Double cornea transplant patient reclaims her passion

Vicky Combs-Snider, 66, had always been diligent about annual eye exams. As an insurance salesperson covering a four-state territory, she did a lot of driving and computer work.

“Last spring, I got new glasses and sunglasses, but by September I couldn’t read road signs, and it was difficult to see in the evening,” she says. In fact, her vision had worsened so much that her husband had to drive her to appointments with clients.

“It had only been a few months since I’d gotten new glasses, so I went back to where I bought them and, after another exam, they said I needed to see a specialist,” she relates.

That specialist referred Combs-Snider to a cataract specialist, who told her that her vision problem was “more than cataracts, and I can’t help you — but Dr. Michael Straiko at Legacy Devers Eye Institute can.”

It turns out, Combs-Snider not only had cataracts but also a genetic condition in which her cornea was losing its endothelial cells, which are essential to keep the cornea clear. Once these cells are destroyed by disease or injury, they are lost forever. If a person loses too many endothelial cells, cornea transplantation may be the only solution to prevent blindness.

“My vision was 20/70 in one eye, and the other one was even worse,” she says. “It was progressive; I was going blind.

“I’m planning to retire [from the insurance business] this year,” she continues. “I have my degree in art and was planning to teach and take up painting again. I paint in oil, make jewelry and stained glass, and I like to garden. To be told I wouldn’t be able to see really shook my world.

“But I’ve never had a doctor as caring and compassionate as Dr. Straiko,” she adds. “He really listens. He took my hand, promised to take care of me and said I’d be OK.”

And today she is.

Combs-Snider underwent her first corneal transplant and cataract implantation, in her right eye, on Nov. 19, 2015. Dr. Straiko performed the same procedures on her left eye on Dec. 10.

“Today my vision is 20/25 in my left eye and 20/30 in my right,” she reports. “I feel so blessed to have been given back the gift of sight, and I thank the families of the two donors who gave their corneas.

“I’ve always signed my donor card since I was 25, never thinking I’d be the recipient,” she adds, see Combs-Snider, page 3
Legacy Devers’ reach extends around the globe

By James Rosenbaum, M.D.

Most of the patients evaluated at the Legacy Devers Eye Institute are from Oregon or southwest Washington. Seeing patients who live locally, however, does not mean that Legacy Devers is just a regional eye institute.

Our reach is truly international, with some patients traveling long distances to see our physicians. A large percentage of the corneal transplant patients who consult Mark Terry, M.D., need to travel by airplane to be seen. Last year, I had a patient fly from India solely for my medical opinion.

Our impact is international in other aspects, too, including the publications in which our work appears and how often they are cited; the recognition and awards our faculty are given; and the invitations we receive to lecture around the world.

In fact, the opportunity to lecture is one of the most valuable benefits of an academic medical career. It is a chance to share Legacy Devers’ expertise while also learning from the experience of others.

For example, Mike Straiko, M.D., a cornea specialist, has recently traveled to Victoria (Canada), India, Iran and Australia to give presentations.

Steven Mansberger, M.D., a glaucoma specialist and epidemiologist, has lectured at Lake Louise and Vancouver, British Columbia, as well as Hawaii and Hong Kong.

But when it comes to racking up frequent flyer miles on the lecture circuit in the past two years, the “winners” would be Dr. Terry, Dr. Claude Burgoyne and myself.

Dr. Terry’s list includes Toronto; Montreal; Italy; South Africa; Oxford, England; Tokyo and Taiwan. Dr. Burgoyne has recently educated audiences in London, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Athens, Sendai, Japan, Prague, Seoul, Halifax and Beijing. My own speaking engagements have included Halifax and Quebec City in Canada; Busan and Seoul in Korea; Osaka and Sapporo in Japan; Panama City, Panama; Curitiba, Brazil; Chennai, India; London and Dublin, Ireland.

While these invitations enable us to see different parts of the world and share the knowledge we have acquired, they also are a testament to the esteem in which Legacy Devers providers are viewed by their colleagues around the world. That is immensely gratifying.

Where in the world has Legacy Devers been lately?

Dr. Burgoyne
Dr. Mansberger
Dr. Rosenbaum
Dr. Straiko
Dr. Terry
Burgoyne named to ‘world’s influential ophthalmologists’ list

Claude Burgoyne, M.D., an ophthalmologist and glaucoma specialist at Legacy Devers Eye Institute, has been named the 15th most influential ophthalmologist in the world by The Ophthalmologist, a British publication that compiles an annual list of 100.

There are more than 200,000 ophthalmologists in the world. They include Nobel laureates, heads of departments, editors of major journals, leaders in the biotechnology industry and even one who has been knighted. To work out of a small private eye institute in Portland, Ore., and be ranked 15th is a remarkable achievement.

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness in the world. Dr. Burgoyne and his colleagues have meticulously mapped the anatomic changes that characterize this disease. Their work is creating clinical tools to recognize glaucoma sooner and eventually to prevent the damage that it causes.

Before coming to Legacy Devers, Dr. Burgoyne had been director of the glaucoma service and the interim chief of ophthalmology at Louisiana State University in New Orleans. He was recruited to work with a highly accomplished group of investigators at the Devers Eye Institute, Discoveries in Sight research laboratories, in 2005. His work has been supported by the National Eye Institute since 1997, and the Legacy Good Samaritan Research Foundation since his arrival at Devers.

Legacy Devers Eye Institute is part of Legacy Health, which includes seven hospitals in southwest Washington and northwest Oregon. Devers has three campuses in Portland, clinical offices at Legacy Good Samaritan and Legacy Emanuel medical centers and a research center not far from the Moda Center.

When asked about the recognition, Dr. Burgoyne expressed gratitude to his Devers clinical and research collaborators including Brad Fortune, O.D., Ph.D.; Lin Wang, M.D., Ph.D.; Stuart Gardiner, Ph.D.; Shaban Demirel, Ph.D.; and Hongli Yang, Ph.D. He noted that Devers, while a small institute, also is home to one of the world’s leading corneal transplant surgeons, Mark Terry, M.D.; one of the top international experts in uveitis, Jim Rosenbaum, M.D.; and a leader in understanding the epidemiology of ocular disease, Steven Mansberger, M.D.

Combs-Snider: At Devers, ‘Everyone was always there to help’

continued from page 1

She also gives thanks to God. “Through His love, miracles do happen,” she says.

The experience has been “mindboggling and humbling at the same time,” Combs-Snider adds. “You don’t fully appreciate your vision until you risk losing it. Now I’m painting again. And I’m just so grateful to be living near one of the leading cornea transplant hospitals in the United States, and having Dr. Straiko as my eye doctor.”
Check out Legacy Devers Eye Institute on Wikipedia

By James Rosenbaum, M.D.

In the United States, the five most-visited websites are Google, YouTube, Facebook, Yahoo and Amazon. Wikipedia is number six, putting it in extremely good company. And if you have children in school, you know what Wikipedia means to them as a reference tool.

How times — and access to information — have changed. When I started my academic life, I sometimes thought I lived in the stacks of the library. But today, I couldn’t tell you when I last visited the library. Knowledge now is literally at our fingertips. I use Google Scholar and PubMed (the portal to the National Library of Medicine) as my main information sources, and visit Wikipedia several times a day.

As a result of its popularity, being recognized by Wikipedia is a big deal. And I’m proud to say that you can now read about Legacy Devers Eye Institute on Wikipedia. There you’ll find our history, a few of our publications, and you can learn about some of our more published providers and distinguished alumni. The article is “alive” in that it can be modified and expanded by any reader. And the article testifies to the breadth of our reach.

According to Wikipedia, Legacy Devers Eye Institute is “one of the few private, nonprofit centers for ophthalmological care, research and training in the United States.” Wikipedia is absolutely correct. Devers has a unique heritage and a role in the welfare of Oregonians as well as individuals from around the world seeking eye care.

We are grateful to our patients for entrusting their care to us. We are grateful to our donors whose philanthropy has propelled us forward. Please visit our Wikipedia page at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legacy_Devers_Eye_Institute.

Devers in the news

“International study reveals new genetic clues to age-related macular degeneration.” Tammy Martin, Ph.D., works on AMD genetics with Michael L. Klein, M.D., Oregon Health & Science University; and Matthew P. Johnson, Ph.D., Texas Biomedical Research Institute. Their work has resulted in a paper that was published in Nature Genetics on Dec. 21, 2015. They are three of 160 authors of the paper.


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Dr. Rosenbaum reaches 500 (articles, that is)

Roving reporter Jay Todd recently caught up with the Richard Chenoweth Chair of Legacy Devers Eye Institute, James Rosenbaum, M.D., to ask some probing questions about the doctor’s most recent achievement.

TODD: Dr. Rosenbaum, there’s a rumor that you have now published 500 scholarly articles. Is this true?

ROSENBAUM: I guess it depends on your definition of scholarly, but yes, my 500th publication recently appeared in press.

TODD: That’s a big number, but does anyone actually read what you write?

ROSENBAUM: Good question. Fortunately, articles and journals have a citation index indicating how many times other authors have cited your publication. Even though I work in a relatively obscure field, the intersection between ophthalmology and rheumatology, my work has been cited more than 16,500 times.

TODD: What is your most cited work?

ROSENBAUM: A decade ago, two colleagues and I organized a meeting we called SUN (for the standardization of uveitis nomenclature). We brought together 50 experts from around the world to agree on terms used to describe the diseases we provide care for, ensuring that when Rosenbaum writes a paper and says he treated active inflammation inside the eye, it means the same thing as when a clinician scientist from Japan writes a paper. Our paper on the proceedings of this meeting has now been cited more than 1,100 times, and two-thirds of recent papers on uveitis cite the SUN criteria.

TODD: To what do you attribute your success in writing?

ROSENBAUM: Well, it might be genetic and it might be environmental. My mother’s mother was a successful cookbook author. Her editor helped my father publish his autobiography, “The Doctor,” which eventually became a Hollywood movie starring William Hurt. And now our daughter is the national correspondent for the New England Journal of Medicine with a growing reputation for her style, insight and somewhat iconoclastic approach to medicine.

TODD: What does the future hold?

ROSENBAUM: I have an essay that will appear in JAMA Ophthalmology called “Fred, the Fellow and the Professor Revisited.” It’s about how a former fellow has faced an illness. It was rejected five times before being accepted, but I think it will be very well received. I hope to publish a commentary on mindfulness and how this relates to being a physician. I’ve written a children’s book with a high school classmate who did the illustrations. It’s the bedtime story I told to our daughters as they grew up. It is still looking for a publisher. And of course, my colleagues and I continue to share new observations from the clinic and laboratory bench.

TODD: Thanks, Dr. Rosenbaum. I think I’ll read the children’s book first.
Don’t overlook fireworks safety for your eyes

By Blake Acohido, M.D.

While visually dazzling and awe-inspiring, fireworks are also quite dangerous. In fact, hundreds of thousands of people are injured by fireworks in the United States every year.

Unfortunately, many of these injuries are inflicted on the eyes. Injuries range from corneal abrasion and small eyelid lacerations to severely disabling chemical or thermal burns and full-thickness lacerations to the eye itself. The latter two can result in blindness in some cases, or even loss of the eye.

These injuries are not limited to the fireworks handler. Notably, half of all fireworks-related injuries occur among spectators — and children suffer more than one-third of these injuries.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology advises, “The best way to avoid a potentially blinding fireworks injury is by attending a professional public fireworks show, rather than purchasing fireworks for home use.”

If you absolutely must participate as a fireworks handler, be sure to keep your kids away from all fireworks (even sparklers), wear safety eyewear at all times and avoid the temptation to dabble with professional-grade pyrotechnics.

More information can be found on the American Academy of Ophthalmology website at tinyurl.com/fireworks-eye-safety.

How to donate to Legacy Devers Eye Institute

Legacy Devers Eye Institute provides some of the world’s best research, education and clinical care. We are also the largest provider of free and low-cost eye care in Oregon.

We appreciate the grateful patients and donors who support our mission of research, education and clinical care through the Good Samaritan Foundation. Every donation, regardless of the amount, makes a difference to saving someone’s sight.

To make a donation, contact Rena Whittaker at the Good Samaritan Foundation at 503-413-5585 or rwhittak@lhs.org, or visit legacyhealthgiving.lhs.org/bbis/deversgiving.
Legacy Devers participates in major national eye study

By Steven Mansberger, M.D., MPH

Legacy Devers Eye Institute will take part in a major 20-year follow-up of the Ocular Hypertension Treatment Study (OHTS) funded by the National Eye Institute. Ocular hypertension is elevated intraocular pressure and approximately 8 percent of adults over age 40 have the condition, which can lead to glaucoma. This study will determine the long-term effects of glaucoma and ocular hypertension on quality of life, visual acuity, visual fields, retina disease, and risk of visual impairment and blindness.

In the 1990s, eye care providers didn’t know whether they should treat ocular hypertension in everyone, no one or just selected patients. Clinicians from Legacy Devers and other study sites designed the Ocular Hypertension Treatment Study to:

1) Evaluate the safety and efficacy of topical ocular hypotensive medication in delaying or preventing the development of glaucoma in individuals with ocular hypertension; and

2) Identify baseline demographic and clinical factors that predict which participants will develop primary open angle glaucoma (POAG).

Under the leadership of Jack Cioffi, M.D., and Steven Mansberger, M.D., MPH, the OHTS began recruitment in 1994 and continued follow-up for over 10 years. Devers was the second-largest recruitment location with over 110 participants. This remarkable study produced more than 80 publications on detection and treatment of glaucoma — changing how eye care providers treat and monitor ocular hypertension and glaucoma patients. Many researchers from Legacy Devers, including Stuart Gardiner, Ph.D., and Shaban Demirel, O.D., Ph.D., were key authors of many of these publications.

Some of the highlights from OHTS publications include:

- Without treatment, 9.4 percent of ocular hypertension patients developed glaucoma over five years, and approximately 19 percent after 10 years.
- When doctors treated ocular hypertension, they could decrease the chance of developing glaucoma by 60 percent in all racial groups including African-Americans.
- Early detection with or without treatment resulted in similar decreases in the chance of developing glaucoma after 10 years; therefore, eye care providers and patients could wait to treat ocular hypertension until the eye showed early signs of glaucoma.
- Cataract surgery lowered intraocular pressure by 18 percent and this effect would persist for more than three years.
- I created a risk calculator showing that increasing age, thinner central corneal thickness, large cup-to-disc ratio, and more variable visual fields put ocular hypertension patients at risk for glaucoma. Clinicians have used this Devers Ocular Hypertension to Glaucoma Risk Calculator worldwide to take care of their patients.

This far-reaching study has changed the world's knowledge of monitoring and treating ocular hypertension and glaucoma patients, and this follow-up promises to teach us more. Research coordinators Gordon Barker, Kelsey Oakes and Cindy Blachly began calling, recruiting and testing OHTS patients in January 2016. Emily Jones, M.D., Robert Kinast, M.D., and myself are study investigators. So far, Legacy Devers Eye Institute is the center with the highest number of patients enrolled. Stay tuned.
Legacy Devers welcomes its 2016–17 Fellows

**Cornea**

David DeMill, M.D., received his undergraduate and medical degrees from the University of Utah. He completed his transitional year internship at Intermountain Medical Center in Salt Lake City, and his residency in ophthalmology at the University of Michigan Kellogg Eye Center. Outside of work, he enjoys travel, biking, playing the saxophone, golf, basketball, and spending time with his wife and three children.

**Uveitis**

Sherveen Salek, M.D., received his undergraduate degree in biology from Stanford University and went on to Johns Hopkins University for his medical degree. He completed his internship in internal medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, and returned to the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins for his residency in ophthalmology. He enjoys road cycling, hiking and attempting to cook.

**Glaucoma**

David Simons, M.D., Ph.D., is a native Texan who earned a combined M.D./Ph.D. from Baylor College of Medicine. He completed an internship at Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle, and his residency at Casey Eye Institute. During residency, he developed an appreciation for glaucoma research, and after fellowship he hopes to start a lab investigating how the optic nerve head is damaged in glaucoma. In his free time, he enjoys playing soccer and going to OMSI with his wife and two kids.

Nisha Nagarkatti-Gude, M.D., Ph.D., received her undergraduate degree from Harvard University and completed her medical degree and a doctorate in neurosciences at the Medical College of Virginia. She spent a year doing post-doctoral research in the Netherlands before returning to Virginia for her medical internship, and completed her ophthalmology residency at Casey Eye Institute. She is looking forward to continuing to explore all of Portland’s great food and hiking options, and enjoys cooking, traveling and nerdy board games.

Where are the 2015–16 Fellows headed?

As we welcome new fellows, we bid adieu to those who have been with us for the past year as they begin the next chapter of their professional lives:

**James Sanchez, M.D.** accepted a position at Eye Associates of New Mexico. He will be working in Santa Fe and Albuquerque as one of two cornea specialists.

**Kelly Ma, M.D., MPH** will be staying in Portland, joining Kaiser Permanente Northwest.

Laura Kopplin, M.D., Ph.D., will be joining the faculty at the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute.

Brendan Butler, M.D., will join Medical Eye Center in Medford, Ore., where his senior partners include two other Legacy Devers alumni.
Publications


Yokogawa H, Sanchez PJ, Mayko ZM, Straiko MD, Terry MA. Corneal Astigmatism Stability in Descemet Membrane Endothelial Keratoplasty for Fuchs Corneal Dystrophy. *Cornea*. [In pre-publication]


**Invited lectures/panels**

**Steven Mansberger, M.D., MPH**, was invited to speak:

- At the annual Canadian Glaucoma Society as the International Scholar in Banff, Alberta, Canada in April
- On implantable glaucoma medications at Glaucoma Day at the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery in New Orleans in May
- As 2016 alumni-sponsored lecturer in May at the University of Alabama, Birmingham
In addition, Dr. Mansberger was:

- Invited to work on a consensus manuscript for Primary Open Angle Glaucoma, Risk Factors by the World Glaucoma Association
- Invited to participate as a consultant for Bausch and Lomb in Kona, HI in January

**Michael D. Straiko, M.D.,** participated in the 2016 Cornea Society Symposium on May 8 in New Orleans, LA. The symposium is entitled: Trending Now: What’s Hot? Dr. Straiko will speak on “What is New in Endothelial Keratoplasty”.

Dr. Straiko also has been invited to Boston, Maine, Iran and Australia to lecture and teach DMEK surgeries this year.

**Brad Fortune, O.D., Ph.D.,** has become a Fellow in the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), joining the ARVO Fellows Class of 2016.

In addition, Dr. Fortune served in January as an ad hoc reviewer for the NIH Study Section review panel: Special Emphasis Panel ZRG1 SBIB-Z (55) to evaluate Bioengineering Research Partnership (BRP) grant applications.

**Shaban Demirel, O.D., Ph.D.,** has been invited to be an external examiner for a Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of Waterloo, Canada, on April 28.

**James T. Rosenbaum, M.D.,** spoke to the Rheumatology Division at the University of Massachusetts, Worcester, on “Uveitis: A Rheumatologist’s View” on Dec. 11, 2015.

In addition, Dr. Rosenbaum delivered these lectures:

- The Molecular Diagnosis of Orbital Inflammatory Diseases at Moorfield’s Eye Hospital in London on Dec. 22, 2015
- Retinal Vasculitis: A Rheumatologist’s Perspective in Park City, Utah, at the Winter American Uveitis Society meeting on Jan. 16
- The Microbiome and Ankylosing spondylitis at the Boise Rheumatology Association on Jan. 28
- Eye and Bowel Disease in Spondyloarthriti to UCB Pharmaceuticals Medical Science Liaisons on Feb. 11
- Ocular Manifestations of Sarcoidosis to patients and providers at a National Sarcoidosis Workshop in New Orleans on Feb. 27
- Uveitis: A Rheumatologist’s View, a grand rounds lecture at the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Disease, Bethesda, Maryland, on March 4
- Molecular Diagnosis of Orbital Inflammatory Disease, as Visiting Professor at Department of Ophthalmology, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. He gave the Grand Rounds lecture during the Residents’ Didactic Conference on Uveitis: Diagnosis, Lab Testing and Treatment, March 9
- The Eye and Rheumatic Disease at the Cleveland, Ohio, Rheumatology Society’s annual meeting on May 6
- Ocular Manifestations of Sarcoidosis at a satellite meeting of the American Thoracic Society in San Francisco on May 15

Dr. Rosenbaum also was an honored guest of Sankara Nethralya Eye Hospital, Chennai India, where he gave the keynote welcome along with lectures on Autoimmunity Versus Auto-inflammation, Is Ankylosing Spondylitis an Autoimmune Disease? Does the Microbiome Cause Uveitis? Retinal Vasculitis, and Nibbling Away at Idiopathic Uveitis in March.

Additionally, Dr. Rosenbaum spoke on April 11 at the PANLAR (Pan American League Against Rheumatism) meeting in Panama City, Panama on the Microbiome and Ankylosing Spondylitis, and on April 14 at the same meeting on The Eye and Rheumatic Diseases.

And on Feb. 20, Dr. Rosenbaum led an international steering committee in London for Abbvie to develop a 3E (Evidence, Experience, Exchange) program for the treatment of uveitis.

Claude F. Burgoyne, M.D., was an invited speaker on “Is the Lamina the Site of Damage in Glaucoma?” and “Imaging the Lamina, Sclera, and Choroid in Glaucoma” at the Greek Glaucoma Society and International Glaucoma Congress Meetings in Athens, Greece, April 2016.

In addition, Dr. Burgoyne:

- Was an invited panel member for an ARVO Special Interest Group on Connective Tissue Stiffness in Glaucoma at the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) 2016 Annual Meeting in Seattle on May 2.
- Spoke about Paradigm Change in OCT Phenotyping Glaucoma, and Optic Nerve Head Biomechanics in Aging and Glaucoma, at Hofstra University’s Department of Ophthalmology Grand Ronds on April 20.
- Lectured on Deep Optic Nerve Head Phenotyping in Glaucoma at the Japan Focus Symposium at the Japanese Ophthalmological Society in Sendai, Japan, April 16.
Legacy Devers Eye Institute clinicians

**Contact lenses — 503-413-7022**
Jennifer Prunty, O.D.
Karen Rice, O.D.

**Cornea — 503-413-6223**
Michael D. Straiko, M.D.
Mark A. Terry, M.D.

**General eye care — 503-413-7022**
Blake Acohido, M.D.
Ashley Hayden, M.D.
Eric Jones, M.D.
Robert M. Kinast, M.D.
Jennifer Prunty, O.D.
Karen Rice, O.D.

**Glaucoma — 503-413-6453**
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Emily P. Jones, M.D.
Robert M. Kinast, M.D.
Steven L. Mansberger, M.D., MPH

**Neuro-Ophthalmology — 503-413-7022**
Martin Gizzi, M.D., Ph.D.

**Ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery — 503-413-7022**
Laura Gadzala, M.D.

**Retina — 503-413-7022**
Sirichai Pasadhika, M.D.

**Uveitis — 503-413-7022**
Ashley Hayden, M.D.
Sirichai Pasadhika, M.D.
James T. Rosenbaum, M.D.

**Vision rehabilitation**
Shari Katz, M.A.
Karen Rice, O.D.

**Patient referrals**
Legacy Devers Eye Institute sub-specialty services: cornea, glaucoma, neuro-ophthalmology, oculoplastic and retina

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