The eyes are our windows to the world. When they are impaired by disease or injury, our connection to the world is deeply affected. In this issue of Hamilton Eyelights, you will learn about some of our most recent advances in ophthalmic research, patient care, and academic excellence as the UT Hamilton Eye Institute continually advances the frontier of ophthalmic medicine to make a positive difference in people’s lives. None of these significant strides would be possible without the generosity of private donors. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Warmest regards,

Barrett G. Haik, MD, FACS
Hamilton Professor and Chair
Director, Hamilton Eye Institute
Hamilton Eyelights

a seasonal newsletter produced by

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Welcome Aboard

Assistant Director of Operations

Monique Dailey, MA, joins the University of Tennessee Hamilton Eye Institute (HEI) following 13 years in the UTHSC Department of Nursing as a business assistant and practice manager. She brings to the institute an ideal mix of skills and experience, including a bachelor’s degree in accounting, an associate’s degree in medical office technology, and a master’s degree in women’s health administration. She began her career in insurance billing and patient accounting.

“I think HEI is doing wonderfully on the practice side. It really is on the forefront of vision clinics,” states Monique. “But it’s the research side where I feel my expertise can be used the most.” Soon, she says, other eye institutes will look to HEI as a strategic model for how to become a successful vision research institute. Already, Monique has made quite a positive impact on operations, and we eagerly anticipate many years of her adept leadership. “I’m very happy to be at HEI,” Monique says. “There’s a wonderful mix of people here, and I felt welcome from my very first day.”

Research Scholar

Walter Luchsinger, MD, is a research scholar from the Republic of Panama. He will be engaged in various research projects under the direction of our faculty. Dr. Luchsinger is grateful for this opportunity to work with some of the world’s most accomplished ophthalmic physicians and research scientists. We look forward to helping him achieve his goals and enhance his knowledge of medicine and opthalmology.

Senior Media Technician

Daniel Cox, BA, joins us as the institute surges forward with the integration of emerging technology. His expertise will support the video, audio and telemedicine systems at the institute. As ongoing upgrades are implemented at HEI, such as the newly integrated 3-D HD video systems in the surgery center and Freeman Auditorium, Daniel’s expertise will help continue to advance the quality and accessibility of our presentation and communication technology.
Distinguished Visitors

Fifteenth Annual Clinical Update Meeting

On Saturday, December 10, 2011, the Hamilton Eye Institute convened its 15th annual clinical update meeting. At this event, UT HEI faculty and honored guests share presentations on the latest discoveries, techniques, and scientific data from their areas of ophthalmic subspecialty with an audience of local and regional ophthalmologists. We were particularly gratified to welcome our illustrious visiting speakers for this year’s event. Serving as this year’s Ira Lee Arnold Distinguished Visiting Professor was Peter A. Netland, MD, PhD, the DuPont Guerry III Professor and chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. We also proudly welcomed visiting speaker, Louise A. Mawn, MD, FACS, associate professor and director of the Oculoplastic and Reconstructive Service in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

Among the edifying lectures, the audience was treated to a special, high-definition, 3-D surgery lecture by department vice-chair, James C. Fleming, MD, FACS, using the special 3-D projection system that was added to the Freeman Auditorium earlier this year. The event, which was organized by Matthew W. Wilson, MD, FACS, professor of Ophthalmology and St. Jude Chair of Pediatric Oncology, was a resounding success for all who attended. We thank Drs. Netland and Mawn for their outstanding participation.


Dr. Fleming presents a 3-D corneal transplant video in the Freeman Auditorium.
International Outreach

ORBIS Sight-Saving Mission in Indonesia

March 12-31, 2012, the ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital visited Surabaya, Indonesia, to provide sight-saving surgeries and to enhance the training of local eye-care professionals. Among the surgeons and medical staff who volunteered for this mission was James C. Fleming, MD, FACS, the Philip M. Lewis Professor and vice-chair of Ophthalmology at the UT Hamilton Eye Institute. Dr. Fleming worked together with other surgeons who performed many sight-saving surgeries in local hospitals as well as on the ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital airplane. It was a very rewarding experience, and Dr. Fleming was extremely gratified to participate in this outstanding program. We are truly grateful to FedEx for their participation and their continued technical support of the ORBIS DC-10/Flying Eye Hospital.

HEI Glaucoma Director Travels to Pakistan

Sarwat Salim, MD, FACS, associate professor of ophthalmology and director of the HEI Glaucoma Service, was recently invited to Lahore, Pakistan, by the leadership of the Ophthalmology Society of Pakistan. She discussed current variations of glaucoma filtration surgery, including the Ex-PRESS glaucoma filtration device, and the importance of 24-hour intraocular pressure monitoring in glaucoma. She also encouraged the young ophthalmologists to seek training opportunities in glaucoma overseas to enhance their skills in research and its translation into clinical practice.
Dr. Steve Charles Delivers Pakistan Lecture

As one of the world’s leading vitreoretinal surgeons, HEI Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology Steve Charles, MD, FACS has developed many of the techniques and devices used by all vitreoretinal surgeons. He is also a prolific public speaker who has delivered more than 1,000 lectures in more than 50 countries. On January 28, 2012, he added Pakistan to that list.

Invited by Rehman Siddiqui, MD, at the Shahzad Eye Hospital in Pakistan, Dr. Charles appeared at an event sponsored by Alcon and attended by a large audience of vitreoretinal surgeons and comprehensive ophthalmologists in Karachi, Pakistan – and he did it without ever having to pack a bag, board a plane or show a passport. Through the HEI Telemedicine Program, Dr. Charles was able to deliver his lectures from the HEI Freeman Auditorium over 8,000 miles away. His topics, “Updates in the Management of Diabetic Retinopathy,” and “25G Vitrectomy for Diabetic Traction Retinal Detachment,” generated a great deal of interest and led to a lively Q & A discussion following his presentations.

Drs. Charles and Siddiqui are now planning an even more ambitious undertaking for this summer: Dr. Charles will perform a live vitreoretinal microsurgery at the HEI Surgery Center while an audience in Pakistan observes. This extraordinary demonstration will provide an opportunity for ophthalmic surgeons in Pakistan to enhance their knowledge and proficiency in vitreoretinal surgery through first-hand observation and discussion with an internationally acclaimed leader in the field.
Dr. Walton Appointed to Endowed Professorship

Professor of Ophthalmology R. Christopher Walton, MD, MHA, has been named to the Baptist Memorial Health Care Clinical Professorship in Ophthalmology at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in the College of Medicine. Dr. Walton subspecializes in uveitis and ocular inflammatory diseases. He is a nationally and internationally recognized authority in ophthalmology. Dr. Walton is also known for his commitment to Graduate Medical Education and has been the recipient of multiple awards given by residents over the years.

“Dr. Walton’s extensive clinical skills as a physician and ophthalmic surgeon, broad academic experience as a clinician educator, and significant medical management training and experience have been invaluable to our department and UTHSC,” said Barrett G. Haik, MD, FACS, Hamilton Professor and chair of Ophthalmology. “Additionally, as director of Ophthalmology at the Memphis Veterans Administration, he has dramatically improved care for our nation’s veterans.

“His leadership in the Department of Ophthalmology was critical to developing the design of the UT Hamilton Eye Institute and its clinical, educational and public health initiatives,” Dr. Haik added. “The 930 Madison building that houses the Hamilton Eye Institute was a gift to UTHSC from Baptist Memorial Hospital in 2001. With the establishment of this professorship, the leadership of the Baptist Memorial Health Care Corporation has provided further support for the Hamilton Eye Institute’s mission to help patients with vision-threatening disorders, and we are deeply grateful.”

Dr. Walton was awarded a medallion for his appointment to this endowed professorship at the College of Medicine Deans’ Convocation, May 25, 2012, 8:30-10:30 a.m. at the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church, 70 North Bellevue Blvd., Memphis, Tenn.
Department Activities

Health Fair Glaucoma Screening

Last fall, the Hamilton Eye Institute participated in a health fair for 68 attorneys and staff members at Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs, a law firm in East Memphis. Melvin Litch, Jr., MD, HEI clinical professor of Ophthalmology, and Pam Rice, ophthalmic medical technician, were on hand to provide free glaucoma screenings. The event was organized by Steve Wilensky, UTMG director of Operations, and included representatives of several other medical specialties such as podiatry and chiropractic medicine. After the event, Shelia Webster, the firm’s office manager, reported that it was their most successful health fair ever.

Mid-South Lions Leaders Weekend

Saturday, April 14, 2012, the Mid-South Lions Leaders Weekend at the Hamilton Eye Institute was a roaring success. This annual event, organized by Mid-South Lions CEO, Brad Baker, is open to anyone who wants to learn about the Mid-South Lions Sight and Hearing Service.

The day began with stimulating lectures about the latest developments in eye-care technology by Drs. Edward Chaum and Margaret E. Phillips. Next, attendees were treated to an exciting demonstration of the HEI’s new 3-D surgical video system. Finally, volunteer members of our faculty and staff, Ed Richter and Drs. Kanner, Iannaccone, Mills, Calderwood and Swaminathan, led more than 100 Lion visitors through our specialty clinics, research floor, and surgery and skills-transfer centers. We enjoyed the opportunity to exhibit the Hamilton Eye Institute’s facilities and programs for the Mid-South Lions leadership, members and supporters. We treasure our collaboration with the Lions in our shared mission to fight blindness.
The Knights Templar Eye Foundation has awarded HEI postdoctoral researcher Mallika Palamoor, PhD, $40,000 for her study, “Glycan Therapy: An Alternative to Gene Therapy to Treat LCA.” The study’s objective is to create a system for delivering a proposed drug through the eye to test it for treatment of certain types of Leber congenital amaurosis (LCA), a condition caused by certain gene mutations resulting in severe visual impairment in children from birth. Although the drug can be injected directly into the eye, potential complications may arise from repeated dosing, requiring another method for sustained release.

There is currently no treatment for children with this form of LCA, which occurs in approximately 1 in 80,000 births. Dr. Palamoor’s mentor, Monica Jablonski, PhD, professor in the Departments of Ophthalmology, and Anatomy and Neurobiology, stated, “Dr. Palamoor’s study to develop a new drug is very exciting and novel work that has the potential to move forward the entire field of ocular drug delivery.”

The Knights Templar Eye Foundation is a nonprofit that provides funding for vision research and for the surgical treatment and hospitalization of those who suffer from diseases or injury to the eyes. Since its inception, the foundation has spent more than $95 million to help provide medical treatment for those unable to afford it.

Congratulations to Anton Reiner, PhD, HEI joint faculty member, who has received a four year, $1.4 million grant for his research, “Neural Control of Choroidal Blood Flow.”
Tonia Rex, PhD, assistant professor in the Departments of Ophthalmology, and Anatomy and Neurobiology, has received a major grant from the National Eye Institute at the National Institutes of Health. The award will provide her study, “Novel Therapy and Mechanisms in Glaucoma,” with funding for five years as she researches a treatment for glaucoma using systemic neuroprotective gene therapy. Her co-investigators on the study are Monica Jablonski, PhD, and Eldon Geisert, Jr., PhD, both professors in the Departments of Ophthalmology, and Anatomy and Neurobiology.

Glaucoma is the second-leading cause of blindness in the world; more than 2.2 million Americans have glaucoma, but only about half of them know they have it. Current therapies are directed at lowering pressure inside the eye but can be less effective in cases of poor patient compliance. Dr. Rex and her team are working with an alternative neuroprotective therapy: a modified form of erythropoietin (EPO), a hormone that increases production of red blood cells and protects nerve cells from damage. They have modified the hormone to diminish its effect on blood cells, preserve its neuroprotective activity, and provide sustained, systemic delivery.

“I am grateful to have received this grant in this competitive environment,” Dr. Rex states. “I am excited about performing this translational research geared toward providing important insights into the pathogenesis of glaucoma and the development of much-needed treatments for this blinding disease.”
February 24-26, 2012, UT ophthalmology residents and faculty participated in the Hamilton Eye Institute’s Annual Basic and Clinical Science Review Course. This free program is organized by the second-year ophthalmology residents and offered to all residents and fellows in training. The course provides a series of didactic lectures by subspecialty experts in the field based on the core material from the Basic and Clinical Science Series published by the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO). This year’s topics included cornea and external disease, glaucoma, neuro-ophthalmology, ocular pathology and ophthalmic tumors, optics, orbit and oculoplastics, pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus, retina and vitreous, and uveitis.

Lecturers at the event included members of our own faculty as well as several guests: Roger Deshaies, MD, a private practice ophthalmologist in Memphis, Tenn.; David J. Harris, Jr., MD, FACS, with University Eye Surgeons, Knoxville, Tenn.; Ming Wang, MD, PhD, director of the Wang Vision Institute, Nashville, Tenn.; and Kenneth W. Wright, MD, director of the Wright Center for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, Costa Mesa, Calif. We are deeply grateful to our guest lecturers, faculty and residents for their participation, and to Alcon, Inc., for their support of this educational event.

HEI congratulates Christian Brothers University students, Scott Parker, Claire May and Rachel Reese, who recently presented scientific posters co-authored by HEI faculty Monica M. Jablonski, PhD, and Tonia S. Rex, PhD, at the Tennessee Academy of Sciences. Parker and May were awarded fellowships.
When Rick Clifford came to the Hamilton Eye Institute, he signed in at the reception desk, and then began to feel faint. “Next thing I know, I’m waking up in the emergency room after surgery. They told me I had a brain aneurysm,” he recalls. “The kind folks at the Hamilton Eye Institute actually saved my life.”

Clifford had been suffering severe headaches for three weeks. “I had gone to several other doctors trying to isolate what my issue was,” he recounts. When his right eyelid began to droop, he made an appointment with HEI oculoplastics specialist, James C. Fleming, MD, FACS. As it turns out, a weakened blood vessel in Clifford’s brain was swollen and ready to burst. That vessel had been irritating an adjacent nerve, which was causing his symptoms. It finally ruptured while he was signing in for his first appointment to see Dr. Fleming, and he began to have a seizure.

Several physicians were at his side in seconds. “We diagnosed his aneurysm as it was evolving,” recalls Dr. Fleming. They recognized Clifford’s drooping eyelid as a symptom of third-nerve palsy, which told them exactly where the intracranial bleeding was located.

Daniel K. Bennett, MD, third-year ophthalmology resident, was also there. He recalls, “We made sure his vitals were stable and called EMS immediately. I had a friend in neurosurgery at Methodist University Hospital at that time, so I immediately called and alerted the neurosurgery team so they were ready for him when he came through the door.” Dr. Bennett emphasizes that time is critical in this type of event. “Without emergent intervention, many patients will experience significant, permanent neurological impairment, assuming the event doesn’t prove fatal.”

“I feel very blessed,” Clifford says. “The expediency and professionalism of the folks at HEI saved my life. I’m indebted to them for what they’ve done for me.” And the story doesn’t end there. “When I got back to the institute for a follow-up checkup, the staff recognized me. They were warm and welcoming, and took a personal interest in my case. Each and every time, they’ve been extremely courteous and helpful.

“My hat’s off to the staff there for all they’ve done for me,” Clifford says. “I’m sure they take the same care with all their other patients. I personally recommend the Hamilton Eye Institute clinic to anyone.”
Faculty Listing

Academic & Research Faculty

Barrett G. Haik, MD, FACS
Ophthalmic Oncology, Orbital Disease, & Oculoplastics
Hamilton Professor & Chair, Department of Ophthalmology
Director, Hamilton Eye Institute

James C. Fleming, MD, FACS
Orbital Disease & Oculoplastics
Philip M. Lewis Professor of Ophthalmology
Vice-Chair, Department of Ophthalmology

Ralph S. Hamilton, MD
Comprehensive Ophthalmology
Professor of Ophthalmology

Richard D. Drewry, Jr., MD, FACS
Neuro-Ophthalmology
Professor Emeritus

Roger L. Hiatt, MD
Pediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus
Professor Emeritus

Edward Chaum, MD, PhD
Vitreoretinal Diseases
Plough Foundation Professor of Retinal Diseases

Eldon E. Geisert, PhD
Ophthalmic Research
Professor of Ophthalmology
Professor of Anatomy & Neurobiology
Director, Center for Vision Research

Dianna A. Johnson, PhD
Ophthalmic Research
Professor of Ophthalmology
Professor of Anatomy & Neurobiology

Natalie C. Kerr, MD, FACS
Strabismus, Developmental Ophthalmology & Pediatric Cataracts
Hiatt Professor of Ophthalmology
Director, Residency Program

R. Christopher Walton, MD, MHA
Uveitis & Ocular Inflammatory Diseases
Professor of Ophthalmology
Continuing Medical Education

Matthew W. Wilson, MD, FACS
Ophthalmic Oncology, Orbital Disease, Oculoplastic Surgery & Ophthalmic Pathology
St. Jude Chair of Pediatric Ophthalmology
Professor of Ophthalmology

Alessandro Iannaccone, MD, MS
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Monica M. Jablonski, PhD
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Professor of Ophthalmology
Professor of Anatomy & Neurobiology

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Director, Special Projects

Eliott L. Kanner, MD, PhD
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Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology

Thomas O’Donnell, MD
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Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology
Director, Low Vision Services

Andreea E. Partal, MD
Cornea, External Disease & Refractive Surgery
Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology

Tonia S. Rex, PhD
Ophthalmic Research
Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology
Assistant Professor of Anatomy & Neurobiology

John M. Freeman, MD
Cornea & External Disease, Comprehensive Ophthalmology
Instructor of Ophthalmology
Clinical & Affiliated Faculty

Professors:
Steven Charles, MD
Jerre M. Freeman, MD
Thomas C. Gettelfinger, MD
Ivan Marais, MD
Spencer Thornton, MD
Audrey W. Tuberville, MD
Ralph Wesley, MD
Thomas O. Wood, MD

Associate Professors:
Howard L. Beale, MD
Brian S. Biesman, MD
Ernesto A. Calvo L., MD
Michael A. Dyer, PhD
Fletcher Goode, MD
Andrew Lawton, MD
Peter A.D. Rubin, MD, FACS
Richard E. Sievers, MD
Ming Wang, MD, PhD

Assistant Professors:
Kathryn W. Byrd, MD
Jorge I. Calzada, MD
Thomas A. Currey, MD
Roger L. Deshaies, MD
James Freeman, MD
Lawrence W. Gordon, MD
Henry T. Grizzard, MD
Ralph F. Hamilton, MD
James C. Hart, MD, MPH
J. Charles Henry, MD
Faramarz (Fred) Hidaji, MD
Tawan (Sunny) Khamapirad, MD
Sidney Kriger, MD
Melvin Litch, MD
Gary Passons, MD
William Bradford Priester, MD
Alan R. Schaeffer, MD
Jesse M. Wesberry, MD

Instructors
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David F. Jones, MD
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Margaret E. Phillips, MD
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John D. Hyatt, MD
Second-Year Vitreoretinal Surgery
John C. Randolph, MD
Vitreoretinal Surgery

International Research Fellows
Aladdin Rashwani, MD
Pediatric Ophthalmology & Oncology
Chainarong Luengchaichawang, MD
Glaucoma

Ophthalmology Residents
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Daniel K. Bennett, MD
Brian T. Fowler, MD
Brian M. Jerkins, MD
Alinda Guynes McGowin, MD

Second Year:
Lauren C. Ditta, MD
Lauren L. Harris, MD
Katie A. Mills, MD
Brian C. Tse, MD

First Year:
Julie K. Calderwood, MD
Stephen Huddleston, MD
Mark Kosko, MD
Justin Wilkin, MD

Joint-Appointed Faculty
Michael A. Dyer, PhD
Erno Lindner, PhD, DSc
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Events Calendar

HEI GRAND ROUNDS WORLDWIDE WEBCAST
First, Second and Third Friday of the month, 1 p.m. central time
Visit www.eye.uthsc.edu/mediasite for more information.

MEMPHIS EYE SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETINGS
Second Wednesday of every other month at 6:30 p.m.
For latest meeting date and location, contact Lori Jennings at (901) 683-4600.

April 26
The 11th Sir Harold Ridley Distinguished Visiting Professorship
featuring Steve Charles, MD, FACS, Founding Director, Charles Retina Institute, Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology, Hamilton Eye Institute, UT Health Science Center, Memphis, Tenn.

May 19
Annual Meeting of the Memphis Eye Society and Tennessee Academy of Ophthalmology

June 1
Annual Ophthalmology Alumni/Residents’ Day
featuring the 22nd Kambara Distinguished Visiting Professor,
Elias I. Traboulsi, MD, Vice Chair for Education, Professor of Ophthalmology and Head of the Department of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, Cole Eye Institute, Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio

September 13
15th Annual Williford Distinguished Visiting Professorship
featuring M. Bruce Shields, MD, Professor Emeritus of Ophthalmology and Visual Science and Chairman Emeritus, Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, Conn.

October 20
Memphis VisionWalk
Overton Park, 2080 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, Tenn.
Registration: 9:00 a.m., Walk Start: 10:00 a.m.

Congratulations to the following HEI faculty

Alinda Guynes McGowin, MD, third-year ophthalmology resident, on the birth of her son, Beeland, born November 13