

2012 SIGHT + SOUND

WINTER EDITION



Training Surgeons Across the World

by Zack Butovich

The Endoscopic Endonasal Approach (EEA) to the skull base is a revolutionary, minimally invasive procedure that gives surgeons access to the base of the skull and top of the spine by proceeding through the nose and sinuses. Dr. Carl Snyderman, of the Department of Otolaryngology, is the Co-Director of the Center for Skull Base Surgery, and has helped pioneer and perfect the Endoscopic Endonasal Approach.

Though the surgery is remarkably effective, and has few negative repercussions, it is not widely performed outside of Pittsburgh. There are few skull base teams with adequate experience to teach these techniques to surgeons in training. Consequently, there is a worldwide shortage of skull base surgeons who are able to offer their patients a full range of surgical options and the best care for their problem.

Dr. Snyderman aims to change that unfortunate fact. As the world leaders in endonasal endoscopic skull base surgery, Dr. Snyderman and Dr. Paul Gardner of the Department of Neurosurgery, have begun a new telemedicine project. When integrated with the already established and highly successful International Visiting Scholars program – where physicians and surgeons from all over the world come to Pittsburgh in order to learn EEA techniques by performing anatomical dissections in the laboratory and observing live surgeries – the program is helping to teach an increasing number of talented surgeons the skull base procedure, as well as providing further support to them through connective media, such as internet connected webcam technology and interactive robotic camera controls.

On November 17, 2011, Dr. Snyderman and Dr. Gardner successfully mentored a live surgery at the University of Maribor in Slovenia, from a conference room in Pittsburgh. This remote interaction through the internet is the heart of telemedicine. The Slovenian surgeons previously spent time in Pittsburgh learning skull base surgery, through the International Visiting Scholars program. However, due to the extreme complexity of the procedure, it is nearly impossible to become proficient in a short amount of time. Remote technology, such as interactive robotic cameras and webcam technology, allow Drs. Snyderman and Gardner to observe the Slovenian surgeons as they perform the procedure, give advice on how to do their surgery better, as well as help increase communication and teamwork between the group of surgeons, with the ultimate goal of pushing the surgeons, in Dr. Snyderman's words, "[to] get to the next level."

Though the telemedicine project is an extraordinary advancement in the field of surgery, especially for complex and necessary procedures like skull base surgery, it isn't without its limits. In order to establish a new potential site for telemedicine, a great amount of planning and cooperation must be achieved. Dr. Snyderman has worked hard to develop relationships and affiliations with visiting surgeons in order to foster the capacity for telemedicine. However, a site also needs to meet certain technological requirements as well: there must be a dependable and fast internet connectivity, as well as multiple cameras and connective equipment, in addition to the appropriate surgical equipment and staffing needs.

The University of Maribor in Slovenia is the first international site to integrate telemedicine connectivity to our Center for Skull Base Surgery and has an affiliation agreement with the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine for collaboration on medical education that was signed last year. Over the next few years, we hope to establish more sites across the world, including sites in Canada, India, China, Japan, and Malaysia.

Telementoring of surgeons in their own hospitals in an environment that is familiar to them using their own resources will advance the surgical care of patients worldwide and help develop regional centers of excellence that can become an educational resource for training the next generation of surgeons. **S+S**

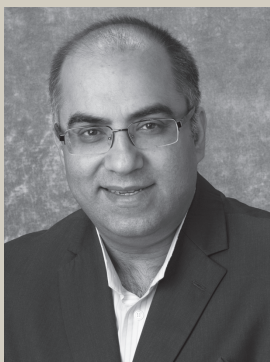
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Above:
Dr. Paul Gardner and Dr. Carl Snyderman.

From the UK to the U of P, to Lead Pediatric Ophthalmology

by Zack Butovich



"The skyline is beautiful," Dr. Kanwal "Ken" Nischal said of Pittsburgh. He was describing the view as you drive through the Fort Pitt Tunnels into downtown. "You don't get that kind of view with other cities.

It's just all of a sudden there." On November 1, 2011, Dr. Nischal joined us from London, England, to become our new head of Pediatric Ophthalmology at Children's Hospital.

Dr. Nischal arrives excited and dedicated to the work ahead of him at the UPMC Eye Center. "It's easy working with the Center," Dr. Nischal said, "it's easy to develop new ideas by working with all sorts of new and different people." He added that the mix of faculty, staff, researchers and scientists truly helps foster new innovations in ways that he hadn't experienced in many other places.

The UPMC Eye Center is impactful. The research and developments, as well as the patient care, coming from it is world-class. We are at the top of the list in funding from the NIH, and some of the science we have crafted has had groundbreaking impact, such as research in sensory substitution, glaucoma treatments, corneal stem cells, and macular degeneration. Dr. Nischal is determined to keep the Department of Pediatric Ophthalmology on par. His expertise is in corneal transplants, especially infants, pediatric cataract surgery and glaucoma treatments, all of which are important not just for the children patients, but for their families. Dr. Nischal believes he can help make Children's Hospital the premier location for pediatric ophthalmic care in the country.


Ideally, the new pediatric center would work in an interdisciplinary manner with other departments, therefore inspiring those new therapies that are sometimes found when different minds come together. Dr. Nischal's first goal is to make protocol driven evidence

based therapies for children in the next six to 12 months. From there, he plans to develop a center for visually impaired children, where not only will children receive care for any condition, but where parents will receive developmental health and education in order to best be able to care for their children. Further long term goals include a new teaching program for fellows in pediatric ophthalmology and an expanded NIH quality research facility, all in order to make the best location in the world for pediatric ophthalmology research and care.

Dr. Nischal believes he can help make Children's Hospital the premier location for pediatric ophthalmic care in the country.

"We have a very good team already in place, I want to enhance what's already here," Dr. Nischal said, adding the respect he holds for Dr. Al Biglan and all the work he did for pediatric ophthalmology in Pittsburgh during his time as the head of pediatric ophthalmology at Children's while still working as a full time private practice physician. "I want to emulate what Dr. Biglan did," Dr. Nischal said.

Dr. Biglan had a huge impact on the field of pediatric ophthalmology in Pittsburgh. As head of the pediatric ophthalmology department before there was a full time chair for the position, Dr. Biglan made enormous strides in pediatric research and education for residents in the program. Upon his retirement about five years ago, the Eye & Ear Foundation started a fund to establish a Dr. Al Biglan lectureship, which would bring in physicians and researchers from all over the world to speak to students, inspiring and educating them on new problems and solutions in pediatric ophthalmology. The Dr. Al Biglan Fund appeal concluded this year. The Eye & Ear Foundation is proud to announce a collected total of just over \$82,000. Dr. Nischal plans on making a well known presentation day for Dr. Biglan in the future, as an appropriate and important event for alumni and residents in his honor.

We, at the UPMC Eye Center, Department of Ophthalmology, and Eye & Ear Foundation, are happy to welcome Dr. Nischal to our team, and look forward to his work and the accomplishments he will achieve with us. 

Dr. Myers Turns Greek for a Night

by Zack Butovich

On November 19, 2011, our own Dr. Eugene Myers, Distinguished Professor and Emeritus Chair of the Department of Otolaryngology, was honored by the Arkadi-Maleme Chapter of the Cretan Association of Pittsburgh – a member of the PanCretan Association of America. He is the first non-Greek to receive a distinguished honor from the Association.


The honor symbolizes the strong relationship Dr. Myers has developed with Dr. Emmanuel Helidonis, Chairman



of the Department of Otolaryngology at the University of Crete, in Greece. The two distinguished physicians met in Pittsburgh in the early 1970s, shortly after Dr. Myers was appointed Chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology at what was then called the Eye and Ear Hospital of Pittsburgh, and soon developed a close bond that still lasts today.

Before Dr. Myers' arrival, the Hospital was recognized locally for good medical care, but had no national reputation. Dr. Myers revolutionized its identity, recruiting many new, fellowship trained faculty in order to provide the highest quality clinical care, education, and research. The Department of Otolaryngology at the Eye and Ear Institute grew into one of the most recognized and highly regarded academic and research departments in the world.

Dr. Helidonis reflected Dr. Myers' ambition and dedication to excellence by developing a robust research program at the University of Crete that became a model widely renowned across Europe.

It is easy to see how Dr. Myers' dedication and drive spreads to those around him through the parallel success Dr. Helidonis found at the University of Crete. The Cretan Association has recognized that, and thus has awarded him this wonderful recognition. 

Dr. Johnson Honored for Excellence in Otolaryngology

by Zack Butovich

On December 3, 2011, Dr. Jonas Johnson, Chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology, became the first otolaryngologist ever to receive the distinguished **Dr. Rodman E. Sheen and Thomas G. Sheen Award**. The Sheen Award was established in 1968 to honor physicians who have advanced the study and science of medicine and have made exceptional achievements in the medical profession. Other notable awardees have included Drs. Thomas Starzl, Judah Folkman, and Francis Collins.

"I am very honored, amazed, and surprised," Dr. Johnson said describing the award. "To be the first otolaryngologist selected is humbling." Having made contributions in clinical care, education, and research, Dr. Johnson has made his career on a public platform in academic otolaryngology. He has served on various national forums as a volunteer, including as a committee worker, the executive secretary of the Head and Neck Society, and the editor of two prestigious academic journals.

In his role as chairman, Dr. Johnson has helped raise our institution into a world-class leader in research and patient care. "Healthcare is on a precipice," Dr. Johnson says, "and doctors look to the U.S. as a centerpiece for the best healthcare in the world... I am just proud of the young people we have trained, and the [consequent] impact on the quality of care in the U.S. and globally." Apart from the high level of education the department gives to its residents, Dr. Johnson's leadership has helped pave the way toward newer, more effective cancer drugs, potential cures for tinnitus, effective minimally invasive surgical treatments, and potential cures for traumatic brain injury, among countless other advancements. "We are very bullish on new findings," Dr. Johnson says, "for improved quality of life."

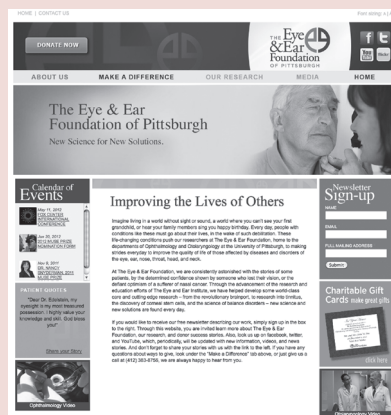


Jonas T. Johnson, MD, FACS
The Dr. Eugene N. Myers Professor and
Chairman of Otolaryngology
University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Dr. Johnson, as an example of his drive to educate as many as possible, often remarks about the quality of teaching and medical education in our country. "The best thing about U.S. healthcare," he says, "is that doctors train their own competition. We teach everybody we can...[we have] that willingness to share. You don't find that in the rest of the world." That being said, however, Dr. Johnson often has his mind towards those unable to receive care. He is a physician deeply concerned about healthcare for everyone. "I'm looking forward to major changes in...distribution, so everyone can get it." Dr. Johnson believes very strongly in philanthropy and is a committed supporter of the Eye & Ear Foundation as well as many other organizations.

The Sheen Award is sponsored by Bank of America and was presented to Dr. Johnson during the annual convention of the New Jersey chapter of the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Johnson was awarded with \$25,000 check, which he has generously donated to the Eye & Ear Foundation to further the research and education efforts of the Department of Otolaryngology. **S+S**

A New Year, A New Look



Along with the New Year comes a new logo and website for the Eye & Ear Foundation.



You probably noticed in our last *Sight + Sound* edition, our new logo, along with our new and improved newsletter. Well, the changes do not stop there! We are now announcing our new website!

If you haven't seen our new website already, visit **www.eyearandear.org** to see our new, updated version. We now provide easy access to a more direct and secure donation process. We encourage you to explore all the new features, including videos, our online version of *Sight + Sound*, a schedule of upcoming events, and an informative list of all the new research and projects being conducted in the University of Pittsburgh's Departments of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology. You can also follow us on Twitter and "like" us on Facebook! And, as always, you can share your stories by emailing us at **info@eyearandear.org**.

Next up... the Eye & Ear Foundation is relocating to the Eye and Ear Institute! We will keep you updated!

Dr. Dorothy Christie Scott, A Legacy of Service

by Zack Butovich

In 1958, Dorothy Christie Scott became the first woman resident ever at the Eye and Ear Hospital in Pittsburgh. Having served as a scrub nurse for four years before applying to the ophthalmology residency program, Dorothy Scott was determined to stand out from her peers. When her first application was denied, Dr. Kenneth Day, a highly respected ear surgeon Dorothy worked under for much of her time as a nurse, personally stepped forward and worked to make sure her second application was accepted, due to his recognition of her strong skills and tireless ambition.

Years later, while vacationing in the Caribbean island of Montserrat with her husband, Glenwood Scott, Dr. Scott noticed the poor

later, Dr. Scott helped create a hospital there, with a large focus on ophthalmologic health, which stayed open for nearly 30 years. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by a volcanic eruption in 1995 that wiped out nearly two-thirds of the island.

Dr. Scott and her husband continued to make yearly visits and provide care despite the destruction of the hospital. Soon after, the British government set forward plans to build a separate eye clinic in Dorothy Scott's name on the island, relieving the amount of work the Scotts had in setting up and dismantling equipment upon every visit, and providing permanent, sustainable care for the residents of the island.

Sadly, Dr. Scott passed away in 2002. In her memory, her husband, Glenwood, has made a generous pledge to the Eye & Ear Foundation to create a scholarship award in her name. Each year, the award will be presented to a resident who most exemplifies the quality of dedication in addressing the advancement of our understanding and elimination of health care disparities in ophthalmology. For this first awarding year, the Dorothy Christie Scott Academic Mission Award in Ophthalmology is being presented to Dr. Angela Elam, who has developed a survey based on results from focus groups comprised of recent and non-users of eye care in order to highlight barriers to care and potential improvements for eye care systems. Finding results that shed light on the future of disparities in eye care, Dr. Elam hopes to distribute at least 1,000 surveys in community settings across Southwestern Pennsylvania in order to gather quantitative data and assess the generalizability of ideas developed through the focus group participants.

"Ophthalmology to me equals opportunity — opportunity to provide education on the importance of eye care to individuals and communities, opportunity to eliminate disparities in eye care, and opportunity to change lives by saving vision. Those opportunities are what I love about



Dr. Dorothy Scott and her husband, Mr. Glenwood Scott.

Ophthalmology," Dr. Elam said, noting the enormous disparities in available care, especially for those suffering a condition like diabetes, who are much more likely to suffer vision loss from diabetic retinopathy. Dr. Elam's project is currently awaiting a decision on funding from the NIH, and the pending plan is to begin research in the early spring.

"It is a tremendous honor to be the first recipient of an award that honors such an outstanding ophthalmologist and philanthropist... [Dr. Scott] left us very big shoes to fill and I'm looking forward to the challenge," Dr. Elam said upon receiving the award. The Eye & Ear Foundation, along with the Department of Ophthalmology, is proud to award Dr. Angela Elam the first ever Dorothy Christie Scott Award Academic Mission Award in Ophthalmology and looks forward to the great work she will do for our community. **S+S**



Prince Charles and Dr. Scott on the island of Montserrat.

eye health of the island residents. Residents literally had cataracts so large, you could see them on peoples' eyes without additional equipment. These were people that were essentially blind, walking around without care or help. There were no ophthalmologists on the island, and healthcare was scarce.

Despite having a successful practice in Pittsburgh, Dr. Scott always wanted to do more. In the mid-1960s Dorothy and Glenwood began making yearly trips to Montserrat, bringing with some basic ophthalmologic equipment and often volunteer residents from the ophthalmology program, providing care and cataract surgeries to residents of the small island. A few years

National Doctors' Day

March 30

Celebrated each year on March 30, National Doctors' Day acknowledges the dedication and life-changing work of all physicians. While the first Doctors' Day was celebrated in 1933, it wasn't until 1990 that a national holiday was established to recognize this country's physicians. The date chosen commemorates the groundbreaking day in 1842 when the first anesthetic was used in surgery — changing the landscape of medicine.

Should you wish to show your gratitude to your physician, recognizing their dedication and innovation, you can do so by making a donation in his/her honor to support their academic and research efforts. The attached envelope can be used for such a purpose, with checks made payable to The Eye & Ear Foundation.

Technology Saving Vision for the Underserved

In 1925, Helen Keller challenged the Lions Clubs to become “knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness.” To this day, the Lions Clubs of Pennsylvania and The Pennsylvania Lions Sight Conservation and Eye Research Foundation have made incredible strides towards the fulfillment of that mission. Reflective of this idea, the Lions have developed a wonderful relationship with the Eye & Ear Foundation of Pittsburgh, the support organization for the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Pittsburgh.

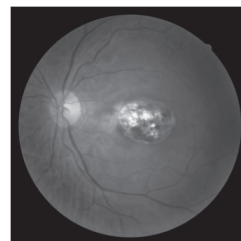
Currently, the Lions have been the first organization to provide funding for part of an exciting new project called the Guerilla Eye Service (GES) Retinal Camera Project. Designed and run by Dr. Evan Waxman, and staffed completely by volunteer medical students and ophthalmology residents, the GES is a mobile eye care clinic that visits free care centers across Allegheny County and other parts of rural southwestern Pennsylvania, providing vision screenings for the underserved population and those with barriers to care.

The idea that conceived the GES was actually brought to Dr. Waxman by his ophthalmology residents. Year after year, each new class of students would ask for volunteer work, community outreach programs, or something similar. In an effort to both provide community outreach and a strong educational experience, Dr. Waxman designed the Guerilla Eye Service. Students, through the GES, learn valuable information about patient interaction, ophthalmic issues with underserved population, and the role of free care providers. In an effort to be able to reach out to more potential patients and expand the scope of the GES, Dr. Waxman researched the use of digital retinal cameras. The cameras are mostly independently functioning machines that snap pictures of patients’ retinas, which can reveal a host of diagnoses by a trained professional. After a picture is taken, it is sent to Dr. Waxman to be examined, and if a problem is identified, the patient may receive care at UPMC’s free care service. With the help of the

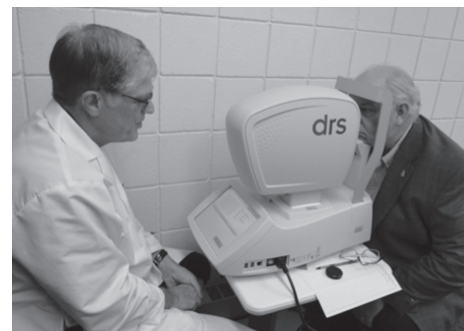
cameras, Dr. Waxman does not necessarily have to be present at the vision screening to identify problems. Among some potential issues these cameras can identify is diabetic retinopathy, a serious, and unfortunately, too common condition in underserved communities. Diabetic retinopathy leads to vision loss and blindness, and though it is completely treatable if diagnosed early enough, it is often left unchecked in patients until it is too late.

The cameras have also provided a huge expansion of the educational aspect of the GES. For those students unable to volunteer their time to the service, Dr. Waxman uses the photographs taken by the cameras to provide visualizations of different conditions and diseases, where they come from, and their relative frequency in certain populations. The de-identified pictures are sent through email messages, as well as through an ophthalmology interest group newsletter, which is put together by medical students.

The goal of the digital camera project is to install cameras in 20 clinics in the Pittsburgh area. The Lions Club has generously donated funds to support the first digital retinal camera that has since been placed in the McKeesport 9th Street Clinic. It has been a huge success since its installation with Dr. Waxman has diagnosing nearly 50% of patients scanned with various eye conditions and disorders. This is a significantly higher statistic than originally predicted, and provides strong evidence for the continued need to grow and expand this project.



An example of a picture taken by the Digital Retina Camera. This patient has evidence of congenital toxoplasmosis, a treatable condition.



Dr. Markle and Lion Bryan McCarl using the Digital Retina Camera at the McKeesport 9th Street Clinic.

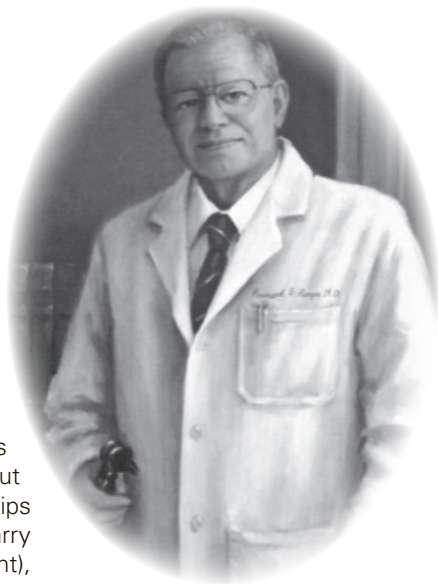
Since the McKeesport Clinic became involved with the camera project, it has become the model for our efforts towards the 20 camera goal. We have now received funding for and installed three more cameras, and are working with Lions again to support a fourth, to put our total at five cameras — a quarter of the way towards our goal! Other supporters of the camera project include McAuley Ministries, which, after seeing the success of a camera they funded in the Mathilda Theiss Health Center in the Hill District, is interested in supporting a second camera; and the Buncher Family Foundation, whose support has put a camera in the Northside Christian Health Center. Further support helping to cover operating expenses has been generously provided by the Allergan Foundation, and through a special appeal made on behalf of Dr. Edmund Watters, who retired in mid-2010, from his patients. As we continue to receive funding for the project, it is clear the impact it has on the community. We strive to stretch the scope of the project as far as we can — into Greene County, Fayette County, Beaver Country, and further, in the hopes of changing as many lives and saving as many people’s vision as possible.

The Eye & Ear Foundation is proud to support the Guerilla Eye Service Project and the work of Dr. Waxman and his volunteer medical students and residents. We thank the Lions for their strong support and continued commitment to the Eye & Ear Foundation — we can truly say that they succeed in dedicated themselves to the goal of becoming “knights of the blind.” **S+S**

Remembering Dr. Rueger

by Zack Butovich

Dr. Raimund Rueger was a long-time friend of the Department of Otolaryngology at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Rueger was in private practice in Pittsburgh, but in having close personal relationships with Dr. Eugene Myers and Dr. Barry Hirsch (both still with the Department), he often found himself helping out at the Eye and Ear Institute. As the Institute expanded the Otolaryngology residency program, Dr. Rueger became more closely associated with it. Dr. Rueger was also the Chief of Otolaryngology at Allegheny General Hospital for many years, where he led a program that allowed for many otolaryngology residents at the Institute to spend three to six months training with him. They received excellent training in head and neck surgery, and they had the opportunity to participate in the care of patients suffering maxillofacial trauma. At the time, this was the residents' only



exposure to trauma; the experience helped them learn and grow, and helped our program to continue to be accredited.

Sadly, Dr. Rueger passed away three years ago, after being diagnosed with leukemia. In his memory, Dr. Rueger's wife, Mrs. Dolores Rueger, also a close friend of the Eye and Ear Institute and Eye & Ear Foundation, donated a large section of his personal library to our Eye and Ear Library. Included were dozens, if not hundreds of academic journals, reference catalogs, and research publications. The generous

contribution to our library was recognized at a dedication on November 4, 2011 with the unveiling of a plaque in Dr. Rueger's memory, designating the donation as the Dr. Raimund Rueger Collection.

Dr. Rueger was very devoted to the Ear and Ear Institute. Upon the dedication, Mrs. Rueger simply said, "I had a roomful of books...and I just figured the University should have them. It's what he would have wanted." We, at the Ear & Ear Foundation, as well as the Department of Otolaryngology greatly appreciate the contribution Mrs. Rueger has made to our library, and with great reverence, acknowledge and respect the work and dedication Dr. Rueger has shown to our Department. **S+S**



Mrs. Dolores Rueger and Dr. Barry Hirsch in front of the plaque commemorating Dr. Rueger and his donated collection in the Eye and Ear Library.

Visual Neurologist Receives Career Development Award

by Zack Butovich

In early December of 2011, Dr. Matthew Smith, Department of Ophthalmology, received the **Research to Prevent Blindness (RPB) Career Development Award**. This award is a very exciting achievement for Dr. Smith, representing strong support for his work over the next four years.

Through the RPB award, Dr. Smith hopes to develop a basic understanding of how the visual brain works in order to help treat issues with visual dysfunction caused by traumatic brain injury or changes in parts of our brain responsible for vision. Additionally, through his research, Dr. Smith aims to help lay the groundwork for the development of visual prosthetic devices in the future. To achieve these goals, Dr. Smith is using his extensive knowledge and experience with

the visual system of primates to collect data from studies utilizing chronically implanted arrays of electrodes on the visual cortex of macaque monkeys, and studying the relationship between eye movements and visual attention.

By the end of the four year grant, Dr. Smith plans to learn how changes in the way visual neurons communicate lead to changes in perception, and how electrically stimulating neurons can help to simulate these perceptual effects. We greatly anticipate the work that Dr. Smith will accomplish and to see the results he will find.

Dr. Smith graduated from Canisius College in 1997, with a degree in biology and psychology. In 2003, he received his PhD in Neural Science from New York University. Having

received several awards, Dr. Smith came to the University of Pittsburgh in 2007 to pursue further research in visual neuroscience. As part of our Louis J. Fox Center for Vision Restoration, Dr. Smith is working to understand how neurons work together to create our visual perception of the world around us. He is currently analyzing the activity of brain regions involved in coordinating how our eyes move and how our brains interpret physical and visual information.

The RPB Career Development Award Fund was established in 1990 to attract young physicians and basic research scientists to eye research. To date, the program has recruited 160 vision scientists to research positions in departments of ophthalmology at universities across the country. RPB is the world's leading voluntary organization supporting eye research. Since it was founded in 1960, RPB has channeled hundreds of millions of dollars to medical institutions for research into the causes treatment and prevention of blinding eye disease. **S+S**

The 2011 Albert C. Muse Prize with Dr. Nancy Snyderman

The Albert C. Muse Prize was established in 2001 to honor the hard work and dedication that Albert Muse has done in his relationship with the Eye and Ear Hospital, Eye and Ear Institute, and the Eye & Ear Foundation over the last four decades. Mr. Muse has demonstrated a consistent and passionate leadership in the evolution of the three organizations. The Muse Award was created in part to recognize the achievements of the Eye and Ear Institute and Foundation made possible by his efforts and his philanthropy.

The Muse Prize is awarded annually to a physician or scientist who has demonstrated excellence in their field and has stood out through their extraordinary contributions in either Ophthalmology or Otolaryngology. Alternating each year between these two



Dr. Jonas Johnson, Mr. Al Muse, Dr. Nancy Snyderman, Mr. George Fechter.

medical fields, the purpose is to associate our two world-class departments of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology with leading clinicians and scientists from around the world by acknowledging their exceptional contributions.

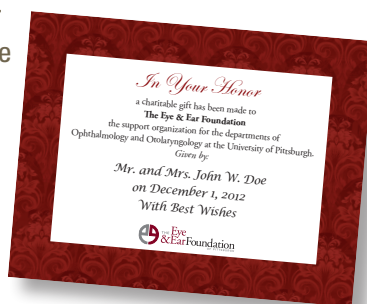
The 2011 recipient of the Muse Prize was Nancy L. Snyderman, MD, FACS, the chief medical editor for NBC News, and alumnus of the University of Pittsburgh's residency in Otolaryngology. Having written five books, received numerous research grants, as well as broadcasting awards, including an Emmy, DuPont, and Gracie awards, Dr. Snyderman has separated herself from her peers by her determination to promote awareness of health related issues to countless people.

Before receiving the award, Dr. Snyderman gave a lecture open to the public, in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine where she briefly discussed her career and her path to medical journalism. Highlighting key topics such as medical ethics and the important role of journalism in the media, Dr. Snyderman posed difficult questions to the audience, including a situation she was involved in while covering the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti, which raised a conflict between her job as a journalist and her motivation to help as a surgeon. Afterwards she held a question and answer session with the audience which included a wide variety of topics.

Later that evening, Dr. Snyderman attended the Muse Prize dinner, held in the Duquesne Club, where she received the Award in front of an audience of over one hundred friends and benefactors of the Foundation – the largest group assembled for the Muse Prize event since its inception. In her acceptance speech, Dr. Snyderman noted her roots in Pittsburgh, and fondly recalled the expert guidance she received from Dr. Eugene Myers and Dr. Sidney Busis, as well as the extremely high regard she held for both. **S+S**

Charitable Gift Cards Make Great Gifts

Your gift in a loved one's name can help fund research at the Eye and Ear Institute to improve the lives of people with disorders and diseases of the eye, ear, nose, throat, head, and neck. Visit eyeandear.org today for Charitable Gift Card giving details.



Young Donor Shows Amazing Generosity

Over the Holiday break, a young man, Zachary Platto, and his family visited the Eye and Ear Institute. Zachary, 13, was born with Pierre Robin's Syndrome, or an underdeveloped jaw that causes breathing issues and other complications as he grows. Needing to see a doctor at least once a month, and often more frequently, Zachary has been treated over the course of his life at Children's Hospital by Dr. Joseph Dohar, Director of the Voice, Resonance, and Swallowing Clinic and member of the Department of Pediatric Otolaryngology.

But on this particular visit, Zachary was not a patient but a guest of the Eye & Ear Foundation. Zachary decided to contribute \$1,000 of the money he received from his bar mitzvah to the Foundation, to be put specifically towards Dr. Dohar's work and research. Zachary remarked, "It's my way of saying 'thank you' to Dr. Dohar for all the wonderful work he has done."

The Eye & Ear Foundation is certainly impressed with Zachary's generosity. He truly understands the meaning of giving back, and we are extraordinarily grateful for his contribution.

Above:
Zachary Platto (center) with Dr. Johnson and Executive Director Lawton Snyder.



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Letter from the Executive Director



Lawton Snyder

In our last *Sight + Sound* issue, we mentioned the close relationship the Eye & Ear Foundation has had with the Western Pennsylvania Medical Eye Bank

Foundation. The organization has made it a mission to support research in corneal disease and transplantation techniques, and has given very generously to our Louis J. Fox Center for Vision Restoration over the past few years. Though they have already given so much to the Eye & Ear Foundation, the Medical Eye Bank Foundation, on November 29th, donated over \$200,000 to support the Louis J. Fox Center for Vision Restoration. The gift was presented during our annual Department of Ophthalmology Holiday Fundraiser on December 7th. On behalf of the Eye & Ear Foundation, and the Fox Center for Vision Restoration, we thank Jack Wisnoski and the Medical Eye Bank Foundation, for all the support they have given us over the past 70 years, for all they have done for the community, and for all the dedication they have put into the field of corneal research and restoration.

Lawton Snyder

Executive Director

The Eye & Ear Foundation of Pittsburgh



Above, right:

Mr. Jack Wisnoski, Mr. Bob Gumbert, Dr. Seshaiyengar Venkatesh, Dr. James Funderburgh, Mr. Lawton Snyder, Dr. Joel Schuman, and Dr. Robert Hendricks.