

## Dean Jack Bennett Returns to Indiana Due to Illness

### From the Office of the Dean

Dear Friends:

I hope that you will join me in expressing my deepest concerns to Jack and Alice Bennett as he faces the sudden onset of an illness that necessitated his leaving Saint Louis. During the past few days I have been made aware of several initiatives and opportunities that were taking shape under his direction over the past fifteen months. These opportunities must not escape us. As Acting Dean, it is my plan to continue to work toward his vision for us. More information is forthcoming and will appear in a future issue of the EyeWire. The following statements will provide additional information to those interested.

Sincerely,

Larry J. Davis, OD  
Associate Professor  
Acting Dean

### From the Office of the Chancellor

The UM-St. Louis campus community was saddened to receive copies of the message below from our Chancellor:

TO: Campus Community  
FROM: Blanche Touhill, Chancellor  
DATE: April 11, 2000  
RE: School of Optometry

School of Optometry Dean Jack W. Bennett has developed a serious medical condition that will necessitate treatment in Indianapolis. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Jack Nelson and I have asked Dr. Larry Davis to serve as acting dean during this time.

Dr. Bennett came to UMSL in January of 1999, following a distinguished career in the optometry field, including terms as dean of optometry schools at Indiana University and Ferris State University. That experience was beneficial as he moved quickly to refocus our optometry school and energize our clinical activities in East St. Louis and on Lindell Blvd. in St. Louis.

I am very confident that our optometry faculty will maintain and build upon the foundation that Dr. Bennett has established during his tenure here. Dr. Bennett deserves much credit and I am, as we all should be, appreciative of his efforts. I know you will join me in wishing him well.

A number of individuals and groups have asked how they might reach Jack and Alice Bennett to wish them well. The Bennetts have asked that people do not send flowers, but would welcome any notes or cards at the following:

Indiana University  
School of Optometry  
800 E. Atwater St.  
Bloomington, IN 47405  
c/o Gerald E. Lowther, O.D., Ph. D.

or email: [sgilmore@indiana.edu](mailto:sgilmore@indiana.edu)  
[glowther@indiana.edu](mailto:glowther@indiana.edu)

## School Briefs

### Alumni

**Dr. L. Kent Harrington** ('88 and '97) received his promotion to Lt. Col. in March. Kent and his wife, Gina, are currently living in San Antonio, Texas with their four children.

**Dr. Ellen Weiss** ('92) was published in *J. Glaucoma*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2000 (with Carl Camras), "Latanoprost-induced Iris Color Darkening: A Case Report with Long-term Follow-up."

### Faculty

**Dr. Vasudevan Lakshminarayanan** published three papers: 1) "Spatial pulse characterization in periodically segmented waveguides by using dynamic programming approach," *Optics Communication*, 169:223-231, 1999, 2) "Refractive astigmatism acts predominantly as a source of high spatial frequency distortion," *International Ophthalmology*, 22:181-182, 1999, 3) "Forever young: visual functions not affected or minimally affected by aging," *Journal of Gerontology: Biological Sciences*, 54:B336-B351, 1999.

**Drs. Edward S. Bennett, Vinita Henry, M. DePaolis, and JT Barr** published an article entitled "RGP Lens Management of the Irregular Cornea Patient" in the December 1999 issue of *Contact Lens Spectrum*.

**Dr. W. Howard McAlister** was elected Diplomate Chair for the Section on Public Health and Environmental Optometry at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Optometry. **Dr. Timothy Wingert** was elected Assistant Diplomate Chair.

**Dr. Edward S. Bennett and C. Schwartz** published "When Words Mean as Much as Dk and Base Curve" in the January 2000 issue of *Review of Optometry*.

(School Briefs continued on page 3)

## Dean Jack Bennett

### Message Given in Response to Chancellor's April 11 Announcement

(continued from page 1)

Faculty, Staff and Students:

April 11, 2000

I received a call from the Chancellor's office yesterday morning as I was leaving for lecture. Subsequently I learned of the nature of Dean Bennett's illness and the recommendation of his physician that he not continue to work at this time. I was not prepared for what I learned next. In a conversation that morning with Blanche Touhill and Jack Nelson, Dean Bennett communicated his opinion that I should sincerely consider assuming the position of Acting Dean. The Chancellor having the fullest confidence in his recommendation encouraged me to do so.

Let me say that as you are, I am in shock. Jack has served us for just over one year. I believe in that short time he fostered an environment of cooperation and participation by everyone. In that time we completed an introspective evaluation of our entire program which was to serve as a guideline for the immediate and distant future. Now, while we do not yet know the full impact of his leadership, we do have the opportunity to continue to work toward those goals and objectives, challenges and opportunities communicated in the report from the Council of Optometric Education. Dean Bennett is firmly convinced that many exciting things are in our future. He is confident that Chancellor Touhill and Vice-Chancellor Nelson intend to do whatever is in their power to assist us in that journey.

I did not seek this role and am deeply humbled by the thought of following Dean Bennett. I do intend to honor his request and recommendation to continue working toward what he began. Together we can make progress addressing the challenges and opportunities that are before us. I hope that each of us in the spirit of cooperation and responsibility will look outside ourselves and focus on those things which will enhance our teaching, research and patient care. I see a wealth of untapped potential in the students, faculty and staff at the University of Missouri Saint Louis School of Optometry.

Sincerely

Larry J. Davis, OD

## From Jack W. Bennett, O.D.

It is with great sadness that I am announcing I am no longer able to continue in my position as Dean of the UM-St. Louis School of Optometry. Although I have truly enjoyed the time I have been associated with the School and believe we have accomplished a great deal in the short time I have been here, my health requires that I leave with much left unfinished.

I have recently been diagnosed with a rare neurological disorder. Because of the degenerative nature of the disease, I am returning to Bloomington, Indiana, to be closer to my family and Indiana University.

I would like to thank the administration, faculty, staff, and students at UM-St. Louis for the opportunity you have given me to serve you over the last fifteen months and for the support you have given me.

My sadness in leaving, however, is lightened by the knowledge that the school has been left in the capable hands of Dr. Larry Davis, Acting Dean.

Again, thank you. You will all be missed.

Jack W. Bennett

## Eric Stein Carrying on the Community Service Tradition

by Barbara Willis Brown, O.D. ('88)

Eric Stein, O.D. (1984) has been in his own private practice for about eight years. Yearning for those simpler days of fourth-year rotations, Eric has been devoting his Tuesday evenings to providing free eye care at a medical clinic in Fort Smith. In the beginning, it looked much like his memories of the New Life Evangelistic Center or a VOSH trip—donated glasses in baggies and exami-

nations with trial frames and hand held instruments.

About five years ago, the group obtained some outside funding which allowed Eric to purchase children's glasses. In the following year, some additional funding allowed him to purchase adult glasses. He sees about 20 to 25 patients a month in this program outside his private practice. Eric and his wife Joan and two children, Stacy and Danny, reside in Fort Smith, AR.

## Dr. Robert A. Koetting Receives Numerous Awards

by Barbara Willis Brown, O.D. ('88)

Robert A. Koetting, O.D., F.A.A.O., had quite a year in 1999. First he was honored with the AOA's Distinguished Service Award in June. In December, the awards really rolled in. First Optometric Management named him as one of the "top O.D.'s of the Decade." Then, Review of Optometry named him "Most Influential O.D. in Practice Management in the 20th Century." Any one of these might have been enough for most optometrists, but Dr. Koetting received all three. When asked about what he had thought when he heard about receiving these, he very modestly stated, "Gee, that's nice."

When asked of which award he is most proud, he quickly states, "Contact Lens Person of the Year" 1986, the Contact Lens Section of the AOA. He was the third recipient of this award.

I had the pleasure of sitting and chatting with Dr. Koetting in January and discussing some of what makes him contribute his time and energy to various professional organizations. He, again modestly, stated, "To have something to do." That may be telling for many of us: have something to do!

When asked to what he would attribute his success, he states that he attributes his success to the 'work

ethic.' He feels that optometrists from the post-war era had to struggle to be known in their field, so they often joined the Rotary Club, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, and others. Current graduates, he understands, struggle with the student loan debt. To that end he serves on the Scholarship Committee of the Friends of the University Committee. He states that he is trying to help make things better.

With all the awards which have come his way, I had to ask Dr. Koetting who he felt did the most for optometry in the 20th century. His reply was quick, "My dad. Most people don't realize that he was an optometric militant—he worked to have optometrists think and work as doctors. He worked to advance professional optometry, and was responsible for getting the AOA to move from Pittsburgh to St. Louis." He explained that in those days, the official office moved with whomever was president. The secretary's office was located in Pittsburgh. "My dad worked at the AOA office until he finally retired in 1988 or '89."

Perhaps these insights sum up the story of "success meets optometry" in the stories of Drs. Koetting—it runs in the family. Congratulations, Dr. Koetting.

## School Briefs

**Dr. Monica Harris** is currently working on a Master of Business Administration degree in the Executive Program at Washington University.

**Dr. Bill Long** published a paper, "Competency-based Optics Instruction," in the *Journal of the American Optometric Association*, January, 2000.

**Dr. Edward S. Bennett** was quoted in the March 2000 issue of *Family Life* magazine (from the publisher's of *Parents*) in an article "Are Contact Lenses Right for Kids?". Dr. Bennett said "when children are active in sports, glasses get in the way. Some children may be intimidated by contacts or may not be comfortable touching the lenses of their eyes. If a child is happy with his glasses, his parents shouldn't push for contacts." Dr. Bennett recommends children about age 9 may begin wearing contacts successfully.

### Alumni Personals

**Drs. Gary and Lorrie Poteet** are the proud parents of a new son, Dawson. He weighed 8 lbs. 3 oz. and measured 20 3/4 inches long. He has a two year old brother Dakota. Gary is a partner at Snowy Range Vision Center in Laramie, Wyoming.

**Dr. Jonathan J. Schorn** ('99) and his wife Tracy welcomed Rachel Emily Schorn into the world. She was 7 lbs 5 oz and "has lots of dark brown hair." Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Dr. Gerald McLaughlin** ('90) who was married to Dr. Phoebe Ho March 18, 2000 in Overland Park, KS.

Visit **Dr. Lawrence W. Ernst** ('90) at his website: [www.warrentonedoc.com](http://www.warrentonedoc.com).

(School Briefs continued on page 4)

**School Briefs**

**Faculty Personals**

**Drs. Edward S. Bennett** and his wife, Jean, are the proud parents of a newly adopted daughter. Emily Claire was born in China and arrived in the United States in January. Emily was welcomed by two brothers, Josh and Matt.

In April, **Dr. Robert Mobley** published a poem entitled "Reflections in a Cemetery" in *Charlie*, the literary journal of the St. Charles Community College.

**Dr. Bill Long** played the recorder for the UM-St. Louis Madrigal Dinners in December, 1999, and at the "Play the Recorder Month" recital of the St. Louis Recorder Society held Sunday, March 26, 2000.

Congratulations on your achievements, Vand!

**Calendar**

**May 19, 2000**

School of Optometry  
Honors Convocation  
Hilton St. Louis Frontenac  
6:00 p.m.  
Call Lis for more information  
(314) 516-5615

**May 20**

School of Optometry Advisory  
Board Meeting, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

**May 20**

UM-St. Louis Commencement  
America's Center, 7:00 p.m.

**June 2-4**

MOA Leadership Retreat  
Lake of the Ozarks

See a complete list of all faculty and staff email addresses!



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