

# Pride and Joy

I am honored to welcome you to the April 2004 issue of *Cataract & Refractive Surgery Today*. It is humbling to present the combined experience of seasoned refractive surgery pioneers, innovators, and teachers who have influenced so many ophthalmologists around the world over the past 40 years. The authors of our cover stories represent a Who's Who list of refractive surgeons. Their professional accomplishments serve as a historical review of how far refractive surgery has come and a glimpse of where it is going.

Today's refractive surgeons are responsible for the sight of their patients and for the future of our profession. Most general physicians work daily with the slowly degenerating biological systems of the human body. For many of these practitioners, the goal is not to improve physical function but to restore recently lost function or delay inevitable decay. Instead of donning the traditional cloak of physician caretaker, our authors focused their careers on the ophthalmic surgeon's role in improving patients' visual function beyond that dictated by their genes or environment.

Lee Nordan, MD, begins this month's cover focus by sharing his wisdom and perspective on the philosophical issues that pertain to refractive surgery. From the isolated island of innovators to the currently cautious acceptance of refractive surgery in mainstream ophthalmic practice, Richard Troutman, MD, and Casamir Swinger, MD, reflect on their experience bring-

ing keratomileusis and keratophakia to North America. Their stories, which include their rubbing shoulders with ophthalmic luminaries such as Professor José Barraquer, MD, are riveting. Also, Frederic Kremer, MD, provides an inspiring review of how he formulated the role that refractive surgery would play in his career while in the confines of Will's Eye Hospital's residency walls. His story portrays the lifecycle of innovation. Dr. Nordan also discusses the contributions of several innovators to the historically pivotal creation of the "refractive cataract

surgeon mentality." Steven Trokel, MD, provides first-hand knowledge of the creation of the 193-nm excimer laser for vision correction, and Ioannis Pallikaris, MD, explains the chronological development of the LASIK technique. Georges Baikoff, MD, describes his experience with developing a phakic IOL and how the device's evolution coincided with laser vision correction. Finally, I offer my thoughts on the

convergence of corneal and intraocular approaches to refractive surgery and how history may repeat itself as we seek the solution to presbyopia.

I anticipate that readers will keep this issue of *CRSToday* on their shelves as required reading for young partners, residents, and students who ask, "what is refractive surgery?" It will illuminate the significance of the few who were willing to risk their reputations and careers to make the profession of ophthalmology the fantastic and vibrant field it is today. ■



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