20th century. By 1949, English ophthalmologist Harold Ridley created a major breakthrough when he modified the acrylic plastic used for cockpit enclosures in World War II aircraft to produce the first implantable lens.

Perhaps the most significant development for treatment of cataracts occurred in 1978, with the invention of the foldable lens, which ultimately reached the market in 1991. The smaller, foldable lens could be implanted by using a microsurgical procedure so small it was almost invisible without magnification, producing dramatic improvement in results and recovery time.

“The foldable lens is like a ship in the bottle; we roll the lens into a tiny tube and implant it in the eye, where it unfolds beautifully,” says Dr. Miller. “Since the foldable lens arrived, there has been a range of new developments in the methods and equipment we use. We are participating in an explosion of ideas that drive lens technology and surgical procedures, all based on the small microsurgical procedure approach.”

The continuing improvement of lens replacement surgery is not only a goal for the treatment and recovery of patients, but it is also a responsibility to society.

“Cataract surgery is the #1 procedure paid by Medicare,” says **Anne L. Coleman, MD, PhD**, chair of the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology and director of the Stein Eye Institute.

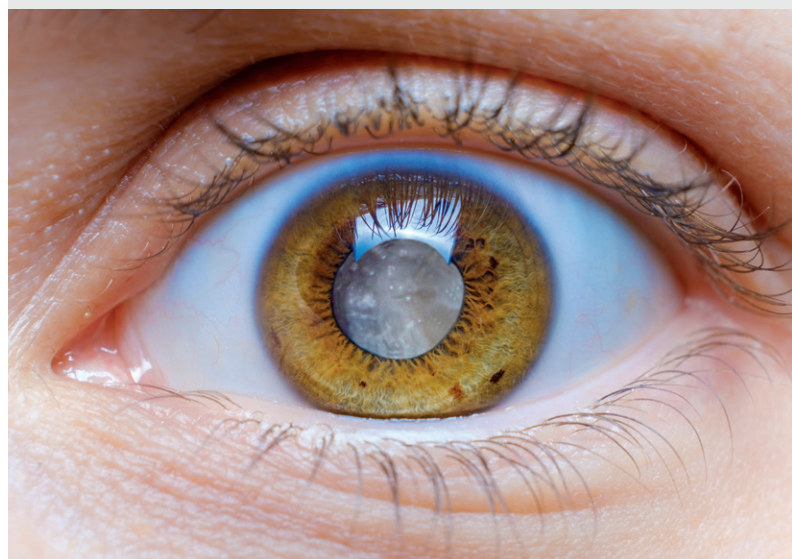
What are cataracts, and why is surgery necessary?

The transparent lens of the eye is responsible for focusing light and producing clear, sharp images. A cataract is a condition that clouds the lens, with symptoms including loss of focus, reduced night vision, faded colors, and blurry vision.

Cataracts are the most common cause of vision loss and blindness. While cataracts can develop at any point in life, most cases are the direct result of aging. By 70, more than 50% of Americans have cataracts in one or both eyes; by age 80, the percentage rises to 70%. Currently more than 24 million Americans are diagnosed with cataracts, and cataracts cause more than half of all blindness and one-third of visual impairment worldwide.

Surgery is required to remove a cataract. Cataract surgery produces minimal discomfort and typically takes 15 to 30 minutes to perform. The procedure involves removing the eye’s natural cloudy lens and replacing it with a clear, artificial lens implant, known as an intraocular lens. The microsurgical procedure involves emulsifying the original lens and then inserting a foldable lens through an incision less than two millimeters wide into the cornea and into the capsular bag, where it unfolds and remains permanently. More than 30 million lens replacement procedures have been conducted in the United States. Excluding dental procedures, it is one of the most frequently performed surgeries.

Cataract surgery rates among the most highly valued medical procedures among patients, and in national surveys, 99.4% of recipients said they would do it again.



The image shows an eye with a cataract. A cataract is a clouding of the eye’s natural lens.

“As a public health issue, and an issue of public funding, it is our responsibility to do everything we can to improve the procedure while being mindful of costs.”

Cooperation with industry in developing new products and methods along with clinical trials at UCLA are keys to progress in treating cataracts, explains Dr. Miller. “Our goal is to push the evolution of cataract removal and lens replacement surgery in the private sector by collaborating on advances in technology and treatment.”

The first division of cataract refractive surgery

The Stein Eye Institute, active in cataract discovery and care since its earliest days, assumed a national leadership role for progress in the field as the first academic division of cataract and refractive surgery in the nation.

In 2024, ophthalmologists at Stein Eye will perform procedures ranging in scope from implanting intraocular lenses to treat cataract to more complex procedures involving simultaneous treatment of other conditions, such as corneal failure, glaucoma, macular degeneration, or retinal detachment.

Education: a priority for progress in cataract treatment

With cataract at the top of the list of most common eye issues, developing strong competency in cataract surgery is a major priority for the Institute’s educational programs. For residents in training at the Institute, the Cataract and Refractive Surgery Division coordinates a highly structured curriculum, along with programs for Institute fellows shared with the Cornea Division.

The Institute also takes a lead in teaching the latest in cataract surgical techniques. For residents from UCLA and other Southern California campuses, the Division offers two annual courses in cooperation with the vision-care private sector. The courses, “Cataract Surgery Essentials” and “Advanced Cataract Surgery,” bring together residents from UCLA, USC, UC Irving, Loma Linda, UC San Diego, and the Navy Medical Center who learn from faculty and industry professionals from Alcon, Johnson & Johnson Vision, Bausch + Lomb, and Zeiss. To date, more than 1,000 trainees have attended the courses.

The Division also educates doctors across the country in courses for practicing ophthalmologists that run in conjunction with large national conferences; for example, at the 2023 Cataract Spotlight Symposium held during the American Academy of Ophthalmology annual meeting, more than 4,000 doctors heard presentations by Division faculty.



“The state of cataract surgery is moving more towards refractive cataract surgery, meaning that patients will more frequently have their vision corrected without the need to wear glasses or contact lenses.”

SHAWN R. LIN, MD



Dr. Miller and other UCLA Department of Ophthalmology physicians meet with doctors in countries with the greatest need—primarily in Asia, South America, and Africa—to build hands-on skills.

“We work to build competency in cataract surgery by developing methods that can be sustained locally, and then let the effect multiply way beyond one person’s ability.”

KEVIN M. MILLER, MD

Global outreach to spread advances

Such training also extends to doctors worldwide. A priority for Stein Eye ophthalmologists is enhancing the skills of doctors in other countries, transferring the evolving tools and techniques in the mission to restore sight to more than 40 million people worldwide with preventable blindness—more than half caused by cataracts. At home, the Stein Eye Institute and Doheny Eye Centers UCLA host international fellows who receive training in cataract surgery and other subspecialties and then bring that knowledge back to their home countries.

Abroad, Dr. Miller and other UCLA Department of Ophthalmology physicians meet with doctors in countries with the greatest need—primarily in Asia, South America, and Africa—to build hands-on skills.

“We work to build competency in cataract surgery by developing methods that can be sustained locally,” says Dr. Miller, “and then let the effect multiply way beyond one person’s ability.”

As one example, Dr. Miller cites his experience more than two decades ago when he trained a doctor in Western China with refined techniques for lens replacement surgery.

“When I saw him again 15 years later,” Dr. Miller recalls, “I learned he had used the methods we had worked on together to build his own training program for other local doctors in the region, with significant impact on preventing blindness through cataract surgery. He estimated that several million people in that province had benefited.”

A future of new ideas, new methods

With a success rate above 99% and broad approval by patients, it would seem that cataract surgery has reached peak effectiveness. But the development of tools and techniques will continue to evolve with significant benefits for patients.

“The state of cataract surgery is moving more towards refractive cataract surgery, meaning that patients will more frequently have their vision corrected without the need to wear glasses or contact lenses,” says **Shawn R. Lin, MD**, medical director of the Stein Eye Center—Calabasas.

Says Dr. Miller, “Our lens technology will continue to work toward the holy grail of ophthalmology: the ongoing development of a lens that mimics the human lens in its ability to change shape within the eye. I think we’re probably three to five years away from reaching that goal, but the end is certainly in sight.”

“At the same time,” says Dr. Miller, “our outcomes for cataract surgery continue to get better and better, and recovery time is shorter and shorter. Cataract surgery is already one of the great success stories in medicine; we want the procedure to become even more life-transforming.”

Personal choices to restore clear vision

A singular aspect of cataract treatment is the opportunity for patients, in consultation with their doctors, to tailor the procedure to their own needs, by matching personal expectations to specific lenses—choices that can emphasize distance vision, correct astigmatism, or extend the depth of focus.

“While preparing for cataract surgery, we have detailed discussions with our patients to determine the best choice for their lens, based on their needs and lifestyles,” says Dr. Shawn Lin, who was named a Southern California “Rising Star” by Super Doctors®, and is one of the founders of EyeGuru.com, a resource website for ophthalmologists that is visited more than one million times annually.

“There are tradeoffs for each type of lens,” says Dr. Lin. “With many lenses to choose from, our job is to work with patients so they can select a lens that’s going to help them make the most of their lifestyle and goals.”

Current types of lenses include standard **monofocal** lenses, **toric** lenses, multifocal lenses, **extended depth of focus** lenses, and **light adjustable** lenses, each with options for near, medium, or distance vision.

Study Reveals How Abnormalities of Quantum Mechanics Trigger Process Leading to Inherited Blinding Disease

A research team led by a UCLA Department of Ophthalmology faculty member at the Doheny Eye Institute has shown how a genetic mutation disrupts proteins responsible for the functioning of mitochondria—the powerhouse of cells—setting off a chain reaction that leads to sudden and irreversible blindness in individuals with Leber hereditary optic neuropathy (LHON).

The study, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, was led by **Alfredo A. Sadun, MD, PhD**, Flora L. Thornton Endowed Chair in Vision Research, and UCLA Physiologist **Steven A. Barnes, PhD**, professor of ophthalmology and neurobiology. It is believed to be the first to show the role of abnormalities of quantum mechanics in a human disease. Dr. Sadun, a neuro-ophthalmologist who is among the world's leading experts in LHON, and Dr. Barnes collaborated with physical chemists at UCLA and Dr. Sadun's brother, a professor of mathematics at the University of Texas at Austin.

LHON has several features that make it unusual. "It's a genetic degeneration, but unlike Alzheimer's, in which you lose brain cells slowly over decades, this occurs over a period of a week or two and affects people at a young age," Dr. Sadun explains. "It's tragic for these young adults who suddenly become blind for the rest of their lives." Dr. Sadun adds that LHON is known to be maternally inherited, and affects men at a much higher rate than women. While the disease always affects both eyes, vision loss typically starts in one eye before quickly moving to the other. Possible triggers include smoking and binge alcohol consumption. Dr. Sadun was so struck by the dramatic nature of LHON early in his career that he has devoted much of his research and clinical time to the disease, and now takes patient referrals from all over the world.

It had been known that the genetic mutation associated with LHON wreaks havoc with the mitochondrial function in key retina cells, but exactly how this impairment occurred was unclear. Most physicians and scientists had assumed that the cause was an insufficient production of adenosine triphosphate (ATP). But a decade ago, Dr. Sadun and his colleagues, in a study also published in *PNAS*, showed that ATP levels were normal in mice with the LHON mutation. Instead, they found abnormally high levels of reactive oxygen species (ROS), which is also known to be a major cause of aging. "Once we knew ROS was the culprit, the next question was, what causes the ROS," Dr. Sadun says.

In the most recent study, Dr. Sadun's team discovered that the LHON mutation causes a conformational change in a protein such that the naturally produced antioxidant Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is

perturbed, enhancing a process called quantum electron tunneling. The team also found that in the new configuration, CoQ10 becomes "stuck," and because of the quantum mechanics, the electrons move backwards through the mitochondrial proteins, thereby promoting the production of ROS.

Dr. Sadun notes that as with any basic-science discovery, the clinical implications of his team's findings are uncertain. "We can just hope this will lead to a breakthrough treatment for LHON at some point," he says. Regardless, the paper has drawn substantial interest from scientists in other fields, several of whom have contacted Dr. Sadun to consult on the findings. A commentary published in *PNAS* hailed the discovery as fundamental for researchers who focus on aging, given aging's association with mitochondrial function.



Dr. Alfredo Sadun (right) approached his youngest brother, Dr. Lorenzo Sadun (left), a world-class mathematician, to assist with calculating how much tunneling would occur if the key molecules were separated by 12–14 angstroms. Lorenzo estimated it would take 100 hours to make this determination, and he didn't have the time.

About a year later, Alfredo got a call from his brother. "He said he had some bad news—he was in a ski accident that required major surgery on his shoulder," Dr. Sadun recalls. "But he told me he also had good news: While he was recuperating, he would have time to do the math for me."

Lorenzo confirmed Dr. Sadun's assumption that it was likely quantum electron tunneling that was responsible for the increased ROS production, and with that knowledge, Dr. Barnes approached colleagues at UCLA, and they embarked on the study.

Stein Eye Study Identifies Critical Period for Achieving Optimal Gene Therapy Outcome in Retinitis Pigmentosa

A UCLA Stein Eye Institute research team has found, in a study using a mouse model of retinitis pigmentosa (RP), that gene replacement therapies are unlikely to restore visual function to normal in RP patients if they are delivered after 50% of the patients' photoreceptor rods have been lost. The study, published in the December 12, 2023, online issue of the journal *Nature Communications*, utilized an RP mouse model capable of mimicking genetic rescue via viral-mediated gene therapy—allowing the researchers to identify a benchmark for what would occur under the best-case gene therapy strategy.

“Our research shows the earlier we can administer gene therapies, the better,” says **Greg D. Field, PhD**, Joan and Jerome Snyder Chair in Vision Science, associate professor of ophthalmology at Stein Eye, and senior author of the study. “While this isn’t a surprising finding, the specifics of what seems to be a critical period for providing the therapy is an important insight. Our findings indicate if treatment is delivered before roughly half of the rod photoreceptors have died, it seems to fully halt degeneration, and the retina continues to function more or less as normal. But when we deliver therapy *after* about 50% of the rods have died, we seem to have missed this critical period, and while degeneration is slowed, it continues.”

Dr. Field says these results indicate that when the retina is treated after a small amount of photoreceptor death, function can be rescued because those dead cells haven’t reached the point of being toxic to the surrounding cells. On the other hand, he notes, after a certain point the photoreceptor death may produce a snowball effect in which a toxic buildup from the dying cells produces a cascade of events that continues even after the underlying cause of the cell death is cured.

“Our findings are potentially important as we try to make smart decisions about when to deliver these therapies to humans,” Dr. Field says. “And our results certainly point to the importance of early diagnostics in order to identify individuals well before 50% of the rods have died, so that we can intervene before we cross that critical point.”

RP is a group of inherited eye diseases characterized by photoreceptor degeneration that begins with rod loss, followed by cone loss, eventually leading to blindness. Gene therapies are being developed and have been tested in clinical trials, but it hasn’t been known how retinal function following gene replacement depends on the time of intervention. “These therapies have shown varying degrees of success, but none of them has halted degeneration in the way we would have anticipated from animal-model studies,” Dr. Field says. “We think that’s because the gene therapies are being delivered much later in humans than they were in the animals.”

Clinical trials tend to recruit patients with severe vision loss, in part to avoid unintended consequences in individuals with moderate impairment, Dr. Field notes. But even if that weren’t the case, RP is often not diagnosed until its later stages. The earliest symptom tends to be poor night vision, which many individuals will tolerate for a lengthy period before seeing their physician. “They assume it’s just a function of getting older, and often that’s true,” Dr. Field says. “But as a result, by the time many individuals with RP present to their doctor, they have already experienced a great deal of rod loss.”

To determine how retinal function after gene therapy is dependent on the time of intervention, Dr. Field and his colleagues engineered a mouse with a lack of function in a gene that causes RP in humans, but capable of inducing normal expression of that gene when

“Our findings indicate if treatment is delivered before roughly half of the rod photoreceptors have died, it seems to fully halt degeneration, and the retina continues to function more or less as normal. But when we deliver therapy *after* about 50% of the rods have died, we seem to have missed this critical period, and while degeneration is slowed, it continues.”

GREG D. FIELD, PHD

injected with a certain drug. This allowed the researchers to observe conditions under a best-case gene therapy scenario, administered at various time points—for the study, after 25%, 50%, and 70% rod photoreceptor loss had occurred.

They found that treatment at the early and middle stage of rod loss restored retinal function to nearly normal levels, although some anatomical defects remained. After late treatment, retinal function continued to deteriorate, although at a slower rate.

Having looked at the histology of the retina in this and a previous study, Dr. Field’s group has now turned to the question of how gene expression changes in these cells and throughout the retina as the degeneration is occurring. “Our goal is to identify particular genes or networks of genes that are either helping to resist the degeneration or causing it to accelerate,” Dr. Field says. “This could point to complementary or secondary therapies that might make the gene therapies more effective.”

FACULTY HONORS

Anthony J. Aldave, MD, professor of ophthalmology, was appointed the Bartly J. Mondino, MD, Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology, effective July 1, 2023. The administrative chair was established in 2022 and supports Dr. Aldave's role as Vice Chair of Academic Affairs in the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology.

Steven A. Barnes, PhD, professor of ophthalmology and neurobiology, received a five-year R01 federal grant for his research on retinal ganglion cell signaling regulated by intrinsic reactive oxygen species.

Ava Bittner, OD, PhD, associate professor of ophthalmology, received an NIH R01 Grant, which will help support her investigation of beacon sensors and telerehabilitation to assess and improve the use of devices for low vision.

Anne L. Coleman, MD, PhD, chair of the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology and director of the Stein Eye Institute, received the California Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons Distinguished Service Award for her contributions to accessing eye care and educating the public about eye health. The award was presented December 20, 2023, at the Stein Eye Institute.

JoAnn A. Giaconi, MD, Health Sciences clinical professor of ophthalmology, and **Gary N. Holland, MD**, distinguished professor of ophthalmology, were named Faculty Advisors to Medical Students. As

Faculty Advisors, Drs. Giaconi and Holland are responsible for mentoring and providing career guidance to David Geffen School of Medicine medical students as they navigate the Stein Eye Institute.

Dr. Giaconi was also named the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) Secretary for Communications, where she will be involved in the development and management of Academy activities and services. Dr. Giaconi was also named Chief Medical Editor of the AAO's Academy Express, a clinical newsletter emailed to over 75,500 ophthalmologists worldwide.

The September 2023 issue of the journal *Applied Magnetic Resonance* was devoted to the achievements of **Wayne L. Hubbell, PhD**, distinguished professor of ophthalmology. Titled, "Wayne Hubbell—on the Occasion of His 80th birthday," the journal recognized the many contributions of Dr. Hubbell to electron spin/paramagnetic resonance (ESR/EPR) spectroscopy, which was pioneered in the Hubbell laboratory at the Stein Eye Institute. To read articles from the special issue, go to: <https://link.springer.com/collections/ggjhgacjcb>.

Shawn R. Lin, MD, Health Sciences assistant clinical professor of ophthalmology, was the recipient of the Stein Eye Institute's 1st Annual Golden Eye Award. The Award recognizes tremendous surgical capabilities, as well as the ability to collaborate exceptionally with the operating room (OR) team. The award voting committee is comprised of OR nurses, scrub techs, and staff.

Stacy L. Pineles, MD, professor of ophthalmology, presented the Claud Worth Lecture on October 5, 2023, at the British and Irish Paediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus Association meeting in London, England.

Srinivas R. Sadda, MD, professor of ophthalmology, presented the Charles L. Schepens Lecture, on October 12, 2023, at the Retina Society's 56th Annual Scientific Meeting in New York, New York.

In addition, Dr. Sadda received the 2023 Retina Research Foundation Merit Award in recognition of outstanding research in retinal visual science. The Award provides a \$50K grant for research.

Victoria L. Tseng, MD, PhD, assistant professor of ophthalmology, was appointed the Jerome and Joan Snyder Chair in Ophthalmology. The chair supports the distinguished faculty member who directs the ophthalmology residency program, ensuring that UCLA's accredited program continues to offer rigorous and comprehensive instruction for individuals of the highest caliber.

Jie J. Zheng, PhD, professor of ophthalmology, was presented with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award from the UCLA Molecular Biology Institute on September 14, 2023, in recognition of his outstanding commitment to leadership, outreach, and service.

Thank You Volunteer Faculty

The UCLA Department of Ophthalmology Department is deeply indebted to our volunteer clinical faculty (VCF) who have provided their time, knowledge, and guidance to our trainees.

The UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine has revised the current process of appointment and reappointment to the Volunteer Clinical Professor Series. In brief, the new policy outlines unified standards for appointment and reappointment, including a minimum requirement for teaching of medical students (and other trainees by exception) of 50 hours per year. As the Department of Ophthalmology VCF primarily interact with ophthalmology residents and fellows at the UCLA Medical Center and affiliated sites, the majority of our VCF were not able to meet the medical student teaching requirement for reappointment. While exceptions have been requested for many of our VCF who remain actively engaged in the training of ophthalmology residents and fellows, the Department would like to thank the VCF whose appointments were not renewed beyond June 30, 2023. The VCF have been and will continue to be essential to the Department's ability to fulfill its educational, patient care, and community service missions.

Stein Eye and Doheny Eye Institutes Contribute to Success of AAO Annual Meeting

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) Annual Meeting is a leading ophthalmic educational event that attracts attendees from throughout the world. The meeting includes lectures, instructional courses, and more, highlighting the latest advancements in ophthalmology.

The November 3–6, 2023, meeting in San Francisco featured UCLA Department of Ophthalmology faculty presentations from: **Drs. Anthony J. Aldave, Anthony C. Arnold, Benjamin B. Bert, Ava K. Bittner, Laura Bonelli, Joseph Caprioli, Vikas Chopra, Anne L. Coleman, Sophie X. Deng, Brian A. Francis, Simon Fung, JoAnn Giacon, Robert A. Goldberg, Jean-Pierre Hubschman, Simon K. Law, Colin A. McCannel, Tara A. McCannel, Kevin M. Miller, Kouros Nouri-Mahdavi, Stacy L. Pineles, Pradeep Prasad, Peter A. Quiros, Daniel B. Rootman, Srinivas Sadda, Alfredo Sadun, David Sarraf, Victoria L. Tseng, Edmund Tsui, and Federico G. Velez.**

AAO Awards

Congratulations to our faculty and alumni who were honored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology in 2023.

Life Achievement Award Recipient

- ▶ Brian A. Francis, MD, MS (faculty)

Senior Achievement Award Recipients

- ▶ Uday Devgan, MD (SEI alumnus)
- ▶ Amani Fawzi, MD (SEI alumna)
- ▶ David Rex Hamilton, MD (past SEI faculty and SEI alumnus)
- ▶ Tsontcho Ianchulev, MD (DEI alumnus)

Achievement Award Recipients

- ▶ Jean-Pierre Hubschman, MD (faculty and SEI alumnus)
- ▶ Victoria L. Tseng, MD, PhD (faculty)
- ▶ Irena Tsui, MD (faculty)
- ▶ N. Grace Lee, MD (DEI Alumna)
- ▶ Ghazala A. Datoo O'Keefe, MD (DEI alumna)
- ▶ Sandy X. Zhang-Nunes, MD (SEI alumna)

Secretariat Award Recipients

- ▶ Colin A. McCannel, MD (faculty)
- ▶ Stacy L. Pineles, MD (faculty)
- ▶ Jesse L. Berry, MD (DEI alumna)
- ▶ Paul P. Lee, MD, JD (past DEI faculty)
- ▶ Allen Chiang, MD (SEI alumnus)

Susan Lee DeRemer to Lead Development Efforts



The UCLA Stein Eye Institute welcomes **Susan Lee DeRemer, CFRE**, as director of Development.

In the ever-changing landscape of fundraising and development, Susan has used her varied background in finance, fundraising, and volunteer service to create successful fundraising and communication

strategies to reinforce the mission and goals of both non-profit and for-profit organizations.

Before coming to Stein Eye, Susan was director of leadership gifts at the PKD Foundation, a non-profit organization that funds research into polycystic kidney disease. Susan's work in ophthalmology includes being vice president of the Discovery Eye Foundation and serving as director of development, director of major gifts, and events coordinator (Western Region and Los Angeles) for Foundation Fighting Blindness.

Susan received her BA at UCLA, where she also received her certificate in Fundraising and Institutional Development. "As a UCLA graduate, and from my previous work in ophthalmology partnering with some of our great Stein Eye clinicians and researchers, it's wonderful to be back at UCLA," says Susan. "I am excited to be supporting the unparalleled excellence of the Stein Eye Institute and its vital mission to preserve and restore vision."

You can reach Susan by emailing giving@jsei.ucla.edu, calling the Development Office at (310) 825-3381, or by texting/calling (424) 325-9076.



New Faculty Appointments

Aya Barzelay-Wollman, MD, PhD

Health Sciences Clinical Instructor



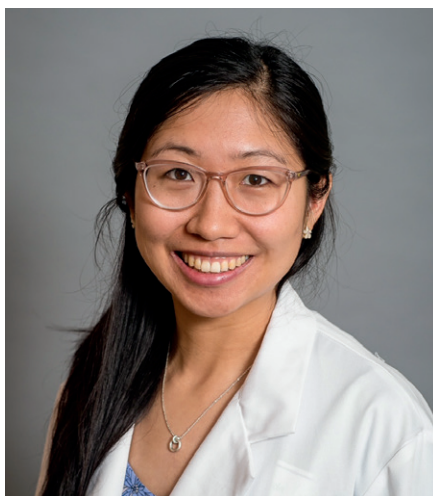
Dr. Barzelay-Wollman joins the faculty of the Retina Division where she specializes in the clinical and surgical treatment of retina and vitreous diseases and conducts research. In addition to these duties, Dr. Barzelay-Wollman serves as ocular trauma faculty staffing after-hours globe trauma surgeries with our residents and providing a level of expertise and supervision that further elevates the care of ocular trauma at UCLA.

Dr. Barzelay-Wollman obtained her PhD at Tel Aviv University in 2009 and her MD at the Technion Institute of Technology in Haifa, Israel, in 2015. She conducted her residency at Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center in 2019–20 and completed a surgical retina fellowship at Sheba Medical Center in Israel in 2021. She was an international fellow in vitreoretinal diseases and surgery at the UCLA Stein Eye Institute in 2023.

Dr. Barzelay-Wollman sees patients at the UCLA Stein Eye Institute and the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

Amanda Lu, MD

Health Sciences
Assistant Clinical Professor



Dr. Lu joins us as a new faculty member in the Comprehensive Ophthalmology Division where she provides primary ophthalmic and surgical care. Dr. Lu, who was born and raised in Dallas, Texas, graduated from Harvard University with a BA in organismic and evolutionary biology and with a minor in global health. She was awarded the prestigious Trustman Fellowship to study ethnobotany in Peru, following her passion for environmental interactions and health.

Dr. Lu earned her MD at Yale School of Medicine and her MBA from Quantic School of Business and Technology. She completed her medical internship at Manchester Memorial Hospital, and she received her ophthalmology residency training at the UCLA Stein Eye Institute. Dr. Lu's academic interests include studying perioperative cataract outcomes and factors driving healthcare costs, and her research has been featured in national presentations and peer-reviewed publications.

Dr. Lu sees patients at the UCLA Stein Eye Institute in Westwood.

David Lozano Giral, MD

Health Sciences Clinical Instructor



Dr. Lozano Giral specializes in the clinical and surgical treatment of retina and vitreous diseases, and serves as ocular trauma faculty.

He received his medical degree in 2014 and a master's degree in medical science in 2016, both at Universidad Anahuac in Mexico City. He joined the Genetics Research Department at the Instituto de Oftalmología Conde de Valenciana in Mexico City, publishing peer-reviewed papers on genetic polymorphisms and mutations related to ophthalmologic pathologies. He conducted his residency at the Instituto de Oftalmología Conde de Valenciana in 2020 and was an international retinal fellow at the Stein Eye Institute in 2023. He has been involved in development of new platforms for surgical robotics, and his work has been published in journals and in chapters of national and international medical books.

Dr. Lozano Giral sees patients at the UCLA Stein Eye Institute and Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

Providing Patients with Concierge-Level Service

The UCLA Stein Eye Institute has recently launched an Ambassador Concierge volunteer program, the latest initiative sponsored by the Jules and Doris Stein UCLA Support Group. The program aims to pair excellent vision care with top-notch patient services. Committed volunteers provide patients with kindness and generosity, focusing on creating a warm and friendly atmosphere. Volunteer services include serving as patient escorts, making suggestions for local dining, and offering directions to other UCLA Health facilities.

Volunteering has many benefits. Volunteers connect with the community and make it a better place. Helping with even the smallest tasks at the Stein Eye Institute can make a real difference in people's lives.

Wendy T., currently a patient at Stein Eye for ocular melanoma, wanted to give back by becoming a volunteer. As a patient, Wendy experienced firsthand how overwhelming the experience of receiving a diagnosis and navigating many appointments, tests, and surgeries can be. Serving as a Stein Eye volunteer, she finds it gratifying to help patients and families by providing information, direction, and small acts of kindness. "This human touch," she says, "can be a huge source of comfort."

Bill R. and his wife, Nancy, recently began volunteering in the Ambassador Concierge program, and say, "We have worked together in a variety of other volunteer programs, and we particularly enjoy those where we can meet a real need and where we can have positive 'people contact.' This assignment does both of those things for us." On their first day volunteering they found that many patients needed assistance navigating the three buildings that comprise the vision-science campus. Patients appreciated their help, and even those who knew their way around, appreciated the friendly greetings they received. Bill and Nancy are pleased to make patients' visits to the Institute more positive and comfortable.

As we perform our best, we can always find ways to be better, and there are plans to further expand the program by incorporating volunteer musicians and a coffee cart for patients and staff.

An Ambassador Concierge volunteer's willingness to give their time and service to the UCLA Stein Eye Institute is greatly appreciated. The kindness and altruism demonstrated by each volunteer serves to lift up and support our entire community of patients who entrust us with their vision.

For information about the Ambassador Concierge volunteer program, or to join as a volunteer, please contact Shirley Egbert at egbert@jsei.ucla.edu or by calling (310) 206-7128.

An Ambassador Concierge volunteer's willingness to give their time and service to the UCLA Stein Eye Institute is greatly appreciated. The kindness and altruism demonstrated by each volunteer serves to lift up and support our entire community of patients who entrust us with their vision.



Women in Ophthalmology: Summer Symposium 2023

Women comprise 20% of the ophthalmologic field but are absent or rarely in key leadership positions. As such, the Women in Ophthalmology 2023 Summer Symposium in Florida is an opportunity for female ophthalmologists to gain knowledge and visibility and to effect change. Symposium content ranged from scientific and medical education to mindfulness and personal development sessions.

Dr. Kelsey Roelofs was the faculty investigator for **Dr. Angela Oh** and **Dr. Kendall Goodyear**, Stein Eye residents who presented posters at the meeting. Faculty members **Dr. Victoria Tseng** and **Dr. Mitra Nejad** presented educational lectures.

5th Annual Doheny-UCLA International Glaucoma Symposium

The 5th Annual Doheny-UCLA International Glaucoma Symposium was held September 30, 2023, at Doheny Eye Institute. The focus of the half-day conference was discussion of targeted glaucoma surgery. The symposium featured presentations covering imaging pearls, medical and surgical management that compared micro/minimally invasive glaucoma surgery (MIGS) to traditional approaches, cataract and glaucoma surgery, as well as review of complex cases that present diagnostic and management dilemmas.

Dr. Vikas Chopra was the course director.

Cataract Surgery Essentials Course

Dr. Kevin Miller, chief of the Cataract and Refractive Surgery Division, presented the annual Cataract Surgery Essentials Course, in conjunction with Johnson & Johnson Vision, on October 7, 2023, at the J & J Institute in Irvine, California. The course featured labs and workstations where approximately 60 trainees from UCLA, USC, UCI, Loma Linda, UCSD, and the Naval Medical Center learned about essential surgical instruments and equipment use in cataract surgery; how to obtain biometry readings and interpret results; use of corneal imaging diagnostic tools; gaining firsthand skills in phaco machine programming and A-Scan ultrasound; and obtaining better understanding of ophthalmic viscosurgical devices.



Doheny-UCLA Yannuzzi Rounds

The Yannuzzi Rounds are a series of online educational programs that provide vitreo-retinal fellows and retinal specialists an opportunity to interact with and learn from leading experts in the field of retinal imaging. Presented via Zoom webinar on October 9, 2023, the virtual seminar updated participants on new aspects of imaging and new insights into our understanding of retinal disease.

2nd Annual Doheny-UCLA International Retina Symposium

The 2nd Annual Doheny-UCLA International Retina Symposium was held at Doheny Eye Institute on January 27, 2024. Co-directed by **Drs. Michael Ip** and **Kirk Hou**, the course objectives are to explain new imaging technology benefits in the treatment and diagnosis of retinal vascular and choroidal vascular disease, as well as introduce newer and updated therapeutics for neovascular age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, diabetic macular edema, and retinal vein occlusion. Key-note lectures were presented by **Dr. Lee Jampol**, the Louis Feinberg, MD, Professor of Ophthalmology at Northwestern University, and **Dr. Usha Chakravarthy**, professor of ophthalmology and vision sciences at Queen's University of Belfast.

27th Annual Vision Science Retreat

The Department of Ophthalmology's faculty researchers, trainees, and staff met in the Stein Eye Institute's RPB Auditorium on October 20, 2023, for the 27th Annual Vision Science Retreat. Sessions featured discussion groups on Responsible Conduct in Research, several talks from trainees, and a keynote address by **Dr. Mark Humayun** from USC on "Advanced Retinal Implants for Vision Restoration." The interactive and informative event was organized by **Dr. Alapakkam Sampath**.



Boston Keratoprosthesis Skills Transfer Course in Thailand

Dr. Anthony Aldave conducted a skill transfer workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, on December 4–5, 2023, that highlighted the use of the Boston keratoprosthesis (KPro). The KPro is a widely used artificial cornea or keratoprosthesis that serves as a treatment option for corneal disease not amenable to corneal transplant or to standard penetrating keratoplasty. The two-day workshop included lectures, panel discussions, and a live surgery case. Assisting Dr. Aldave as instructors were UCLA Department of Ophthalmology faculty, **Drs. Simon Law, Daniel Rootman, Kirk Hou, and Pradeep Prasad**.



Forging a Path in Ophthalmology

Constance M. Calogeris, MD, a Stein Eye Institute alumna (Res '70) died September 15, 2023. She was 85 years old.

Dr. Calogeris was a trailblazer in ophthalmology, entering the specialty when there were very few women, and women were very much second-class citizens. It was a time when women could not take out loans without a male cosigner (typically at higher interest rates and requiring a larger down payment) and when single, divorced, or widowed women could be refused a credit card. It was a time when sexual harassment and discrimination were rampant, when women could be asked about their menstruation history, fired for getting pregnant, and where the ambitions and careers of men took precedence. It was when men were called to service in the Vietnam War that opportunities arose for women to pursue medical training.

Following her graduation from the Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1966, Dr. Calogeris was able to conduct a residency in ophthalmology due to a health emergency of a male counterpart at the Veterans Affairs (VA) Healthcare Center in Long Beach, a UCLA-partnership hospital. “Connie had enormous appreciation and respect for Dr. Bradley Straatsma, founding chair of the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology and founding director of the Stein Eye Institute, and Dr. Robert Christensen, founding member of the Institute, who were her mentors and teachers,” says **Dr. Margaret S. Lanard** (Res '70), Dr. Calogeris's colleague, fellow breaker of glass ceilings, and the sole other female in their residency class.

Following their residency at UCLA, Dr. Calogeris and Dr. Lanard—unlike all their male counterparts—were not offered a job. Unwilling to be held back, Dr. Calogeris opened her own private practice in Long Beach and provided comprehensive eye care for a quarter of a century. “Connie had the right attitude for what was a challenging time for us,” says Dr. Lanard.

Dr. Bronwyn Bateman (Res '78, Fel '79), president of the UCLA Ophthalmology Alumni Association, was instrumental in bringing UCLA's female ophthalmology pioneers back to the Institute in November 2022. The luncheon was co-hosted by **Dr. Anne L. Coleman**—who as chair of the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology, director of the Stein Eye Institute, past president of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, and a multitude of other leadership positions—underscored the advancement of women in ophthalmology forged from the legacy of Dr. Calogeris and her colleagues.

“Connie was a superb clinician and surgeon. I was honored to be her friend, and I will miss her.”

J. BRONWYN BATEMAN, MD



Dr. Anne Coleman (center right), director of the Stein Eye Institute and chair of the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology, along with her predecessors, Dr. Bartly Mondino (left) and Dr. Bradley Straatsma (right), join female pioneer alumnae Dr. Marjorie Mosier (black jacket), Dr. Marjorie Lanard (gray jacket), and Dr. Constance Calogeris (blue jacket). Dr. Arlien Holzhauser, the first woman UCLA ophthalmology resident ('65), died in 1969.



Dr. J. Bronwyn Bateman conducted her internal medicine internship at UCLA. Another breaker of barriers, she joins her (all male) colleagues for a class photo in 1975.

President Biden Honors Doheny Alumnus

David Huang, MD, PhD, who received ophthalmology residency training at the Doheny Eye Institute/University of Southern California (1994–97) and began his career there, was recognized with the National Medal of Technology and Innovation for “literally changing the world for the better” at a White House ceremony on October 24, 2023. President Joseph Biden presented Dr. Huang and his two co-inventors, James G. Fujimoto, PhD, and Eric A. Swanson, MS, the United States’ highest honor for technological achievement for their inventing optical coherence tomography (OCT). The award was last bestowed in 2015.

The month prior, the trio received the 2023 Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award for their transformative imaging technology. Dubbed “America’s Nobel,” the Lasker Award is considered the United States’ most distinguished prize in biomedical research. Dr. Huang was also inducted into the National Academy of Engineering.

OCT has transformed the way eye disease is diagnosed and treated. It enables ophthalmologists to identify vision-threatening disease early, often before patients experience symptoms. In addition to the eye, OCT is used for medical conditions involving the heart, brain, skin, digestive tract, and more.



Photo: Ryan K. Morris and the National Science and Technology Medals Foundation.

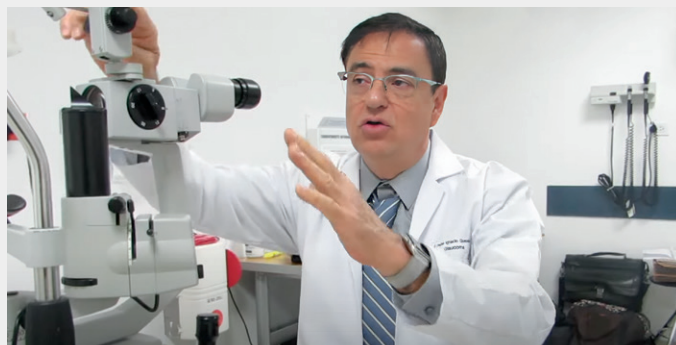
IN MEMORIAM

George Bernard Primbs, MD, FACS, died January 7, 2024. He was 95. Dr. Primbs was in the first graduating class of the UCLA medical school and the first residency class in the Division of Ophthalmology at UCLA (1956–62). He started the Lions Sight and Hearing Center at St. Francis Hospital and was co-founder of the nonprofit SEE International, providing vision care services to underserved communities internationally and in the United States. At the Stein Eye Institute, Dr. Primbs served as past president of the Alumni Association, was a recipient of the prestigious S. Rodman Irvine Prize, and was a longtime member of the volunteer clinical faculty.



UCLA Division of Ophthalmology residency class of 1961 (l to r): Drs. Glenn O. Dayton, Jr., William A. Taake, George B. Primbs, Bradley R. Straatsma (division chief), A. Richard Berner, Daniel H. Miller, and Robert Christensen (faculty).

Pedro Quevedo, MD, a former international fellow at the Stein Eye Institute specializing in glaucoma (1996–97), died in January 2024. Dr. Quevedo treated a countless number of patients at the Instituto para Niños Ciegos y Sordos in Colombia, and he always attended the American Academy of Ophthalmology annual meeting where he met up with his mentors, Drs. Anne Coleman and M. Roy Wilson, and his fellow colleague, Dr. Simon Law. He is survived by his strong and brilliant wife, Maria Margarita “Magui” Serrano-Quevedo, who was as much a part of his success as was his training at Stein Eye.



2023 Stein and Doheny Alumni Reception

The UCLA Department of Ophthalmology Association held its annual Stein Eye Institute and Doheny Eye Institute reception on November 5, 2023, during the American Academy of Ophthalmology meeting in San Francisco, California.



Drs. Vinit Mahajan, John Irvine, Jasmine Hayes-Adams, and Rahul Khurana.



Adding to the festivities of this year's reception was Dr. Anthony J. Aldave, also known as DJ AJA, who kept the music pumping!



Left: Drs. Federico Velez, Stacy Pineles, Cathy Hwang, Vicky Pai, and Jennifer Huang.



Drs. Vinit Mahajan, JoAnn Giaconi, Anne Coleman, Vahid Mohammadzadeh, and Scott So.



Drs. Troy Elander, Bronwyn Bateman, and Diane Elander.



Above: Drs. Bartly Mondino, H. Matthew Wheatley, James Palmer, and Howard Krauss.

Department Awarded \$50,000 for Exemplary Job Prioritizing Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

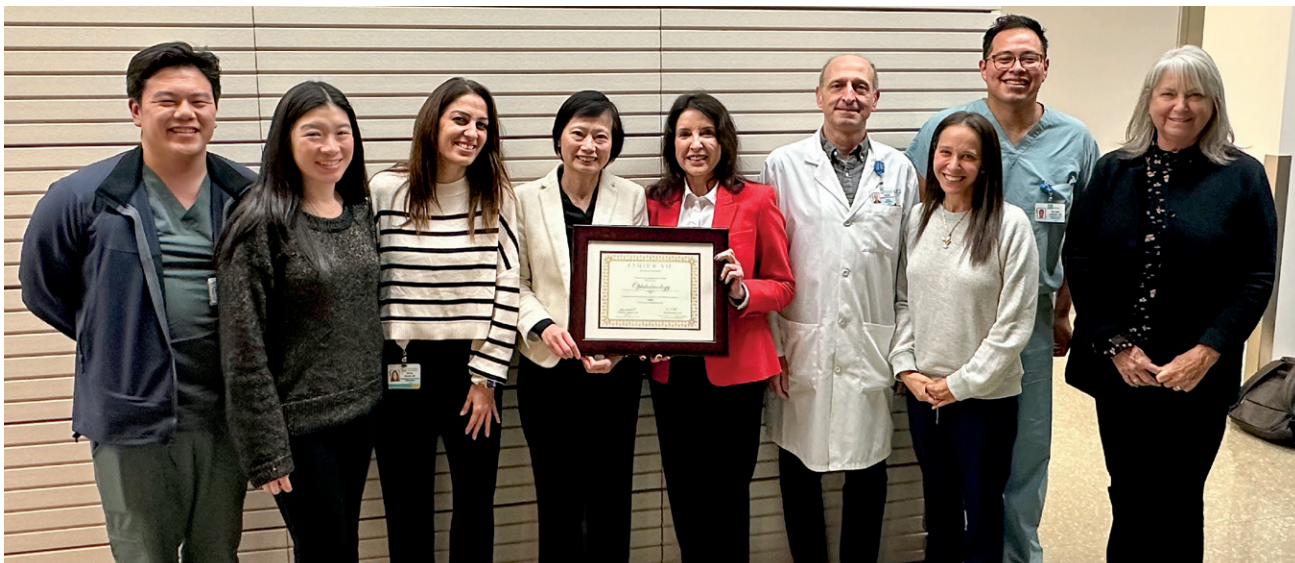
The UCLA Department of Ophthalmology was honored with a \$50,000 prize from the David Geffen School of Medicine (DGSOM) in furtherance of 2024 Eye-JEDI initiatives—the highest amount of JEDI funding given to any of the 24 DGSOM departments. The financial award was on top of the Department being recognized by DGSOM for its 2023 achievements in advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI), specifically in its planning and execution of initiatives focused on people.

Each department's efforts to advance JEDI principles as they relate to People, Structural Elements, Professional Development/Education, Community Engagement, Equitable Patient Care, and Climate are evaluated and compared annually by DGSOM. Evaluation is conducted by a 12-member team using a National Institutes of Health-style structure organized by the JEDI Dean's Office. **Anne L. Coleman, MD, PhD**, chair of the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology and director of the Stein Eye Institute, presented the Department's JEDI efforts at the 1st DGSOM Chairs' Symposium in April 2023, and the Department of Ophthalmology received among the highest scores. The evaluation team was particularly impressed with the Department's faculty/resident recruitment strategy, the use of data to evaluate the current state and efficacy of efforts, and its strong work in structural initiatives. Speaking to the advancements achieved under **Sophie X. Deng, MD, PhD**, EyeJEDI vice chair, one reviewer said, "I am very impressed by this chair and the impressive amount of work she has done in nine months!"

"The EyeJEDI Committee believes that people are the change agent of the other JEDI elements," says Dr. Deng. "As such, our JEDI endeavors are people-centered initiatives. Recognizing the imperative of fostering a sustainable and diverse workforce in ophthalmology, our Department initiated development of a structured Underrepresented in Medicine (URiM) pipeline program. This initiative includes creating an Undergraduate Summer Vision Research Program and Visiting Medical Student Scholarship and sponsoring UCLA medical students in the Minority Mentoring Program of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. We've also implemented a holistic residency review process and actively engaged in URiM recruitment events. Under Dr. Coleman's leadership, the Department has increased the representation in departmental leadership, and expanded research on gender and race/ethnicity disparities in eye care and ophthalmology training."

To learn more about EyeJEDI's mission, its initiatives, JEDI News, and find links to EyeJEDI resources and opportunities, go to <https://steinresidents.com/eyejedi/>.

On behalf of the EyeJEDI Executive Committee and the 22 faculty and staff committee members, (l to r) Drs. Ken Kitayama, Victoria Tseng, Mitra Nejad, Sophie Deng, Anne Coleman, Kourous Nouri-Mahdavi, Stacy Pineles, Maltish Lorenzo, and Lynn Gordon present the honor received by the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology from DGSOM for its 2023 EyeJEDI achievements.



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Doheny Eye Center UCLA—Arcadia

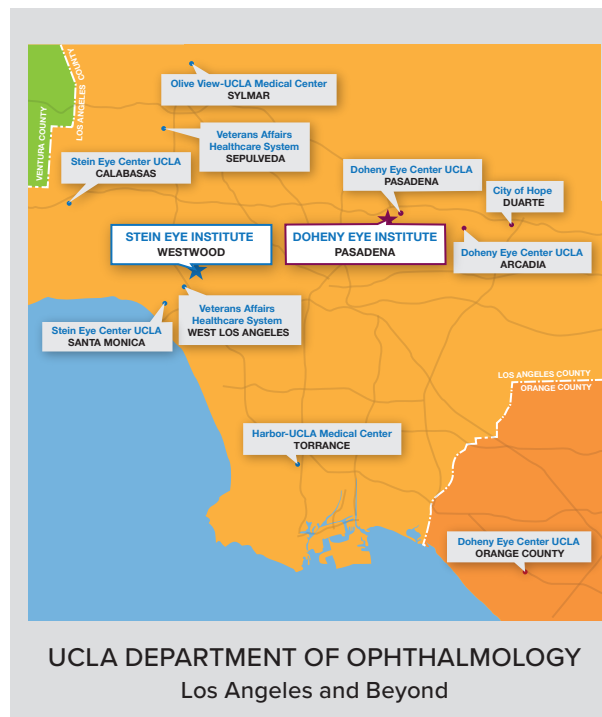
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Volunteer Opportunities

Center for Community Outreach & Policy
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Send comments or questions to:

Tina-Marie Gauthier
Managing Editor
Email: Tina@EyeCiteEditing.com



For 34 consecutive years, UCLA Health has been recognized on the U.S. News & World Report national honor roll of best hospitals. UCLA Stein Eye and Doheny Eye Institutes are ranked #1 in California and top five in the nation for ophthalmology.