DEPARTMENT MILESTONES

Looking Back on 145 Years of Ophthalmology

This year, the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Pennsylvania celebrated the 145th Anniversary of its founding in 1874. This milestone is the culmination of countless advancements and successes, many of which are commemorated below. Founded in 1972, the Scheie Eye Institute is proud to house such an accomplished Department of Ophthalmology, one which stands today as one of the best in the nation. In this inspiring age of discovery and progress, the Department is fully dedicated to furthering its commitment to exceptional clinical care, groundbreaking research, and the highest quality teaching.

1751 // Benjamin
Franklin's idea for a
Pennsylvania Academy
becomes a reality. For
the first five years of the
Academy, Franklin serves
as its President. The
Pennsylvania Academy
becomes the University of
Pennsylvania in 1791.



1851 // Hermann von Helmholtz invents the ophthalmoscope.



1874 // HUP opens and the Department of Ophthalmology is founded. William F. Norris, MD, is appointed the first Professor of Ophthalmology.



1901 // More than 200 surgical procedures are performed in the eye clinic, which is more than any other department at the University Hospital.

1700s 1800s

1784 // Benjamin Franklin invents Bifocal Glasses.



1871 // Construction begins for the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP), the first university owned and operated hospital in the United States built expressly for the purpose of teaching.

1900s

1874-1897 // The Agnew Wing of the University Hospital, which provides eye wards for men and women, is constructed. Dr. Norris recruits distinguished faculty, begins the study of ocular pathology, and establishes a laboratory.



1902-1924 // An operating room for eye surgery is created, while the eye dispensary and ophthalmic pathology laboratory are renovated and enlarged. Dr. de Schweinitz founds the American Board of Ophthalmology. The Graduate School of Medicine is organized, which includes a program offering specialized training in ophthalmology.



1924-1936 // A slit lamp microscope is installed in the eye dispensary and a laboratory of perimetry is established for visual field testing. Dr. Holloway advocates for greater endowment of ophthalmology departments. 1960 // Harold G. Scheie, MD, becomes the fifth Chairman of Ophthalmology. Dr. Scheie creates an elective five-year training program that includes two research years, pioneers glaucoma research and treatments, and develops affiliations with new Veterans Administration Hospital and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.





Dr. Scheie's Instruments

1936 // The de Schweinitz Lecture and Dinner is founded as a memorial to Dr. de Schweinitz, becoming an annual tradition.



1902 // George E. de Schweinitz, MD, becomes the second Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology.





1924 // Thomas B. Holloway, MD, becomes the third Chairman of Ophthalmology.



1936 // Francis Heed Adler, MD, becomes the fourth Chairman of Ophthalmology. He later is named the first William F. Norris and George E. de Schweinitz Professor of Ophthalmology.

1936-1960 // The first residency program at Penn is established, with Harold Scheie as the first ophthalmology resident. Dr. Adler increases emphasis on basic science research and redevelops a pathology lab.

1953 // The Veterans Administration Hospital of Philadelphia opens.

1979 // The American Academy of Ophthalmology is established.



1968 // The National Eye Institute is established by President Lyndon Johnson.



1975 // The Penn Vision Research Center is established.

1991 // Stuart Fine, MD, becomes the seventh Chairman of Ophthalmology. Dr. Fine expands the faculty threefold, increases the number of endowed chairs from three to eight, and sees considerable growth in the clinical practice and educational programs.



1900s





1972 // The Scheie Eye Institute is founded by Dr. Scheie at the Presbyterian Medical Center in Philadelphia.



1978 // Myron Yanoff, MD, becomes the sixth Chairman of Ophthalmology. Dr. Yanoff establishes retina, cornea, and glaucoma services. Dr. Jim Katowitz establishes a plastic surgery service.



1994 // Dr. Maureen Maguire establishes the Center for Preventive Ophthalmology and Biostatistics (CPOB). The F.M. Kirby Center for Molecular Ophthalmology is established with a generous gift from the F.M. Kirby Foundation.



2014 // Extensive renovations of the Scheie Eye Institute are completed.



2010 // Joan M. O'Brien, MD, becomes the eighth Chairman of Ophthalmology and first female Chair. She expands the number of subspecialities to 17, begins a successful scribe program, and conducts groundbreaking research on the genetics of glaucoma in African Americans.



2017 // The first gene therapy for an inherited eye condition, developed by Drs. Jean Bennett, Albert Maguire, and colleagues at Scheie, is approved by the Federal Drug Administration. For this achievement, Drs. Jean Bennett, Samuel Jacobson, and Albert Maguire are awarded the \$1M Euro Champalimaud Vision Award.

2000s



2013 // A formal, reciprocal agreement is reached with the Aravind Eye Hospital in Southern India. Scheie residents may visit Aravind during their elective time in the third year for four weeks.



2018 // The Founder's Professorship in Retinal and Vitreous Diseases in Ophthalmology is renamed the Alexander J. Brucker Professorship in Retinal and Vitreous Diseases in Ophthalmology, in honor of Dr. Brucker and his 40 years of service to Scheie.



2014 // UPenn announces the creation of the Penn Center for Advanced Retinal and Ocular Therapeutics (CAROT) with Drs. Jean Bennett and Al Maguire as Co-Directors.