

# RETINA RESEARCH FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Foresight for Sight

July 2017

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*Retina Research Foundation Newsletter is published three times per year: Spring, Summer and Fall.*

## Retina Research Foundation Luncheon

Arthur "Tim" Garson, Jr., MD  
RRF Lecturer at the 48th Anniversary Luncheon  
May 17, 2017

The RRF Luncheon has historically been an occasion to both celebrate the anniversaries of RRF's founding in 1969 and to educate attendees about new advances in science or academics. Bringing together the



*Dr. Tim Garson, RRF Lecturer*

leaders, supporters, and friends of the Foundation allows the opportunity for a shared educational experience related to our mission of vision preservation. Following a long tradition of inviting speakers who are outstanding leaders of the academic and medical community, this year RRF was pleased to welcome Dr. Tim Garson.

Dr. Garson is Director of the Health Policy Institute of the Texas Medical Center, home to 59 health care institutions in Houston. The Institute develops collaborative policy solutions to improve the health of those in Houston and Texas. Member institutions

include Baylor College of Medicine, UTMB Health, UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Texas Children's Hospital, Texas A&M Health Science Center, Rice University, and Methodist Hospital among others.

Dr. Garson's presentation as RRF Lecturer, titled "*Texas Medical Center: What's New and What's Coming*" focused on the Texas Medical Center's efforts to stimulate new research and new



*Dr. Sam Wu and John Dawson*

collaborations – with future plans to put four medical schools in the same location so they can work together on research.



*Dr. Frank Eggleston, RRF Chairman, and Dr. Alice McPherson, RRF President*

# Magrabi ICO Cameroon Eye Institute Opens



*Dr. Henry Nkumbe,  
Medical Director,  
Magrabi ICO  
Cameroon Eye Institute*



*Cameroon*

A new eye care facility, which is the first project of the newly created Africa Eye Foundation, has recently opened in Central Africa with the mission of providing high-quality eye care services to this underserved region. The Magrabi ICO Cameroon Eye Institute is situated in Yaounde, Cameroon, and is Central Africa's first non-profit subspecialty eye hospital and training institute.

Excerpt from the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) website:

*Dedicated to delivering comprehensive, high-quality, and affordable eye care and to training ophthalmologists and allied ophthalmic personnel, the Magrabi-ICO Cameroon Eye Institute (MICEI) in Yaoundé was officially inaugurated on March 29, 2017.*

*MICEI is the first not-for-profit subspecialty and training eye hospital in the Central Africa Region and offers services - independent of a patient's ability to pay - for cataract, glaucoma, retina and vitreous surgery, pediatric ophthalmology, cornea, refractive surgery, orbit and oculoplastic surgery, and neuro-ophthalmology.*

*In conjunction with the University of Yaoundé, MICEI will offer hands-on training to educate the eye care experts of tomorrow for Cameroon and the region. The Institute is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and is operated in accordance with the strictest international standards.*



*Magrabi ICO Cameroon Eye Institute  
Photo credit Africa Eye Foundation*

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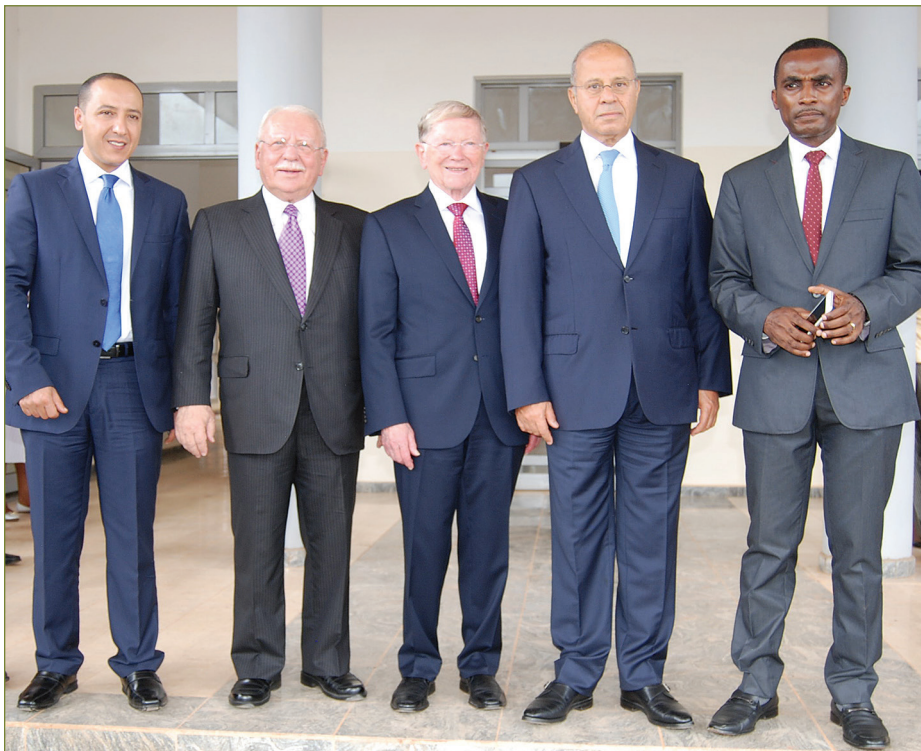
**Henry E. Nkumbe, MD**, is the Medical Director of MICEI, and is an alumni of the **ICO-RRF Helmerich Fellowship** program. As one of two ICO-RRF Helmerich Fellows in 2012, he completed his retina surgery fellowship training at Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai, India.

The mission of the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) is to work with ophthalmologic societies and others to improve access to high quality eye care in order to preserve, restore and enhance vision for the people of the world. The ICO-Retina Research Foundation Helmerich Fellowships are 12-month fellowships providing advanced subspecialty training for young ophthalmologists from developing countries who are committed to returning to their home country to teach and treat patients following the fellowship. This program was established in 2009 in honor of the public service and philanthropy of Walter H. Helmerich, III.

<http://www.icoph.org>



*Photograph taken during a population-based survey on diabetic retinopathy in Yaounde (shows use of knowledge and skills acquired during Helmerich Fellowship)  
Photo credit Francis Tanga*



*Dr. Nkumbe (on far right), with Prof. Soliman (Magrabi Foundation), Prof. Bruce Spivey (Africa Eye Foundation General Secretary), Prof. Bradley Straatsma (Africa Eye Foundation Vice President), Dr. Akef El Maghraby (Africa Eye Foundation Board Chair) Photo credit Africa Eye Foundation*

# RRF Board Members Travel to Madison, WI

Eight RRF Board members traveled to Madison, Wisconsin, on April 27 and 28, 2017, for events hosted by McPherson Eye Research Institute at University of Wisconsin-Madison.

## The 5th Annual McPherson Endowed Lecture

This year's McPherson Lecturer was Dr. José-Alain Sahel of University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and Institut de la Vision, Pierre et Marie Curie Medical School, Paris. He gave a very well-received talk titled "*Shooting in the Dark: Maintaining cone function in retinal degenerations.*" Dr. Sahel is focused on identifying the mechanisms underlying cone functional loss in blinding diseases so that new therapies can be designed to preserve or restore vision in these patients. A reception and dinner, hosted by McPherson ERI, were held that evening.

## Meeting of the McPherson ERI Advisory Board

Dr. David Gamm, Humble Director, McPherson ERI, spoke to the MERI Advisory Board and the RRF Board members about how vision research is changing and how McPherson ERI can maximize its talent and resources to be most effective. He described how scientists of today work in multi-disciplinary teams, share equipment and resources, and have high budget requirements. Federal grants are most desirable because they come with funds for institutional (indirect) support in addition to the research funds.

RRF supports four Chairs and three Professorships at McPherson ERI, and one Chair at the Dept. of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, UW-Madison. This trip was an excellent opportunity for RRF Board members to become more familiar with the current research activities of the Institute.



*Dr. Alice McPherson and UW  
Chancellor Rebecca Blank  
Photo credit Todd Brown*



*(continued on page 5)*

# RRF Board Members In Madison, WI



*RRF Board members attending the McPherson ERI  
Advisory Board Meeting*



*Michael Chaim, Dr. Akihiro Ikeda, Dr. David Gamm,  
and Gail Stirr of McPherson ERI*



*Drs. Alice McPherson, José-Alain Sahel, and David Gamm  
Photo credit Todd Brown*



*Dr. Barry Rovner*



*Dr. Robin Casten*



*Dr. Allen C. Ho*

## Preventing Depression From Age-related Vision Loss

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a leading cause of vision loss in the United States. As the disease progresses, it can lead to increasing trouble with everyday activities that make independent living difficult. Driving, reading, writing, cooking, using the computer or the phone, participating in social activities – all become more challenging with decreasing vision. Retreating into the home becomes the easier course to take, and this withdrawal can take a toll on mental health.

A new study funded by the National Eye Institute (NEI), part of the National Institutes of Health, found a higher risk of depression with AMD and identified the benefits of new specialty treatment teams in cutting the risk of depression in people who have lost their vision.

“Our results emphasize the high risk of depression from AMD, and the benefits of multi-disciplinary treatment that bridges primary eye care, psychiatry, psychology, and rehabilitation,” said Barry Rovner, MD, a professor of psychiatry and neurology at the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. These findings were published in *Ophthalmology*. In the Low Vision Depression Prevention Trial, Dr. Rovner led a team of psychologists, ophthalmologists, optometrists, and occupational therapists to test an approach called behavior activation.

“Behavior activation involves helping people to focus on activities they enjoy, to recognize that loss of those activities can lead to depression, and to re-engage in those activities,” said Robin Casten, PhD, a co-author and an associate professor of psychiatry and human behavior at Jefferson. Maintaining an active social life is a key component of this approach.

“We felt that this trial addressed an important need. Ophthalmologists have many tools at the ready for treating AMD, and we are continuing to forge links with other health care providers to effectively treat the whole patient,” said Allen C. Ho, MD, director of the Clinical Retina Research Unit at Wills Eye Hospital and professor of ophthalmology at Jefferson.

Dr. Rovner said he hopes the study will serve as a model for similar approaches to preventing and treating depression in AMD. When approved by a physician, occupational therapy is reimbursable through Medicare. The study is continuing to follow participants to see if the benefits of treatment are maintained out to one year.

[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

# Major RRF Award Recipients for 2017 Announced

These three RRF awards are presented annually to outstanding vision scientists whose work contributes to knowledge about the retina and retinal diseases and/or who have made special contributions to prevent and decrease blindness.

## **Award of Merit in Retina Research**

Presented by the Retina Society

**Dr. Michael Klein**, Oregon Health & Science University

## **RRF Pyron Award**

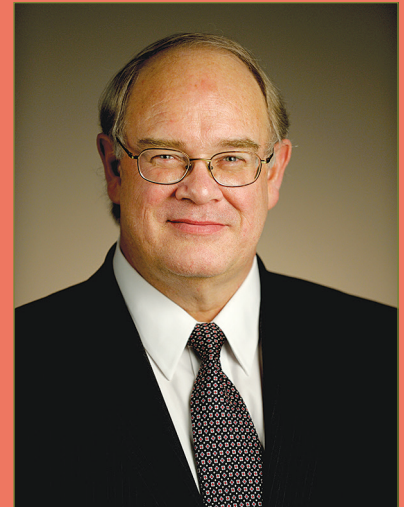
Presented by the American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS)

**Dr. Paul A. Sieving**, Director, National Eye Institute (NEI), National Institutes of Health (NIH)

## **Charles L. Schepens, MD/AAO Award**

Presented at Retina Subspecialty Day of the Academy (AAO Annual Meeting)

**Dr. Frederick L. Ferris III**, Director, Division of Epidemiology and Clinical Applications, National Eye Institute (NEI), National Institutes of Health (NIH)



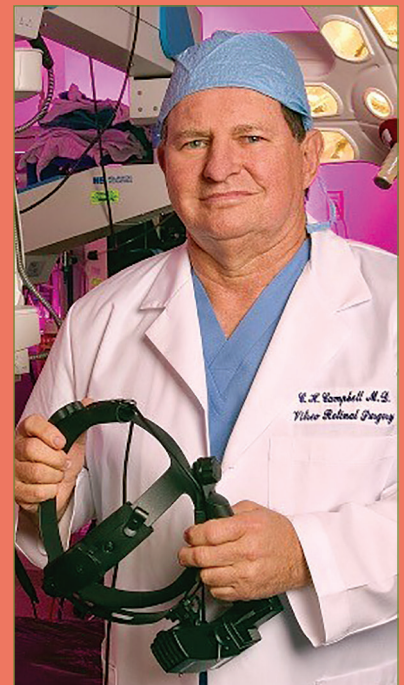
*Dr. Paul Sieving  
RRF Pyron Awardee*

# Meet the Scientific Advisors

## **Charles H. Campbell, MD, FACS, FISC**

Dr. Charles Campbell is a native Texan and a graduate of the University of Texas, and he received his medical degree from Tulane University School of Medicine. Dr. Campbell continued his training at Oschner Foundation Hospital in New Orleans with an ophthalmology residency and completed his fellowship in retinal surgery with Dr. Alice McPherson at Baylor College of Medicine in 1973. In 1974, he founded South Texas Retina Consultants in Corpus Christi, where he started a fellowship program. Dr. Campbell has taught over 25 fellows and continues to have an active practice.

Among Dr. Campbell's multiple contributions, he has served as Medical Director for Project Orbis, an international organization that provides free training to ophthalmologists in third world countries; and was a past president of the Nueces County Medical Society. He is a veteran and served as Captain in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War. Dr. Campbell has been married to his wife, Mary, for 49 years and has five children and 11 grandchildren.



*Dr. Charles Campbell*

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Retina Research Foundation Is a Nonprofit Organization.

FREE MATTER  
FOR THE  
BLIND OR  
HANDICAPPED

## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Please indicate changes in boxes and make any corrections needed next to your name and address, then clip and return entire address label in an envelope.

- Change name or address as shown on address
- Remove name from mailing list.

## Special Remembrances

### IN MEMORY OF

**Ove Pedersen**  
**Terri Denise Seals**  
Ben and Dalyn Schriewer

### IN HONOR OF

**Sara and Dr. Frank Eggleston**  
Katy and Clyde Hays

**Steven Failkoff**  
Sandi Feldman (Feinberg)

**Connie and Dede Weil's Big Anniversary!**  
Kathy and John Orton

### EMPLOYEE GIVING

**YourCause**  
AT&T employee (anonymous)



RRF accepts credit cards for donations securely online at [www.retinaresearchfnd.org](http://www.retinaresearchfnd.org)  
Call the office for more information: 713-797-1925



Additional memorials received will appear in the next issue.