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ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRY



SPRING 2009

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER »

Richard W. Phillips, OD '78, FAAO



Forward**Thinking** | Future**Focused**

Joe Ellis, OD '86 ✨

Service Through National Leadership



As an SCO student, Joe Ellis, OD '86, could not have predicted that one day he would be vice president of the American Optometric Association, let alone preparing for a run at the presidency at the AOA Congress this summer.

"I was a married student who played a lot of intramural sports," he says, "(But) I made friends that I still talk to and see now."

Ellis had played college football at Murray State University. He knew he wanted to go into the healthcare industry and optometry was on the list. He found out about SCO through friends who were attending. That's when he looked more into optometry and became interested.

He counts Jim Newman, OD '73, Glen Steele, OD '69, and Bud Mormon, OD, among his favorite professors, role models who inspired him to become involved in leadership roles within the profession.

Dr. Ellis, who is in private practice in Benton, Kentucky with Laurel Van Horn, OD '99, began his service at the state level. An active member of the Kentucky Optometric Association (KOA), he served on the KOA board from 1990 to 1996 and as president in the 1994-1995 program year.

At the national AOA level, he has served as a member of the Constitution and Bylaws, Finance, Personnel, and Building Committees and as a board liaison to the Communications Group Advisory Committee, the Contact Lens and Cornea Section, the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education, the Advocacy Group, Commission on Paraoptometric Certification, and the AOA Sports Vision Section.

A big motivation for his service was the recognition that organized optometry could increase patients' access to optometric healthcare. Dr. Ellis graduated from

SCO during the time optometry was just being added to Medicare, after 20 years of existence. He realizes

the ground work for that progress came from optometrists working with legislators to change the language of Medicare laws to include optometry.

"People before me had done things so that I could enjoy the benefits of practice," he

says. "If you don't have access to patients, all the training isn't worth anything."

Although he and other members of the KOA worked hard to put legislation together that gave patients greater access to optometric services, they found that national legislation could make their state legislation moot.

Even now there are still access issues such as optometry not being included on certain health insurance plans. Even though some states have corrected the language, it's not there on a national level. Dr. Ellis feels this demonstrates the need to strengthen pro-optometry legislation.

"Optometrists need to be more involved in the state and national political scene," he says.

Because optometry privileges are legislated, even for the use of new technology, Dr. Ellis advocates the need for ODs to play an active role by becoming involved and serving the profession to strengthen the profession.

"We need to be there to ensure we pass the language and legislation to make sure we can use new technology," he says.

As an AOA leader, he also wants to make sure the AOA is involved on the ground floor of national healthcare reform being proposed by President Barack Obama. He wants to guarantee that pro-optometry language is included from the beginning so it won't have to be corrected 20 years down the road, like Medicare.

In addition to his service to the profession at the national level, he also has found time to remain involved in preparing the next generation of optometrists as an SCO preceptor for student externships. As a preceptor, he has seen many changes in optometric education since he graduated.

"I have seen over the years in my dealings with externs where students are a lot more proficient with technology – more technology savvy," Ellis says.

He advises students to get out and make a bigger connection between their education and the profession outside school.

"In my last couple of years, I wished I would have visited more optometry practices," he says.

As he eyes the AOA presidency, he remembers where it all started as an optometry student in Memphis and still professes pride in receiving an SCO education.

"I'm proud to have gone to SCO, proud to see how SCO has grown and gained stature among the colleges of optometry across the country."

It is a pride he shares with other alumni he frequently meets across the country as he attends state board meetings and serves the profession at one of the highest leadership levels at the AOA.

Randy Goodman, OD '79 ✨

Ministering to Body and Spirit: SVOSH Taught the Importance of Serving Others

For Randy Goodman, OD '79, optometry proved to be more than just a healthcare career. Even though he never thought of the profession as just a career, he never dreamed optometry would take him where he is today.

"I thought I would practice until they had to carry me out," he says.

At age 56, Dr. Goodman is far from having to be carried from his practice. However, in May 2008, he received his Masters of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. He is now a minister at First United Methodist Church in Tullahoma, Tennessee.

*"As optometrists,
we don't just care for people's eyes;
we care for their lives."*

So how did a successful optometrist retire from the profession, only to start a new career as a minister? Dr. Goodman's journey began at SCO but continued to progress into something that he believes was meant to be from the start.

He counts his membership in SVOSH as the first step of his interest in serving others. As an SCO student, he went on a mission to Costa Rica with a group of SVOSH members and 27,000 pairs of glasses. He says the mission opened him up to service. His education and training at SCO steered him more towards a life of mission and service.

After graduation, Dr. Goodman and his wife, Betsy Goodman, OD '79, settled in middle Tennessee and became involved in their church. Over the years, his church conducted a number of medical mission trips to Mexico where they tended to their

patients' physical and then spiritual needs.

The same could be said about his years practicing optometry, where taking an interest in his patients led to a greater interest in how he could serve them in other ways.

"I spent a lot of time with patients, talking to them about things that were not optometry related," he recalls. "We would sometimes stop and talk things through."

With his church playing an important part in his life outside optometry, Dr. Goodman organized retreats, men's trips and even filled in for preachers in their absence.

He first felt a calling to ministry in 1992 and by a decade later, he knew the ministry awaited him as the next step in his journey to serve others.

After receiving an unsolicited letter from Asbury Theological Seminary, he enrolled in a new program that allowed him to continue practicing optometry and attend seminary school full-time. He also served as pastor of a small country church. He says his family has been fully supportive of him.

"It's been a challenge, and sacrifice has been made by me and my family, but the sacrifice has been well worth it," he says.

After graduating from seminary school, Dr. Goodman officially retired from optometry in June 2008; his wife continues to practice in the community.

"It's hard to adjust when you're in your 50s," he says. "I've got patients I started



seeing when they were just babies."

Dr. Goodman still enjoys hospital privileges at two area hospitals but he can now go there as a minister. He finds his background in optometry helps answer questions for some patients, like a stroke patient he ministered to during one visit.

"His doctor came and said the stroke had affected his vision and left the room," he says. "Of course the patient had a lot of questions."

The mission he set out on 30 years ago may have evolved in an unexpected way but in Dr. Goodman's opinion, it represents a continuation on a higher level.

"As optometrists, we don't just care for people's eyes; we care for their lives."

Jim Newman, OD '73 ✨

Mentor, Professor, Friend: Helping Students Succeed in More Ways Than One



Paying it forward is not a foreign concept to Jim Newman, OD '73, Professor. In a way, he's repaying a debt and paying it forward at the same time. It all began with his first pair of glasses.

"In the ninth grade, I was always complaining to my parents about my vision," Dr. Newman said. "I got my first pair of glasses and I remember being able to see each individual snow flake."

At that point in his young life, Dr. Newman became more interested in optometry. It wasn't until he was an undergraduate student that he made that final leap and decided to attend SCO.

After his graduation in 1973, he and his wife, Carol, planned to open a practice in Greenwood, Mississippi, but, at the time, the economy was bad. They decided to stay in Memphis, where Dr. Newman joined a practice and began teaching at SCO.

After four years of practicing and teaching, the practice was sold and Dr. Newman decided to keep teaching at SCO. While it wasn't part of his original plan, things fell into place for him, especially his current position as SCO's Director of Academic Support Services. After over 20 years of unofficially helping students overcome academic and personal obstacles to success, SCO made the position official six years ago.

Dr. Newman said his role of tutoring and counseling SCO students began after observing students floundering, not doing well and just not living up to their full potential.

"If your mother's in intensive care at home, that's going to have an effect," Newman said. "People come here with all kinds of trauma in their life; you don't go to school in a bubble."



In the beginning, it was just a matter of stepping up to serve the students' needs. Newman said when he attended SCO, there was no one who did what he does.

"You just had to deal with it," Newman said of his time as a student. "The school wasn't student friendly."

Dr. Newman says the atmosphere has improved and today there is a good rapport between students and faculty.

When he first saw students having problems, he began quietly pulling them aside to get at the root of the issue. Now, monitoring students is a daily task that comes more from care and empathy rather than a sense of duty.

"I'm constantly looking at students' performances," he said. "If I see it slipping, I call them in."

Over the 36 years Dr. Newman has spent at SCO, the students don't seem to change. They still experience the same problems and issues. The one constant is Dr. Newman himself.

"I keep getting old and they keep staying the same age," he said. "They used to call me 'Uncle Jimmy' and now they call me 'Dad'."

The students' terms of endearment come from how seriously Dr. Newman takes them and their issues. He makes sure all students know they aren't at SCO alone, starting at orientation. He uses a couch that belonged to President Emeritus William Cochran, OD '68, and a chair in his outer office to make it more comfortable. Students frequently come there to take quick naps or just sit and talk. Confidentiality is important to Dr. Newman and, much like a priest or counselor, he divulges no details about their private lives.

Although SCO also provides access to counseling services off-campus, Dr. Newman is often a first responder of sorts. As such, he makes sure the pressure doesn't wear him down. As a general rule, he doesn't take his job home with him. He has also taken the occasional student's phone



FCO Students Spend Spring Break Serving Others on Mission Trip to Nicaragua

Accompanied by Jim Newman, OD '73, Professor, SCO's Fellowship of Christian Optometrists (FCO) chapter spent Spring Break 2009 by travelling on a mission trip to help children living in Jinotega, Nicaragua. The group partnered with an established mission to provide optometric services to school children between the ages of 5 and 18 in the mountainous city.

During her undergraduate studies, FCO member Dee Horn, '10, had worked with the mission on spring break missions to Central America. The organization has built many one-room school houses in the mountains of Nicaragua. After contacting the organization to see if a need still existed in the area, Horn worked with FCO to organize the trip around their class and clinic schedules, and spring break.

Katy Falk, '10, FCO trip leader, reported that 22 SCO students volunteered their time during spring break to provide eye care for the children in Nicaragua. FCO is an international organization that frequently conducts these types of mission trips all over the world. The FCO chapter at SCO began to venture into mission trips three years ago.

The FCO students worked year-round gathering supplies for their trip. Materials include eyeglasses, antibiotics and other drugs. However, they take more than just supplies for eye care.

Dr. Newman, who serves as FCO faculty advisor, said the very nature of the FCO's spiritual mission also allows the group to take Spanish Bibles to distribute on these trips. Stations are set up that are half clinic, half church, meaning one station conducts eye exams and other stations lead reading of religious books for children.

Falk said many of the children in the region had never had eye examinations so it proved to be a major experience for them. Seventy were special needs patients, with autism, Down syndrome, deafness and learning disorders. She noted that Nicaraguan children are also more likely to experience malnutrition in early development because of inadequate diet.

"There were some who probably wouldn't recognize someone across a room," she said, "so it was a very life-altering experience, and we were happy to serve such an underserved and deserving population."

SCO's students also brought toys with them, in addition to books, so they could put the children at ease during their eye examinations. The student group saw 700 children and about 100 adults at two vision screenings at the mission's church.

"One thing I didn't expect during the trip was how much the parents appreciated the screening of the children," added Falk. "Our visit gave parents the peace of mind that their child had healthy, properly developing eyes."



call on a Saturday night but has learned to discern between a real crisis and an overly dramatic student.

He has also learned to take care of himself. Dr. Newman realizes taking on the stress of others can have an adverse affect on his own health. "I exercise and I watch what I eat," Dr. Newman said. "I've learned how to balance it."

His concern lies in the students' academic progress as well. While personal issues can affect academic performance, so can the lack of necessary study skills. Now, as opposed to 10 or 20 years ago, he spends most of his time helping first-years. Although the application and interview process does a good job of attracting top students, he still works with a few "diamonds in the rough" to help them transition to the rigorous demands of the optometry program.

Dr. Newman says many of today's students learned in undergraduate school how to memorize material and repeat it. He knows from experience that diagnosing a condition cannot be done by simply memorizing material. He teaches students how to think and process the information in order to succeed in their careers. In turn, SCO produces top notch optometrists.

"I know what they've got to know when they get to clinic; they don't," Dr. Newman said. "I have to teach students how to think and process."

Making sure the students are succeeding academically involves Dr. Newman's constant attention and staying attuned to what's going on in their lives. Serving the students is what makes Dr. Newman thrive. He further serves the public's needs by helping educate optometrists of the best quality. By his own admission, he wouldn't be in his position today if he didn't enjoy it.

"If I'm going to stay here teaching, I have to enjoy working with the students," Dr. Newman added. "If you don't enjoy working with students, why are you here?"



Ronald Blum, OD '72 ✨

Why I Give

Honoring Employee Who Devoted Himself to Serving Others

Mark Murphy seemed to give all he had to so many people. After the death of their son in 1994, he and his wife, Francine, made an endowment to Wilderness Inquiry, an organization which arranges outdoor experiences for both disabled and able-bodied people.

The Murphys supported many other charities. They established The Bliss House in Ontario, to welcome disabled, non-verbal adults and provide a "northern" experience for its visitors.

Murphy's devotion to others made such an impression on his employer, Ronald Blum, OD '72, that it was only fitting to honor Murphy after his untimely death from cancer on October 24, 2008.

Dr. Blum recently established an endowed scholarship at SCO in Murphy's name on behalf of The Egg Factory (TEF), the company founded by Blum in 1998.

"Mark was a special person willing to help and mentor people," says Dr. Blum, President/CEO and Chairman of PixelOptics, a subsidiary of The Egg Factory.

Murphy served as President of Supply Chain Services, a division of Johnson and Johnson Health Care Systems, Inc. He also served as President of Johnson and Johnson Hospital Services, Inc., and

worked with Innotech, Dr. Blum's first company. Founded by Dr. Blum in 1990, Innotech was purchased by Johnson and Johnson in 1997.

"Mark was a very successful businessman and finance man who was instrumental in working on the board of our parent company," Dr. Blum says.

Murphy was a part of his parent company's team since its inception by Dr. Blum. The Egg Factory fosters innovation with an emphasis on optics and ophthalmics.

"Mark was involved at the beginning of Egg Factory and did not get to see it to the end because it has been in development for so long," Blum says, "but, it's no longer smoke and mirrors."

Dr. Blum's company has been working on an Electro-Active Lens Technology that would be used to correct presbyopia and is nearing the end of the development stage. He says Murphy is the only team member who will not get to see the project to fruition.

Dr. Blum says TEF's mission is to further optometry's reach.

"We try to come up with innovations that will help mankind," he says. "We're helping the profession and helping people see better."

Dr. Blum became interested in optometry as a child growing up in Kingsport, Tennessee, where he observed the late Leonard Supman, OD '40.

"Leonard was always someone you admired as you were growing up," he says. "Through him I became very interested in vision care."

To honor his role model, Dr. Blum has also annually contributed to the Dr. J. Leonard Supman Memorial Endowed Scholarship at SCO.

After graduating from SCO, Dr. Blum founded Drs. Blum, Newman, Blackstock & Associates, Optometrists, P.C., in 1977 in Roanoke, Virginia. He says he grew the practice for 20 years before he decided to become an inventor.

"We're all blessed with different abilities – basketball, football, – I invent," Dr. Blum said.

Dr. Blum has spent the last two decades using his abilities to give back to, and further, the science of optometry. With the passing of his friend and associate, Mark Murphy, Dr. Blum is now giving back to SCO to honor his friend and to support optometric education in order for a young person to achieve his or her potential.

2008 Community Phonathon Raises \$38,000 for SCO

Community Phonathon recently returned for its second year, and SCO's organizations and student volunteers were up to the challenge set by the previous year's success. During the fall of 2008, Institutional Advancement offered student organizations the opportunity for their members to volunteer by calling alumni, updating alumni records and raising money for SCO.

The results of the 2008 Community Phonathon surpassed the previous year's totals. With a 20% increase in gifts received over the previous year, 2008 demonstrated the loyalty and commitment of SCO's alumni.

During the 15 nights of calling, gifts and pledges exceeded \$38,000. Student organizations benefitted as each participating student organization received a part of the \$3,000 awarded by Director of Development Brenda Pearson during February's Student Government Association (SGA) meeting.

Participating organizations included COVID, FCO, Gamma Omicron, Lions Club, NOSA, OPP, ssTOA, Texas Student Organization, and SVOSH.

The Community Phonathon is truly a win-win situation as students enjoy the opportunity to talk with alumni, with each contact benefiting SCO and the student organization.

"The continued success of Phonathon is totally dependent upon the alumni, who, when called, respond with conversation and a gift. It has a tremendous impact on the student, who has a meaningful and insightful conversation with an alumnus practicing optometry," commented Pearson, coordinator of the event.

Please call or email the Office of Institutional Advancement if you would like more information about Phonathon at 1-800-238-0180, ext. 4, or email alumni@sco.edu.



SOUTHERN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

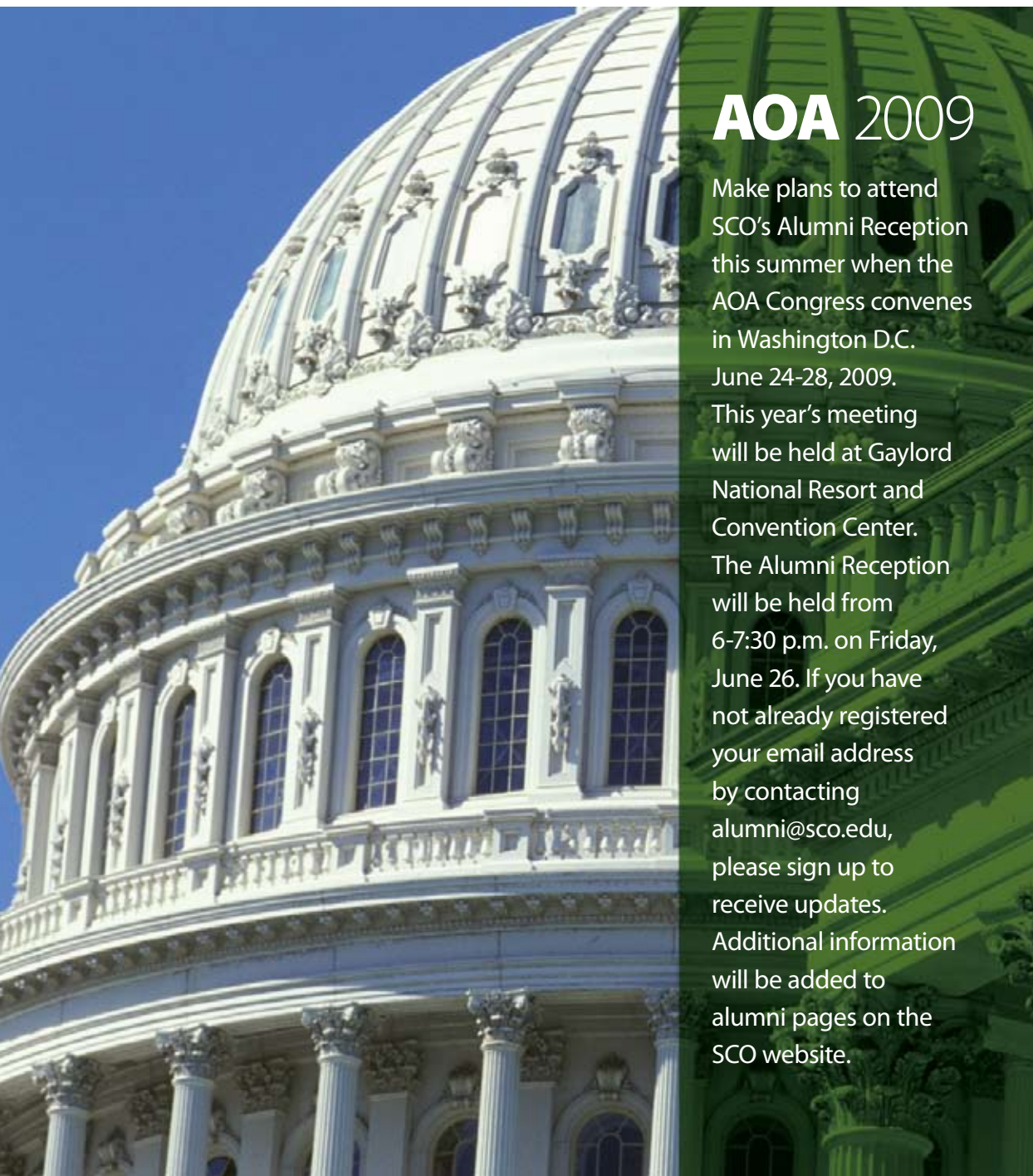
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AOA 2009

Make plans to attend
SCO's Alumni Reception
this summer when the
AOA Congress convenes
in Washington D.C.
June 24-28, 2009.

This year's meeting
will be held at Gaylord
National Resort and
Convention Center.

The Alumni Reception
will be held from
6-7:30 p.m. on Friday,
June 26. If you have
not already registered
your email address
by contacting
alumni@sco.edu,
please sign up to
receive updates.

Additional information
will be added to
alumni pages on the
SCO website.

Out and About

SCO is committed to interacting
with its alumni. We hope to see
many of you at:

June 4-7

Utah Optometric Association
(Midway, UT)

June 24-28

American Optometric Association
(Washington, DC)

October 1-4

SCO Homecoming, Reunion and
Continuing Education Weekend
(Memphis, TN)