

20th anniversary of the modern CWRU and University Hospitals Department of Ophthalmology:

A Century of Accomplishments

The Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at Case Western Reserve University and University Hospitals Case Medical Center is pleased to celebrate its 20th anniversary of the establishment of the modern department in 1991. The Department was originally founded by Benjamin Millikin, MD, in 1893 at Lakeside Hospital and Western Reserve Medical School located in downtown Cleveland. Trained at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia and Germany, Dr. Millikin brought the latest advances in ophthalmology as a separate medical science to Northeast Ohio and also had a strong interest in medical student education in this discipline. He went on to serve as Dean of the School of Medicine from 1900 -1912. He was succeeded as Ophthalmology chair in 1916 by William Bruner, MD, who also trained at Wills. Dr. Bruner served in this capacity until 1936. During this period he was one of the leaders in the founding of some of the enduring institutions for health care and education in Cleveland, including the Allen Medical Library, the Cleveland Sight Center, and most importantly the relocation of the Medical School and Lakeside Hospital in 1932 to create the modern academic medical center that exists today on Adelbert Road in University Circle.



Benjamin Millikin, MD with a patient

In 1937, all the surgical specialties, including Ophthalmology, became divisions in the Department of Surgery under Dr. Carl Lenhart. Ophthalmology remained in a divisional structure for 54 years directed initially by Dr. Abram Bruner, nephew of Dr. William Bruner, until 1951. Notable during this period was the establishment of the residency program in 1937 with Dr. Charles I Thomas as the first resident. Dr. Thomas later became chairman of the Division in 1961 but prior to this Dr. Lornard Johnson, one of the founders of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), the largest organization fostering eye research in the world, led the Division. Dr. Johnson recruited the first full-time faculty member in the Division, Dr. Albert Potts, who went on to receive the Friedenwald Award, the top prize for a vision researcher given by ARVO for his work on methanol toxicity, and Chair of Ophthalmology at the University of Louisville and Arizona.



Charles I Thomas, MD

Then in 1961, Dr. Thomas, the first full-time chair, oversaw the expansion of the residency program from one to 5 residents per year with the inclusion of the VA Medical Center and MetroHealth Medical Center as affiliated hospitals of the program. He also founded the Cleveland Eye Bank, and the Johnson Laboratory for Vision Research including a retinal program under Dr. Ed Kean and ophthalmic ultrasound

program under Dr. Edward Purnell. Dr. Purnell, a Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and residency alum, assumed the chairmanship in 1973, continuing his seminal work on ophthalmic ultrasound, strengthening the residency program, leading expansion of clinical programs, and advancing a translational and clinical research under Dr. Jonathan Lass.

Nearing his retirement after 18 years as Division Chief, working with Dr. Lass, Dr. Purnell, with the support of Dr. Jerry Shuck, chair of Surgery, Dean Neil Cherniack, President Agnar Pytte, and Mrs. Farah



Edward Purnell, MD

Walters, president of University Hospitals of Cleveland, led the establishment of the modern Department of Ophthalmology by the University and University Hospitals in 1991. Two years later, Dr. Lass assumed the Chairmanship and became the second Charles I Thomas Professor. Under his leadership clinical programs have expanded with services in both general and all specialty areas, tripling of clinical faculty and facilities, including new outpatient facilities at Landerbrook, Westlake, and Hudson, and new surgical locations in Mayfield Heights and Westlake. Teaching programs have undergone tremendous changes with the residency program expanding to six residents per year with acquisition of the Mt. Sinai program (1995) and the St. Luke's program (2000), and addition of St.

Vincent Charity Hospital as an affiliate hospital under Dr. Dan Weidenthal's and subsequently Dr. Marc Abrams' leadership, and expansion at the VA in 2011 with new state of the art facilities and creation of two teams of residents under Dr. Ed Burney's leadership. More than 275 residents have trained in the program since Dr. Thomas in 1937 with graduates now in practice throughout the country and their placement in top, highly competitive fellowships. The first international experience to the Prasad Eye Institute in Hyderabad, India was initiated in 2009 with the support of a local foundation, Ophthalmic Education Worldwide.

The basic research program expanded from one basic scientist to six with primary appointments and five with secondary appointments led by Dr. Eric Pearlman, Research Director. This expansion was facilitated by tripling of laboratory space and recruitment funds provided by the School of Medicine under Dean Ralph Horwitz and Dean Pamela Davis, and from University Hospitals under Dr. Fred Rothstein's direction, and from generous donors to the Department. A driving force for the creation of an independent department was the department chair and faculty to be eligible for grants from Research to Prevent Blindness (RPB), the largest private foundation to fund vision research in the United States. The Department entered the unrestricted RPB grant program in 1997 and since has received prestigious individual awards (Career Development, Wasserman, Senior Investigator, Medical Student, and the Jules and Doris Stein Professorship), reflecting the highest quality of vision science of our researchers. The Department's basic science efforts were enhanced with the approval by Dean Nathan Berger in 1996 of the creation of the Case Visual Sciences Research Center under Dr. Lass' direction which has grown to 18 basic and clinical departments involved in vision

**Department of Ophthalmology &
Visual Sciences Research Center**

research and more than \$9 million/year in federal funding with NIH P30 Core Grant and T32 Training grant funding continuously from 1997.

The clinical research program in the Department expanded with the founding of the Vision Research Coordinating Center in 2004 and Clinical Trials Unit under Dr. Suber Huang's leadership with double digit growth in corporate and federal trials, investigator initiated studies, and multicenter studies including the National Eye Institute sponsored Fuchs' Genetics Multicenter Study. The last decade showed major growth in the two image analysis reading centers in the Department, the Cornea Image Analysis Reading Center and the Retinal Image Analysis Reading Center (REDIARC), conducting both corporate and federal studies requiring analysis of corneal and retinal images in a controlled manner, overseen by their technical director, Beth Ann Benetz. Finally, with a solid philanthropic foundation from previous chair efforts, the Department has added three additional endowed chairs (Asseff, Searle-Huang, and Page-Reinhart), two major research funds (Russell, Mitchell), and three named lectureships (Purnell, Bruner, and Levine). The excellence and depth of all these clinical, teaching, and research programs led to the designation by University Hospitals of our Department as an Eye Institute in 2008.

The legacy of excellence since Dr. Millikin's aspirations to develop ophthalmology as a separate discipline at Western Reserve School of Medicine and Lakeside Hospital in 1893 to the founding of the modern Department of Ophthalmology in 1991 should serve as inspiration for the next generation of clinicians, educators and researchers with our Department and our Eye Institute.



Jonathan Lass, M.D.

Charles I Thomas Professor and Chairman
CWRU Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Director, University Hospitals Eye Institute
Director, Case Visual Sciences Research Center
June 2011



20th anniversary of the modern CWRU and University Hospitals Department of Ophthalmology:



Western Reserve School of Medicine - 1890s



Lakeside Hospital in downtown Cleveland – 1890s

Department Leadership Since 1890s



Benjamin Milliken MD
1893-1913



William Bruner, MD
1916-1936



Abram Bruner MD
1937 - 1951



Lorand Johnson MD
1951-1961



Charles I Thomas MD
1961-1973



Edward Purnell MD
1973-1993



Jonathan Lass MD
1993-



Dr. Thomas with Dr. Purnell, who founded ocular ultrasonography laboratory with Dr. Thomas' support.



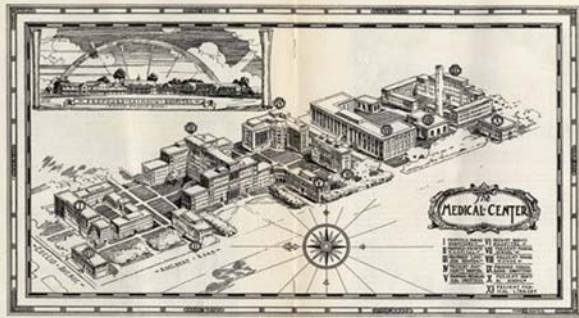
Jerry Shuck, M.D.
Chair, Dept of Surgery
Supported the establishment of
modern Department of
Ophthalmology



Edward Kean, Ph.D. who had
continuous funding from National
Eye Institute for over 20 years
under Drs. Thomas and Purnell,
examining the chemistry of the
visual pigment, rhodopsin



Residency photo including Drs. Reinhart, Lass, and Purnell in the back row and Dr. Burney front row



Western Reserve School of Medicine
and University Hospitals of Cleveland:
A Blueprint for the new academic
medical center - 1922



UH Case Medical Center Campus – 2011