



**Maryland
Society for
Sight**

**MARYLAND SOCIETY FOR SIGHT
2004 PERSON OF VISION
DR. ARNALL PATZ**

The Maryland Society for Sight is extremely proud to bestow its highest honor, the 2004 Person of Vision Award on Dr. Arnall Patz, Director Emeritus of the Wilmer Eye Institute.

Dr. Patz has distinguished himself as a world renowned scientist, clinician, teacher and administrator, and in the process has immeasurably brightened the lives of those with whom he has come in contact.

In 1950, while still an ophthalmic resident at the District of Columbia General Hospital, he observed a premature baby with an oxygen funnel strapped to its face. Despite conventional wisdom, which appeared to support the ethicality and clinical validity of this new, life-saving therapy, Dr. Patz had the intuition to associate hyperoxia with the then recent epidemic of retinopathy of prematurity, the most common cause of blindness in American babies at that time. With a decision that was decades ahead of its time, he initiated and performed a formal clinical trial to determine the relative benefits and deficiencies of high versus low levels of inspired oxygen in premature infants. Dr. Patz was able to prove the causal relationship between hyperoxia and blinding retinopathy of prematurity.

In 1956, Dr. Patz received the Albert Lasker Research Award, considered the Nobel Prize in Science, for his sight saving work in the newborn nursery.

For the next two decades, Dr. Patz conducted in Baltimore an

exemplary private practice in all aspects of eye care, aiding thousands of patients in the process. Few physicians generate the love and devotion of so many grateful patients, and few physicians receive so much admiration from their professional colleagues.

During his years in private practice, while serving on the volunteer staff of the Wilmer Eye Institute, Dr. Patz initiated a series of laboratory investigations of vascular retinopathies, leading to important discoveries in diabetic retinopathy, retinopathy of prematurity and related diseases. In 1968, just a few years after the invention of lasers, Dr. Patz and other Hopkins colleagues developed one of the original argon laser photocoagulators to treat a variety of eye diseases, beginning with diabetic retinopathy and rapidly spreading to include macular degeneration, retinal branch vein occlusion and others.

In 1970, Dr. Patz joined the full-time staff of the Wilmer Eye Institute as the inaugural Seeing Eye Research Professor. He founded the Institute's famed Retinal Vascular Center, and for the next decade fostered a prodigious volume of high quality laboratory and clinical studies in retinopathy of prematurity, diabetic retinopathy, retinal branch vein occlusion, macular degeneration associated with subretinal neovascularization and other diseases affected by abnormal angiogenesis.

In 1979, Dr. Patz became the fourth director of the Wilmer Eye Institute, succeeding such great individuals as William Holland Wilmer, Alan C. Woods, and A. Edward Maumenee. For 10 years, he wisely guided the expansion of the Institute, and multiplied many-fold its resources, finances, and world class ophthalmic personnel. He fostered the careers of numerous young clinicians and scientists, whose names and accomplishments have themselves subsequently received well-deserved international respect and recognition.

In 1987 Dr. Patz served the American Academy of Ophthalmology as President. He continued his active leadership at the Academy as chairman of the national diabetic retinopathy project, Diabetes 2000. He also participated on innumerable boards of directors, advisory groups, and editorial boards throughout his career, and

gave many named and visiting professorial lectures.

Dr. Patz served on the Board of Directors of the Maryland Society for Sight from 1960 to 1984 and was the Society's President from 1970 to 1975.

Perhaps most important of all, Dr. Patz has inspired thousands of students and colleagues throughout the last half century with his generosity, honesty, enthusiasm and energy, as well as his commitment in pursuit of a productive and virtuous life. For those who know him well, his achievements as a loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend are as inspirational as his professional accomplishments.

In recognition of his remarkable contributions, Dr. Patz has been recognized with many prestigious honors, including the Inaugural Helen Keller Award in 1994. Some of his other awards include the E. Mead Johnson Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1956; first prize from the American Academy of Ophthalmology for his scientific exhibit on argon laser photocoagulation in 1970; the Lucien Howe Medal of the American Ophthalmological Society in 1991; the Friedenwald Research Award from the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) in 1980; the Inaugural Distinguished Scientist Award from the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness in 1982; and the Inaugural Isaac C. Michaelson Medal from the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Hebrew University/Hadassah Medical School in 1986. Distinguished universities, including the University of Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson University, and Emory University have conferred honorary doctorates upon him as has The Johns Hopkins University in 2001. In 1989, the Macula Society struck a medal, the Patz Medal, to be conferred only upon those individuals who have made outstanding contributions in retinal vascular diseases. He was the inaugural recipient.

In 1993, the Arnall Patz Distinguished Professorship in Ophthalmology was dedicated at the Wilmer Eye Institute, where a

professorial chair carries his name in perpetuity, and where a lecture hall also bears his name. Dr. Patz continues his commitments to philanthropies and medical education and enthusiastically participated in obtaining an advanced degree in liberal arts at Johns Hopkins University.

In the annals of 20th century ophthalmology, few individuals will have contributed so importantly as Dr. Arnall Patz. He continues to inspire those fortunate enough to work with him. Much can be learned through knowledge and appreciation of his sterling character and extraordinary productivity.

Dr. Patz and his wife, Ellen, have four children, Bill, Sue, Dave, and Jon, and eight grandchildren.

The Maryland Society for Sight salutes Dr. Patz as its 2004 Person of Vision for his extraordinary contributions to ophthalmology and his tireless dedication to the fight against blindness.