The Scheie Alumni Association is delighted to host the 142nd Anniversary Meeting and the 44th Anniversary Scheie Eye Institute Alumni Event on Friday, April 15th and Saturday, April 16th. This event will bring alumni, faculty, residents, and staff together for a weekend of scholarly learning, reunions with old friends, and dinner and dancing at the Rittenhouse Hotel.

This conference features presentations from faculty, residents, alumni, and guests highlighting advances in each ophthalmic subspecialty. The 11th Annual David M. Kozart Memorial Lecture will be given by Dr. James C. Tsai and the 2nd Honored Alumni Lecture will be delivered by Dr. Daniel S. Gombos.

Dr. Tsai is the President of the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary and the Chair of Ophthalmology for the Mount Sinai Health System. A glaucoma specialist, he completed his residency at the Doheny Eye Institute and glaucoma fellowships at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and Moorfields Eye Hospital. The title of his lecture is “Neuroprotection for Glaucoma: Advances in Our Understanding.”

Dr. Daniel S. Gombos is a Professor and Section Chief of Ophthalmology in the Department of Head and Neck Surgery at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. An ocular oncologist, Dr. Gombos completed one of his fellowships under the direction of our own Chair (Dr. Joan O’Brien) at the University of California San Francisco. Dr. Gombos’ lecture will be titled “Ocular Oncology—Ophthalmology’s Youngest and Oldest Subspecialty.”

The Scheie Eye Institute will also introduce a new tradition this year, honoring resident alumni celebrating their 50th anniversary from Scheie. Dr. Daniel Albert, a member of the Scheie class of 1966, will be present and help to kick start this tradition.

This CME accredited event was organized by Dr. Stephen Orlin (Course Director) and Drs. Alexander Brucker and Joan O’Brien (Course Co-Directors). It will take place in the lower level of the Scheie Eye Institute, David M. Kozart Auditorium. There is no registration fee to attend. The Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania will designate this event for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit. Interested participants must register with the Office of Continuing Medical Education ahead of the symposium in order to attend.

Lastly, there will be a celebratory dinner held at The Rittenhouse Hotel in Philadelphia on Friday evening at 7PM for faculty, residents, alumni, and guests. We hope to see you there!

SCHEIE TO CELEBRATE 142nd anniversary meeting

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Congratulations to Dr. Paul Tapino for winning the Giovan Giacomo Giordano National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) Achievement Award for Ethics and Creativity in Medical Research! Dr. Tapino is an Associate Professor of Clinical Ophthalmology and Director of the Ophthalmology Residency Program at the Scheie Eye Institute. He was selected from a nation-wide pool of medical leaders for outstanding teaching and excellence in clinical education.

The award was given in October at the Medical Conference “Health and Research: Beyond the Eyes.” The event was co-hosted in Washington DC by the NIAF and the Sbarro Health Research Organization, Inc. (SHRO). In his award lecture, “All About the Eyes,” Dr. Tapino discussed the anatomy of the eye, ocular manifestations of common systemic diseases, and several of the most common eye diseases. He was joined by Scheie colleague, Dr. Giacomina Massaro-Giordano. Dr. Massaro-Giordano presented the award to Dr. Tapino in commemoration of her father-in-law, Dr. Giovan Giordano, a renowned educator and pathologist in Naples, Italy, after which the award was named in 2010.

“It is an honor to be this year’s recipient of the Giovan Giacomo Giordano Award,” said Dr. Tapino. “Medical education is important to me, and such a big part of what I do every day. It was very special to be recognized by the National Italian American Foundation.”
A Cure in Sight: Scheie’s Impact on the Vision Walk

By Marquis Vaughn

On October 17, 2015, hundreds of participants gathered together for the 9th Annual Philadelphia Vision Walk at Independence National Historic Park. Proceeds from the walk support the Foundation Fighting Blindness in their mission to find treatments and cures for blinding eye conditions.

The faculty, staff, and patients of the Scheie Eye Institute made a significant contribution to the walk, exceeding fundraising goals and acting as a community sponsor. More than 200 members of the Scheie community participated in the event. Joan Dupont, Project Manager for Research Trials at Scheie, explains her motivation in coordinating the Vision Walk.

“I started the Vision Walk at Scheie about five years ago,” Joan explained. “The Foundation Fighting Blindness helps support our new residents with research dollars, and for someone who works in research, that is very important to me. I just feel that it is our duty to help support our patients by raising money to help find cures for them. That is the ultimate goal.”

Judy Chen, one of Scheie’s Team Captains, elaborates on Scheie’s role in the event.

“Everyone did a great job of participating in the Vision Walk,” she said. “Having fundraisers and bake sales were a great way to get people within and outside of the Scheie community involved in some way. We were also excited to be the biggest team present at the walk.”

Interestingly, Scheie was the only team present with its own mascot. Abraham Blinkin’, an exuberant eyeball of joy, gave a unique touch to the walk, providing entertainment for the children and becoming a memorable figure to represent this great cause.

Dr. VanderBeek IN THE NEWS

By Ava Kikut

Dr. Brian L. VanderBeek was recently featured in a number of news outlets including the Philadelphia Inquirer, U.S. News, and Health Day for his research on the effects of Avastin, a low-cost drug used to treat numerous retinal diseases. Dr. VanderBeek’s study was conducted in response to a 2015 FDA proposal that would limit access to Avastin on the grounds that the drug’s compounding process (a form of repackaging) may be tied to endophthalmitis (a serious eye infection).

Dr. VanderBeek and other Penn researchers found that, out of 400,000 injections, only 0.017 percent of those who used Avastin developed endophthalmitis. This rate was lower than that of Lucentis, a comparable drug that is FDA approved and not compounded. The study demonstrated that the Avastin compounding process is not associated with endophthalmitis.

“The FDA draft proposal as currently written would cause extreme restrictions to Avastin that would lead to an unnecessary and severe increase in national health care spending,” explained Dr. VanderBeek. “The limitations would not decrease demand for the medication, just cause a substitution of a much more expensive drug in place of a cheaper one. Lucentis costs $2000 a dose, while Avastin costs only $50-80.”

Dr. VanderBeek and other ophthalmologists are hoping that these published results will prevent the proposal from going into effect. In the meantime, physicians and patients can be confident that Avastin does not present a higher risk for endophthalmitis than other more expensive treatments.
Scheie is very pleased to announce the arrival of Dr. Robert A. Avery, a new full-time attending physician in the Division of Pediatric Ophthalmology and an Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Neurology at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Avery began his research career as an undergraduate studying psychology. After obtaining a Master’s degree in Psychology, focusing on Infant Language Development, he decided to pursue medicine.

“I started to become more excited about doing further human-based research, and I realized that physicians have access to the most interesting diseases and patients,” Dr. Avery recalled.

After graduating from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2003, Dr. Avery completed an internship in Pediatrics at the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Delaware. He then came to Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) to pursue a residency in pediatric neurological and fellowship in neuro-ophtalmology, training under Dr. Grant Liu. After obtaining a Master’s in Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Avery became an attending pediatric neuro-ophthalmologist at the Children’s National Medical Center and the Gilbert Family Neurofibromatosis Institute located in Washington, D.C. He was very excited to return to Penn in 2015.

“I believe Penn’s neuro-ophtalmology program is really comprehensive,” he said. “It has an excellent reputation for its research and patient care. Also, in this very cohesive group, I am excited about the constant learning from my colleagues in neuro-ophtalmology, ophthalmology, and other departments. I think the best part about returning to Penn Ophthalmology is that it is such an academic environment in all divisions, not just neuro-ophtalmology. I think it is a great academic platform where people are always curious and thirsty for knowledge.”

Dr. Avery spends the majority of his time conducting research. He is the principal investigator of a NIH/NIBR sponsored grant using hand-held optical coherence tomography (OCT) to monitor tumor progression in children with optic pathway gliomas. He is also one of the study chairs for a multicenter international study of optic pathway gliomas secondary to neurofibromatosis type 1, funded by the Children’s Tumor Foundation and Gilbert Family Neurofibromatosis Institute.

In addition, Dr. Avery performs clinical care and teaches residents and fellows. He spends one clinic session every week at PDAM (Perelman Center for Advanced Medicine) and CHOP, caring for both children and adults.

Dr. Avery’s wife, Dr. Angela McGovern, is a neonatologist at Lankenau and Bryn Mawr Hospitals. Together they have two sets of twin boys: two three-year-olds and two one-year-olds. We are very delighted to welcome Dr. Avery back to Scheie!

SCHEIE NON-MYDRIATIC CAMERA: Increasing Accessibility to Diabetes Screenings

By Ava Kikut

Last fall, the Penn Center for Health Care Innovation chose a team from the Scheie Eye Institute to participate in the Innovation Accelerator Program. This program is designed to support the development, testing, and implementation of new approaches to improving health care delivery methods and patient outcomes. Over the past few months, the Scheie team, led by Thomasine Gorry, MD, has worked with mentors from the Center for Health Care Innovation to develop a project that offers an alternative to “in person” diabetic eye exams.

Patients with diabetes receive eye examinations at a far lower rate than is necessary to prevent complications, with the majority having less than one exam a year. As a result, diabetes has become the leading cause of vision loss for adults. However, if the disease is diagnosed early and properly monitored, it can be treated before blindness occurs.

The introduction of a “non-mydriatic” (without pupil dilation) retinal imaging digital camera will increase opportunities to detect early signs of diabetes and regulate its development. The device is more comfortable for the patient than alternative high-quality imagers, which require pupil-dilating eye drops. It is also more convenient. Screenings can be offered in easily accessible locations with simultaneous diabetic and eye care services (such as in primary care physician and optometrist offices and blood draw laboratories). After the images are taken at these centralized locations, they are read remotely by ophthalmologists.

With the support of the Innovation Accelerator Program, the non-mydriatic camera has been on-trial screening patients since December 2015. The project has been very well received by both patients and the medical community.

“No other institution is offering remote screenings with this level of quality,” stated Sheara Hollin, Chief Operating Officer, Scheie Eye Institute. The team hopes to eventually expand access to the technology to allow regular screenings to become highly assessable and standardized.

The Scheie team includes: Sheara Hollin, COO; Thomasine Gorry, MD, MGA, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology; Co-Chair of COPD Clinical Operations; Quality Domain, Joan O’Brien, MD; Chair of Ophthalmology; Tomas Aleman, MD, Retina Service; Eydie Miller, MD, Director of Glaucoma Service; Gideon Whitehead, BM; Rebecca Bigos, Process Quality Analyst; Davis Herrman, Design Specialist; Diane Dae, Medical Student.
Neuro-ophthalmology bridges the fields of ophthalmology and neurology and treats patients with neurological and systemic conditions affecting vision. The neuro-ophthalmology practice at Penn is composed of four talented physicians: Dr. Grant Liu, Ken Shindler, Madhura Tamhankar, and Robert Avery. Working as a cohesive unit, this group brings specialized clinical care, pioneering research, and diverse educational opportunities to the University.

Brain or Eye Problem?

When a patient presents with unexplained vision loss, the neuro-ophthalmologist must determine if the problem arises from the brain and/or the optic nerve.

“We first examine the optic disc and retina to rule out an eye issue,” explained Dr. Grant Liu. “If indicated, we order neuroimaging to see behind the optic disc.”

After a complete eye examination, a partial or complete neurologic exam follows to test the patient’s strength, sensation, and coordination. The neuro-ophthalmologist then discusses the diagnosis, need for additional testing, and treatment plan with the patient.

“Neuro-ophthalmologists in general will see fewer patients than ophthalmologists—and that’s primarily because neuro-ophthalmologists are spending twice the time ophthalmologists are spending on any other patient,” said Dr. Tamhankar. “Many patients are looking to us as being the last resort. They have typically seen many doctors without an explanation of their eye condition and then finally, they get the answer, they are so happy—because they know that someone has figured it out.”

Examples of common conditions evaluated by neuro-ophthalmologists include double vision, optic neuritis, pupillary abnormalities, unexplained vision loss, migraines and related visual complaints, and abnormal eye movements.

Neuro-ophthalmology at Penn

The neuro-ophthalmology practice at Penn has experienced great changes over the past decade. After losing three of its key members four years ago, the remaining physicians struggled initially to balance the influx of the departed physicians’ patients, while maintaining Penn’s reputation as a leader in neuro-ophthalmic education, teaching, and research.

“We rebounded and are doing really well now,” said Dr. Grant Liu. “We hope to be at six physicians again. I want to get us back to where we were before, with levels of productivity and diverse expertise reflective of being the premier neuro-ophthalmology group in the world.”

The neuro-ophthalmology group sees a wide range of patients, offering care at four different centers (Scheie Eye Institute, Children’s Hospital, VA Hospital, and Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania), which is highly unusual for a single medical center.

Furthermore, each physician has his or her own area of expertise and individual research interests, as described by Dr. Tamhankar: “We don’t just see patients, but each has our own niche. I think that’s what makes us different. But then you bring it all together and it really complements the practice and elevates the practice to a higher level.”

Outside of clinical care and research, education is another top priority for the neuro-ophthalmology team. The service has two neuro-ophthalmology fellows, an ophthalmology resident, a neurology resident, and Penn medical students rotating each year. The fellowship is extremely comprehensive, providing exposure to Children’s Hospital, the VA Hospital, adult neuro-ophthalmology, and neurology training.

“We have a very organized schedule of neuro-ophthalmology conferences for Penn neurology and ophthalmology residents,” added Dr. Liu.

In teaching, as well as in research and clinical work, the subspecialty functions as a cohesive team.
Walking through the lobby of the Scheie Eye Institute, one wouldn’t expect to find fine art majors, commercial photographers, and artists. However, the Photography Department is filled with these individuals, who use their unique backgrounds to contribute to ophthalmic photography at Scheie.

The Photography Department is responsible for the diagnostic testing for ophthalmology patients at the Scheie, Perelman, and Radnor locations. Led by Beth Serpentine, the Department consists of eight photographers, including four Ophthalmic Photographers, two Ophthalmic Photography Technicians, and one Ophthalmic Photography intern.

Working together as a cohesive unit, the photographers see approximately 80 patients each day. While many of these patients have pre-scheduled appointments with photography, others are referred to the photographers during their appointment at Scheie.

“The majority of patients are add-ons,” explained Beth. “Certain specialties can pre-schedule their testing. For instance, with glaucoma, the doctor is monitoring disease progression over time, so often the need for photos can be planned. With retina, however, the doctor usually determines that day which diagnostic imaging they need.”

The photographers are alerted via Navicare, a patient tracking system, of a patient’s arrival. Giving preference to the pre-scheduled patients, the photographers work together to ensure each patient receives the requested testing as efficiently as possible.

“Often times, a patient will come in and need multiple tests,” said Beth. “Sometimes one person will do one test and communicate with another photographer to get them started on the next test, while the first photographer is sending the images to the physician. And then, the next person may take care of Navicare.”

The Photography Department uses state-of-the-art equipment, including multiple OCTs (optical coherence tomography), fundus cameras, a slit-lamp camera for anterior segment imaging, and several devices that further analyze corneal cells and other anterior segment anatomy.

“We are giving doctors information that they couldn’t get on their own,” explained Beth. “As wonderful as the human eye is, there are certain things we just can’t visualize, so we have our technology do that for us.”

For example, to diagnose certain retinal pathology, a fluorescein angiogram is used to reveal the plumbing of the eyes. This test shows whether any blood is leaking or being blocked, and like many others, gives valuable diagnostic information to the physician.

The Department is continuously upgrading their technology. For example, it has acquired an OCT-angiography machine, which is a vascular imaging modality that may replace more invasive testing.

The Department’s main struggle, according to Beth, is lack of space. If the Department were able to physically expand, they could acquire more equipment and see more patients without being backed-up. Aside from physical expansion, Beth’s hopes for the future include hiring more personnel, upgrading current cameras, and acquiring the newest equipment as it is released.

Outside of patient photography, the Department also helps with photography for public relations. Scheie photographers have taken pictures at Scheie events, conferences, and the Vision Walk.

What is your background?
“I came to Scheie as a commercial photographer, photographing mostly products and people.” – Jim Berger

“I have seven years of ophthalmic experience, five of which were in photography.” – Andre Estanislau

“I went to school for fine arts, focusing on photography. I then started work as a general medical photographer in the Pathology Photography department at Johns Hopkins and went through their student program there.” – Cheryl Devine

“When I was 16 years old I received my first camera, which was a 35mm Yashica camera. From then on I loved photography. In 1983, I was trained to be an ophthalmic-optometric technician in the U.S. Army.” – Cheryl Devine

“I studied Medical Photography as an undergraduate at RIT and then specialized in Ophthalmic Photography during my early working career. While raising my kids in upstate NY, I owned my own businesses in the Real Estate field.” – Sara Morales

“I have been working as a technician, photographer, and scriver since 2006. I am currently a certified COA, CMSS (scriver), and OCT-C. And I have been coordinating the Ophthalmic Medical Assistant program at Mercer County College in Trenton, NJ for three years.” – Janie Morris

What’s your favorite part of your job?
“My favorite part of the job is meeting new people, seeing patients over the patients, and working on research studies.” – Jim Berger

“I love that I work with a group of great people and I also enjoy the challenges of capturing ophthalmic photographs of complicated eye diseases.” – Andre Estanislau

“Knowing that what we are doing is going toward helping the patients with their eye health and in research, with the future of treatment for patients, makes doing this type of work very satisfying.” – Cheryl Devine

“My favorite part of my job is interacting with the patients and photographing patients (even if it is only of their eyes).” – Brian Holmes

“I love the new technology. The diagnostic tools are getting more precise and as a photographer I am always learning new imaging techniques.” – Sara Morales

“I love being able to help patients through some of the most difficult of times and watching the ‘light bulb come on’ when I am teaching other technicians and photographers.” – Janie Morris

Any funny stories to share?
“I can say that in Photography we meet all sorts of interesting people with interesting personalities. All I can say is that there is hardly ever a dull moment…” – Andre Estanislau

“I also like to write and sing songs. Sometimes I get a chance to share a song with a patient who may have the same interests. Sometimes it makes what may not be a pleasurable experience tolerable (Sometimes!!!)” – Brian Holmes

“At Scheie we see patients from all over the world and they teach me many life lessons. I once apologized to a patient for directing bright lights in his eyes and then for helping a physician inject a dye in his arm. He looked at me calmly and said, “This is nothing… I come from a war torn city with no electricity or water, I hope I can stay here.” It was a sobering moment for me.” – Sara Morales
Words from Scheie Alumni President

The winter of 2015-16 has been fairly mild. It was about 70 degrees in Philadelphia on Christmas and the spring blossoms tried to come out. But Mother Nature has brought us a blizzard in January and some cold spells in February to remind us that we have to wait for spring. Even Punany Phil decided we all have to wait six more weeks.

However, what I think Phil was predicting was not the start of spring, but the roar of discussion, shower of ideas, and hot topics to be presented at the annual Scheie Alumni meeting on April 15th and 16th. Under the great leadership of Dr. Steve Orlin, master Penn Physician, we have another wonderful meeting planned and waiting for our alumni!

As always, we encourage you to return to Philadelphia to see old friends and reconnect with our thriving department, which under the leadership of Dr. Joan O’Brien, continues to flourish. This great weekend of lectures, case discussions, and dining awaits— I promise you won’t be disappointed!

Scot M. Goldstein, MD
Pediatrics & Adult Oculo-Facial Plastic Surgeon
Tri-County Eye & Wills Eye Institute

Faces of Scheie cont. from page 5

“Certain people gravitate towards outside projects more than those who come from a clinical background,” explained Beth. “We have one photographer, Brian Holmes, who still shoots weddings and does videography on the side, so he loves public relation projects!”

Like many others in the Photography Department, Beth transitioned through multiple art forms before finding her niche in clinical photography. She began college pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts, with the goal of assimilating fine art photography and graphic design. After experimenting with graphic design, her interest was piqued by a Biomedical Photographic Communication Program and she began focusing on forensic photography. During this time, Beth was offered an internship in an Ocular Oncology Department at Wills Eye Institute, where she was first exposed to ophthalmic photography.

“When I finished, I realized that I wanted to work in a hospital setting,” said Beth. “After graduation, I started working at Scheie as an Ophthalmic Photographer.”

After three years at Scheie, Beth was promoted to her managerial role, where her responsibilities range from teaching new employees and scribes to handling new projects and managing the schedule.

“The first thing I learned is how important is it for people to get along with each other and mesh well,” Beth recalled. “I thought that technical skill was the most important quality to look for, but it’s really personality. You can teach technical skills, but not interpersonal skills.”

Like Dr. Shindler, Dr. Avery spends the majority of his time in the lab, but does maintain an active clinical practice. His research focuses on double vision, and, more recently he has been investigating the potential of OCT (optical coherence tomography) to help detect changes in patients with papillipemia.

“In order to make all of this possible, I am very grateful for the support I have received from my colleagues and especially from Dr. O’Brien, who has been very supportive of my research efforts and has readily provided me with the study personnel and resources needed to perform these studies,” said Dr. Tamhankar.

Dr. Robert Avery: The Missing Piece of the Puzzle

Dr. Avery is the most recent addition to the neuro-ophthalmology group, arriving in October. He was previously a pediatric neurology resident and neuro-ophthalmology fellow at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and Penn.

“A lot has changed since I was a fellow here,” he said. “I was really excited to come back. Penn’s neuro-ophthalmology program is extremely comprehensive….other programs don’t have that kind of depth. It’s a very cohesive group here, and this was a perfect opportunity to be a part of a program undergoing positive changes.”

Like Dr. Shindler, Dr. Avery spends the majority of his time in the lab, but does maintain an adult and pediatric clinical practice. His research focuses on optic pathway gliomas, which are tumors that grow within the visual system that can cause mild or severe vision loss.

“New children have trouble cooperating with traditional visual acuity and visual field tests needed to monitor their tumor,” Dr. Avery explained. “For a long time, we didn’t have a way to measure how the tumor is affecting their vision.”

Dr. Avery has spent the past six years developing the use of hand-held OCT in young children. OCT, which uses a light source to take an image of the back of the retina, can be acquired in a matter of seconds, but many young children cannot cooperate with this testing and therefore do not benefit from this technology. Once children are sedated for their MRI scans, Dr. Avery and his team can quickly acquire OCT images to assess the health of the optic nerve. Dr. Avery’s ultimate goal is for the OCT imaging to reduce and possibly replace MRIs, as OCTs are non-invasive, safe, quick, and require much less sedation than a full MRI.

“This could give us valuable information about whether or not we should treat their tumors,” said Dr. Avery. “Beyond the knowledge gained, if OCT can reduce the number of MRIs needed, this decrease in anesthetia exposure would be a great added benefit.”

The Next Decade

The neuro-ophthalmology practice hopes to continue to grow and strengthen their research base over the coming years.

“We hope to be at six physicians again,” said Dr. Liu. “We are looking for people that can enhance both our clinical and research mission in neuro-ophthalmology. With all the construction at HUP and CHOP and renovations at Presbyterian, it’s a great time to be at Penn. It’s a pure growth phase for everyone.”

The practice also hopes to explore newer technologies.

“I am very much interested in using OCT angiography, which is a newer technique, to study blood flow within the optic nerve and what happens to the blood flow in certain conditions,” said Dr. Tamhankar.

There is little doubt that the group is well on its way to achieving Dr. Liu’s vision of being recognized as the premier neuro-ophthalmology group in the world.

Face of Scheie cont. from page 5

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After three years at Scheie, Beth was promoted to her managerial role, where her responsibilities range from teaching new employees and scribes to handling new projects and managing the schedule.

“The first thing I learned is how important is it for people to get along with each other and mesh well,” Beth recalled. “I thought that technical skill was the most important quality to look for, but it’s really personality. You can teach technical skills, but not interpersonal skills.”

Beth has an affinity for working with patients and teaching, which is why she enjoys working in a University setting. She also interacts with different vendors, monitors camera usage, and handles equipment trouble shooting.

“I get to think creatively and use the fine arts portion of my skill set. There are a lot of times where we need to think outside of the box,” Beth laughed.

Thanks to Beth and the whole Photography Department, Scheie strives in diagnostic imaging and works together to provide the best care for all their patients.
Dr. William Trattler exemplifies many of the qualities taught and valued at the Scheie Eye Institute. He strives to not only enhance the lives of his patients, but also his colleagues and all those surrounding him. A graduate of the Scheie residency class of 1996, Dr. Trattler went on to specialize in refractive, corneal, and cataract eye surgery at the University of Texas-Southwestern Medical School. Today, he is Director of Cornea at the Center for Excellence in Eye Care and serves on the volunteer faculty for both the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and Florida International University College of Medicine.

Dr. Trattler has fond memories of his time at Scheie. He remembers with great detail his first cataract surgery with Dr. Nicholas Volek, which confirmed his desire to become an anterior segment surgeon.

“I remember at the end of the case, which thankfully went smoothly, that it was a euphoric feeling. And post-op, the patient was so happy,” he said.

Dr. Trattler also recalls seeing a disappointed patient at the Veterans Hospital in 1994 with bilateral macular holes. The patient was told that nothing could be done to save her vision. However, Dr. Trattler had recently attended a lecture for the residents on a new procedure to fix macular holes.

“When I saw the patient, I shared that there might now be a therapy,” he explained. “As a senior, I happened to see her when she returned, and she was so happy and considered me such a hero for taking the time to just refer her into the retina clinic. Her surgery was successful, and she could drive again.”

Today, Dr. Trattler is a member of the Center for Excellence in Eye Care in Miami, Florida, a multi-specialty ophthalmology practice composed of fourteen ophthalmologists and two optometrists. He focuses on cataract and refractive cataract procedures, crosslinking, and LASIK/surface ablation, as well as facilitating clinical trials.

“Our center has been involved in many clinical trials, including FDA studies for crosslinking and various intraocular lenses, as well as Phase 3 and Phase 4 pharmaceutical studies,” said Dr. Trattler. “Currently, our main study is an Epithelial-On Crosslinking study for patients with keratoconus and post-LASIK ectasia.”

Dr. Trattler loves working alongside faculty and students. Frank Spektor, MD, another Scheie graduate, also works in the same practice. Dr. Trattler occasionally lectures at Bascom Palmer and has medical students and ophthalmology residents shadow him, providing them with access to innovative technologies and treatments.

“We have technologies for cataract surgery that include the LenSx laser, as well as TrueVision 3D, which allows me to use 3D glasses and look at a 4K monitor when performing procedures in the OR, rather than look through a microscope,” he explained. “The technology is amazing for teaching, as everyone in the OR watching has an identical 3D view of the procedure.”

Along with introducing new techniques and tools to his students, Dr. Trattler also co-authored numerous articles and abstracts. One book in particular is especially beneficial to many medical, nursing, and veterinary students, titled Microbiology Made Ridiculously Simple. A second book which he co-authored, called Review of Ophthalmology, is often used by ophthalmology residents to study for the OKAPS and the boards.

As a successful educator, clinician, and surgeon, Dr. Trattler highly values teamwork and collaboration.

“One of my strengths is my ability to work well with my colleagues, and not be competitive,” he said. “Rather, my hope is to help my colleagues be successful.”

Dr. Trattler’s desire to help others was developed early and shared amongst his family. His father, Dr. Henry Trattler, is also an ophthalmologist and a founding member of the practice. The positive impact his father had on others’ lives inspired Dr. Trattler to contribute in the same way to society.

“There were several occasions in junior high and high school where classmates of mine came up to let me know that my father had performed surgery on their parents and grandparents, and the surgery really made a difference in their family member’s life,” he recalled.

Dr. Trattler attributes a large part of his career achievements to his continued attendance of meetings and conferences.

“I feel I learn so much at each meeting on how to better care for patients, and I love interacting with ophthalmologists from the US and around the world,” he said. “With the availability of so many exciting technologies, it can be challenging to decide which tools to incorporate into our practice, as well as how to further optimize the care of various conditions. New technologies are also presented at these conferences, so a sense of what will become available in the near term and down the road is helpful.”

Dr. Trattler has three amazing children, and hopes that his passion for ophthalmology and service is passed down to at least one of his children!
The Scheie Eye Institute, founded by Harold G. Scheie in 1972, is a leader in the field of ophthalmological research, education, and patient care.

Our physician-scientists focus on translational research, ranging from age-related macular degeneration to glaucoma to retinitis pigmentosa. The Scheie Eye Institute is consistently among the top three recipients of National Eye Institute funding.

Our full-time residency and fellowship program is devoted to training 15 residents and 8 fellows to become leaders in the future of ophthalmology. In fact, Scheie is now the first institute to receive a training grant in Ocular Genetics and Bioinformatics from the National Institute of Health. This will enable us to train scientists and ophthalmologists to interpret the huge amount of genetic information which will become available to us within the next five years as whole genome sequencing becomes widely affordable.

The Scheie Eye Institute employs 60 physicians and researchers to consult and treat eye problems of every kind. Last year alone, Scheie had 100,000 patient visits. For more information about the Scheie Eye Institute, look us up online at http://www.pennmedicine.org/ophthalmology/ or call us at 215.662.8415.

Private contributions have helped to propel the Scheie Eye Institute to the forefront of research and patient care. Many of our greatest breakthroughs have been made possible through donations from individuals and organizations. These gifts benefit vision saving therapy for those in our community and people around the world. If you would like to make a donation to the Scheie Eye Institute, please visit us online at http://www.pennmedicine.org/ophthalmology/ or send a check to the Scheie Eye Institute, Attn. Lila Lapides, 51 N. 39th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

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