

# AN EYE TO THE FUTURE



The Department of Ophthalmology  
and Vision Science  
The University of Arizona  
Health Sciences Center  
Spring 2006

## 2006: A Year of Change, A Future of Growth New Faculty, New Clinic, More Research Awards

The UA Department of Ophthalmology and Vision Science experienced unprecedented expansion in 2005, nearly doubling the number of clinical faculty with the addition of four members, and adding a clinic at the University Physicians Healthcare (UPH) Hospital at Kino Campus to provide vision care for adults and children on Tucson's southwest side.

In addition, research awards have increased significantly over the last five years, totaling more than \$3 million per year for the last two years (see *Research Report*, page 3).

### *New Clinical Faculty*

Four ophthalmologists have joined the clinical faculty, providing expertise in glaucoma, neuro-ophthalmology (eye disorders that accompany diseases of the brain and nervous system), pediatric ophthalmology, strabismus (misalignment of the eyes), and diseases of the cornea. They are:

**Lydia R. Bañuelos, MD**, a specialist in pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus;

**Luca O. Brigatti, MD**, a glaucoma specialist;

**Tomas D. Tredici, MD**, a specialist in pediatric and neuro-ophthalmology;

**Roxana Ursea, MD**, a cornea, refractive surgery and uveitis specialist.

(For more information about our new clinical faculty members, see page 6.)



▲ From left to right: Drs. Roxana Ursea, Luca O. Brigatti, Lydia R. Bañuelos and Tomas D. Tredici

### *Vision Care at Two Clinics*

The most advanced adult and pediatric eye care now is available at two convenient locations in Tucson:

The **UPH Eye Care Center at UPH Hospital at Kino Campus**, 2800 E. Ajo Way, Tucson, is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Vision care for adults — including visual examinations and diagnosis and treatment of glaucoma, cataracts, ptosis (drooping of the upper eyelid), eyelid trauma, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration and other eye conditions — is provided by:

Luca O. Brigatti, MD\*

Lansing E. Brown, MD

John C. Nichols, MD

Robert I. Park, MD

Lynn Polonski, MD

J. Daniel Twelker, OD, PhD\*\*

Roxana Ursea, MD\*\*\*

Children's vision care is provided by:

Lydia R. Bañuelos, MD

Joseph M. Miller, MD, MPH

Tomas D. Tredici, MD

(\* also speaks Spanish and Italian)

\*\*also speaks Spanish)

\*\*\*also speaks French and Romanian)

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# Adieu, AMEU!

After 30 years of providing medical eye exams in underserved rural areas throughout Arizona, the Arizona Medical Eye Unit (AMEU) – a mobile eye-care facility – has found a new home under the sponsorship of the Lions Vision Center of Peoria, a non-profit organization committed to the philosophy that all individuals are entitled to quality eye care regardless of opportunity and income.

Until September 2005, the AMEU was administered by the UA Department of Ophthalmology and Vision Science, in collaboration with the Arizona Ophthalmological Society and the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs of Arizona.

“Changes in the manner in which the UA College of

Medicine provides clinical services have occurred since the founding of the AMEU, and this necessitated the transfer of ownership,” explains Joseph Miller, MD, MPH, ophthalmology department chairman. “We are pleased that the AMEU will continue to serve the residents of Arizona and provide rural access to ophthalmologic care under the sponsorship of the Lions Vision Center and the Arizona Ophthalmological Society.”

“We are delighted we have been given the opportunity to expand the eye services of our Lions organization, and to be able to help so many people who otherwise have difficulty getting proper eye care,” says Dave Roberts, president of the Lions Vision Center board of directors.



▲ The Arizona Medical Eye Unit (AMEU) – shown here in front of University Medical Center – now is under the sponsorship of the Lions Vision Center of Peoria.

The AMEU’s first screening under Lions Vision Center sponsorship was held Sept. 23, 2005 in Ajo. “We’ve been averaging seven to nine screenings a month since then,” says Jeannette Russell, executive director of the Lions Vision Center. “We’ve been extremely busy and very pleased about it.”

Under the new sponsorship, the AMEU has traveled to many locations, including Ajo (three times), Nogales, Sells and Why, as well as to four reservations, according to Ms. Russell. In addition, the AMEU provided glaucoma screenings for Arizona legislators in Phoenix this year on Jan. 24 as part of Glaucoma Awareness Month activities.

Donated to the UA ophthalmology department in 1976 by the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs, the AMEU is a fifth-wheel trailer containing two eye examination stations. The

unit is towed by a Ford F-350 truck donated by Canyon Ranch Health Resorts. Ophthalmologists from the Arizona Ophthalmological Society serve as volunteer staff, providing medical eye exams, including screenings for visual acuity and eye diseases such as glaucoma, cataracts and diabetic retinopathy.

The AMEU will be based in Peoria at the Lions Vision Center and will continue to operate under the direction of Gregory King (who recently retired as program coordinator with the UA ophthalmology and vision science department), with staffing by Arizona Ophthalmological Society volunteers. The AMEU also will remain under the sponsorship of the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs.

For information about upcoming screenings, contact the Lions Vision Center, (602) 267-7573.

## Department Advisory Board

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Sandy Shiff\*

### Board Members

Teri Barnett	Donald Miles, MD
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\*Lions Club representatives

## From the Director

2005 brought unparalleled growth to our department with the addition of four new clinical faculty: Lydia Bañuelos, MD; Luca Brigatti, MD; Tomas Tredici, MD; and Roxana Ursea, MD. These new faculty members improve our ability to serve the public's need for quality eye care in the areas of pediatric ophthalmology (Drs. Bañuelos and Tredici); glaucoma (Dr. Brigatti); neuro-ophthalmology (Dr. Tredici); and anterior segment eye disease, including refractive surgery and uveitis (Dr. Ursea).

Our clinical growth is possible because of the commitment to develop the University Physicians Healthcare (UPH) Hospital at Kino Campus. These outstanding new faculty members provide an opportunity for future growth, as well as improved patient care and teaching faculty for the present.

Please contact me if I can help you obtain services with any of our staff. We appreciate the interest and support you have shown in aiding us in our fight against blindness and hope that if we can provide care to you or a loved one, you will contact us.



▲ *Joseph M. Miller, MD, MPH*

*Joseph M. Miller, MD, MPH*  
*Head, Ophthalmology and Vision Science*

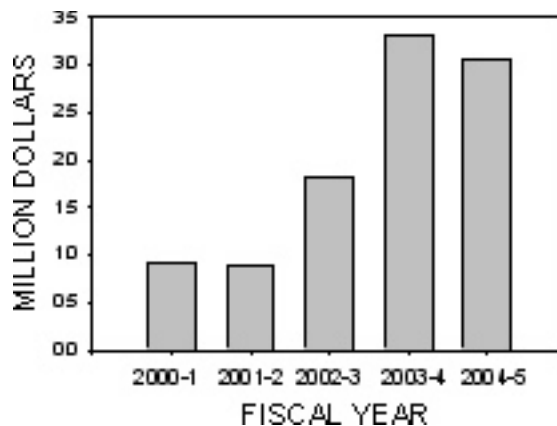
## Research Report: *Approaching the Top 25 Nationally*

Our department has experienced a significant increase in total research awards over the past five years, stabilizing at more than \$3 million per year for the past two years (see figure below).

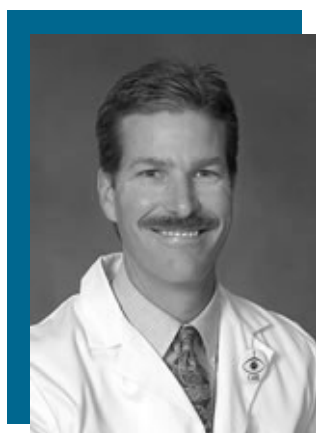
In comparison to other departments of ophthalmology in the U.S., our department ranked 27th, with \$2.2 million in federal grants in 2004 (the most recent year available).

In addition, two key competitive renewals were awarded during the past year. The first was a \$1.9 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for five years to Alan Marmorstein, PhD, to continue his work on Best's macular dystrophy, a familial form of macular degeneration. The second was a \$3.5 million grant from the National Eye Institute of the NIH for five years to Erin Harvey, PhD, to continue her studies on the development and treatment of astigmatism (a condition in which the shape of the cornea prevents clear vision at any distance) in children.

In addition, much of the department's growth is due to continued support by Research to Prevent Blindness (RPB), the leading non-government supporter of eye research directed at the prevention, treatment or eradication of all diseases that threaten vision. RPB provides a yearly stipend to the department as well as three career development awards (to Jim Schwiegerling, PhD, Lihua Marmorstein, PhD, and Erin Harvey, PhD) and a Walt and Lilly Disney Special Scholars Award For Amblyopia Research (to Joseph Miller, MD, MPH).



*W. Daniel Stamer, PhD*  
*Associate Head for Vision Science*  
*Associate Professor, Ophthalmology and Vision Science*



▲ *W. Daniel Stamer, PhD*

# Nights to Remember

The Department of Ophthalmology and Vision Science has established an annual recognition dinner to commend the sight-preservation efforts of exceptional benefactors. Established in 2004 as the “Night for Sight,” the highlight of the evening is to recognize the efforts of an individual with the presentation of the “Dr. Robert W. Snyder Visionary Award.”



▲ Cele Peterson was honored at the “Dr. Robert W. Snyder Annual Award Dinner” and was among those who attended the first “Night for Sight.”

## Cele Peterson Honored

The 2005 recipient of the Snyder Visionary Award is Tucson’s own Cele Peterson. Cele, a well-known Tucson businesswoman and community leader, is a long-time supporter of the department’s research into the causes and treatment of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), which robbed her sight but not her spirit of giving.

The event also featured an update on the department’s AMD research by faculty members Joseph Miller, MD, MPH, head of ophthalmology and vision science, and Alan Marmorstein, PhD, associate professor of ophthalmology and vision science and optical sciences.

AMD is a progressive and usually painless eye disease that affects the macula, the small spot of light-sensing cells in the retina at the back of the eye, causing varying degrees of loss of central vision.

It is one of the leading causes of vision impairment in the United States, currently affecting more than 1.75 million people over age 65, according to the National Institutes of Health’s National Eye Institute. As the population ages, the number is expected to increase to nearly 3 million by 2020, according to

a study published in *Archives of Ophthalmology* in 2004.

People with AMD experience a loss of central vision and are unable to read, drive, recognize faces or colors, or perform tasks that require the ability to see detail.

The need to prevent and cure this blinding eye disease is great. The Southwest Age-Related Macular Degeneration Research Program was established in 2000 by the department. Dedicated to retinal disease, specifically the elimination of AMD, the program’s goals include developing better surgical and nonsurgical treatments for AMD, understanding the molecular and cellular mechanisms of AMD, and bringing new ideas into AMD research through collaborations with UA colleagues.



▲ AMD researcher Alan Marmorstein, PhD, and Cele. A cell biologist, Dr. Marmorstein is investigating the causes of age-related and inherited forms of macular degeneration, medications for treatment and prevention, and diagnostic and imaging techniques, including the development of a non-invasive imaging device for diagnosing AMD.



▲ AMD researcher Brian McKay, PhD, and Cele. Dr. McKay, a specialist in retinal cell biology, is developing a new method for growing RPE (retinal pigment epithelial) cells for use in cell-based therapies for AMD and other blinding diseases of the retina.



▲ Dr. Snyder presents Cele with the first “Dr. Robert W. Snyder Visionary Award.”

## Robert Snyder, MD, PhD, Recognized

The “Night for Sight” was initiated on Nov. 10, 2004, and featured special recognition of Robert Snyder, MD, PhD, former ophthalmology department chairman.

Sponsored by the Tucson Breakfast Lions, the event was attended by several prestigious community leaders, donors and other honored guests, including Henry Koffler, PhD, former UA president, and his wife, Phyllis; James Dalen, MD, former UA College of Medicine dean, and his wife, Priscilla; and Merlin K. “Monte” DuVal, MD, UA College of Medicine founding dean, and his wife, Ruth.

The evening began with a welcome from special guest Keith Joiner, MD, MPH, dean, UA College of Medicine. Harold Cross, MD, PhD, founding head of the UA ophthalmology department, gave an impressive historical overview of the department. A summary of the department’s current status and increasing growth was presented by W. Daniel Stamer, PhD, associate head of vision science.

Dr. Snyder delivered a memorable keynote address that took the audience through his remarkable 16 years with the department. Dr. Snyder then introduced and welcomed Joseph Miller, MD, MPH, new department chairman, who shared his exciting plans for the department’s future.

The department thanks all who attended these events — your presence and generous support made the evenings especially memorable.



▲ Left to right: Dr. Miller; Dr. Dalen; Lisa Fabey, executive director of development, Arizona Health Sciences Center, and her husband, Greg Fabey, associate vice president, government relations, University of Arizona; Priscilla Dalen; and Dr. and Mrs. Anthony Gleckler.



▲ Left to right: Dr. Snyder; Dr. and Mrs. Dalen; and Dr. Snyder's wife, Lynn.



▲ Left to right: Drs. Snyder, Joiner and Miller.

## New Development Liaison

Sharon Carrizosa, administrative assistant for the ophthalmology and vision science department’s research administration, has assumed the responsibility of liaison with the Development Office of the Arizona Health Sciences Center. Sharon is responsible for maintaining contact information for all who are interested in supporting the department in its fight against blinding eye disease. Sharon can be reached at (520) 626-0716, or by e-mail, [scarrizosa@eyes.arizona.edu](mailto:scarrizosa@eyes.arizona.edu).

### How You Can Support Vision Research and Eye Care

Every donation — including planned giving, major gifts, restricted and unrestricted gifts — is utilized by the Department of Ophthalmology and Vision Science to support research aimed at the prevention and cure of blinding eye diseases, such as age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma, and to provide the best possible eye care for all patients whose vision is threatened by eye disease or injury.

For information about how you can become a member of the visionary team who support the department’s groundbreaking research and comprehensive vision care, contact Sharon Carrizosa, development liaison, at (520) 626-0716, or e-mail, [scarrizosa@eyes.arizona.edu](mailto:scarrizosa@eyes.arizona.edu). Or use the self-addressed return envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

We are deeply grateful for all of you who help make our progress possible. With your continuing support, we can overcome blinding eye diseases and preserve healthy eyesight.



## New Clinical Faculty



**Lydia R. Bañuelos, MD**

Dr. Bañuelos, a specialist in pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus, has joined the department as clinical instructor and director of the department's

pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus service.

She received her medical degree from Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston, in 1996. She completed an internship in internal medicine at Caritas St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, Boston, in 1997; a residency in ophthalmology at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, Los Angeles, in 2000; and a fellowship in pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine in 2001.

Her professional memberships include the American Association of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus and the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Dr. Bañuelos sees patients at the Arizona Lions Eye Care Clinic, 707 N. Alvernon Way, and the University Physicians Healthcare (UPH) Eye Care Center at UPH Hospital at Kino Campus, 2800 E. Ajo Way. For an appointment at either location, call (520) 694-1460.



**Luca O. Brigatti, MD**

Dr. Brigatti, a specialist in glaucoma, has joined the department as assistant professor and director of the glaucoma service.

Prior to his appointment,

Dr. Brigatti was assistant professor of ophthalmology at the University of Rochester School of Medicine in Rochester, N.Y.

He received his medical degree from Milan University School of Medicine in Italy in 1989 and trained in ophthalmology at Milan University First School of Ophthalmology. In the United States, he completed a post-graduate fellowship in glaucoma research at Yale University School of Medicine Department of Ophthalmology, and an internship in medicine at Greenwich Hospital, Yale University School of Medicine, in Greenwich, Conn. He trained in ophthalmology at the University of South Florida in Tampa and completed a fellowship in glaucoma at the University of California, Los Angeles.

In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Brigatti's research interests include glaucoma, analysis of the structure and function of the optic nerve and nerve fiber layer, and scanning laser ophthalmoscopy.

Dr. Brigatti is a member of the American Board of Ophthalmology, the American Glaucoma Society and the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology.

He is fluent in English, Spanish and Italian.

Dr. Brigatti sees patients at the Arizona Lions Eye Care Clinic, 707 N. Alvernon Way, and the UPH Eye Care Center at UPH Hospital at Kino Campus, 2800 E. Ajo Way. For an appointment at either location, call (520) 694-1460.



**Tomas D. Tredici, MD**

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Dr. Tredici, a specialist in pediatric and neuro-ophthalmology, has joined the department as clinical assistant professor.

Prior to joining the UA, Dr. Tredici

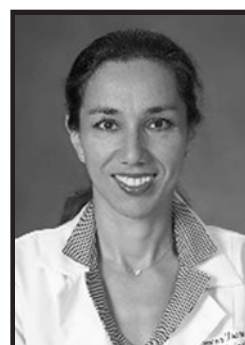
practiced ophthalmology in Fresno, Calif.; Spokane, Wash.; and Flagstaff, Ariz.

He earned his medical degree in 1979 from Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, where he also completed his residency in ophthalmology in 1982. He completed a fellowship in neuro-ophthalmology at the Cullen Eye Institute, Houston, Texas, in 1983 and a fellowship in pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus

at Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, in 1984.

He is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology and is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society and Christian Medical and Dental Associations.

Dr. Tredici sees patients at the Arizona Lions Eye Care Clinic, 707 N. Alvernon Way, and the UPH Eye Care Center at UPH Hospital at Kino Campus, 2800 E. Ajo Way. For an appointment at either location, call (520) 694-1460.



**Roxana Ursea, MD**

**Roxana Ursea, MD**

Dr. Ursea, a cornea, refractive surgery and uveitis specialist, has joined the department as assistant professor and director of the department's

cornea and refractive surgery division.

Prior to her appointment, Dr. Ursea was with the Shiley Eye Center of the University of California, San Diego, where she completed a clinical fellowship in cornea, external diseases and refractive surgery.

After graduating from medical school in Bucharest, Romania, she completed a residency in internal medicine at University Hospitals. In 1990, she pursued further postgraduate training in the United States, with fellowships in vascular biology and high-frequency ultrasound ophthalmology at Cornell University Medical College, New York. She completed her internship at New York Hospital of Queens and completed her residency in ophthalmology at New York Presbyterian Hospital Cornell and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, in 2002.

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## New Clinical Faculty

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Dr. Ursea expanded her clinical expertise with specialized training in uveitis and ocular immunology at the National Eye Institute of the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md., in 2004. Her main projects involved use of immunosuppressives and immunomodulators in the management of refractory and special cases of ocular inflammation, and she participated and designed protocols for clinical trials. She completed a second fellowship in cornea, external diseases and refractive surgery at the University of California, San Diego.

Her clinical interests include keratoconus, laser vision correction and challenging uveitis cases. Her research interests include exploring new applications of high frequency ultrasound and custom wavefront technology in refractive surgery, and new therapeutic modalities for anterior segment disorders.

Dr. Ursea is chairman of the American Society of Ophthalmic Ultrasound and immediate past chairman of the ophthalmic ultrasound section of the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine. She is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery and the Association of Research in Vision and Ophthalmology. She is board-eligible by the American Board of Ophthalmology.

She is fluent in English, French and Romanian.

Dr. Ursea sees patients at the Arizona Lions Eye Care Clinic, 707 N. Alvernon Way, and the UPH Eye Care Center at UPH Hospital at Kino Campus, 2800 E. Ajo Way. For an appointment, call (520) 694-1460.

## 2006: A Year of Change, A Year of Growth

(continued from page 1)

The **Arizona Lions Eye Care Clinic**, 707 N. Alvernon Way, Tucson, is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Vision care for adults is provided by:

Luca O. Brigatti, MD\*  
Lansing E. Brown, MD  
Harry D. Carrozza, MD  
John C. Nichols, MD  
Robert I. Park, MD  
Lynn Polonski, MD  
J. Daniel Twelker, OD, PhD\*\*  
Roxana Ursea, MD\*\*\*

Children's vision care is provided by:

Lydia R. Bañuelos, MD  
Joseph M. Miller, MD, MPH  
Tomas D. Tredici, MD

For a vision care appointment at either clinic, call (520) 694-1460.

(\* also speaks Spanish and Italian)

\*\*also speaks Spanish)

\*\*\* also speaks French and Romanian)



▲ UPH Hospital at Kino Campus



▲ Alvernon Lions Eye Care Clinic

## University of Arizona Department of Ophthalmology and Vision Science

### FACULTY

#### HEAD

Joseph M. Miller, MD, MPH

#### ASSOCIATE HEAD

W. Daniel Stamer, PhD

Todd W. Altenbernd, MD

Lydia R. Bañuelos, MD

Luca O. Brigatti, MD

Lansing Brown, MD

Harry D. Carrozza, MD

Harold E. Cross, MD, PhD

M. Velma Dobson, PhD

Pamela Farthing-Nayak, PhD

Erin M. Harvey, PhD

Alan D. Marmorstein, PhD

Lihua Y. Marmorstein, PhD

Brian S. McKay, PhD

John C. Nichols, MD

Richard R. Ober, MD

Robert I. Park, MD

Lynn Polonski, MD

Jim T. Schwiegerling, PhD

Rand W. Siekert, OD

Tomas D. Tredici, MD

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Roxana Ursea, MD

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Phone: (520) 694-1460

#### UPH Eye Care Center, UPH Hospital at Kino Campus

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The University of Arizona  
Department of Ophthalmology  
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## Don't miss these upcoming events!

### Saturdays, March 18 and April 22, 8am-Noon

#### *UA Student Sight Savers Program Glaucoma Screening Clinic*

Glaucoma screenings by UA Student Sight Savers – a group of medical and nurse practitioner students from the Colleges of Medicine and Nursing and volunteer ophthalmologists from the department and the community. The UA Student Sight Savers Program is a community service project funded and administered by the Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Congress Foundation.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Clinic  
140 W. Speedway, Tucson

Appointment, more information: St. Elizabeth of Hungary Clinic,  
(520) 628-7871.

### Wednesdays, March 29, April 5 and April 26, afternoon (call for appointment)

#### *UA Student Sight Savers Program Glaucoma Screening Clinic*

Glaucoma screenings by UA Student Sight Savers (see description above).

University Physicians Healthcare (UPH) Eye Care Center  
UPH Hospital at Kino Campus  
2800 E. Ajo Way, Tucson

Appointment, more information: UPH ophthalmology clinic,  
(520) 694-1460

*These events are free and open to the public.*

### Friday, June 16, 4-7pm

#### *Jorge Rodríguez Memorial Lectureship and Residents/Research Day*

Speaker: Mark B. Horton, OD, MD, chief, Eyes, Ears, Nose and Throat Department, and director, Indian Health Service/Joslin Vision Network Teleophthalmology Program, Phoenix Indian Medical Center.

Part of the *Science of Eye Disease Seminar Series* presented by the department for the medical community and the public. The late Jorge Rodríguez, MD, MPH, was principal investigator for Proyecto VER (Project Vision, Evaluation, Research), the first comprehensive study of the prevalence and causes of eye disease among Hispanic Americans. Dr. Horton will discuss the use of telemedicine for remote imaging and diagnosis of diabetic retinopathy in American Indians and Alaska Natives. In addition, current ophthalmic research by department faculty, residents and students will be showcased. Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits given. Hors d'oeuvres and soft drinks provided.

Four Points by Sheraton Conference Center  
1900 E. Speedway Blvd., Tucson

Registration/more information: W. Daniel Stamer, PhD,  
(520) 626-7767.

**AN EYE TO THE FUTURE** is published by the UA Department of Ophthalmology and Vision Science to share news and showcase research activities.

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PHOTOS: AHSC Biomedical Communications, Sharon Carrizosa, Dennis Haymore

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