

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As I write this letter, the foundation work is being performed for the new Children's Hospital on the far side of the medical complex from the WVU Eye Institute. This will be a tremendous addition to the care of children in the state. To that end we welcome Dr. Ryan McGuire (pediatric ophthalmologist) to the team of Dr. Geoff Bradford and Dr. Alison Hixenbaugh. Dr. McGuire completed his ophthalmology residency at Drexel University and his pediatric ophthalmology fellowship at CHOP (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia). As the Children's Hospital comes on line in the next few years, we will be seeking to add to this team.

We also welcome glaucoma specialist Dr. Joel Palko to the faculty. Dr. Palko completed his ophthalmology residency at Washington University and his glaucoma fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh. He will divide his time between clinical care and starting a biomedical

engineering laboratory for the study of ocular disease.

Our fellowship ranks have increased this year with the addition of a cornea fellow. Our current fellows are: Dr. Annahita Amireskandari (cornea), Dr. Sumeet Gupta (glaucoma), and Drs. Evan Berger and Nicole Pumariega (retina). With the aid of these talented individuals we are able to accomplish our goals in the areas of patient care, teaching, and research. We continue our efforts in training residents so they can make a successful transition to fellowship training or comprehensive ophthalmology practice.

Research efforts are expanding in the areas of retinal biochemistry, metabolism, and genetics. We currently have six NEI RO1 grants within the department. The most recently funded was submitted by Dr. Max Sokolov. The faculty of the Department have been very active in clinical trials involving age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, cataract surgery, and corneal collagen crosslinking for keratoconus. The residents' annual research program demonstrated the high quality of both their research and presentations. The residents are preparing submissions to national meetings including ARVO and ASCRS.

Our grateful patients, alumni, and friends have continued their generous gifts to our department in terms of time, advice, and donations. These gifts are absolutely essential to further the research and educational activities of our institute in these trying times. We depend on this generosity to create a legacy to sustain both present and further endeavors.

It is a privilege to work alongside of our tremendously talented and dedicated students, residents, fellows, staff, clinicians, and researchers in trying to find better ways to serve our patients through innovative treatments found only through the combination of research, education, and clinical care that is at the core of all academic departments at West Virginia University.

Thomas Mauger, MD
Professor and Chairman
WVU Eye Institute Department of Ophthalmology

NEWS FROM THE WVU EYE INSTITUTE



UPMC physician joins WVU Eye Institute faculty

[Dr. Joel Palko](#) joins the WVU Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences as glaucoma specialist. Dr. Palko completed residency training in Ophthalmology at Washington University in St. Louis and his glaucoma fellowship at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Dr. Palko began seeing patients in July.



WVU Eye Institute welcomes new pediatric physician

[Dr. Ryan McGuire](#) becomes part of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences in the pediatric specialty. Born and raised in Warren, OH, he was accepted in a Bachelor of Science/Medical Doctorate combined program through the University of Akron and Northeastern Ohio Medical University. After completing his ophthalmology residency training at Hahnemann University Hospital/ Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, PA, he completed his fellowship training in clinical pediatric ophthalmology and adult strabismus at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Dr. McGuire will specialize in pediatric and adult strabismus, pediatric cataracts and glaucoma, and retinopathy of prematurity.



New optical shop now open

We welcome [The Eye Shop](#) to the WVU Eye Institute. This full service optical center offers everything from bifocals to prescription sunglasses. The Eye Shop has over 50 years combined experience in eyeglass fitting.

In April, the [Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program](#) – Occupation & Mobility group went to New York City for a weekend. This jam-packed adventure included stops at The Today Show, Lion King Broadway workshop, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island to name a few. The group consisted a blind and low vision students who learned to navigate the street crossing, subways, and weather of a big city.



Department of Ophthalmology professor publishes two papers

[Dr. Tony Realini](#), professor and director of clinical research at the WVU Eye Institute, had two papers accepted for publication concerning his West Indies Glaucoma Laser Study (WIGLS) that was conducted in Saint Lucia and Dominica.

Each year [the Children's Vision Rehabilitation Program](#) hosts a summer Adventure Camp for visually impaired students in grades 8 – 12. This year it was held at Adventures on the George in early June. During this camp, students learned to cook, enjoyed zip lining and white water rafting, and dined out.



WVU Eye Institute introduces new treatment for keratoconus

"We are excited to be able to offer, to the thousands of patients in West Virginia with keratoconus, the only FDA approved treatment to stabilize the condition" Thomas Mauger, MD, Chairman of the [Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences](#). Dr. Mauger (a cornea specialist) has been actively performing corneal collagen crosslinking as part of one of the early clinical trials for the past six years and is now bringing this innovation to West Virginia. The WVU Eye Institute has acquired the Avedro Mosaic Advanced Corneal Cross-Linking System device. This instrument is the only FDA approved treatment for the stabilization of keratoconus and a related condition, post refractive surgery

ectasia. With this technology and the outstanding subspecialty talent here including Drs. [Lee Wiley](#) and [Lingo Lai](#), there is no place in the world that will off more comprehensive and precise care for this group of patients.



WVU researcher explores link between intercellular communication and incurable blindness

[West Virginia University](#) researcher [Jianhai Du](#) is investigating how the retinal pigment epithelium turns proline – an amino acid into fuel that the retina can easily burn. Dr. Du and his team discovered that if the RPE can't process the proline properly, the retina is undernourished, and retinal degenerative diseases result. Their findings, which appear in the Journal of Biological Chemistry, may point to innovative treatments that make incurable blindness preventable. To further read about the study, click [here](#).



Dr. Charlton named recipient of 2019 Buck Harless Bridge Builder Legacy Award

[Judie Charlton, MD](#), professor in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at West Virginia University, has been named recipient of this year's Buck Harless Bridge Builder Legacy Award.

Named after Harless' favorite poem, "The Bridge Builder" by Will Allen Dromgoole, the award recognizes those who have shown great care for the youth and people of West Virginia. Along with Drs. Jim and John Brick, Dr. Charlton started visiting the Larry Joe Harless Community Center in Gilbert, WV a decade ago. Since then, she has begun directing an ophthalmic screening program out of the community center, which served more than 1,000 southern West Virginians and has detected vision issues in 40 percent of patients since its inception.



Dr. Trotter's dedication and support continues innovated clinical practice and ground breaking research at WVU Eye Institute

Before WVU Medicine became one of the leading health care systems in West Virginia, ophthalmology and visual sciences wasn't being discussed as part of the expansion. That is until Dr. Robert R. Trotter, a Boston eye specialist, returned to his hometown of Morgantown, West Virginia with a vision to give back to his home state.

He created the WVU School of Medicine's Division of Ophthalmology and worked hard to establish a program to treat eye diseases for the people of West Virginia and become a leader in ophthalmic education. Dr. Trotter founded WVU's three-year ophthalmology residency program which has since trained more than 150 residents and fellows.

Dr. Trotter, ophthalmology's first chair passed away in 2006. His legacy is carried on by Dr. Jodie Trotter, his loving wife who believes as did her husband in the importance of education and research to restoring vision and preventing blindness.

Dr. Jodie Trotter was chief psychologist at Kennedy Youth Center, clinical assistant professor at the WVU Department of Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry and consultant on Social Security Disability for West Virginia. She established the first private practice in adult clinical psychology in West Virginia in 1976.

In honor of her late husband, she established the Drs. Robert R. and Jodie Trotter Vision Research Fund that supports clinical and bench research. Besides research, Dr. Trotter has supported other programs at the West Virginia University Eye Institute.

Thanks to the insight and dedication of Dr. Robert Trotter and the ongoing commitment of Dr. Jodie Trotter, the West Virginia University Eye Institute exists today and is the only academic facility conducting eye research in West Virginia. Through private donations, like that of the Trotters, research done at WVU Eye Institute helps to uncover the cause of eye diseases and develop the best treatments.

RESIDENT AND FELLOW ANNOUNCEMENTS

WVU Eye Institute welcomes four new residents and fellow

[Andrew Bean, MD](#), [Christian Warner, MD](#), [Justin Harvey, MD](#), [Mary Kunesh, MD](#), and [Nicole Pumariega, MD](#), retina fellow.

WVU Eye Institute says goodbye to graduating residents

It is that time of year again when WVU Eye Institute says goodbye to the graduating residents. The 2019 ophthalmology graduates will be missed. During a reception at the WVU Alumni Center, each one was recognized for their contributions and achievements during their tenure at the Eye Institute.

We congratulate Drs. Josh Atkinson, [Annahita Amireskandari](#), Steven Fish, [Sumeet Gupta](#), James Kasenchak and Jamie Schaefer as they go forth and conquer the world of ophthalmology at different places. Though we are happy that Drs. Amireskandari and Gupta will remain at the WVU Eye Institute as a cornea fellow and glaucoma fellow respectively.

SUPPORTING THE WVU EYE INSTITUTE

The West Virginia University Eye Institute is dedicated to providing excellent patient care, and educating the healthcare professionals of tomorrow to ensure the vision of outstanding care will continue on for generations. Your generous donation demonstrates your unwavering Mountaineer spirit and commitment to improving the lives of others.

Funds for the WVU Eye Institute support investments in clinical care, innovations, education and research. You can impact tomorrow by making your donation today.

To support the WVU Eye Institute, visit <https://give.wvu.edu/wvumedicine-eyeinstitute> or contact:

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