The Northwestern Ohio Lions Eyebank and the NWO Lions Eyecare Foundation

A History of Service to Our Area

By

Lion Carol R. Kollarits, MD
Founders:

• Robert Oberhouse (Pemberville)
• Lee Black (Maumee)
• Freeman Crampton (Toledo)
• Medical Director: Dr. Richard Torchia

The minutes of the earliest meetings were destroyed after the death of one of the subsequent presidents, so I do not know the exact date of the founding, but I assume it was after the founding of the Eye Bank Association of America in 1961.

The first meeting I attended was in November of 1976, shortly after my husband, Frank Kollarits, and I came to Toledo. At that meeting, Barry McEwen recruited Frank to join the Maumee Lions Club. Frank had a perfect attendance for more than 20 years.

Frank had a Ph.D. in physics and taught Electrical Engineering at the University of Toledo for 30 years.
In 1976, Dr. Torchia recruited me to the faculty of the Medical College of Ohio and asked me to become Medical Director of the Eyebank.

This photo shows my husband, Dr. Frank Kollarits, assisting me in using the first ophthalmic ultrasound unit in northwestern Ohio. We calculated the power of the intraocular lens to be used in this patient’s cataract surgery.
PURPOSE OF AN EYEBANK

• OBTAIN,
• TRANSPORT,
• AND STORE DONATED EYES FOR
• TRANSPLANTATION OF CORNEAL AND OTHER EYE TISSUE,
• RESEARCH, AND
• PRACTICE SURGERY.
The clear cornea and the white sclera were the only parts of the eye that could be successfully transplanted at that time.

Newer transplantation techniques actually use only the single layer of endothelial cells and the adjacent basement membrane (Descemet’s membrane) on the inner side of the cornea.
Donor eye

Recipient eye

Cornea

Scarred cornea is discarded

Donor cornea is removed and transplanted to recipient
FULL THICKNESS CORNEAL TRANSPLANT

The most common procedure used a circular blade to cut a full thickness disc from the donor and recipient eyes. Then the healthy corneal disc was stitched into the opening in the recipient’s cornea, as shown below.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY

ONE YEAR AFTER SURGERY
100% SUCCESS IN KERATOCONUS AND KERATOGLOBUS (NO BLOOD VESSELS)

Unlike heart and kidney transplantation, corneal donors and recipients do not have to “match”.

If there are no blood vessels in the abnormal cornea, as in keratoconus or keratoglobus, then the patient’s immune system will not reject the transplanted corneal tissue.

The globular cornea on the left causes distorted vision. On the right, the more normal contour after transplantation provides better vision.
LESS SUCCESSFUL IF BLOOD VESSELS ARE PRESENT (SCARRING AFTER HERPES INFECTION)

If blood vessels are present, as in this cornea following a Herpes infection, then white blood cells and antibodies can reach the transplanted cornea and cause rejection, resulting in scarring of the transplanted cornea.
FUCH’S ENDOTHELIAL DYSTROPHY
MOST COMMON INDICATION

Fuch’s corneal dystrophy can cause blurred vision in older people, particularly after cataract surgery.

Instead of transplanting the full-thickness cornea, today’s corneal surgeons can remove and replace just the inner layers of the cornea through a small incision, eliminating the multiple stitches and long recovery times of full-thickness corneal transplantation.

An air bubble holds the transplanted tissue in position for a few hours, after which the healthy transplant adheres to the back of the patient’s cornea.
The details of the iris are poorly seen through the hazy cornea before the corneal transplant. After the transplant, the cornea is clear and the iris details can be seen easily.
Robert Oberhouse was the first president of the Lions Eyebank of Northwestern Ohio.

He had lost both eyes in World War II, but worked full-time as a counselor for the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired.

He ran an excellent meeting, recognizing members by their voices.
Dr. Robert Kiess, the residents, and I organized two enucleation courses for area morticians.

The doctors in training to be ophthalmologists did the autopsy enucleations in the Toledo area.

Outside Toledo, we depended on local morticians to remove the donated eyes. The Eyebank sponsored two enucleation courses for area morticians.

The donated eyes were transported to Toledo by local Lions Club members, and sometimes by the Ohio State Highway Patrol.
Every eye was used for its best purpose.

If an eye could not be used for corneal transplantation (for example, if the donor died of an infection that could have been transmitted to the recipient), then it could be used for practice surgery by the residents.

This photo shows Dr. Thomas Shealy doing surgery on a donated eye. Dr. Shealy practiced ophthalmology in Ft. Wayne, Indiana after completing his ophthalmology residency at Medical College of Ohio.
Diabetic Retinopathy Screenings

Bob Oberhouse held Eyebank meetings throughout northwestern Ohio to give all Lions in the region the opportunity to be part of the Eyebank.

Many of these local Lions Clubs sponsored free diabetic retinopathy screenings, as shown in this photo. Patients were examined and, if diabetic retinopathy was found, they were referred to their local eye doctor for further care.

Dr. Ada Hall now practices ophthalmology in Wisconsin, and Dr. Larry Jordan practices in Missouri.

We would not have been able to provide this service without the support and organizational abilities of the local Lions Clubs through their involvement with the Lions Eyebank.
Two air-puff tonometers were purchased for glaucoma screening.

Over 30,000 people in NWO were screened by Lions after we trained them to use the air-puff tonometer.

About 300 were referred for further testing.

This was a very successful service provided by local Lions at County Fairs and health fairs. Unfortunately, Lions International cancelled the use of air puff tonometers after being sued by a patient who broke her arm when she jumped and fell off a chair during a test.
Ohio Lions Eye Research Foundation Award

During this period, the Ohio Lions Eye Research Foundation funded several research grants at Medical College of Ohio.

In this photograph, Dr. James Blume from the McComb Lions Club is shown presenting a check for a new research project.
TEN YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LIONS EYEBANK OF NORTHWESTERN OHIO:

• 100 CORNEAS PER YEAR PROVIDED FREE
• MOST EYEBANKS CHARGED $1,000 EACH
• OVER $1,000,000 SAVED
• NEW EXPENSES: HIV TESTING AND ORGAN PROCUREMENT AGENCY “FINDER’S FEE”

No fees were charged to either the patient or the patient’s insurance for the donated cornea. When these new fees were charged to the Eyebank, the Lions felt they could not charge the recipient for tissue that had been donated by another person. Rather than disband the Eyebank, they decided to repurpose the organization to fund eye surgery for those who “fell through the cracks” – those with no insurance but making too much money to qualify for Medicaid.
This is a page from the West Central Ohio Lions Eyebank, showing the fees typically charged today.

**Lions Eye Bank West Central Ohio Fee Structure**

**January 2017**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Location Pricing</th>
<th>Cornea</th>
<th>DSEK</th>
<th>DMEK</th>
<th>Whole Sclera</th>
<th>Half Sclera</th>
<th>Glycerin Cornea</th>
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<td>$3,800</td>
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(Fee Includes Shipping)
NORTHWEST OHIO LIONS EYECARE FOUNDATION
GLEN GAMBER OFTEN BROUGHT BOB
Glen Gamber belonged to the Pemberville Lions Club. Although his wife, Beverly, used a wheelchair, the two of them attended nearly every Lions Eyecare Foundation meeting.
Nate Hampshire from the Findlay Lions Club and his wife Alma were also regular attendees.

For many years, Nate also served on the Ohio Lions Eye Research Foundation, attending their meetings in Columbus.
After the demise of the Lions Eyebank of Northwestern Ohio, Al McEwen of the Maumee Lions Club continued to bring donated eyes from the Michigan Eyebank in Ann Arbor to Toledo. One of his proudest memories was of recognizing a fellow Lion in the waiting room of a local surgery center, just after Al had brought an eye from Ann Arbor. When Al asked the other Lion why he was there, the reply was, “My wife is having a corneal transplant.”

Al and Wanda were also frequent attendees at the Lions Eyecare Foundation meetings.
Wayne Zook was president of the Lions Eyecare Foundation after Bob Oberhouse’s death. Wayne’s wife, Phyllis, was a nurse. She arranged several Lions-sponsored free diabetic retinopathy screenings at Fulton County Health Center.

Wayne served as president until his death.
Wayne Zook of Wauseon, a representative of the Northwest Ohio Lions Eye Care Foundation, presents a Braille and Speak machine to Mrs. Carla Garbo, a Fulton County teacher for the visually impaired. The machine was purchased for a blind child in northwest Ohio.
Jim Sugg served as the next president of the Northwestern Lions Eyecare Foundation. His recollections follow:

Reflections on the Northwest Lions Eye Bank
Northwest Ohio Lions Eye Care Foundation

I started attending meetings of the Northwest Ohio Lions Eye Bank in the early 80’s. At that time, morticians were trained about the removal and care of eyes and volunteers from local Lions Clubs were notified to transport the eyes to Toledo – Ann Arbor – or Columbus for processing and cornea transplants. PDG Bob Oberhouse from Pemberville Lions was the chairman of the Eye Bank. He had become blind while serving in the armed services and had a great passion to help others who were blind. A few of the others who were very active in the Eye Bank were PDG Glen Gamber and Lion Carl Manzek from Pemberville, PDG Nate Hampshire from Findlay, Lion Bob Shreve from Toledo East, and Lion Bill Best from Delphos. When Organ Procurement started sending excessive bills for processing corneas (these bills were never paid) the group started looking for other ways to meet the eye care needs of the people in District 13-A.
Jim Sugg’s recollections, continued:

- The Northwest Ohio Lions Eye Care Foundation was formed with the help of a lawyer in Pemberville who assisted with the writing of the purpose of the foundation and the necessary legal papers. Included in the purpose and legal papers was the statement that “All members in District 13-A Lions Clubs would be considered voting members of the foundation”. The goals at first were to provide eye surgeries and special glasses that exceeded in cost what local clubs could provide.

- Cases are to be submitted by local clubs for consideration of assistance. Prior approval is needed for cases unless it is an emergency and then the medical director and executive committee can approve treatment. Carol Kollarits MD served as our Medical Director for many years.

- At that time the quarterly meetings were held in restaurants rotating between Region 1 and Region 2. We held lots of meetings in the “Forks” at Pemberville and a restaurant in Middle Point. When PDG Bob’s voice started to give out on him he asked me to run the meetings for him and I enjoyed taking him to the Sight Center in Toledo and presenting scholarships to graduating ophthalmology students at MCO. Several grants for research were given to doctors and researchers at MCO.

- Later, when Lion Wayne Zook from the Wauseon Lions Club took over as chairman of the NWOLECF the group became a 501c3 foundation. Other chairmen of the foundation who have served are PDG Jim Sugg, PDG Ron Meyer, PDG Larry Swords, and PDG Pat Goulding. Over the years some of the Lions who have served as Directors were PDG Al Trausch, PDG Gerald Aller, PDG Charlie Hinkle, Lion Morris Warner, PDG Louis Deutschman, Lion Al McEwen and many other Lions. Currently Dr. Robert Goulding serves as Medical Director.

- In the early days of the NWOLECF, two air puff tonometers were purchased for use by Lions Clubs holding eye screening projects. Later on we started to purchase CCTV’s to loan to individuals within the district who needed them. These were real bears to carry around – 25” RCA Tv’s and the cameras that were connected to the Tv’s. They were not only heavy but they required a lot of space and a sturdy table. The newer models in use now are a huge improvement.

- Jim Sugg, April, 2017
JIM SUGG
PASSES THE GAVEL TO
RON MEYERS
Ron Myers sent the following letter:

I really don’t like writing about myself.
I was involved with the NWOLECF for a long time. I was secretary two years and then took over as president. I was president for five years. I took over from Jim Sugg. I remember talk of the eyebank, but I was never involved with it.

Yours in Lionism,
PDG Ron Meyers
RON MEYERS DELIVERS A CCTV VISION AID
Oscar Schultz of Findlay followed Ron Meyers as president. Abbie Schultz had her daughter e-mail several pictures to me. I thought this was the best photo I received. Her daughter, Jeanette, sent along these recollections:

Hello Carol,

Please find attached some photos of Dad and Mom (Oscar and Abbie Schultz) with some of their Lions Club activities. Also find the PDF images of two certificates which were presented to their club in acknowledgement and appreciation for their contributions to LCIF.
Abbie Schultz’s recollections were forwarded to me by her daughter, Jeanette:

Several of the photos have the following notes on the back. The one with Mom and Dad standing close, side by side is marked “Middle Point Lions Visitation”. The one with John Davis presenting Dad with a certificate is marked “Ohio Lions District 13-A Convention. Sat. Cabinet Breakfast Award, Days Inn, Findlay, OH. Award given to Oscar Schultz, District Chaplain. March 20, 1993”.
The one with Dad pointing, is marked, “Perrysburg Lion, Frank Huntley and Findlay president Oscar Schultz show Abbie Schultz the contributions made to Ohio Lions Eye Research Foundation”. As a side note – Frank Huntley and his wife, Anna Marie have been special friends of my parents for many, many years. Anna Marie was one of Mom’s bridesmaids for their wedding in 1948.

Mom and Dad had been the ones who took the contributions to Columbus to, as Mom recalls it, the research building. Mom and Dad enjoyed talking with the students who were doing the experiments. Although Mom does not now recall the names of the students, she does recall that it was all very interesting. Mom and Dad’s dear friends and fellow Lions, Nate and Alma Hampshire, had also made some of these trips prior to my parents doing so. Sadly, both Nate and Alma have also passed away.

Mom says that she and Dad did enjoy meeting you at District 13-A dinners. In addition, Mom remembers that you treated her mother’s eyes for a bleeding problem, Laura J. Entrikin, quite a number of years ago. Grandma Entrikin passed away in 1986 at the age of ninety and six months.

Dad and Mom had sixty-five years together. During their early years, Dad was a pastor with the Church of God, General Conference. Then in the 1970’s he became an instructor and librarian at Winebrenner Theological Seminary in Findlay. After Dad retired for pastoring and teaching, he became very active in the Lions Club activities. He enjoyed being involved in helping people and so was delighted to participate in so many of their endeavors.

Mom and I hope that this will be helpful to you,
Blessings,
Jeanette (Schultz) Berg
AFTER 20 YEARS, I RESIGNED AS MEDICAL DIRECTOR AND WAS REPLACED BY DR. ROBERT GOULDING (far right).
Larry Swords followed Oscar Schultz as president.

LARRY AND CAROL SWORDS
Both Patricia Goulding and Dr. Robert Goulding served terms as district governor. Subsequently, Pat Goulding became president of the Northwestern Ohio Lions Eyecare Foundation, while “Dr. Bob” continued as the medical director.

Pat, seen in the following photos, conducted meetings until shortly before her death.
PRESIDENT PATRICIA GOULDING