

# FOCAL POINTS

MICHIGAN COLLEGE OF  
OPTOMETRY'S NEWSMAGAZINE

SPRING/SUMMER 2019

## FACULTY/ EMERITUS FOCUS

Dr. Jennifer Schad  
Dr. Michael Keating

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## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Ankur Patel  
Erica Halm

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## A WORD FROM

Dr. Barbara Horn  
Alumna and AOA President

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## ALUMNI FEATURE

Dr. Lee Peplinski  
Drs. Jess and Dave Czerny



# THOUGHTS FROM THE DEAN



MCO Dean, Dr. David Damari

As another summer winds down here in Western Michigan, we look forward to welcoming our next class of optometry students to Michigan College of Optometry. I am sure you remember all too well the challenges and joys these excited students will face over the next months and years: adjusting to life in Big Rapids (if they are not coming to us from the College of Arts & Sciences), making new friends that will last a lifetime, getting ready for a course load like none they have experienced yet in their academic careers...the list is almost endless! But this is also a time of unique challenges for your College. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) incentives for meaningful use of electronic health records were a significant source of clinical revenue for the University Eye Center for the last several years but those incentives are phasing out. We are facing increasing costs and ever-tightening budgets for operating one of the smallest and highest-quality optometric education programs in the country.

If those challenges weren't enough, the competition for top optometry students is getting stiffer. A new program opened in Downer's Grove, Illinois (just outside of Chicago) two years ago and the University of Detroit-Mercy has made it known that they are investigating optometry as a new offering. A new program in East Tennessee just received Stage Two approval from the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education.



That's a potential addition of just under 200 new seats when optometry programs already admit over 75% of all applicants. For a small program like MCO to function well, our students must be among the best, and they are, but the increasing competition makes attracting the best much more difficult. Our faculty are doing an outstanding job of updating the curriculum to support the advancements in the profession. They, and the administration and staff of the College, strive to assure that we will continue to offer the highest quality optometric education to the best students.

If you believe, as I do, that the quality of education at MCO is critical to the future of our profession, then now is the time to help with those efforts. I have previously asked for your financial support before for student scholarships, but now your opportunities to make a positive impact on MCO and the future of our profession go far beyond that. If you have ever had an inclination to give to MCO, it is time to act. You can create an endowed scholarship under the Ferris Futures matching grant program. You can help with our capital needs, since our technology purchased when the building was new 8 years ago is rapidly aging out of its useful life. Please consider going to [ferris.edu/giving/mco](http://ferris.edu/giving/mco) to see some of those opportunities, or contact Bob Murray at the Ferris Foundation (231.591.2365). Please help us to keep your Michigan College of Optometry among the most selective and outstanding programs in the country!

One of the bedrocks of the quality education at MCO for many years was Dr. Mike Cron, who we recently lost. I first had the opportunity to meet Dr. Mike Cron at the turn of the millennium when he chaired a National Board sub-committee I had just been appointed to. I knew of him by his work on visual perception and development, and was looking forward to meeting him. When I finally did, I was immediately struck by how gentle and soft-spoken he was. He was a clear example to me of someone who had important things to say, but did not say them in a loud or insistent way. He let the content of his words, and of his character, demand attention from those who were blessed enough to listen. Moreover, he used that wisdom to be a tireless advocate for children—his children and grandchildren, the children who were patients of the University Eye Center, and all the children who could benefit from optometric services. In other words, he advocated for every child in his passionate but quiet way. Dr. Cron's legacy will live on because of his love of theater, his work at MCO, his work at the National Board and other national optometric organizations, and his life as a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

As always, if you any suggestions for the College, or any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best always,

*David Damari*



# AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. BARBARA HORN AS SHE BECAME MCO'S FIRST ALUMNA/US PRESIDENT OF THE AOA



## WHAT DO YOU THINK HAS LED YOU TO THIS MOMENT?

I was first introduced to optometry in elementary school, watching my brother go through his vision therapy sessions. Then, later in my first week of optometry school, our practice management educator asked us to present on any topic of our choosing. I chose “the alphabet soup of optometry:” AOA, AOSA, AAO, ASCO, ARBO among many others (those are just the A’s). I realized that while all within the organizations are critical to the functioning of optometry, only one safeguards, advances and continues to represent and protect us all. Because of that realization, in week one of optometry school, I was forever devoted to our AOA. Early on, I recognized the important role the optometric profession plays in our society by providing high-quality eye and vision care that helps make a difference in the lives of patients and our communities each and every day. Having the support of both the MOA and the AOA has been critical in helping me become the best health care provider I can be.



## **WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF IN YOUR OPTOMETRIC CAREER?**

My goal is to inspire future leaders and increase the student transition to life-long membership. There is an opportunity to get them informed to help increase public awareness and contribute to the professional standing of the profession, which is why I'm eager to invigorate students and young ODs and keep them involved in organized optometry. I know that when I connect with individual doctors and talk to them about the importance and value of membership, a light goes off and they come into the fold. Receiving messages like these years after the student event where the initial conversation occurred is priceless and makes me very proud:

*"... asked you how you were able to do, what I considered, EVERYTHING and do it so well. Your answer helped propel my career. You told me 'You make time for what's important to you.' That seems simple but to me at the time it was highly impactful. Thank you again!"*

This is why this year, we are also making even more of a concerted effort to connect one-on-one as an organization in a way that's never been done before. Throughout this coming year, AOA's Board of Trustees will travel among schools and colleges of optometry nationwide, where we will have the opportunity to engage even more with presidents and deans, faculty and students. During those meetings, we will also work to interact with affiliates at the local level. Through these meetings and opportunities, we will encourage everyone in this great profession to get involved and propel us into a prosperous future.

## **WHERE DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF OPTOMETRY HEADING?**

With the changing landscape in health care-- from dramatic shifts in regulations, care delivery, technology and doctor-patient engagement-- now is an epic moment for the profession. When faced with change in the past, optometry has looked forward with insight and strategy to navigate changes and set a clear path for what is best for the profession and our patients. Our history is replete with action from doctors propelling eye health and vision care forward, not simply sitting on the sidelines. From daring to charge-a-fee for an exam to boldly blazing through states across the country to advance care by modernizing legislation to ensure doctors can provide the care we are trained to deliver, we carry a strong flame forward. The AOA, our volunteers and leaders do so much to fight for our right to practice and care for patients that it's a 24/7/365 labor of love. It is our collective power that makes optometry so strong, which is why I am resolute on moving forward as one profession, with one voice. Our membership is strong, but we need all doctors and future doctors to join in and get engaged.



## **WHAT ARE A FEW THINGS YOU HOPE TO FOCUS ON DURING YOUR PRESIDENCY?**

### **#2020EyeExam Campaign**

Given the tie-in with 20/20 vision, we are seizing the year 2020 to spotlight optometry's essential and expanding role in health care and to leverage the collective power of AOA doctors and students to educate the public about the importance of comprehensive eye exams. The initiative will encourage Americans to make 2020 the year they schedule an in-person, comprehensive eye exam with an AOA doctor of optometry. We plan to utilize every possible mode of communication to get the word out, while engaging members, health care providers, employers and the public in that message.

### **AOA Future Practice Initiative**

With doctors of optometry in more than 10,000+ communities across the country, we are a critical key to primary eye health care for all Americans and could make access a reality for 99 percent of our nation's patients. Which is why the AOA Board of Trustees set an agenda to expand optometric scope of practice throughout the country by establishing the Future Practice Initiative (FPI). The AOA is working with interested states to improve their chances for victory with legal, legislative, grassroots advocacy, and strategic and lobbying support. In the sophomore year of FPI, I'm dedicated to continuing to provide state affiliates with resources to fight for access, ensure continuity of patient care and keep the practice and profession of optometry on the leading edge. This will be a critical component of the 2020 initiative.

### **Focus on Membership**

AOA Membership will be a major focus in the upcoming year. I'm looking forward to carrying on the "United in Possibilities" nationwide membership campaign, which is getting noticed by not only prospective members but also industry leaders who recognized AOA's campaign for excellence, innovation and achievement. On May 1, the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) announced that the initiative earned a 2019 Gold Circle Award in the Membership Recruitment Campaign category.

This award, like all that the AOA achieves, reflects the essential, high-quality care our doctors of optometry deliver every day in communities across America. We will maintain a laser-like focus on serving our members and their patients while supporting the continued advancement of the practice and profession of optometry.

## WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU HAVE FOR OUR ALUMNI?

I would encourage alumni to stay connected. Enjoy class reunions together, attend AOA's and AOSA's Optometry's Meeting in 2020 to gather together again as family, and as often as you can. Your fellow alumni are who you can call to discuss interesting or challenging patient cases, to turn to in good times and in times of need. In fact, many of the friendships I cherish today were established at MCO. I also encourage them to get to know the AOA. By supporting AOA with your membership, you are supporting your own livelihood! AOA is the leading authority on quality care and an advocate for doctors of optometry, as well as our nation's health. AOA's mission is centered on improving the quality and availability of eye and vision care. Continue to stay engaged and involved with your optometric family through both MOA and AOA because the more we all come together and support one another, the more we accomplish and, ultimately, the more we can do for our patients.

## WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU HAVE FOR OUR STUDENTS?

Find an area of optometry you enjoy and volunteer time in a local, state or national committee. Finding others passionate about the same topics is beneficial to students, the committee working on those specific goals, the patients and profession overall. Everyone gains and the student can continue to grow and enjoy their passion.

Lastly, remember to treat every patient as your family. Have the same compassion and care for every patient that you would have in diagnosing a family member and guiding them for their future with vision loss or life-threatening issues. As a family primary eye health care provider, you will be a critical contributor to your community. You won't simply "live" in your chosen area. You will be part of the health care fabric that enables your community to thrive.



Dr. Horn (third from left) and some of her MCO classmates and roomates, including MCO faculty member Dr. Kalaczinski (right of Dr. Horn)

# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## **What is your educational background?**

I completed my English and Math pre-requisites for Optometry school through dual enrollment at Montcalm Community College when I was in high school. After graduating from high school in 1995, I finished up the remaining courses here at Ferris State and began at MCO in Fall of 1997. I graduated from MCO in 2001.

## **Why did you choose MCO?**

I chose MCO and Ferris for two reasons. I remember as a child traveling through campus with my parents to visit family in Reed City just knowing that I would attend Ferris. I liked that I was far enough from home to truly experience college life, but appreciated being within driving distance to return home and visit. When I chose optometry as a junior in high school, I knew that I wanted to be at MCO. I was so committed to this program, that I put all my eggs in one basket. Fortunately, that gamble paid off!

## **What is your favorite aspect of teaching?**

Challenging a student to reach their potential and celebrating in their success when they rise to the occasion is an incredible feeling. I am so proud when I watch past students move on to residencies, present posters at national meetings and nail down amazing positions after graduation. Additionally, teaching challenges me to continue learning. When I began as adjunct faculty in the clinic, I was so impressed by the questions that students would ask about all aspects of the patient encounter. When you are examining the patient yourself, the patient care decisions become so automatic that you don't even think about the "why" behind those decisions. Teaching not only challenges us to remember why we perform a test and why we initiate one treatment rather than another, but to also rationalize that thought process to our students.

## **DR. JENNIFER SCHAD**



## **What kind of involvement do you have within the optometric community?**

I am a Fellow in the American Academy of Optometry. I am also a member of AOA and MOA. Last year I was elected as an MOA Board Trustee. I am humbled to be a part of the amazing leadership of this organization. My involvement over the past year has reaffirmed how crucial organized optometry is to the future of our profession. I am looking forward to my remaining 7 years of service.



### **What are your clinical and academic interests?**

I love the variety that a day as a primary care provider brings! Whether it is refractive, binocular vision, anterior segment or posterior segment in nature, we are problem-solvers. We use the knowledge and skills in our tool boxes to figure out the patient's problem and, as a PC doctor, we need to be prepared for anything! My academic interests are polar opposites. On one hand I have a passion for practice administration and sharing my real-world experiences with our students in Practice Management. On the opposite hand, I also have a passion for systemic pathology, its relationship to the eyes and how pharmaceutical agents treat those conditions and affect ocular structures.



**Dr. Schad and her musical group**

### **What activities do you enjoy outside of your career?**

I have a minor (really major) passion for gardening. It is a bit of a sickness really. The spring is my favorite time of year when I can enjoy emerging plants or opening flower buds in my yard. I also enjoy cycling with my husband. We have 3 children, two girls and one boy, so we are also busy enjoying their activities: gymnastics, band, orchestra and track.

### **What do you look forward to accomplishing during the rest of your career?**

Wow, this is a big question to answer! I have many items on my list of goals, which I often reassess. I plan to focus most on my teaching. I knew a lot about optometry before teaching at MCO, but little in comparison about teaching. I continue to expand my expertise as I look ahead to the future.

As an MOA Board member, I am looking forward to moving into the executive leadership roles, including presidency in seven years.



**Dr. Schad's family**

### **Where do you see the future of optometry heading?**

I graduated from optometry school in 2001. When I graduated, we had DPA and TPA agents. I was well aware of the battle that gave optometrists the ability to use drops to dilate pupils and treat eye infections. Since then I have seen our scope expanded to use of oral pharmaceutical agents, including schedule III controlled substances to manage pain for our patients. Now to see other states' scopes expanding to include laser procedures and minor surgical procedures of the eyelids, I am truly amazed by how the role of optometry has changed even since my graduation. Optometry is becoming a crucial contributor to the broader healthcare system. We are increasing our responsibility in the primary care of our patients. I see optometry delivering much-needed care to an aging population, improving access to that care and their quality of life. It is an exciting time to be an optometrist!



**Dr. Schad (third from left) with her colleagues Dr. Aslakson and Dr. Kalaczinski and alumna Dr. Amanda Himmel at MCO's Hooding Ceremony**

### **If there is one thing you can say to MCO students what would it be?**

I would actually say two things. First, I am so proud of how hard you work! Secondly, do not stop learning about optometry when you leave MCO. You have an immense responsibility to your patients to continue increasing your knowledge and make evidence-based decisions in their care.

### **If there is one thing you can say to MCO alumni what would it be?**

MCO students today are amazing (just like MCO alumni)! They are passionate about caring for their patients and the future of our profession. In Practice Management, we work through budget simulations that include management of their student loan debt after graduation and for some, paying it back weighs heavily on their minds. Please give back to MCO and support our future in the profession by donating to MCO student scholarships!

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## ANKUR PATEL

Forth Year Student

Ankur is originally from Canton, MI. He went to Canton High School at the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park (PCEP). He then attended Wayne State University for his freshman year, after which he transferred to Michigan State University. Finishing up another two years, Ankur received his Bachelor of Science degree in Human Biology. During this time, he was treasurer of the Pre-Optometry club at MSU.

Ankur chose MCO mainly because the school is based in Michigan, granting him in-state tuition and allowing him to be close to home where he can continue visiting family on the weekends. His decision was also swayed by MCO's state of the art facility and small class sizes. He mentioned that he very much enjoyed knowing everybody in the building. Ankur stated "we weren't just friends or colleagues walking through the halls, we were family."

Going through Optometry school, Ankur has always envisioned himself ending up in private practice and becoming an owner. Recently, working at a corporate location for his rotations he's changed his mindset into thinking otherwise, at least short term post graduation. His long term career goal will always continue to be owning multiple practices. Outside of school, Ankur likes to play pickup basketball with his friends at a local gym. He enjoys traveling, trying new foods and spending time outdoors. He also prioritizes spending quality time with friends and family.

To MCO alumni Ankur's message is this: "Stay in touch with students. As a student, it is very welcoming when alumni of the school ask how Optometry school is and we get to talk about mutual friends or experiences. We appreciate any support and have lots of questions about life out in the real world."



Ankur represented MCO at Optometry's Meeting 2019 Student Bowl, where MCO won the Spirit Award!

What's a typical day like for you this year?

"Fourth year is going great so far. I learn a lot better with hands on experience. I work at Henry Ford Optimeyes currently on an 8:00am-6:30pm schedule Tuesday-Friday. I see patients every 15 minutes performing problem-focused exams involving refractions, slit lamp, funduscopy and indirect biomicroscopy. I've learned a lot in a short period of time and can't wait to see what the other two sites have to offer!"



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

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## **Where are you originally from?**

I am originally from Williamston, MI about 20 minutes east of Lansing.

## **What is your educational and work background?**

I grew up going to Williamston Public Schools for my entire childhood. From there, I decided to travel a long way to attend Michigan State University (a whole 15 minute drive). Although I didn't see myself as being a large university type person, the Lyman Briggs residential college and the urge to branch out gravitated me towards MSU. Throughout undergrad, I volunteered at a carefree Optometry Clinic in Lansing, MI to get more exposure to optometry as a profession. From there, I was hired to work as an optometric technician at a private practice in DeWitt. I worked there for a year after I graduated undergrad and before attending optometry school. Working as a technician taught me so much about optometry and working with patients, it made me love the profession even more. Everyday there was something new I would learn or see, it really helped to solidify the fact that optometry was the right career path for me.

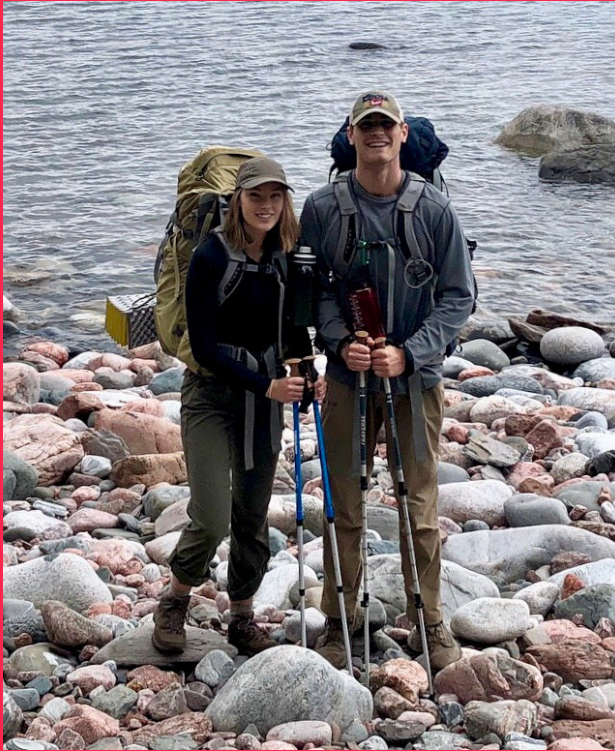
## **Why did you choose MCO? What do you enjoy most it?**

I had heard a lot of great things about MCO through people in the pre-optometry club who graduated before me at MSU, and from the doctors I worked with at DeWitt and Carefree. After visiting MCO, I stopped exploring other schools because it automatically felt like the right fit for me. At MSU, I excelled more in the smaller class size settings, so that was a huge bonus that MCO offered. I was drawn in by the brand new facilities and the friendly faces here, not to mention the fact that I would be closer to my friends and family in Michigan. It didn't take long for MCO to feel like home. Throughout these past few years at MCO, I have made many lifelong friends and my passion for optometry has continued to grow.

## **ERICA HALM**

**Third Year Student**





Erica with her boyfriend, Grant, hiking at Lake Superior

**What type of practice do you envision yourself in the future? What are your career goals?**

I envision myself eventually ending up in a private practice setting in Michigan. I like the idea of having more freedom in the way I practice. It's important for me to be able to build relationships with my patients and to provide high quality care with the best equipment and technology. As of now, I don't have one particular specialty that holds my interest above others. I would love to provide a wide variety of services to patients and be able to do many of those in office. My goal as an optometrist is to never lose sight (no pun intended) of my love for optometry!



Erica and some of her MCO friends at Eyeball

**What activities do you enjoy outside of school?**

I love to hike, snowboard, be out on the water, spend time with friends and family and enjoy the simple things in life such as a good cup of coffee or a cold beer. I have a great group of friends here at school. We like to get together and just chill or play games after a long day or week.

**Do you have a message for our alumni?**

Thank you to all the alumni that continue to support MCO students and provide us with a wealth of wisdom. By having conversations with alumni, I've learned a lot about what to expect after graduation and advice on how to excel as an optometrist. We appreciate you!



# ALUMNI FEATURE

Dr. Lee Peplinski, born and raised in Lansing, graduating MCO in 1989. He's been at Bennett & Bloom Eye Centers in Louisville, Kentucky, since 1992.

## **Tell us about your path into your current mode of practice?**

After MCO, I was interested in a co-management setting, so I spent three years down at Bascom Palmer to learn as much as I could about ocular disease. This was an era when less than half the states had therapeutic laws. Around the same time a surgeon in Kentucky was interested in developing this kind of practice and brought me in to help get it started. Our model is strictly a medical/surgical co-management center, with no primary eye care. We have now grown to 8 offices and 16 doctors (18 if you count our residents).

## **What is the most rewarding part of your career?**

I truly enjoy caring for patients! Building relationships with them, catching up on life and family when they return for visits, and simply helping them know that someone cares. Any OD that can offer their patients those things will be successful! I also enjoy the teaching aspects of optometry. We have had an extern program with several schools since the early 90's (hard to get MCO students down to Kentucky) and an Ocular Disease Residency for over 12 years. Who wants to learn lasers?

## **Dr. Lee Peplinski**



**Dr. Peplinski and his wife Rayanne in Egypt**

## **What are your hobbies and interests outside of work?**

I remain active in organized optometry, am a past-president of the Kentucky association, and currently sit on the KBOE. I love traveling, especially with my wife Rayanne, and sometimes with my two adult kids, Alicia and Peter. I try to stay fit through cycling, enjoying the peace of some good mountain bike singletrack. I lead a men's Bible study. And then there is our Foundation. More on that below.

## **Where do you see the future of optometry heading?**

The profession of optometry is poised to take over its rightful place as THE primary eyecare providers. We have to embrace all that this entails, from continuing to provide excellent refractive care, but also taking on entry level medical conditions as well - and not just those of the eyes. When we do this, our place in the market will be solid, regardless of what happens to the overall healthcare landscape. For this to happen we must continue to have a strong association who represents the profession.



### **What are some fond memories you have of MCO?**

The people. The smaller class size allows us to get to know not just our class, but usually one to either side as well. We had some amazing times together going to the AOSA meetings! Some of those memories are better left to those who were there. And the faculty were very approachable and knew me by name. There are not many MCO grads here in Kentucky, so I love running into them at meetings and catching up.

### **What would you tell our students?**

Enjoy your time. Soak up as many memories as you can. Don't rush your experience, like I sometimes feel that I did.

### **What about our alumni?**

Pour into the next generation of optometrists. Remember how you felt when you first got started, and help these newer ODs get through that transition. Helping them become successful helps the profession get stronger.



**Dr. Peplinski's family in Little Cayman**



**RPLF team photo with Governor of Benue State, Nigeria**

**Please tell us a little bit about your Ret.Pray.Love.Foundation.**

**We want to create a world where everybody sees better, both physically and spiritually. Rayanne and I started doing eyecare missions in 2011, partly because of the experience I had with the MCO SVOSH trip to Dominica (I believe the inaugural) in 1988. In addition to providing free eyecare and glasses, we help create sustainable ongoing services by providing education to the providers in the area. So far we have served in Belize, the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, and Puerto Rico, with plans for Peru in the works for 2020. Ultimately, we hope these services form a bridge from physical health to spiritual well-being through the message of the Gospel and connection to a local church. In 2018, we incorporated the Ret.Pray.Love.Foundation as a 501(c)3 charitable organization. As a shameless plug, donations and volunteers for future trips are always welcome. Check us out on FaceBook!**



# ALUMNI FEATURE

## Drs. Jess and Dave Czerny

Dr. Jess Czerny is originally from Traverse City MI, but moved to Spearfish, South Dakota when she was a sophomore in high school. Dr. Dave is originally from Black Hills in South Dakota. They both attended Black Hills State University for their undergraduate studies in Spearfish, where they met.



Drs. Jess and Dave Czerny in front of their office

**Where do you currently practice?**

Together, we own two optometry practices: Mountain Valley Vision Center in Spearfish, SD and Deadwood Eye Care in Deadwood, SD

**Tell us about your path into your current position?**

We both always knew we wanted to be business owners. Immediately after graduating we took on two corporate subleases, and worked part time in two private practice locations (which we eventually aquired). One of the corporate locations closed and we merged that practice into a group practice with 5 ODs. That specific location ultimately failed and we sold out of the partnership, however the risk was worth the reward and knowledge acquired from the process. We have now settled on two private practices which keep us on our toes as we try to update things constantly to keep up with changing technologies. We have a part time associate (and are looking to hire another OD currently).



Biking in Colorado

**Dr. Jess, what made you decide to pursue a concurrent veterinarian degree?**

While I love optometry, my mom is a vet, and when I started college I was always deciding between optometry and veterinary and ultimately decided to go for both! While I love my optometry patients, I did want to be able to have animal interaction as well, and also liked the expanded scope of practice (with surgery etc.). It turns out the two careers complement each other nicely, with a lot of similarities between human and animal systemic disease and various eye diseases. Because I practice in a small town I have lots of patients where I have treated both the owner and their pet, sometimes even for the same disease such as glaucoma!! Eye surgeries are, of course, some of my favorites in veterinary medicine and I look forward to continuing my knowledge of both optometry and veterinary medicine.

**What is your favorite part about working as an optometrist?**

**Dr. Dave:** I love helping people who didn't know that they could be helped, or couldn't find the care they needed elsewhere. I love having the technology to educate patients about their eye health and properly care for my patients utilizing the full scope of our licensure. In terms of reward, I love developing relationships with patients who come to know, like, and trust you as their doctor.

**Dr. Jess:** I love educating people about conditions that they weren't educated on previously, or treatments that they didn't know were options for them. I also enjoy educating patients on how certain systemic conditions may affect their eyes. In terms of reward, I think it's super rewarding to develop a good enough relationship with a patient that they bring their animal to see me at the vet clinic or vice versa.

**Where do you see the future of optometry heading?**

We both hope private practice continues to offer patients the most technologically advanced options for protecting and preserving vision and diagnosing disease early. We do think optometrists need to advocate for insurance rights, as even in the few years since we have graduated we have seen insurance companies taking more and more control of the field, which is sadly affecting both the patients' quality of care as well as the doctors ability to provide the best care. Dr. Jess is currently an advocate in veterinary medicine to keep the human insurance model out of the veterinary field. Currently, in veterinary medicine, the doctor can practice exactly how they see best for the patient, and the client is reimbursed, which saves money for both the doctor and the patient dramatically since fees don't end up getting raised in order to compensate for low reimbursements and increasing costs to have an insurance biller.



**Exploring Zion National Park**



**What are some fond memories you have of MCO?**

So many!!! All of our classmates were so great and we have so many memories from beach events to tubing the river in town. We loved the smaller class size which allowed us to become friends with all of our classmates and our professors! Dave loved finishing his final year of track and field as a first year MCO student pole vaulting for Ferris State.

**If there is one thing you can say to MCO students, what would it be?**

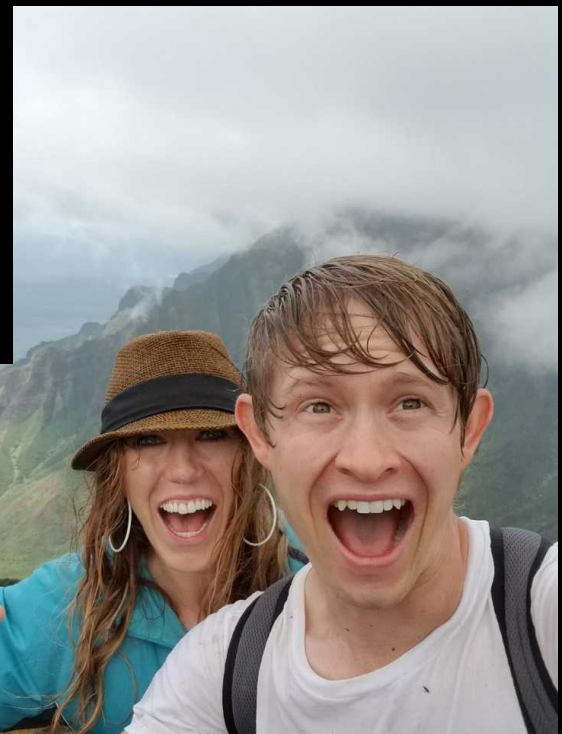
Always treat the patient the way you would treat a family member, and advocate for your future profession to keep the care in the doctors hands and not a third party insurance. Take control of your future, don't let what other doctors think, say or do dictate what you do with you career. Determine what you want and set a plan for how to achieve it. Don't ever settle.

**If there is one thing you can say to MCO alumni, what would it be?**

As a group of professionals, optometrists in general sometimes settle for the status quo. We hope that we will personally continue to create our own destiny and we hope that the rest of our profession can find the motivation, and determination to do the same.



Drs. Dave and Jess with their baby, William



Traveling in Kauai, Hawaii

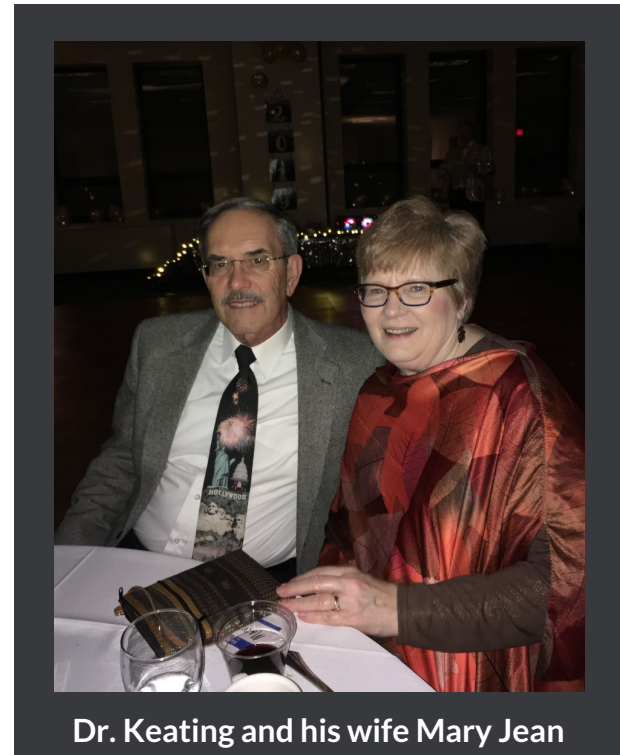
Michael Keating, PhD was a professor at MCO from 1975 until his retirement in 2013. He was one of the first three faculty members hired to establish what is now the Michigan College of Optometry. Dr. Keating has recently created an endowment fund for faculty to support sabbatical leaves, for which MCO and FSU are incredibly grateful.

Dr. Keating grew up in Nebraska, where he attended Creighton University for his undergraduate studies double majoring in Physics and Mathematics. He then finished his Masters and PhD degree in Theoretical Physics at Indiana University. At that time, the physics department was full, and as a result a few of the graduate students were offered offices in the new optometry building. Being exposed to the field during a difficult job market, Dr. Keating applied to teach optics at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, where he served as faculty for three years. Dr. Keating and his wife Mary Jean wanted to move closer to home, leading Dr. Keating to accept a new job offer as one of the first three faculty to start an optometry college in Michigan.

Coming to MCO without an established curricula meant that Dr. Keating and his colleagues had an exceptionally busy summer establishing the program. Dr. Keating was directly involved in every aspect of building up the program, from ordering and setting up equipment to creating the optometric curriculum. During this time, he and his colleagues faced a turbulent time when the Michigan governor vetoed funds to run the college as a result of influence from the ophthalmology community. At that moment, no one was sure if the college would survive. However, the Ferris President gathered very strong legislative support and the establishment of the college continued. Reflecting back, this roadblock is one that Dr. Keating is proud of having been involved in helping overcome.



Dr. Keating with his 5 year Docent Award from the Grand Rapids Art Museum



Dr. Keating and his wife Mary Jean



Throughout his years at MCO, Dr. Keating was involved in numerous endeavors. He conducted basic science research, looking at the matrix analysis of astigmatism, where he was considered a world-renowned expert in the field. He also served as the Associate and Acting Dean of MCO on a few occasions, helping with important administrative duties at the college. His most rewarding contributions involved teaching, as he very much enjoyed working with optometry students. He mainly taught geometric optics, but made contributions towards other courses including ophthalmic optics, vision science, and low vision. Dr. Keating's teaching philosophy has always been to teach his subject in a captivating way. He recognized that some students were naturally gifted at physics while others would struggle and he really enjoyed working with both. He stated that although physics could be very mathematical and tedious at times, it was also incredibly fascinating to study, and it was important for Dr. Keating to be able to tell a story to get his students engaged. Dr. Keating is a gifted teacher and has made countless contributions to MCO, receiving many exceptionally distinguished awards for his efforts from the university, faculty, and his students (over 13 in total). Dr. Keating is quick to say how lucky he feels and how grateful he is to have been recognized for his efforts.

He also holds fond memories of his students not only in the classroom, but outside of it as well. He remembers regularly attending student Halloween parties in costume, cheering on the Ferris State University female volleyball team during the several times when optometry students were major players on the team, and coaching the intermural MCO male basketball team to a championship game. To current MCO students, Dr.Keating's message is this: "You're in a great profession. Optometry makes a positive contribution to the world. It's fun doing your work, but it's always very rewarding that you're helping others as well. You have a great future to look forward to".

Lately, Dr. Keating has been enjoying the retired life. Currently, he is a volunteer Docent at the Grand Rapids Art Museum. He explains "Art deals with light, vision, color, and concepts; and so does Optics, although in a different way. I very much enjoy being a Docent, by teaching others about the art and contributing to my community." He also helps his wife Mary Jean, who has been running a Tour company since 1995. He's still involved in competitive orienteering, a race in the woods where opponents go with only a compass and a topographical map. Furthermore, he's been enjoying reading historical novels and being involved in activities with his grandchildren that occupy a fair amount of his time.



**Dr. Keating orienteering**



MCO would like to extend a thank you to Dr. Keating, who recently supported the college through the establishment of the Michael and Mary Jean Keating Faculty Endowment Fund, which aims to defray living costs of faculty who go away on sabbaticals. Dr. Keating himself took two sabbaticals throughout his career, which he believes made a paramount impact on his contributions in his field. His first sabbatical inspired him to write an optics textbook titled “Geometric, Physical, and Visual Optics”, which is currently part of the optometric curriculum and is being utilized by first year students to this day. When he took a second sabbatical, he came back with a new perspective with regards to his teaching philosophies. Dr. Keating recalls “When I took my second sabbatical, I was visiting the University of Arizona, in the optical sciences college. When I went away, it was a tremendous opportunity as it allowed me to break my everyday routine. Going to a different place, interacting with different individuals, you get a chance to see how others are doing things, which allows you to bring back new ideas. Sabbaticals give you a fresh look at what you are already teaching and provide you with many different perspectives.” Through his own experiences, Dr. Keating is a strong supporter of sabbaticals, believing that the experience is extremely valuable, providing professors with fresh ideas. Relating to his own experiences, he believes his sabbaticals were a unique opportunity that proved to be very meaningful to him when he served as faculty. For this reason, he aims to aid in extending the same opportunity to others through the endowment fund that he and Mary Jean have created.

On behalf of everyone at MCO, we’d like to thank Dr. Keating for his generous contribution to our faculty and his many years of continued dedication to the college and university.



Dr. Keating with his family



# HOODING AND GRADUATION

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2019! We wish you the best in your lifelong optometric journey!





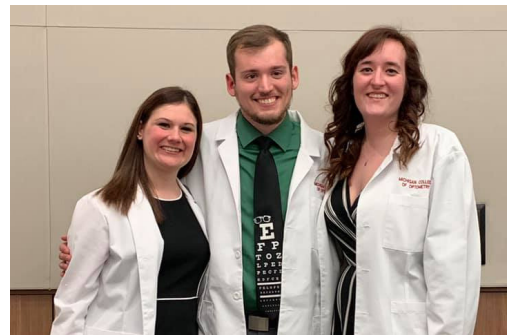
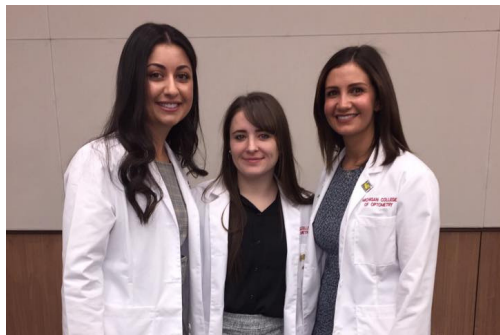
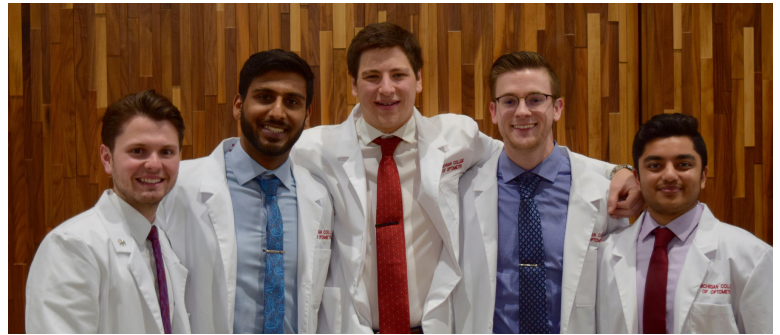
# OPTIC CUP 2019





# SECOND YEAR WHITE COAT CEREMONY

In February, our second year students were welcomed as clinicians who would begin examining patients at the University Eye Center!





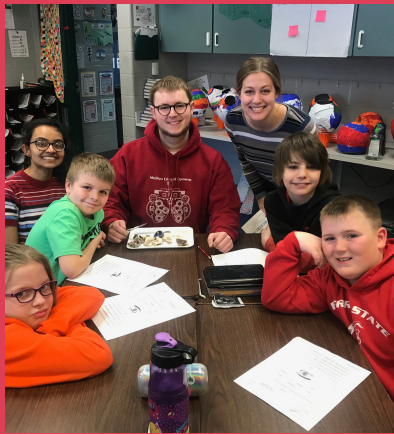
# SVOSH TRIPS

Many of our students traveled to Mexico, Dominica, and Honduras to provide eyecare to those in need!





# MCO EVENTS





# MCO EVENTS





# MCO Awards

MCO congratulates the following faculty, alumnus and student who received awards from the Michigan Optometric Association this year:

**Optometrist of the Year:** Dr. Lillian Kalaczinski

**Educator of the Year:** Dr. Emily Aslakson

**Young Optometrist of the Year:** Dr. Paula McDowell

**Student of the Year:** Dr. Luke Lirones

**Keyperson of the Year:** Dr. Douglas Totten (not pictured)

MCO congratulates our **Alumnus of the Year**, Dr. Nelson Edwards (O'87)!

Dr. Nelson has been on an amazing 46 foreign mission trips for VOSH. He has served as President of VOSH-Michigan, and as Secretary/Treasurer of VOSH-International, a Senior Clinical Examiner for the Board of Examiners in Optometry and as Assistant State Coordinator for VISION USA. He served with honor in the United States Air Force, retiring from the 127th Medical Group, Michigan Air National Guard. He is the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from ROTARY Foundation and much more.

Congratulations to Dr. Edwards and our other deserving nominees!



MOA award winners Drs. Kalaczinski, Aslakson, McDowell and Lirones



Dr. Nelson Edwards receiving his award from MCO Alumni Association Chair, Dr. Bradley Taylor

# CONTACT US

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU ABOUT  
SPECIAL NEWS, POSITION CHANGES OR  
ANYTHING FUN OR EXCITING!

EMAIL NEWS TO [SARAHHINKLEY@FERRIS.EDU](mailto:SARAHHINKLEY@FERRIS.EDU)

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