



2026

Future Vision Forum

**Vision Restoration:
AI, Regenerative Medicine, and Technology**



Friday, August 14 - Saturday, August 15
Mission Bay Conference Center
University of California, San Francisco



FUTURE VISION FORUM

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Future Vision Forum · Friday, August 14

Mission Bay Conference Center, Robertson Hall, 2nd Floor
8:30am – 4:30pm

Welcome

8:30 – 8:40 Suber Huang & Nick Ruthmann

Session 1 – Cell and Gene Therapy

Moderators: Jacque Duncan, Bart Leroy, Mandeep Singh

8:40 – 8:45 Session Introduction
 8:45 – 10:10 Moderated Discussion

10:10 – 10:25 Networking

10:25 – 10:30 Session 1 Takeaways

Session 2 – Neuroprosthetics and Whole Eye Transplants

Moderators: Jeffrey Goldberg, Mark Humayun, Daniel Palanker

10:30 – 10:35 Session Introduction
 10:35 – 11:50 Moderated Discussion
 11:50 – 12:00 Session 2 Takeaways

12:00 – 12:50 Lunch – The Lounge, 1st Floor

Session 3 – Precision Medicine, AI, and Wearable Technology

Moderators: Thomas Panek, Nick Ruthmann, Daniel Ting

12:50 – 12:55 Session Introduction
 12:55 – 1:50 Moderated Discussion
 1:50 – 2:00 Introduction – Suber Huang
 2:00 – 2:20 Distinguished Lecture – Thomas Siebel, C3 AI
 2:20 – 3:00 Moderated Discussion

3:00 – 3:15 Networking

3:15 – 3:20 Session 3 Takeaways

Session 4 – Market, Regulatory, Pharma

Moderators: Mayssa Attar, Eugene De Juan, Stevie Ringel

3:20 – 3:25 Session Introduction
 3:25 – 4:15 Moderated Discussion
 4:15 – 4:20 Session 4 Takeaways

Session 5 – Summary of Day's Findings

Moderators: Suber Huang, Nick Ruthmann

4:20 – 4:30 Day 1 summary and introduction to Day 2

4:30 Day 1 end

6:00 Cocktail Hour – Hyatt Regency, San Francisco – Waterfront Room
 7:00 Dinner

Future Vision Forum · Saturday, August 15



Mission Bay Conference Center, Robertson Hall, 2nd Floor
8:30am – 3:30pm

Welcome

8:30 – 8:40 Suber Huang & Jacque Duncan

Panel Session 1 – Cell and Gene Therapy

Panelists: Kapil Bharti, Greg Bowman, Valeria Canto-Soler, Jacque Duncan, John Flannery, David Gamm, Bart Leroy, Alapakkam Sampath, Mandeep Singh, Ramin Valian

8:40 – 8:45 Session Introduction

8:45 – 9:40 Panel Discussion

Panel Session 2 – Neuroprosthetics and Whole Eye Transplants

Panelists: Karl Csaky, Kimberly Gokoffski, Jeffrey Goldberg, Mark Humayun, Thiran Jayasundera, Richard Lee, David Myung, Daniel Palanker, Andrew Pieper

9:45 – 9:50 Session Introduction

9:50 – 10:45 Panel Discussion

10:45–11:00 Networking

Panel Session 3 – Precision Medicine, AI, and Wearable Technology

Panelists: Bob Bhisitkul, Leah Byrne, Sai Chavala, Todd Durham, Mark Humayun, Thomas Johnson, Ted Leng, Thomas Panek, Nick Ruthmann, Daniel Ting

11:05 – 11:10 Session Introduction

11:10 – 12:00 Panel Discussion

12:00 – 12:50 Lunch – The Lounge, 1st Floor

Panel Session 4 – Market, Regulatory, and Pharma

Panelists: Mayssa Attar, Angela Bowman, Eugene De Juan, Rusty Kelley, Leanne Labriola, Jane Lebkowski, Keith Luhrs, Stephen Poor, Stevie Ringel, Noni Rossini, Namrata Saroj

1:05 – 1:10 Session Introduction

1:10 – 2:10 Panel Discussion

Panel Session 5 – The Future of Vision, Forecasting

Panelists: Kapil Bharti, Eugene De Juan, Jacque Duncan, Jeffrey Goldberg, Suber Huang, Nick Ruthmann, Daniel Ting

2:15 – 2:20 Session Introduction

2:20 – 3:15 Panel Discussion

3:15 – 3:30 Closing Remarks – Suber Huang

Attendees

Mayssa Attar, PhD

Bausch & Lomb

Kapil Bharti, PhD

National Eye Institute

Bob Bhisitkul, MD, PhD

University of California, San Francisco

Angela Bowman, PhD

Foundation Fighting Blindness

Greg Bowman, PhD

University of Pennsylvania

Leah Byrne, PhD

University of Pittsburgh

Valeria Canto-Soler, PhD

University of Colorado

Sai Chavala, MD

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Dennis Clegg, PhD

University of California, Santa Barbara

Karl Csaky, MD, PhD

Retina Foundation of the Southwest

Eugene De Juan, MD

*University of California,
San Francisco*

Jacque Duncan, MD

*University of California,
San Francisco*

Todd Durham, PhD

FFB Consortium

John Flannery, PhD, UCB

University of California, Berkeley

David Gamm, MD, PhD

University of Wisconsin

Kimberly Gokoffski, MD, PhD

University of California, Irvine

Jeffrey Goldberg, MD, PhD

Stanford University

Suber Huang, MD, MBA, FARVO

Future Vision Foundation

Mark Humayun, MD, PhD, FARVO

University of Southern California

Thiran Jayasundera, MD, MS, FACS

UC Davis

Thomas Johnson, MD, PhD

Johns Hopkins University

Russell Kelley, PhD, MBA

Foundation Fighting Blindness

Leanne Labriola, DO, MBA, FASRS

InnSight Technology

Curt Langlotz, MD, PhD

Stanford Health

Jane Lebkowski, PhD

Regenerative Patch Technologies

Richard Lee, MD, PhD

National Eye Institute

Theodore Leng, MD, MS, FACS

Stanford University

Bart Peter Leroy, MD, PhD

Ghent University, Belgium

Keith Luhrs, PhD

Bausch & Lomb

David Myung, MD, PhD

Stanford University

Daniel Palanker, PhD

Stanford University

Thomas Panek

Lighthouse Guild

Andrew Pieper, MD, PhD

Harrington Discovery Institute

Stephen Poor, MBBS, MRCOphth

Apellis

Stevie Ringel

Nome Therapeutics

Noni Rossini

Lighthouse Guild

Nick Ruthmann, MD, MPH

Future Vision Foundation

Alapakkam Sampath, PhD

University of California, Los Angeles

Namrata Saroj, OD

Ocular Therapeutix

Thomas Siebel

C3 AI

**Mandeep Singh, MBBS, MMed,
DPhil, FRCSEd**

Johns Hopkins University

Daniel Ting, MD, PhD

Duke NUS

Ramin Valian

Emmecell





Mayssa Attar, PhD

Senior Vice President, Pharma and Consumer R&D

Bausch & Lomb

mayssa.attar@bausch.com

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Designing the next generation of clinical trials in intermediate AMD—a consensus driven, pragmatic, proof of concept early intervention study. Guymer RH, Rosenfeld PJ, Ehlers JP, Attar M, Chen H, Ferris F, Fujimoto JG, Ip M, Pfau M, Saßmannshausen M, Shen J, Zacks DN, van Zyl T, Wu Z, Jaffe GJ. *Exp Eye Res.* 2025 Jun;255:110340. doi: 10.1016/j.exer.2025.110340. Epub 2025 Mar 14. PMID: 40090569

Impact of Modifying Abicipar Manufacturing Process in Patients with Neovascular Age-Related Macular Degeneration: MAPLE Study Results. Callanan D, Khurana RN, Maturi RK, Patel S, Wykoff CC, Eichenbaum D, Khanani AM, Hassan T, Badger H, Mehta S, Le G, Attar M, Seal J, Li XY. *Clin Ophthalmol.* 2023 May 11;17:1367-1384. doi: 10.2147/OPTH.S405994. eCollection 2023. PMID: 37197577

Neutralizing Antibody Formation with OnabotulinumtoxinA (BOTOX®) Treatment from Global Registration Studies across Multiple Indications: A Meta-Analysis. Jankovic J, Carruthers J, Naumann M, Ogilvie P, Boodhoo T, Attar M, Gupta S, Singh R, Soliman J, Yushmanova I, Brin MF, Shen J. *Toxins (Basel).* 2023 May 17;15(5):342. doi: 10.3390/toxins15050342. PMID: 37235376

Effect of Anti-VEGF Therapy on the Disease Progression of Neovascular Age-Related Macular Degeneration: A Systematic Review and Model-Based Meta-Analysis. Luu KT, Seal J, Green M, Winskill C, Attar M. *J Clin Pharmacol.* 2022 May;62(5):594-608. doi: 10.1002/jcph.2002. Epub 2022 Jan 5. PMID: 34783362

Biography

Mayssa Attar is a translational scientist with over 25 years of leadership in biopharmaceutical, consumer and device product development. She has made significant contributions to the development, registration and/or commercialization of more than a dozen approved therapies across multiple disease areas. She currently serves as Senior Vice President, Pharmaceutical and Consumer R&D Head at Bausch and Lomb. She has held senior roles at AbbVie and Allergan. Dr. Attar has over 30 peer-reviewed publications, more than 10 issued patents and is an invited national and international speaker. Mayssa has served as adjunct faculty at USC School of Pharmacy and as a board member for Character Bio. She has served as a board member of the Allergan Foundation and the Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce.



Kapil Bharti, PhD

Scientific Director

National Eye Institute

kapil.bharti@nih.gov

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Schaub NJ, Hotaling NA, Manescu P, Padi S, Wan Q, Sharma R, George A, Chalfoun J, Simon M, Ouladi M, Simon CG Jr, Bajcsy P, Bharti K. Deep learning predicts function of live retinal pigment epithelium from quantitative microscopy. *J Clin Invest*. 2020 Feb 3;130(2):1010-1023. doi: 10.1172/JCI131187. PMID: 31714897; PMCID: PMC6994191.

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Ortolan D, Sharma R, Volkov A, Maminishkis A, Hotaling NA, Huryn LA, Cukras C, Di Marco S, Bisti S, Bharti K. Single-cell-resolution map of human retinal pigment epithelium helps discover subpopulations with differential disease sensitivity. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2022 May 10;119(19):e2117553119. doi: 10.1073/pnas.2117553119. Epub 2022 May 6. PMID: 35522714; PMCID: PMC9171647.

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Biography

Dr. Kapil Bharti is the Scientific Director of National Eye Institute, NIH. His lab has developed the US first Phase I/IIa trial to test autologous iPSC-derived RPE patch in AMD patients. He has also developed some of the first NAMs in ophthalmology including the first digital twin of an eye cell and a 3D bioprinted eye tissue. Currently, he is developing a dual RPE/photoreceptor cell therapy and multiple gene therapies for rare and common eye diseases. He has published over 100 peer reviewed manuscripts and reviews, given over 30 keynote and named lectures, won several awards including the two times winner of the Public Service Award for the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR), two times winner of the NIH Director's award, Soubrane EVER Conference Keynote Lecture, NEI Director's Dr. Karl Kupfer Visionary Award, and Sayer Vision Research lecture at NEI for his pioneering role in advancing the field of stem cell based therapies. He has filed 18 patents; six have been issued already. He serves on the advisory board (pro bono) of several stem cell therapy-based companies and patient-advocacy groups. At NEI he oversees 20 research labs, 6 core facilities, and a staff of over 350 people.



Bob Bhisitkul, MD, PhD

Alexander Irvine, MD Endowed Chair

University of California, San Francisco

bhisitkulr@vision.ucsf.edu

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Pereira DS, Maturi RK, Akita K, Mahesh V, Bhisitkul RB, Nishihata T, Sakota E, Ali Y, Nakamura E, Bezwada P, Nakamura Y. Clinical proof of concept for anti-FGF2 therapy in exudative age-related macular degeneration (nAMD): phase 2 trials in treatment-naïve and anti-VEGF pretreated patients. *Eye (Lond)* 2023; 38(6):1140-48.

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Biography

Dr. Bhisitkul, Professor of Ophthalmology, Alex Irvine MD Endowed Chair at the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine, has over 25 years of experience as a retina surgeon and clinician scientist. Dr. Bhisitkul graduated from Stanford University then combined medical school at Stanford with his PhD in Neurosciences at Yale University, followed by residency and fellowship training at Harvard Medical School/ Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. His translational research interest is in pre-clinical development of novel technologies for ophthalmic diseases. In clinical research, he is an investigator in major clinical trials of novel ophthalmic therapeutics, as well as studies of long-term outcomes of drug treatments for chronic eye disease. At UCSF, he is the Academic Director for the Retina Division and Director for the Retina Fellowship program. He has served as an Associate Examiner for the American Board of Ophthalmology, is a recipient of the American Academy of Ophthalmology Achievement Award and the American Society of Retina Specialists Honor Award, and has served as an editorial board member of *American Journal of Ophthalmology Case Reports* and as associate editor of the *British Journal of Ophthalmology*. He acts as consultant and medical advisor for ophthalmologic pharmaceutical companies in designing early-stage trials and conducting clinical development of new ocular therapies.



Angela Bowman, PhD

Director of Scientific Research

Foundation Fighting Blindness

abowman@fightingblindness.org

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Biography

Angela Bowman, PhD, is the Director of Scientific Research at the Foundation Fighting Blindness. In this role, Angela is responsible for understanding and identifying opportunities to drive scientific advances for inherited retinal diseases and dry Age Related Macular Degeneration. In addition, Angela serves on ClinGen Ocular Domain Working Group Expert Panels for LCA and maculopathies. Angela earned her PhD in Developmental Biology at Stanford University and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in retinal gene therapy at the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to her role at the Foundation Fighting Blindness, Angela was a Research Associate Professor of Developmental Biology and Executive Director of the Center of Regenerative Medicine at Washington University in St. Louis.



Greg Bowman, PhD

Louis Heyman University Professor

University of Pennsylvania

gregoryrbowman@gmail.com

References

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Biography

Dr. Greg Bowman is the Louis Heyman University Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. He and his lab devise new ways to design therapeutics and interpret genetic variation in areas ranging from viral infections like Ebola to Alzheimer's and cardiac disease. A major emphasis is on identifying cryptic pockets and allosteric by mapping out the ensemble of different structures that a protein adopts. To build and exploit these maps, the group combines biophysical experiments, physics-based simulations, and machine learning. Greg is also the Director of the Folding@home distributed computing project, which harnesses the computational power of citizen scientists from across the globe to enable computer simulations on an unprecedented scale.



Leah Byrne, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Ophthalmology,
Secondary Appointments in the Departments
of Neurobiology and Bioengineering

University of Pittsburgh

lbyrne@pitt.edu

References

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Biography

Leah Byrne, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh Department of Ophthalmology. The Byrne Lab develops gene therapies for retinal disease, including a diverse group of blinding disorders that have a profound impact on the quality of life of patients. The Byrne lab develops gene therapy vectors, and is exploring gene augmentation, optogenetics, and genome editing approaches to treat inherited and age-related forms of blindness. Dr. Byrne is also the co-founder and CSO of Avista Therapeutics (<https://www.avistatx.com>), a gene therapy biotechnology company based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which aims to initiate its first clinical trial for inherited blindness in 2026.

Dr. Byrne earned a bachelor's degree in Neuroscience from Hamilton College. She then studied as a Fulbright Fellow at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden. Dr. Byrne earned a PhD in Neuroscience from the University of California Berkeley in 2011. Dr. Byrne then worked as a Ruth L. Kirschstein NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow, and a Ford Foundation Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania and UC Berkeley. Dr. Byrne has been awarded a RPB Career Development Award, A Foundation Fighting Blindness Individual Investigator Award, and in 2023 she received the University of Pittsburgh Office of Innovation Emerging Innovator Award. Recently, Dr. Byrne was named a Senior Member of the National Academy of Inventors.



Valeria Canto-Soler, PhD

Doni Solich Family Chair in Ocular Stem Cell Research,
Director, CellSight – Ocular Stem Cell
and Regeneration Research Program

University of Colorado

valeria.canto-soler@cuanschutz.edu

References

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Vergara MN, Flores-Bellver M, Aparicio-Domingo S, McNally M, Wahlin KJ, Saxena MT, Mumm JS, Canto-Soler MV. Three-dimensional automated reporter quantification (3D-ARQ) technology enables quantitative screening in retinal organoids. *Development.* 2017 Oct 15;144(20):3698-3705. PubMed Central PMCID: PMC5675442.

Flores-Bellver M, Mighty J, Aparicio-Domingo S, Li KV, Shi C, Zhou J, Cobb H, McGrath P, Michelis G, Lenhart P, Bilousova G, Heissel S, Rudy MJ, Coughlan C, Goodspeed AE, Becerra SP, Redenti S, Canto-Soler MV. Extracellular vesicles released by human retinal pigment epithelium mediate increased polarised secretion of drusen proteins in response to AMD stressors. *J Extracell Vesicles.* 2021 Nov;10(13):e12165. PubMed Central PMCID: PMC8575963.

Li KV, Flores-Bellver M, Aparicio-Domingo S, Petrash C, Cobb H, Chen C, Canto-Soler MV, Mathias MT. A Surgical Kit for Stem Cell-Derived Retinal Pigment Epithelium Transplants: Collection, Transportation, and Subretinal Delivery. *Front Cell Dev Biol.* 2022;10:813538. doi: 10.3389/fcell.2022.813538. eCollection 2022. PubMed PMID: 35252183; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC8895272.

Biography

Dr. Canto-Soler completed her Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences at Austral University in Argentina and a postdoctoral fellowship at the Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University. She joined the Wilmer faculty as a research associate in 2006 and was promoted to assistant professor in 2008. In July 2017 she joined the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Colorado School of Medicine as the Doni Solich Family Chair in Ocular Stem Cell Research and the Director of *CellSight* – the Ocular Stem Cell and Regeneration Research Program. Over the years she has received several national and international awards including the POEN Award for Best Research Study in Ophthalmology, the Alcon Research Institute Young Investigator Award, and the William & Mary Greve Special Scholar Award from Research to Prevent Blindness. She has also been named Outstanding Personality by the Council of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in recognition of her scientific contributions.

Using human induced pluripotent stem cells (hiPSC), a type of stem cells generated from cells obtained from adult persons, Dr. Canto-Soler and her research team have established a method to generate light-sensitive miniature human retinas in a laboratory dish. At *CellSight*, they are currently using this breakthrough technology to develop novel stem cell-based therapeutics to save and restore sight in patients with blinding diseases.

In 2022 Dr. Canto-Soler and her team were awarded first prize in the NEI 3D Retinal Organoid Challenge (3DROC).



Sai Chavala, MD

Associate Professor, Ophthalmology

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

schavala@gmail.com

References

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Biography

Sai Chavala, M.D., is a fellowship-trained surgical retina specialist and physician-scientist dedicated to developing innovative therapies to preserve and restore vision. He completed his ophthalmology residency at the Cole Eye Institute at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, followed by a basic science postdoctoral fellowship in stem cells and regenerative medicine at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and Weill Medical College of Cornell University under HHMI Investigator Shahin Rafii, M.D. He then completed his surgical retina fellowship at Duke University.

Dr. Chavala's research contributions span cell-based retinal regeneration, epigenetic reprogramming for retinal rejuvenation, and optogenetics. His work reflects a long-standing commitment to translating scientific discoveries into meaningful treatments for blinding retinal diseases.

He currently serves as President and CEO of Retina of North Texas and as Professor of Surgery at the Burnett School of Medicine at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. Chavala has led or contributed to more than 100 scholarly presentations, research publications, and patents. He is also actively involved in philanthropic initiatives and is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Society of Retina Specialists, the Retina Society, the Macula Society, and other professional organizations.



Dennis Clegg, PhD

Wilcox Family Chair in Biomedicine, Distinguished Professor

University of California, Santa Barbara

dennis.clegg@lifesci.ucsb.edu

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Biography

Dr. Clegg is the Wilcox Family Chair in Biomedicine and Distinguished Professor in the Department of Molecular Cellular and Developmental Biology at UC Santa Barbara. He is founder and director of the Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering at UCSB, and Co-founder of Regenerative Patch Technologies LLC. Dr. Clegg earned his BS degree in biochemistry at UC Davis and his PhD in biochemistry at UC Berkeley. As a Jane Coffin Childs Postdoctoral Scholar at UCSF, he studied neural development and regeneration. He has continued this avenue of research in his own lab, with a current emphasis on developing stem cell-based therapies for ocular disease. Dr. Clegg is the recipient of the UCSB Distinguished Teaching Award, the Pacific Coast Champions in Health Care Award, the National Eye Institute Audacious Goals award, the Braille Institute Award of Excellence, and is a Fellow of the American Institute for Biological and Medical Engineering. He has authored 139 papers, books, book chapters and reviews and is author on 23 patents. He is a Co-Principal Investigator of The California Project to Cure Blindness, a multi-institutional effort to develop a stem cell therapy for Age-Related Macular Degeneration.



Karl Csaky, MD, PhD

Chief Executive and Medical Officer

Retina Foundation of the Southwest

kcsaky@icloud.com

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Biography

Dr. Csaky serves as the T. Boone Pickens Director of the Clinical Center of Innovation for Age Related Macular Degeneration, Director of the Molecular Ophthalmology Laboratory, and Chief Strategy Officer at the Retina Foundation of the Southwest. His work focuses on both basic and clinical research in age related macular degeneration (AMD), with particular emphasis on the pathobiology of AMD, ocular drug delivery and innovative approaches to understanding clinical structure–function relationships in AMD.

Dr. Csaky is actively involved in multiple clinical trials targeting degenerative AMD and has contributed to the development of novel methodologies for evaluating disease progression and treatment response. He has led symposia with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Eye Institute (NEI) on the identification and validation of new clinical endpoints for retinal diseases. In addition, he has served on study sections for both the NEI and BrightFocus Foundation.

He is a member of the Macula Society, Retina Society, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Ophthalmological Society, Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), and the American Society of Retinal Specialists.

Dr. Csaky completed a retina fellowship at the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins University and a postdoctoral fellowship at the National Cancer Institute. He completed his internship in internal medicine at Duke University and his ophthalmology residency at Washington University. He was a Fulbright Scholar at the Essen Eye Clinic in Essen, Germany, where he trained under Dr. Meyer Schwickerath, and a Biotechnology Fellow at the Doheny Eye Institute at the University of Southern California under Dr. Stephen J. Ryan. He earned his combined MD/PhD degree from the University of Louisville.



Eugene De Juan, MD

Jean Kelly Stock Distinguished Professor

University of California, San Francisco

dejuane@vision.ucsf.edu

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Biography

Jean Kelly Stock Distinguished Professor of Ophthalmology

EDUCATION

BS – Emory University

MS – University of Alabama in Birmingham

MD – University of South Alabama

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Lifetime Achievement Award (American Academy of Ophthalmology, 2015) Industry Innovator of the Year Award (OIS), Catalyst Award, Glaucoma Research Foundation 2017, 2017 Heed-Gutman Award, The Society of Heed Fellows, 2000 and the Pyron Award (American Society of Retina Specialists 2023).

Dr. de Juan, Jr. shares his time between ForSight Labs (managing member) and UCSF. UCSF recruited Dr. de Juan for this special role to augment translation of the many ideas being developed within the academic center. He continues to see patients and teach at UCSF.

ForSight has founded seven companies since 2005: Transcend Medical, Inc., ForSight Newco II, Inc., NexisVision, Inc., Forsight VISION4, Inc., ForSight VISION5, Inc., ForSight VISION6, Inc., and FSV7, LLC (private), focused on developing therapeutics for CNS disorders.



Jacque Duncan, MD

Chair and Distinguished Professor of Ophthalmology

University of California, San Francisco

jacque.duncan@ucsf.edu

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Biography

Jacque L. Duncan, M.D., Chair and Distinguished Professor, Department of Ophthalmology, University of California, San Francisco, is also the Chair of the Foundation Fighting Blindness Scientific Advisory Board, and the co-Chair of the FFB Clinical Consortium Executive Committee. She graduated with distinction and honors from Stanford University, then spent a year doing research at the University of Colorado while she applied to medical school. She completed medical school, internship and ophthalmology residency at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Duncan completed a medical retina fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania, working with Drs. Stuart Fine and Samuel G. Jacobson. Her fellowship training focused on patients with age-related macular degeneration and inherited retinal degenerations. She returned to join the ophthalmology faculty at UCSF in 2000, supported by a K08 award to work with her mentor, Matt LaVail, studying rodent models of inherited retinal degeneration. Dr. Duncan was appointed Interim Chair 1/1/22, and has served as Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at UCSF 12/1/22 after a national search.

Dr. Duncan has expertise in the diagnosis and management of patients with retinal degenerations including age-related macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, cone-rod dystrophy and Stargardt disease. She has a strong interest in developing imaging and monitoring technologies to better evaluate both the progress of disease and the efficacy of emerging therapies. In collaboration with Austin Roorda, Ph.D., Professor at the University of California, Berkeley School of Optometry, and Joseph Carroll, PhD, Professor at the Medical College of Wisconsin, she has studied cone photoreceptors in the eyes of patients with many different types of inherited retinal degeneration. Dr. Duncan has received funding to support her research from the Foundation Fighting Blindness, Research to Prevent Blindness, the National Eye Institute and the US Food and Drug Administration Office of Orphan Product Development, in addition to several sponsors of clinical trials for patients with inherited retinal degenerations. She has served as chair of the FFB Scientific Advisory Board since 2015. She worked with FFB Leadership to launch the FFB Consortium which comprises over 45 clinical centers and over 150 investigators with expertise in the care and study of patients with inherited retinal degenerations.



Todd Durham, PhD

Senior Vice President, Clinical Outcomes Research

FFB Consortium

tdurham@fightingblindness.org

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Biography

Todd Durham is the Senior Vice President, Clinical & Outcomes Research at the Foundation Fighting Blindness, where he leads an international clinical consortium and directs one of the largest natural history registries in inherited retinal diseases. He works across sectors to shape clinical development strategies, advise on partnered programs, and convene stakeholders—including regulators, industry, clinicians, and patient advocates—to accelerate the development of treatments for rare retinal conditions. With over 30 years of experience in drug development, Todd has held leadership roles in biopharmaceutical companies, clinical research organizations, and academic collaborations. His background includes contributions to both early- and late-phase programs at IQVIA, Bristol Myers Squibb, Novan, Inspire Pharmaceuticals, and Quintiles. He holds a BSPH and MS in Biostatistics and a PhD in Health Policy and Management from the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.



John Flannery, PhD, UCB

Professor of Neurobiology, Dept. Molecular & Cell Biology,
Assoc. Director, Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute

University of California, Berkeley

flannery@berkeley.edu

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Biography

I have been a faculty member at UC Berkeley in Vision Science and Neuroscience since 1995, having mentored many Ph.D. students over this period. I have mentored over 15 Ph.D. students and 7 postdoctoral fellows. (2 are currently tenured faculty and 4 are scientists in biotechnology companies). I maintain my commitment to biology education and to serving the scientific community. I serve as vice chair of three non-profit charities, the Foundation Fighting Blindness, Fighting Blindness, Ireland and Fighting Blindness South Africa. I currently teach in the Optometry school, as well as in the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute, the Vision Science Ph.D. program.

My research program is focused on understanding the genetic and biochemical underpinnings of inherited retinal degenerations and designing genetic therapies for these blinding conditions. The expertise of my laboratory group is directed toward developing viral vectors for gene therapy and gene transfer to retinal neurons, epithelia and glia. We have developed small animal models of retinal degenerations and treatments for these conditions for over 30 years. We study both normal retinal functions as well as disease states to develop rational therapeutics for retinal dystrophies. We have over 2 decades of expertise in promoter design and AAV serotype selection and modification to generate viral vectors that can efficiently transfect retinal cells, in vivo. We have expertise in analyzing the use of these vectors in animal retina in vivo. In our studies to develop viral vectors targeted to specific classes of retinal neurons, we use 'directed evolution' approaches to identify capsid variants as well as promoter selection to optimize cell class specific expression and minimize off-target ectopic expression. We have experience in expression of functional indicators of neuronal activity, e.g. genetically-encoded calcium indicators (gCamp) as well as optogenetics for vision restoration.



David Gamm, MD, PhD

Sandra Lemke Trout Chair in Eye Research,
RRF Emmett A. Humble Distinguished Director,
McPherson Eye Research Institute

University of Wisconsin

dgamm@wisc.edu

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Biography

David M. Gamm, M.D., Ph.D., is the Emmett A. Humble Distinguished Director of the McPherson Eye Research Institute, the Sandra Lemke Trout Chair in Eye Research, and a Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is also a member of the Waisman Center Stem Cell Research Program, the UW Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine Center, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering. In 2016, he co-founded Opsis Therapeutics. His research focuses on advancing human pluripotent stem cell technology for the purpose of generating retinal cells and 3D organoids (for which he holds the first issued patent in the world) for use in cell replacement therapies and retinal disease modeling for blinding disorders such as retinitis pigmentosa and age-related macular degeneration. In his clinical and surgical practice, Dr. Gamm diagnoses and manages a broad range of pediatric eye and vision disorders.



Kimberly Gokoffski, MD, PhD

Associate Professor of Ophthalmology

University of California, Irvine

gokoffsk@hs.uci.edu

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Biography

Dr. Kimberly Gokoffski is an associate professor in the UC Irvine Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences. As a board-certified ophthalmologist specializing in neuro-ophthalmology, her clinical practice centers on caring for patients with afferent disease (blindness from optic nerve damage) while her surgical practice focuses on treating patients with double vision from efferent disease (strabismus). She leads a federally-funded, multidisciplinary research consortium whose goal is to develop engineered solutions for blindness. Specifically, she is pioneering electric field stimulation into a strategy to enable regenerating retinal neurons to reconnect with intended targets in the brain. She currently heads a section of the ARPA-H initiative to enable whole eye transplantation to cure blindness. Additionally, she is using electric field stimulation to increase neuroplasticity in the visual cortex and reverse blindness from amblyopia, a childhood disease of blindness.



Jeffrey Goldberg, MD, PhD

Blumenkranz Smead Professor,
Chair of Ophthalmology at Byers Eye Institute

Stanford University

jlgoldbe@stanford.edu

References

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Discovery and clinical translation of novel glaucoma biomarkers. Beykin G, Norcia AM, Srinivasan VJ, Dubra A, Goldberg JL. *Prog Retin Eye Res*. 2021 Jan;80:100875. doi: 10.1016/j.preteyeres.2020.100875. Epub 2020 Jul 10. PMID: 32659431

Biography

Dr. Jeffrey Goldberg is Professor and Chair of Ophthalmology and Director of the Byers Eye Institute at Stanford University, and a member of the National Academy of Medicine. His clinical effort is focused on patients in need of medical or surgical intervention for glaucoma and other retinal and optic nerve diseases, as well as cataract. His research is directed at neuroprotection and regeneration of retinal ganglion cells and the optic nerve, a major unmet need in glaucoma and other optic neuropathies, and his laboratory is developing novel molecular, stem cell, and nanotherapeutics approaches for eye repair.

Dr. Goldberg received his B.S. magna cum laude from Yale University, and his M.D. and Ph.D. from Stanford University, where he made significant discoveries about the failure of optic nerve regeneration. He did his clinical training in ophthalmology and then in glaucoma at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and was awarded a fellowship from the Heed Foundation. He was named the 2010 Scientist of the Year by the Hope For Vision foundation, and received the Cogan award from the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology in 2012. He was elected in 2010 to the American Society of Clinical Investigation, an honorary society of physician scientists, in 2021 to the American Ophthalmological Society, and in 2024 to the Glaucoma Research Society. He directs an NIH-funded research laboratory and was one of the scientists funded by the National Eye Institute's Audacious Goals Initiative; in 2024 ARPA-H funded his 6- year collaborative to bring whole eye transplant forward for vision restoration.

In addition, Dr. Goldberg has developed significant expertise with implementing FDA clinical trials for optic nerve neuroprotection and regeneration. A number of his innovations have spun out into commercialization pipelines including clinical-stage biotech companies, and he serves as medical and scientific advisor to a number of ophthalmic startup, pharma and device companies. His goal is to translate scientific discoveries to patient therapies.



Suber Huang, MD, MBA, FARVO

Founder/President

Future Vision Foundation

drhuang.fvf@gmail.com

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Biography

Suber S. Huang, MD, MBA, FASRS, serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Retina Center of Ohio and holds academic appointments as Voluntary Assistant Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami, and Visiting Professor at the National University of Singapore. He is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Future Vision Foundation, an organization dedicated to advancing vision science through documentary storytelling and the Future Vision Forum, which convenes global leaders to accelerate innovation in ophthalmic research.

Dr. Huang holds degrees from Johns Hopkins University and Albert Einstein College of Medicine, with advanced training at Harvard University, the Wharton School, and Case Western Reserve University. A former President of the American Society of Retina Specialists, he has led numerous clinical trials, contributed extensively to the scientific literature, and founded the ASRS Retina Image Bank and Retina Atlas. He is widely recognized for his leadership, global impact, and enduring contributions to advancing vision research and patient care.



Mark Humayun, MD, PhD, FARVO

Dennis and Michele Slivinski Chair
in Macular Degeneration Research

University of Southern California

humayun@usc.edu

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Biography

Mark S. Humayun, MD, PhD, FARVO is the Dennis and Michele Slivinski Chair in Macular Degeneration Research, Professor of Ophthalmology, Biomedical Engineering, and Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine, Director of the USC Ginsburg Institute for Biomedical Therapeutics, and Co-Director of the USC Roski Eye Institute.

Dr. Humayun is an internationally recognized pioneer in vision restoration. He assembled a team of multidisciplinary experts to develop the first FDA approved artificial retina, Argus II, for sight restoration. He has 165 issued patents and 332 peer reviewed publications. He has a google scholar H index of 110. Over 53,812 citations of his articles place him in the top 5% for citations within the Doximity community.

Dr. Humayun is a member of the U.S. National Academies of Medicine, Engineering, and Inventors. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), American Society of Retinal Specialists (ASRS), and Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO). He is also a Life Fellow of the American Academy of Ophthalmology since 1990. For his extraordinary contributions he was awarded the United States' highest technological achievement, the 2015 National Medal of Technology and Innovation by President Obama. He is the recipient of the 2018 IEEE Biomedical Engineering Award, the 2020 IEEE Medal for Innovations in Healthcare Technology, the Charles Schepens award by the American Academy of Ophthalmology in 2021, and the Arnall Patz medal by the Macula Society in 2026. Dr. Humayun was named top 1% of ophthalmologists by the U.S. News & World Report.



Thiran Jayasundera, MD, MS, FACS

Chair, Department of Ophthalmology & Vision Sciences

UC Davis

tjayasundera@health.ucdavis.edu

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Biography

Dr. Thiran Jayasundera leads UC Davis Eye Center with a focus on compassionate, patient-centered care and innovative research in blinding diseases. His clinical expertise centers on retinal disorders, especially inherited retinal diseases, and his research has helped shape how outcomes are measured in trials for these conditions. Before joining UC Davis, he held faculty leadership roles at the University of Michigan, where he advanced work in ophthalmic genetics and vision-related anxiety assessment. At UC Davis, he continues to guide clinical care, research, and training with an emphasis on improving sight and quality of life.



Thomas Johnson, MD, PhD

Shelley and Allan Holt Rising Professor of Ophthalmology

Johns Hopkins University

johnson@jhmi.edu

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Biography

Thomas V Johnson, MD, PhD is the Shelly & Allan Holt Rising Professor of Ophthalmology at the Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute and an Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, Neuroscience, and Biomedical Engineering. He is an ophthalmologist specializing in the treatment of complex glaucoma in children and adults. In addition, he is the principal investigator of a translational neuroscience laboratory working to better understand the molecular and cellular mechanisms that lead to retinal ganglion cell death in glaucoma while developing neuroprotective and neuro-regenerative treatments for the disease. Dr. Johnson's laboratory is at the forefront of regenerative medicine as applied to glaucoma and is developing methods to restore vision for patients with optic neuropathy through transplantation of human stem cell derived neurons into the eye and repair of the damaged visual pathway. A 2023 bibliometric analysis of published literature found that Dr. Johnson is one of the top 10 most impactful authors of research involving applications of stem cells in glaucoma worldwide. Dr. Johnson is an associate editor for *Ophthalmology Science* and an editorial board member for *Investigative Ophthalmology and Visual Science (IOVS)*. He is also the Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the international RGC Repopulation, Stem Cell Transplantation, and Optic Nerve Regeneration (RReSTORE) Consortium (<http://rrestore.info>) and his laboratory is funded by the NIH, DoD, Research to Prevent Blindness, the BrightFocus Foundation, The Glaucoma Foundation, and the American Glaucoma Society. More information can be found at <http://johnsonlabjhmi.com>.



Russell Kelley, PhD, MBA

Managing Director and Principal Officer
of the Retinal Degeneration Fund

Foundation Fighting Blindness

RustyKelley@rdfund.org

Biography

Rusty Kelley is the managing director and principal officer of the Foundation Fighting Blindness's venture arm, the Retinal Degeneration Fund (RD Fund). Kelley helped launch the RD Fund in 2018 and brings over 25 years of experience in identifying, funding, and developing biotechnologies to his leadership role. Kelley is on the Executive Leadership team of the Foundation and is currently a Board director of SparingVision and Nacuity and a Board observer for Atsena Therapeutics, Perceive Bio, and Amber Bio. Kelley was also a founding Board director of Opus Genetics and previously served as a Board observer for Stargazer Pharmaceuticals and Vedere Bio.

Before the RD Fund, Kelley directed the translational and interdisciplinary science funding portfolios at the Burroughs Wellcome Fund. Kelley previously served on the bench as a scientist, then as a director and head of preclinical at Tengion, a tissue engineering spinout of Boston Children's Hospital and Wake Forest University. Earlier in his career, Kelley served on the bench in analytical chemistry and in formulation development in the divisions of Wet Chemistry and Pharmaceuticals at AAI Pharma, and then in clinical development at PPD, Inc., where he helped develop and manage clinical trials in the divisions of Medicine, NIH trials, and Infectious Disease.

Kelley earned a BA in Chemistry from UNC Chapel Hill and a PhD in Pharmacology at LSU's Health Sciences Center in New Orleans. Kelley then trained as a postdoc fellow in the School of Medicine at UNC Chapel Hill, where he was awarded an American Heart Association fellowship. Kelley also earned an executive MBA from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.



Leanne Labriola, DO, MBA, FASRS

President & Co-Founder

InnSight Technology

Labriola@pghtrials.com

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Biography

Leanne Labriola is a board-certified ophthalmologist, clinician scientist, and serial entrepreneur. Her impact on the scientific field includes the development of two novel, ophthalmic devices that advance personalized, precision medicine in ophthalmology. She has raised \$4.5 million from the Department of Defense and National Science Foundation, alongside \$3 million from investors, to fund her research and to develop these novel products. Notably, her OcuCheck platform won first place at the 2025 Eyecelerator Pitch Competition. Expected to translate to clinical care by 2028, the OcuCheck will revolutionize our ability to use tear fluid molecular biomarkers to diagnose common ocular and systemic diseases.

Dr. Labriola specializes in uveitis and medical retina, with extensive experience practicing in both academic and private settings. An accomplished researcher, she has published numerous nationally peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, and currently serves as a Principal Investigator for several Phase II–IV retinal disease clinical trials. Her leadership roles include serving on the DRCR Retinal Network Executive Committee since 2014, joining the American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS) Foundation Board in 2026, and previously co-chairing the UPMC Imaging Department. She is also the Founder and Director of the Pittsburgh Research Center and an Adjunct Professor at UPMC.

She earned her undergraduate degree from Duke University, completed her medical school training at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, completed her residency at the University of Pittsburgh Eye Center, and underwent a medical retina fellowship at the University of Southern California's Doheny Eye Institute. Additionally, she holds an MBA with a focus in Healthcare Pharmaceuticals and Marketing from the Haub Business School. Dr. Labriola maintains active memberships in the Retina Society, ASRS, American Uveitis Society, and the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology.



Curt Langlotz, MD, PhD

Senior Associate Vice Provost for Research,
Professor of Radiology (Integrative Biomedical Imaging Informatics),
of Medicine (BMIR), of Biomedical Data Science
and Senior Fellow at the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI

Stanford Health

langlotz@stanford.edu

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Biography

Dr. Langlotz is a radiologist and computer scientist at Stanford University, where he is Professor of Radiology, Medicine, and Biomedical Data Science and Senior Associate Vice Provost for Research. At Stanford he also serves as a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, and as Director of the Center for Artificial Intelligence in Medicine and Imaging, which supports over 250 faculty at Stanford who conduct interdisciplinary AI research to improve health. Dr. Langlotz's own laboratory develops AI tools to eliminate diagnostic errors and detect disease early.

He received an undergraduate degree in Human Biology, master's in computer science, MD in Medicine, and PhD in Medical Information Science, all from Stanford University. He trained in radiology at the University of Pennsylvania and served on the faculty there for 20 years before returning to Stanford 12 years ago. He lives in Menlo Park, California.



Jane Lebkowski, PhD

President, Research & Development

Regenerative Patch Technologies

jane.lebkowski@gmail.com

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Biography

Jane Lebkowski has been actively involved in the development of cell and gene therapies since 1986 and is the President of Regenerative Patch Technologies, a biotechnology firm developing a bioengineered stem cell-based implant targeting improvement of retinal function in patients with retinal degeneration. Dr. Lebkowski also serves as an advisor to several academic and biotechnology institutions.

From 2013-2017, Jane Lebkowski served as Chief Scientific Officer and President of R&D at Asterias Biotherapeutics Inc, where she headed all preclinical, product, regulatory, and clinical development of Asterias' regenerative medicine and dendritic cell based-cancer immunotherapy products. Prior to joining Asterias, Dr. Lebkowski was Senior Vice President of Regenerative Medicine and Chief Scientific Officer at Geron Corporation. Dr. Lebkowski led Geron's human embryonic stem cell program from 1998-2012 and was responsible for all research, preclinical development, product development, manufacturing, and clinical development activities supporting cell-based therapies for several regenerative medicine indications including spinal cord injury and cardiovascular disease. Prior to Geron, Dr. Lebkowski was Vice President of R&D at Applied Immune Sciences and at Rhone Poulenc Rorer (currently Sanofi) where she directed activities to develop T cell-based cancer immunotherapies for solid tumors, hematologic malignancies, and AIDS. Dr. Lebkowski received her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Princeton University and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Department of Genetics, Stanford University.

Dr. Lebkowski has published over 80 peer reviewed publications and has 19 issued U.S. patents. Dr. Lebkowski has served on the Board of Directors of the American Society for Gene and Cell Therapy and the International Society Stem Cell Research along with numerous scientific advisory boards and professional committees. Dr. Lebkowski has served on panels sponsored by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine and FDA to brainstorm initiatives to improve and scale the production of cell-based therapies. Dr. Lebkowski also served as an alternate industry representative on FDA's Cellular, Tissue and Gene Therapies Advisory Committee.



Richard Lee, MD, PhD

NEI Clinical Director

National Eye Institute

richard.lee4@nih.gov

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Biography

Richard Lee joined the National Eye Institute as Clinical Director in December 2023 from London, England where he held leadership positions at the UK's premier centers for ophthalmic care and vision science. His research spans laboratory studies through to clinical trials, primarily in the fields of immunology, inflammatory eye diseases and immune therapies and he has helped raise more than \$100 million in personal and institutional grant awards for vision research. As a passionate advocate for Team Science his work is notable for its underpinning institutional partnerships and multidisciplinary contributors. He has broad experience overseeing large research portfolios spanning experimental medicine studies, including for first-in-man gene and cell therapies, through to data science and artificial intelligence.



Theodore Leng, MD, MS, FACS

Director of Clinical and Translational Research,
Director of Ophthalmic Diagnostics

Stanford University

tedleng@gmail.com

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Biography

Theodore Leng, MD, MS is an internationally recognized specialist in vitreoretinal diseases and surgery and has been named one of the top 150 innovators in the field of retina. He serves as the Director of Clinical and Translational Research at the Byers Eye Institute at the Stanford University School of Medicine Department of Ophthalmology in Palo Alto, CA, where he oversees more than 50 research programs. Dr. Leng attended the Stanford University School of Medicine for his MD and completed his ophthalmology residency at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, FL. After a postdoctoral and clinical fellowship in vitreoretinal diseases and surgery at Stanford, Dr. Leng joined the faculty in the Department of Ophthalmology at Stanford. He has been named one of “America’s Top Ophthalmologists” by the Consumers’ Research Council of America and is a Castle Connolly “Top Doctor.” Dr. Leng has published over 175 peer-reviewed manuscripts and serves as the Associate Editor for Ophthalmic Surgery Lasers and Imaging Retina. His current research interests include computer-aided and machine learning analysis of retinal images, cell-based therapies, clinical trials, multimodal imaging, oculomics and real-world evidence.

Dr. Leng is a founding member of the Collaborative Community on Ophthalmic Imaging and serves on the Horizontal Community on Foundational Principles of Ophthalmic Imaging and Algorithmic Interpretation, which has the goal of speeding the regulatory pathways for innovation in imaging-based systems, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Augmented Intelligence, and Autonomous Intelligence systems, as well Software as a Medical Device (SaMD). Dr. Leng serves Stanford Health Care as the Medical Informatics Director for Ambulatory Specialties, helping to integrate technology solutions to advance clinical care.



Bart Peter Leroy, MD, PhD

Professor of Ophthalmology, Ophthalmic Genetics
and Visual Electrophysiology

Ghent University, Belgium

bart.leroy@ugent.be

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Biography

Bart is Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology, and Staff Member at the Center for Medical Genetics at the Ghent University Hospital. He is Full Professor of Ophthalmology and Ophthalmic Genetics at the Department of Head & Skin at Ghent University. Between August 2013 and March 2020, Bart also was a part-time (20%) attending physician at the Division of Ophthalmology & Center for Cellular & Molecular Therapeutics at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA, USA.

Bart Leroy is an ophthalmologist and clinical geneticist specialised in, and passionate about inherited eye disorders. In collaboration with the team of Prof Elfride De Baere at the Center for Medical Genetics, Ghent University Hospital & Ghent University, he and his team are involved at the University of Pennsylvania and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA, USA, and Ghent University (Hospital), Ghent, Belgium. Bart is involved in deep phenotyping and genotyping studies. He leads the Belgian national reference center for inherited ocular disorders, which is also the national gene therapy group for inherited retinal blindness. He was part of the team led by Profs J Bennett, AM Maguire & K High that helped bring Luxturna to market within the USA & EU. He was Senior Clinical Investigator of the Research Foundation Flanders (Belgium) from 2010 to 2025. He is (co-)recipient of 32 scientific grants and prizes. Bart is board member of several professional organisations, including ISGEDR (Executive Vice-President), ERN-EYE (WG1 Retinal Diseases Co-Lead), EURETINA (Board Member for IRDs) and SGOF. He leads several multi-stakeholder efforts to increase awareness of IRDs through several channels.

Bart is author and co-author of over 245 peer reviewed publications, over 320 posters and over 355 scientific abstracts and 15 book chapters on genetic eye disease. He frequently teaches on ophthalmic genetics and visual electrophysiology, with over 610 presentations at international scientific meetings. Bart regularly peer reviews scientific papers for 28 different international publications, as well as grant applications or career reviews for many international grant bodies and universities. He is a regular panel member for PhD evaluations at leading national and international institutions and has trained more than 30 international fellows and observers.



Keith Luhrs, PhD

Vice President, Research and External Scientific Innovation

Bausch & Lomb

Keith.luhrs@bausch.com

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Biography

Dr. Luhrs is the Vice President of Pharma Research & External Scientific Innovation of Bausch + Lomb based at their Irvine, California West Coast Hub. In this role, he leads an integrated internal research and external science evaluation and collaboration group dedicated to helping our patients by building an innovative pipeline for indications spanning the eye. After an academic career in immunology and a start in oncology biotech, Dr. Luhrs has been focused on ophthalmology drug discovery and development for more than 15 years—and never looked back. Prior to Bausch + Lomb, he held various roles at Allergan and AbbVie prior to leading their retina and ocular surface discovery research teams. Dr. Luhrs received his B.S. in Biological Sciences from Penn State University and a Ph.D. from the University of California—Irvine.



David Myung, MD, PhD

Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and,
by courtesy, of Chemical Engineering, Ophthalmology,
Secondary appointments in the Departments
of Neurobiology and Bioengineering

Stanford University

np94@stanford.edu

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Biography

Dr. David Myung is an Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at Stanford Medicine and by courtesy of Chemical Engineering. He is a board-certified, fellowship-trained ophthalmologist whose clinical practice focuses on cataract surgery, corneal surgery, and external diseases of the eye.

At Stanford, Dr. Myung combines patient care with translational research aimed at improving vision outcomes and expanding access to eye care. His work spans corneal tissue engineering, regenerative medicine, drug delivery systems, and teleophthalmology, reflecting a strong interest in connecting engineering solutions with unmet clinical needs. He also leads programs that support ophthalmic innovation and remote screening, including efforts to improve access for patients who may not easily reach specialty care.

His research and clinical interests align around practical technologies that can help restore or preserve sight. Through teaching, mentorship, and innovation, Dr. Myung contributes to Stanford's broader mission of advancing eye health through science, clinical excellence, and multidisciplinary collaboration.



Daniel Palanker, PhD

Professor Ophthalmology, and, By Courtesy,
of Electrical Engineering

Stanford University

palanker@stanford.edu

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Biography

Daniel Palanker is a Professor of Ophthalmology and by courtesy, of Electrical Engineering at Stanford University. He received PhD in Applied Physics (biomedical optics) in 1994 from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, and postdoctoral training in Physics (ultrafast lasers) at Stanford University in 1996-1998.

Dr. Palanker studies interactions of electric field with biological cells and tissues, and develops optical and electronic technologies for diagnostic, therapeutic, surgical and prosthetic applications, primarily in ophthalmology. Currently, he is working on photovoltaic retinal prosthesis (PRIMA) for restoration of sight and on label-free imaging of neural signals in-vivo.

Several of his developments are in clinical practice world-wide, including Electrosurgical system (PlasmaBlade, Medtronic), Pattern Scanning Laser Photocoagulator (PASCAL, Iridex) and Femtosecond Laser for Cataract Surgery (Catalys, J&J). Photovoltaic retinal prosthesis (PRIMA, Science Corp.) and several others are in clinical trials.



Thomas Panek

President & CEO

Lighthouse Guild

panekt@lighthouseguild.org

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Biography

Thomas A. Panek is President and Chief Executive Officer of Lighthouse Guild, an organization empowering people who are blind or have vision loss to live, work, and shine. A trailblazer in accessibility innovation, Mr. Panek brings a wealth of leadership experience and a deep commitment to advancing accessibility and independence for people with vision loss. He has partnered with organizations such as Google and Meta to ensure technology is built with accessibility at its heart.

Mr. Panek's career spans leadership roles in the nonprofit, private, and government sectors. Before joining Lighthouse Guild, he served as President and CEO of Guiding Eyes for the Blind, a nonprofit organization that provides specially trained guide and service dogs to individuals with disabilities. He previously served as Vice President of National Industries for the Blind, where he played a pivotal role in business development, national account management, and the Wounded Warrior Program. Additionally, he served as a Senior International Trade Specialist at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Beyond his executive experience, Mr. Panek actively serves in various advisory and leadership capacities, including as Chair of Delta Air Lines Advisory Board on Disability and a board member of Achilles International. He has served as an expert on the CDC's Vision Health Initiative and Chair of the North American Council of Guide Dog Schools.

Mr. Panek holds both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in International Studies from The American University in Washington, D.C.



Andrew Pieper, MD, PhD

Professor and Morley Mather Chair in Neuropsychiatry

Harrington Discovery Institute

andrewapieper@gmail.com

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Biography

Andrew A. Pieper earned his MD and PhD in neurosciences from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 2001. He earned his PhD in the laboratory of Dr. Solomon H. Snyder and conducted his medicine internship and psychiatry residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital. At Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), he is the inaugural Rebecca E. Barchas, MD, Professor of Translational Psychiatry in the School of Medicine, and the inaugural Morley-Mather Chair of Neuropsychiatry of University Hospitals. He holds appointments in the CWRU Departments of Psychiatry, Neurosciences, and Pathology and operates a weekly geriatric psychiatry clinic at the Louis Stokes VA Medical Center. He is also the Director of the Brain Health Medicines Center of the University Hospitals Harrington Discovery Institute (HDI).

In addition to research and patient care, he is highly dedicated to mentoring younger scientists at all levels, including high school students and undergraduate students, as well as graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior faculty. His dedication to mentorship was recently recognized by his receipt of the 2023 John S. Diekhoff Award for Distinguished Graduate Student Mentoring, which identifies outstanding contributions to the education of graduate students through advising. This is CWRU's highest mentoring honor, and the nomination and selection process are entirely driven by graduate students. Dr. Pieper is additionally the Founding (2022) Director of the University Hospitals / CWRU American Heart Association (AHA) Partnership to Promote Diversity in Science, which every year hosts 4 summer students from groups traditionally underrepresented in science in various labs across CWRU and also sponsors their attendance at the annual international AHA meeting. He also serves as Associate Director of the CWRU Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) and Director of the HDI-MSTP Fellowship that offers specific training and resources to MSTP students for pursuing drug development of their discovery.

Andrew Pieper's lab is dedicated to advancing brain health and discovering new neuroprotective strategies for treating patients suffering from injury and aging-related forms of neurodegenerative disease, including Parkinson's disease (PD), Alzheimer's disease (AD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). To date he has published over 120 peer-reviewed articles in the field of brain health. Notably, his laboratory has identified a novel chemical compound series that preserves and restores normal energy levels of nerve cells (and their supporting cells) under conditions of otherwise overwhelming stress. Given the high energy demand of the brain, these compounds have shown broad efficacy in animal and human cellular models of neurodegenerative disease, both in the Pieper laboratory and in other laboratories across the world.

Recently, Dr. Pieper's group utilized these compounds to discover and report the first demonstration in the field of the ability of the mouse brain to fully recover from advanced neurodegenerative disease, including from both AD and the chronic neurodegeneration and cognitive impairment caused by traumatic brain injury (TBI). This proof of principle in animal models contradicts the long-held belief that neurodegenerative disease and its effects on the brain are irreversible, which raises the possibility of brain health and functional recovery for human patients suffering from these forms of neurodegenerative disease.



Stephen Poor, MBBS, MRCOphth

Head of Translational Medicine
Apellis

stephenapoor@gmail.com

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Biography

UK-trained ophthalmologist and physician-scientist with twenty-five years industry experience across discovery, translational medicine, late-stage development, regulatory strategy, and BD&L, predominantly in ophthalmology with recent extension into neurology and immunology. Has driven acquisition decisions at CMO level, determined the mechanistic basis of a Phase 2b gene therapy failure from a unique dataset of human ocular samples and ensured the findings were published for the field, and built scientific infrastructure that others depended on for years. Deep expertise across complement biology, angiogenesis, metabolism, gene therapy, and novel delivery, built from human tissue and data. Cross-functional across research, clinical development, real-world evidence, medical affairs, and BD&L. Currently at Biogen, accountable for Phase 3 GA endpoint strategy across FDA and EMA, advancing AI-derived imaging and functional endpoints toward regulatory acceptance, and driving the scientific rationale for a next-generation trial combining systemic and local complement inhibition.



Stevie Ringel

Founder and CEO

Nome Therapeutics

stevie@kizuna-foundation.org

Biography

Steven “Stevie” Ringel is the founder and CEO of Nome Therapeutics, an AI-native company building the operating system for personalized therapeutics that turns rare disease patients’ genomes into actionable treatment plans and executes on them end to end. Diagnosed with a rare retinal condition at 17, the same disease his sister Natalie shares, he founded the Kizuna Foundation to develop a gene replacement therapy for KIZ-mutated retinitis pigmentosa, and the operational bottlenecks he hit along the way became the thesis behind Nome. Before founding both, he was a healthcare strategy consultant at Bain and a VP/General Manager at Sema4 and Tempus, and he currently holds a board seat at the Foundation Fighting Blindness. He lives in San Diego with his partner and two dogs.



Noni Rossini

Chief Marketing Officer

Lighthouse Guild

RossiniV@Lighthouseguild.org

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Biography

Veronica (Noni) Rossini joined Lighthouse Guild as Chief Marketing Officer in 2025. Noni brings 17+ years of progressive leadership experience in marketing, communications, and brand strategy across mission-driven organizations. She built and scaled marketing and communications functions at the Tent Partnership for Refugees, Chobani CEO Hamdi Ulukaya’s foundation, where she also served as Vice President for Europe and Interim Executive Director, and at Girl Effect/Nike Foundation, where she oversaw Marketing and Communications. Her career also includes leading strategic communications for high-profile global brands at communications consultancy Teneo, where she directed campaigns for Meta, McDonald’s, and Coca-Cola among others.

At Lighthouse Guild, Noni leads the development and implementation of marketing and communications strategies to elevate the organization’s national reach and impact. She oversees brand positioning, digital marketing, media relations, and stakeholder engagement to ensure Lighthouse Guild is recognized as a leading organization empowering the blind and low-vision community. Noni earned an MPhil in International Relations from the University of Cambridge and a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from the University of Warwick. She has native fluency in English, Italian, and Portuguese, and professional proficiency in Spanish and French.



Nick Ruthmann, MD, MPH

Director, Center for Cardiovascular Health AI and Digital Innovation

Assistant Professor, Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine
of Case Western Reserve University

Heart, Vascular & Thoracic Institute, Cleveland Clinic

ruthman@ccf.org

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Biography

Nick Ruthmann is a cardiologist and physician leader at Cleveland Clinic, where he directs artificial intelligence strategy, development, deployment, and governance for the Heart, Vascular and Thoracic Institute.

He came to vision science through his parents, both of whom have age-related macular degeneration.

He directs the institute's AI evaluation and monitoring team, is a physician builder in Epic, and founded an AI curriculum for physician trainees to critically evaluate and responsibly apply AI at the bedside.

He is looking for collaborators on how patients and families come to trust clinical AI.

He serves on the Future Vision Foundation Board and is Co-Chair of this year's Future Vision Forum.



Alapakkam Sampath, PhD

Department Vice Chair, Ophthalmology,
Professor Ophthalmology

University of California, Los Angeles

alapakkamasampath@gmail.com

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Biography

Alapakkam Sampath, PhD, is the Grace & Walter Lantz Professor of Ophthalmology at the UCLA Jules Stein Eye Institute. His research focuses on the foundational mechanisms of visual sensitivity, specifically decoding how signals are processed and transmitted between photoreceptors and bipolar cells. Currently, his laboratory investigates homeostatic plasticity in the outer retina in response to inherited retinal degenerations.



Namrata Saroj, OD

Chief Business Officer

Ocular Therapeutix

namrataasaroj@gmail.com

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Biography

Namrata Saroj, OD has over 20 years of experience focusing on global development and commercialization of new drugs and technologies advancing Ophthalmic care. Her extensive understanding of the Ophthalmology clinical and commercial landscapes is founded on her diverse experiences working across multiple programs. She has been a significant contributor towards the commercialization of both Lucentis and Eylea, two of the most successful biologic products in this sector. Dr. Saroj's leadership has been recognized through her vast network of prominent clinical and industry leaders. She has co-authored several peer-reviewed publications in management of Ophthalmic diseases.

Currently, Dr. Saroj is the Chief Business Officer at Ocular Therapeutix. Additionally, as Principal of All Eyes Consulting, LLC, she collaborates with companies across various stages from early start-ups to late-stage development and commercialization. In this capacity, she has effectively helped these companies with strategic partnerships, clinical development and trial enrollment, launch preparation commercialization support. She is the co-founder and Chief Scientific Advisor of Clinical Trials Resource Group, a CRO focused on executing Ophthalmology clinical trials.

Prior to this, she led the Ophthalmology Medical Affairs team as an Executive Director at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc integrally involved in the global commercialization of Eylea. Dr. Saroj has previously held positions at Genentech and Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital.

Dr. Saroj is the President of Association for Macular Diseases, a non-profit organization offering support to individuals, their families, friends, and the professional community.

She earned her Doctor of Optometry from the University of California at Berkeley. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Optometry from the University of California at Berkeley and a Bachelor of Arts in Biochemistry from Whittier College.



Thomas Siebel

CEO, Founder

C3 AI

tsiebel@c3.ai

Biography

Thomas M. Siebel serves as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of C3 AI. He founded the company in 2009 and, in his capacity as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman, led C3 AI from its inception through a successful initial public offering to its establishment as a global leader in Enterprise AI.

Mr. Siebel serves on the College of Engineering boards at the University of Illinois, the University of California, Berkeley, and he is a director of the Hoover Institution and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He received a Bachelor of Arts in History, an MBA, and a Master of Science in Computer Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of four books, most recently *Digital Transformation: Survive and Thrive in an Era of Mass Extinction*.



Mandeep Singh, MBBS, MMed, DPhil, FRCSEd

Andreas C. Dracopoulos Professor of Ophthalmology

Johns Hopkins University

msingh27@jhmi.edu

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Biography

Mandeep S. Singh, MBBS, MMed, FRCSEd, DPhil, is the Andreas C. Dracopoulos Professor of Ophthalmology and Genetic Medicine at the Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute and Department of Genetic Medicine. A vitreoretinal surgeon and translational neuroscientist, Dr. Singh serves as the Founding Co-Director of the Genetic Eye Diseases (GEDi) Center and Director of Hereditary Retinal Diseases at Johns Hopkins. His clinical practice and administrative leadership have centered on transforming care pathways for rare eye disorders, expanding the GEDi Center into a high-throughput national referral hub and establishing a deeply phenotyped, genotyped repository of approximately 2,000 inherited retinal disease (IRD) patients to accelerate clinical trials.

Dr. Singh's research and clinical portfolio occupies the intersection of the 2026 Forum's themes of artificial intelligence, regenerative medicine, and advanced technology. In his laboratory, he pioneered the discovery of cellular component transfer (CCT): a novel mutation-agnostic retinal cell therapy mechanism that bypasses classical structural integration to rescue degenerate host photoreceptors and restore vision. This bench-to-bedside paradigm led him to integrate machine learning algorithms to study single-cell transcriptomes of retinal organoid in vitro models, design intraoperative image-guided subretinal delivery devices, and found Agnos Therapeutics, Inc., a biotechnology company dedicated to developing off-the-shelf generalizable therapies for retinal blindness. He also serves as part of the surgical team for the National Eye Institute's Section on Ocular Stem Cell & Translational Research, in the context of a Phase I/IIa clinical trial evaluating a stem cell-derived cellular patch for the treatment of age-related macular degeneration.

In the context of international clinical trial consortia leadership, Dr. Singh serves as the International Study Chair for the FDA- and Foundation Fighting Blindness-supported Gyrate Atrophy Ocular and Systemic Study and as Study Vice Chair for the Phase 3 multicenter NAC Attack trial of antioxidant treatment for retinitis pigmentosa. He is honored to have received the Future Vision Foundation Laureate Award, the Macula Society Young Investigator Award, and the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Bert M. Glaser MD Award for Innovative Research in Retina.



Daniel Ting, MD, PhD

Senior Consultant Vitreo-Retinal Surgeon
at the Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC),
Director of the SingHealth AI Office

Duke-NUS

daniel.ting45@gmail.com

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Biography

Associate Professor Daniel Shu Wei Ting is the Jong Soy Leong Faculty Professor at Duke-NUS Medical School, Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor and AI Innovation Mentor at the Stanford University, ex AI Fulbright Scholar at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab and School of Medicine. He is the founding co-director of the SingHealth Duke-NUS AI in Medicine Institute (AIMI), a member of the MOH AI steering committee, and a core leadership member in the national AI SIMFONI program. He is a global AI expert in deep learning for medical imaging and generative AI. Globally, he was recognized as one of the Top 100 AI Power List alongside leading global AI figures such as Jensen Huang, Fei-Fei Li and Yann LeCun in 2024, named one of Stanford University's World's Top 2% AI Scientists (2022-2026), and named to the World's Top 10 Ophthalmic Innovator List in 2025.



Ramin Valian

Chief Executive Officer

Emmecell

Ramin@emmecell.com

Biography

Ramin Valian is Chief Executive Officer of Emmecell, a clinical-stage biotechnology company pioneering magnetic cell delivery technologies for ophthalmic diseases. He brings more than three decades of experience in the specialty pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry, including over 20 years in the U.S. eye care market, with expertise spanning corneal disease, surgical and interventional glaucoma, retina, ocular surface disease, and consumer eye care.

Prior to joining Emmecell, Ramin served as Vice President, U.S. Eye Care at AbbVie, where he led the entire U.S. Eye Care business. In this role, he oversaw a broad portfolio including glaucoma, surgical and interventional devices, consumer eye care, retina, and ocular surface diseases. He was also responsible for leading the global pipeline strategy for AbbVie's Eye Care franchise, helping shape the long-term innovation and development strategy for the business. Earlier in his career at Allergan and AbbVie, Ramin held several senior leadership roles of increasing responsibility in operational and strategic functions. During this time, he led the launch of six major ophthalmic products across therapeutics and medical technologies and played a key role in multiple U.S. eye care licensing opportunities across both devices and pharmaceuticals, helping bring innovative treatments to patients worldwide.

As CEO of Emmecell, Ramin leads the company's corporate strategy, clinical and regulatory development, partnerships, and operational growth as it advances toward pivotal clinical development and commercialization. He is focused on expanding the potential of Emmecell's magnetic cell delivery platform, which enables targeted, minimally invasive placement of therapeutic cells for regenerative ophthalmic treatments.

About the Future Vision Foundation

Future Vision Foundation (FVF) is an independent 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. Founded in 2017 by Dr. Suber Huang, the Foundation's mission is to inspire and accelerate vision research by uniting visionary leaders worldwide in scientific collaboration and celebrate groundbreaking advancements in sight through impactful and inspiring documentary films.

The Foundation furthers the awareness and advancement of sight-saving research through the annual Future Vision Awards and the Future Vision Forum. The Future Vision Awards (art) is a cinematic celebration honoring individuals' medical breakthroughs in sight by highlighting their extraordinary research and its impact on vision care. The Future Vision Forum (science) is an unparalleled multidisciplinary symposium uniting visionary leaders worldwide to catalyze emerging research and accelerate innovation that improves the lives of people with eye diseases and visual disabilities. Together, the Future Vision Foundation's Awards and Forum aspire to unify art and science to foster innovation and cures for vision loss.

Future Vision Forum

The Future Vision Forum (Forum) is a first- in-kind annual scientific meeting chartered under the Future Vision Foundation.

Faculty participants are visionary leaders in ophthalmology, visual science, and allied fields that share basic science, translational, and clinical viewpoints on the most critical topics of emerging research. This multidisciplinary approach fosters ideas, programs, and collaborations that result in highly focused and strategic viewpoints that accelerate innovation, discovery, and improve the lives of people with eye disease and visual disability.

The Forum is a strategic colloquium that fosters dialog and insight from our most talented colleagues. Faculty participants engage in moderated discussions that foster innovative ideas and unique research collaborations. Each year a major Forum award is conferred. The inaugural recipient was Dr. Michael Chiang, Director of the National Eye Institute/NIH.

About the Future Vision Foundation

Future Vision Films

Documentaries created by the Foundation honor pioneers in vision health by delving into their work, illuminating its significance, and demonstrating how it helps people who need it most. Our innovative use of visual arts to tell compelling stories of vision is novel and uniquely powerful. These inspiring films aim to raise awareness about medical advancements and be a catalyst for vision research.

Every year, the Future Vision Awards feature the worldwide debut of Laureate films. Those who receive the Laureate Award are entitled to use their documentary films to share their story, present their research, and promote dialogue that supports their work.

Future Vision Laureate & Luminary Awards

The Laureate Award is given to individuals who have made remarkable contributions in their field of academic study related to the eye, eye disease, or vision. The awardee's work is recognized as emerging, exceptional, novel, and innovative. Recipients of this prestigious award represent Ophthalmology's most distinguished and innovative clinician-scientists.

The Luminary Award acknowledges an individual or organization's exceptional support of vision research or patient care. These inspirational individuals and their organizations have had a transformative impact on people's lives worldwide. Prior honorees include Lulie and Gordon Gund of the Foundation Fighting Blindness, Dr. Hunter Cherwek of ORBIS International, Rebecca Alexander of the Usher Syndrome Society, Bradford and Bryan Manning of Two Blind Brothers, the David and Molly Pyott Foundation and Dr. Geoff Tabin, Cure Blindness Project.

For more information and to see our films, go to FutureVisionFound.org or contact FVF Executive Director, Jessica Pietropinto, at jpietropinto.fvf@gmail.com or (216) 382-3366.

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Previous Awardees

Luminary Award

The Luminary Award is the Foundation's highest award and it's bestowed each year to the individual or organization for extraordinary commitment to supporting vision research, clinical care, or patient advocacy.

2026

Arthur Willis, MD, FACS,
Retina Research Foundation

2025

Dr. Geoff Tabin,
Himalayan Cataract Project

2023

David and Molly Pyott

2022

Bradford and Bryan Manning,
Two Blind Brothers

2021

Rebecca Alexander,
Usher Syndrome Society

2019

Hunter Cherwek,
ORBIS

2018

Gordon & Llura Gund

Laureates

A Laureate is an individual who works in visual sciences and has made extraordinary contributions to the understanding, treatment or prevention of blindness and vision related conditions.

2026

Dr. Connie Cepko
Dr. Botond Roska
Dr. Daniel Ting

2025

Dr. Mandeep S. Singh
Dr. Jacque L. Duncan
Dr. José-Alain Sahel

2023

Dr. Catherine Bowes Rickman
Dr. Philip Rosenfeld
Dr. Carol Shields

2022

Dr. Baruch Kuppermann
Dr. Christine Curcio
Drs. Jean Bennett & Albert Maguire

2021

Dr. Edwin Stone
Dr. Mark Terry
Dr. Russell Van Gelder

2019

Dr. David Huang
Dr. Johanna Seddon
Dr. Terry Smith

2018

Dr. Mary Elizabeth (ME) Hartnett
Dr. Mark Humayun
Dr. Krzysztof Palczewski

Previous Forums

2025: Immunomodulation, Cancer and Aging | Philadelphia, PA
2024: Neurolongevity, Neurorestoration, Neuroprotection | Santa Barbara, CA
2023: Rare Diseases | Washington, D.C.
2022: Human Centric Computing | Los Angeles, CA

Anastasios Nikolas Angelopoulos
 Mayssa Attar
 Petr Baranov
 Robert Bell
 Jean Bennett
 Kapil Bharti
 Michael Boaguidi
 Catherine Bowes Rickman
 Brian Brooks
 Wilson W. Bryan
 Wiley Chambers
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 Anne Coleman
 Karl Csaky
 Jacobi Cunningham
 Christine Curcio
 Oliver Danos
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 James P. Dunn
 Daniela Ferrara
 Greg Field
 John Flannery
 Carol Greider
 Tony Grover
 James Handa
 Alison Hardcastle
 Mary Elizabeth Hartnett
 Katherine High
 Jill Hopkins
 Sam Hopkins
 David Huang
 Suber Huang
 Mark S. Humayun
 Juan Carlos Izpisua Belmonte
 Thomas V. Johnson
 Jayashree Kalpathy - Cramer
 Rusty Kelley

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 Robert W. Nickells
 Kourous Nouri-Mahdavi
 Stephen Odaibo
 Steven Ojemann
 Marlana Orloff
 Steve Pakola
 Krzysztof Palczewski
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