

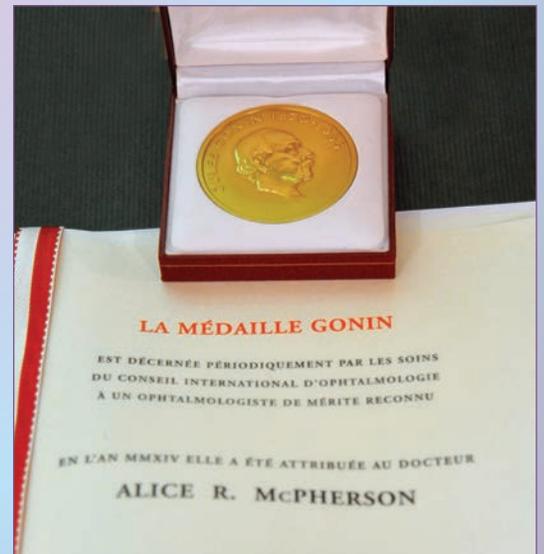
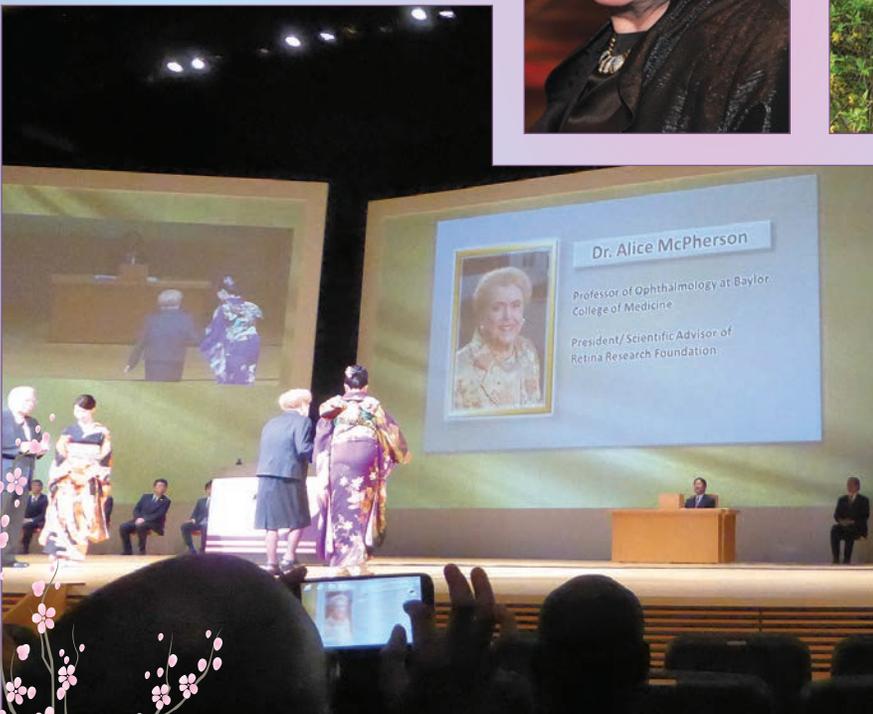
# RETINA RESEARCH FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Foresight for Sight

May 2014

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## The Gonin Medal - WOC 2014

The World Ophthalmology Congress of the International Council of Ophthalmology, Japanese Ophthalmology Society, Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology in Tokyo



*Tokyo, Japan: Site of the World Ophthalmology Congress (WOC2014).*



*Dr. McPherson with young Jules Gonin Eye Hospital ophthalmologists.*



*Dr. McPherson arriving in the lecture hall at Jules Gonin Eye Hospital, Lausanne, Switzerland February 13, 2014.*



*Prof. Dominique Arlettaz, Dean of the University of Lausanne, and Dr. J.J. De Laey, Vice President ICO, presenting Diploma of Gonin Medal to Dr. McPherson.*



## Alice R. McPherson, MD, Chosen to be the 2014 Gonin Medalist

Instituted in 1937 in honor of Swiss-born Dr. Jules Gonin, the **Gonin Medal** is awarded every four years to an ophthalmologist notable for his or her outstanding work or research. It is the oldest and most prestigious medal in ophthalmology.

In collaboration with the **University of Lausanne** and the **Swiss Ophthalmological Society**, the **International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO)** Board of Trustees selects the Gonin Medalist. In accepting this high honor, the recipient first delivers a lecture in Lausanne, Switzerland, at the Jules Gonin Eye Hospital. The diploma of the medal is awarded during a special ceremony at that time. The gold medal is later presented at the World Ophthalmology Congress.



**Alice R. McPherson, MD**

This year **Dr. Alice McPherson** of Houston was named Gonin Medalist by the International Council of Ophthalmology Board of Trustees.

She is the first woman to be selected for this high honor, and now joins a list of only 18 other names in history who are Gonin Medalists. Among those chosen previously are Dr. Alfred Sommer, who demonstrated the impact of vitamin A deficiency on childhood blindness and mortality in developing countries,

and Dr. Robert Machemer, who pioneered the most commonly performed and useful procedure in vitreoretinal surgery.

To be singled out among so many now who are outstanding in the retina subspecialty, and chosen for the named medal of Jules Gonin, is truly a life highlight for Dr. McPherson.

Dr. McPherson is an accomplished teacher, scholar, leader and pioneer dedicated to the study and treatment of retinal diseases.



Her scientific contributions to ophthalmology began with pioneering scleral buckling procedures, cryotherapy and xenon arc and laser photocoagulation in the treatment of retinal diseases. She was

an early and vigorous advocate of photocoagulation in the treatment of diabetic retinopathy. This was initially a controversial position, later proven correct by the large, randomized prospective National Eye Institute Diabetic Retinopathy Study.

In 1969 she founded the Retina Research Foundation (RRF), one of the nation's leading eye research organizations, dedicated to promote understanding, prevention and treatment of retinal diseases.

### Gonin Medal

Dr. Bruce Spivey, ICO President, awarded the Gonin Medal to Dr. McPherson at the Opening Ceremony of the World Ophthalmology Congress in Tokyo, Japan on April 2. With the Crown Prince of Japan in attendance, and in front of thousands of ophthalmologists from around the world, Dr. McPherson graciously accepted this gold medal.



*Dr. Spivey congratulating Dr. McPherson*

### Gonin Medal Lecture and Diploma

As Gonin Medalist, Dr. McPherson traveled to Lausanne, Switzerland, in February to present a lecture entitled, "*The Retina Specialty After Gonin: Personal Recollections and Contributions.*" The following is a brief sampling of the lecture delivered to the Swiss academicians and ophthalmologists in attendance.



*World Ophthalmology Congress (WOC2014) International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) Gonin Medal Award presentation at the Opening Ceremony, April 2, 2014.*



Dr. McPherson's lecture began with the story of the first two women to practice ophthalmology in the United States. Dr. Isabel Barrows of New York traveled to Zurich in 1869 for her eye training, and then established a practice in Washington, DC. The second female ophthalmologist to practice in the US was Dr. Elizabeth Sargent, who had her ophthalmic training in Zurich in 1882. Dr. Sargent returned to San Francisco to practice ophthalmology. Both women had to travel to Switzerland for training because the few women doctors at that time had little opportunity for post-graduate education in the United States. The connection between US and Swiss ophthalmology was established early.



**Jules Gonin, MD**  
*"The Father of Retina Surgery"*

At the turn of the century, one young ophthalmologist from Lausanne had an interest in retinal detachment: Dr. Jules Gonin. For many decades he single-handedly lit and carried the torch of enthusiasm, doing more than any other individual to enkindle and nourish the flame of ever-increasing interest in the retina. Such was his case in becoming the "Father of Retina Surgery." Initially his work was met with skepticism, but perseverance and extensive documentation

of his cases validated his extraordinary success treating retinal detachments by localizing retinal breaks and closing them by thermocauterization. Dr. Gonin published his landmark text with color plates in 1934, and his findings stirred up new interest in the retina as a subspecialty of ophthalmology.

Dr. McPherson completed her ophthalmologic residency in the 1950s at University of Wisconsin-Madison and joined Dr. Frederick Allison Davis and Dr. Peter Duehr in their private practice. Dr. Duehr was assigned to treat the patients referred for retinal detachment.

*"I was struck by the contrast that existed between Duehr's cataract surgery, done with elegance and speed, and the more awkward and difficult struggle required to locate and close the breaks in retinal detachments using monocular direct ophthalmoscopy,"*  
 Dr. McPherson noted.

Dr. Matthew Davis, son of Dr. Frederick Davis, returned to Wisconsin from a three-month fellowship with Dr. Charles Schepens in Boston, introducing Dr. McPherson to the binocular indirect ophthalmoscope and scleral depression taught by Schepens. She resolved to gain further retina training under Dr. Schepens herself, and was the first woman fellow to train with him and the first to complete a full year fellowship.

*"He was my mentor, and soon I came to strongly share his belief that progress in clinical practice is the dividend of investing in basic research, and hoped eventually to act on this belief,"*  
 Dr. McPherson continued.



several decisions that changed her life. She married Tony Mierzwa and moved to Texas. *"The three best decisions I ever made: ophthalmology, Tony and Texas,"* she said.

In 1960, Dr. McPherson accepted a position at Baylor College of Medicine. There she established a large retina practice, taught residents, developed a fellowship program, and was active in postgraduate teaching in several important clinical areas, including retinal detachment, diabetic retinopathy and retinopathy of prematurity.



**Dr. McPherson delivering the Gonin Medal Lecture:**  
*"The Retina Specialty After Gonin: Personal Recollections and Contributions."*

*"During this time, the desire grew in me to find a way to facilitate research directed specifically to understanding the causes, cures and prevention of retinal disorders. As I gained experience in academic ophthalmology and clinical research, I became increasingly convinced that the most important contribution I could make would be to establish an organization that could help develop and sustain innovative retinal research."*

*The Retina Research Foundation (RRF) moved from a dream, to a concept, to a reality,"* Dr. McPherson concluded.

Following her retina fellowship, Dr. McPherson made





*Dr. Alice McPherson with a few of her 80 McPherson Associates Vitreoretinal Fellows, Baylor College of Medicine.*



Established in 1969, RRF is committed to its mission of preserving vision worldwide through research and education. In 1973, RRF awarded its first grant, and now a total of 892 awards have been made. We support a carefully selected variety of programs around the world, in collaboration with the finest organizations in ophthalmology: pilot studies, research chairs, research fellowships, established awards recognizing lifetime achievement, international fellowships of advanced subspecialty training, educational programs, and travel scholarships for young investigators.

*“Like the mighty live oak tree, RRF’s growth represents decades of steady progress --- beginning with the seed of an idea and now firmly established with programs in research and education extending around the globe.”*



*Dr. McPherson with her mentor, Dr. Charles L. Schepens.*

## RRF Grants and Awards

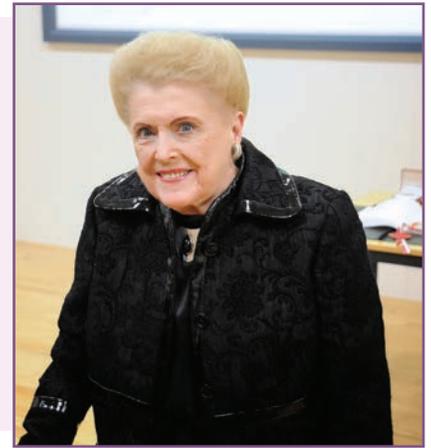


**First Grant: 1973**

**Now in 2014: 15 Pilot Studies funded; 21 Chairs, Professorships, Major Awards, International Fellowships, and Educational Programs funded.**

*“The Gonin Medal to me represents the power of regular people, united through common goals, to accomplish something big. Each of you has played a part in the path that has led to this global and historic recognition of RRF’s accomplishments. Individually, you want science to progress; collectively, this honor shows what each small link in the chain can do when joined together in pursuit of our shared mission to eradicate blindness. Not only caring about your own wellbeing, but also dedicated to ensuring the most hopeful future for generations to come – thanks to each of you for your ongoing dedication.”*

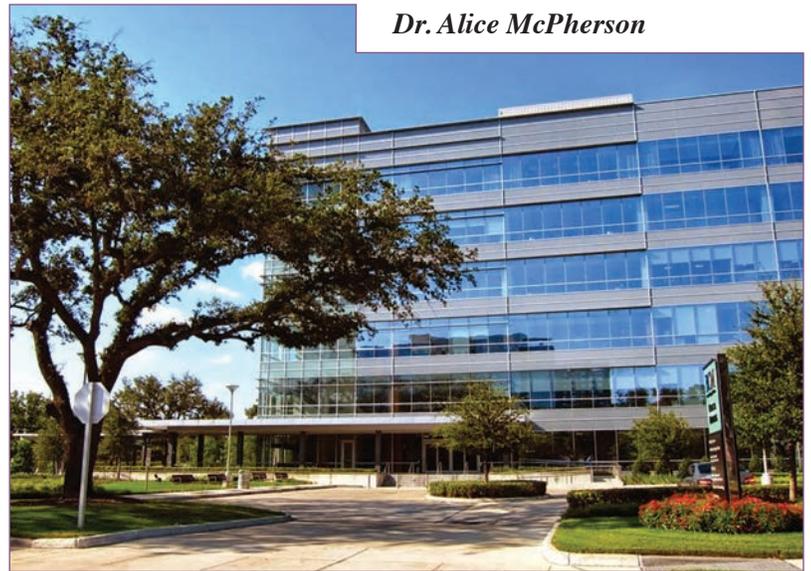
The Board of Directors and Advisory Trustees of Retina Research Foundation join her many patients, friends, fellows, and peers in congratulating Dr. McPherson on this well-deserved honor.



***Dr. Alice McPherson***



***Dr. McPherson with Dr. David Gamm, Humble Director, McPherson Eye Research Institute, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Dr. Petros Carvounis, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas.***



***Retina Research Foundation Headquarters, 4th Floor, Houston, Texas.***



***Retina Research Foundation 2014 Board of Directors.***



# Meet the Advisory Trustees

## Kathryn F. Coleman

A native Houstonian, Kathryn Coleman graduated from Lamar High School in 1952 and Baylor University at Waco, Texas, with a BBA degree in 1956; married Joe E. Coleman, a Baylor graduate, attorney, and avid outdoorsman in 1958; worked for 10 years after graduation, programming and installing accounting systems for companies; two children and three grandchildren; a dedicated Christian and member of Second Baptist Church. Other interests include traveling the world and hunting; a classic Texas Trophy Hunter who was inducted into the Muy Grande Hall of Fame. Advances in macular degeneration treatment have allowed her to continue leading the life she loves.

### Memberships and Affiliations:

- Ft. Bend Museum Association
- Houston Bar Auxiliary
- Baylor University Women's Association
- Pi Beta Phi Sorority
- Phi Gamma Nu, Honorary Business Sorority

## Samuel G.A. Golden, PhD

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa; graduated from the University of Pretoria: Bachelor's degrees in Languages and Philosophy, Divinity, and a Master's degree in Philosophy; graduated from the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands: Doctoral degree in Theology. University of Pretoria, South Africa: PhD Research in Communication Science, University of Erlangen, Germany.

After a successful Ministry and Academic career, requested to serve as an elected and nominated member of Parliament; served as South Africa's Ambassador to Greece and Germany; specialized in Management by Objectives and international business development; received service excellence awards from Germany, Greece and Belgium. Listed in "Who's Who in the World" and "Who's Who of Contemporary Achievement."

Fluent in five languages.

Previously lived and worked in Houston, Dallas and Raleigh, North Carolina.

Married to Jeanne Golden. Permanent residents of the US, settling in Houston; have three children (two living in America) and three grandchildren.



1.



2.

1. *Kathryn & Joe Coleman*

2. *Dr. Samuel Golden*



# RETINA RESEARCH FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

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HANDICAPPED

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Call the office for more information: 713-797-1925

Additional memorials received will appear in the next issue.

