

Line of Sight

UK UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
Department of Ophthalmology

Letter from the Chair

Welcome to the first issue of *Line of Sight* – a newsletter devoted to timely and topical news regarding University of Kentucky College of Medicine Department of Ophthalmology. As the new Chair, I want to share with our patients and friends some of the exciting new treatments and research that are bringing our department into the forefront of health care.

The faculty and staff of the Department of Ophthalmology are challenged today as never before. We seize every opportunity to apply the results of leading-edge research toward improving and advancing the visual health of all Kentuckians. To meet these challenges, we seek grants, contracts, and limited public funds to provide basic support for our department.

We also need your support, and the help of private donors, such as Violet Eads and others that you will read about inside, to become an international leader in ophthalmic research, education and patient care. In this new millen-

nium, and in my first year as department chair, I ask all our patients and friends to stay in touch as we search for creative ways to meet the challenges that face our talented faculty and staff.



P. Andrew Pearson, M.D.
Chair and Associate Professor
Vitreoretinal Surgery
Department of Ophthalmology

Innovative Treatments Provided Daily at UK Ophthalmology

UK Department of Ophthalmology is comprised of highly skilled, accomplished faculty committed to clinical and research efforts for the preservation of sight. The department is at the forefront of research in the field, with a focus on practical application.

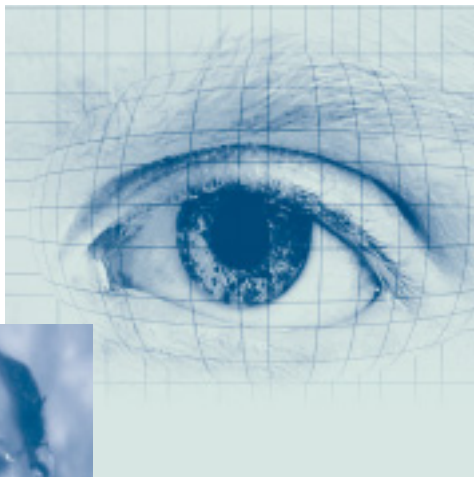
One such researcher is **Andrew Pearson, M.D.**, associate professor of ophthalmology and chair of the department. Pearson's research has led to patented technology, including a sustained-release device known as Vitrasert, marketed by Bausch & Lomb®, which is used to treat an eye condition resulting from human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). This device is implanted in the eye and releases a prescribed drug to the affected area over a period of time. Dr. Pearson also is a lead researcher evaluating similar implants for diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration.

Another dynamic researcher in the department is **Jayakrishna Ambati, M.D.**, assistant professor of ophthalmology. Ambati, a specialist in diseases of the retina and vitreous, is active in research and teaching endeavors, as well as in clinical and surgical practice. His laboratory is exploring ocular angiogenesis, the growth of blood vessels in the eye. Ambati's laboratory research has led to discoveries regarding the mechanisms underlying age-related macular degeneration – the leading cause of blindness among the elderly in the United

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States. In particular, the discovery that leukocytes (white blood cells) play a pivotal role in this process is expected to result in the development of novel therapies for this blinding condition.



Jayakrishna Ambati, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology

The Department of Ophthalmology pursues an active research enterprise, and offers equally impressive clinical and surgical services. Available services for ocular diseases and eye disorders include ophthalmic consultations, computerized ophthalmic diagnostic imaging, computerized visual field testing, diagnostic electrophysiology testing, ultrasonography, photography, and fluorescein angiography. Subspecialties include retinal and vitreous problems, comprehensive ophthalmology, corneal and external disease, glaucoma, pediatric ophthalmology, and neuro-ophthalmology. The department also offers ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery, as well as ophthalmic pathology services.

UK First in Kentucky to Use Laser Acne Treatment

The faculty and staff of UK Department of Ophthalmology are the first in Kentucky to offer a promising new treatment for acne. As part of the **Comprehensive Face and Eye Care** program, the department has begun treating patients with a smooth-beam laser, which has just been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of acne.

The smooth-beam laser works by pulsating heat below the skin's surface to reduce the size of the sebaceous glands, which are largely responsible for acne. Patients use a cream to slightly numb the affected area before the laser is applied. The treatment takes a few minutes and causes only slight discomfort.

During the initial study, 17 patients with stubborn back acne were treated and followed for six months. The results were impressive — there was a 98 percent reduction in acne lesions.

To learn more about smooth-laser treatment, call the Department of Ophthalmology at **(859) 323-5875**.

Meet the Staff

Carolyn Young's cheerful face greets patients in the University of Kentucky Refractive Surgery Center on Harrodsburg Road, as well as in Kentucky Clinic on Rose Street. Young is the coordinator for the UK Refractive Surgery program and assistant to **John Conklin, M.D.**, director of UK Refractive Surgery Service and associate professor of Ophthalmology.



Carolyn Young

“I love my job,” Young said. “This type of surgery is life-changing and exciting. The improvement to our patients’ vision can be very dramatic.” Young sees the patients from their first evaluation to their LASIK procedure, and gets to know many patients well before they are discharged and seen on an annual basis for a routine eye exam. “We always accommodate our patients’ needs and help them get to the next step,” she said.

Young’s 14 years with a great attitude and competency have not gone unnoticed by her peers and employers. In addition to winning the Chairman’s Award this past year for “Service Beyond the Call of Duty,” she has been awarded the Chancellor’s “Extra Mile Award” twice. Young lives in Lexington, and has one son, who is 12 years old. Her goal for the future is to continue to make the UK LASIK program flourish.

The Violet Irene Eads Lions Eye Bank Endowment Fund

Violet Irene Eads, who passed away at the age of 90 in May 1999, included UK Department of Ophthalmology’s **Lions Eye Bank** in her will. The Lexington Lions Club partnered with Ead’s bequest and the Commonwealth of Kentucky Research Challenge Trust Fund to establish the **Violet Irene Eads Research Fund for Eye Tissue** in the Lions Eye Bank of Lexington, an endowment to support eye tissue research.

Eads was a community volunteer who had a special concern for vision and hearing impairments. She included the UK Lions Eye Bank in her will because of these concerns and because she had an association with the Lexington Lions Club to which she often donated used eyeglasses for the club’s vision programs.



Violet and Earl Eads

Affiliated with the UK Department of Ophthalmology, the Lions Eye Bank supports cornea tissue research and provides corneas for transplantation programs across the nation and around the world. For more information on this fund, please contact Susannah Denomme in the UK College of Medicine Development Office at **(859) 323-5184**.

Mark L. Gross Memorial Fund

Mark Lee Gross, M.D., 41, died this past September after a short illness. Gross was a 1993 graduate of University of Kentucky College of Medicine and a former resident in the UK Department of Ophthalmology.

Gross’ family and friends have established a wonderful and permanent way to honor his memory in their creation of the **Mark. L. Gross Fund**. This fund will provide much-needed support to UK Department of Ophthalmology residency program, in addition to providing a boost to the research and education programs. It is often difficult to find funding for residents to help pay expenses for attending professional conferences and conducting research. These gifts will help establish a permanent source of support for these activities. For more information on this fund, please contact Susannah Denomme in the UK College of Medicine Development office at **(859) 323-5184**.

University of Kentucky
Department of Ophthalmology
Kentucky Clinic, E-315
740 S. Limestone
Lexington, KY 40536-0284

Triathlon to Benefit UK Eye Research

The first inaugural "Tri for Sight" will be held in Lexington on and near the University of Kentucky campus on Sept. 21, 2003.

The triathlon will include an 800-meter pool swim in UK's Lancaster Aquatic Center, a 20-mile bicycle ride through beautiful Lexington and central Kentucky, and a 4-mile run.

Proceeds from the event will benefit eye research at UK. Amateurs, as well as serious triathletes are welcome. For more information, e-mail tri4sig@uky.edu.



UK UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
Department of Ophthalmology

How to reach us

Appointment
(859) 323-5867

LASIK
(859) 257-2020

Donation
(859) 323-5184

Web site
www.mc.uky.edu/eye/general.asp