THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY
of the
PAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY
(1940 - 2001)
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This is the definitive history of the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology since its inception in 1940 until the year 2001. A major part of its contents is derived from the Academia Oration presented by Professor Benjamin F. Boyd in 1999. The latter is the main Lecture in the scientific program of the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis (AOI).

In addition, this history is based on information compiled from Dr. Boyd’s private documents and Minutes from the Executive Committee and Board of Directors Meetings of the PAAO (Dr. Boyd was the PAAO’s Executive Director from 1960 to 1985 and subsequently President from 1985 - 1987). Some of the photographs were donated by Drs. Francisco Contreras, Robert Drews, Enrique Malbran and Alvaro Rodriguez (all four Former Presidents), Rubens Belfort Jr., President for the period 2001-2003 and some were derived from Dr. Boyd’s files.

PAAO’s Main Awards

The recipients of PAAO’s awards are always personalities that have significantly contributed to ophthalmology, teaching and prevention of blindness in the Western Hemisphere. The main awards are:

1. **The Benjamin F. Boyd Humanitarian Award** for service to the people of the Americas.

   It was created in 1987 and has been funded to be maintained on a permanent and continuing basis. It is presented during the Inaugural Ceremony of the PanAmerican Congress every two years to the person or persons who have substantially served the Americas to preserve and restore human vision. In the U.S. there are several very distinguished Humanitarian Awards in other fields. (The American Academy of Motion Pictures extends the coveted “Oscar”. The Albert Lasker awards in science are considered the highest in the U.S. - Both are humanitarian Awards).

2. **The Gradle Medal for Teaching** constitutes the highest recognition for teaching in ophthalmology in the Americas.

3. **The Gradle Lecture** is the main named scientific Lecture presented at the Pan American Congresses.

4. **The Pan American Maumenee Medal** is presented at the Pan American Congresses in recognition to contributions through the PAAO.

5. **The AJO Lecture** jointly sponsored by the American Journal of Ophthalmology and the Pan American. It is the top scientific Lecture in addition to the Gradle Lecture.

6. **The Pan American Lecture** presented by a personality outstanding in science and prevention of blindness.

7. **The Troutman-Veronneau Award** selected by contest for the best paper presented in Cornea and/or Strabismus.

8. **The Carl Kupfer Award** presented at the PanAmerican Congresses for excellence in prevention of blindness.
Presidents of the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology (1939 - 2005)

2003-2005  J. Bronwyn Bateman, MD - USA
2001-2003  Rubens Belfort Jr., MD, PhD - Brazil
1999-2001  Paul R. Lichter, MD - USA
1997-1999  Juan Verdaguer T., MD - Chile
1995-1997  Alice McPherson, MD - USA
1993-1995  Francisco Contreras, MD - Peru
1991-1993  Robert C. Drews, MD - USA
1989-1991  Enrique S. Malbran, MD - Argentina
1987-1989  Bradley R. Straatsma, MD - USA
1985-1987  Benjamin F. Boyd, MD - Panama
1983-1985  Alvaro Rodriguez, MD - Colombia
1981-1983  Frand W. Newell, MD - USA
1979-1981  Rafael Cordero Moreno, MD - Venezuela
1977-1979  Feliciano Palomino Dena, MD - Mexico
1975-1977  Juan Arensen, S., MD - Chile
1972-1975  A. Edward Maumenee, MD - USA
1968-1972  Alberto Urrets-Zavalia, MD - Argentina
1964-1968  John McLean, MD - USA
1960-1964  Jorge Valdeavellano, MD - Peru
1956-1960  Brittain Payne, MD - USA
1952-1956  Moacyr A. Alvaro, MD - Brazil
1950-1952  Conrad Berens, MD - USA
1939-1950  Harry S. Gradle, MD (Founder) - USA

▲ (Left) Prof. Benjamin Boyd (Past President and Past Executive Director PAAO, Immediate Past President Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis)
(Right) Prof. Bradley Straatsma, President of Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis (AOI) and Past President PAAO. Dr. Straatsma is considered an inspiring leader of great vision by both organizations (Fig. 1).

▲ Map of Western Hemisphere (Fig. 2)
What is the Pan American?

This is a saga, a history of great achievements by dedicated men and women of different generations and cultural backgrounds joined together by friendship and professional identity. Through human interactions, they made grand things happen. Motivated by a profound desire to bring about major positive changes in the lives of millions of people through the restoration of sight, they were able to significantly elevate the standards of the practice of ophthalmology and the quality of eye care in the Western Hemisphere.

These men and women from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean built the Pan American together, made it a financially stable, solid, prestigious organization, rich in traditions, with a treasure of accomplishments unmatched by any other international, non-governmental Association of physicians in the world. The Pan American is accepted by all Latin American ophthalmologists as their one and only international representative. It is also universally recognized by the International Council of Ophthalmology (Concilium) as the representative body of ophthalmology in the Americas.

What has the Pan American Accomplished?

There is a Pan American movement of great force and impact in ophthalmology based on the scientific and professional progress brought about through the bonds established by the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology.

This weaving together is the result of the mutual understanding and cooperation, sincere friendship and respect that exists among the ophthalmologists of the United States, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean influenced by the Pan American.
Luis Sanchez Bulnes, M.D., President PAAO in 1971 during Congress held in Bogota – Founder, Prevention of Blindness Hospital, Mexico, D.F. (Fig. 6)

Dr. McKinney’s important letter about Dr. Benjamin Boyd’s election and leadership (Fig. 5)

Document Creating the Prevention of Blindness Hospital, August 13, 1918, Mexico, D.F. (Fig. 7)
The History Behind It

The Pan American Association of Ophthalmology has gone through three stages (1940-1960/1960-1987/1987-2001). It was founded during the first Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology held in October 10-12, 1940 at the Hotel Cleveland in Cleveland, Ohio. It was organized immediately following the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology. This first Congress was attended by 240 ophthalmologists from the United States and Canada and twenty five (25) from Latin America. Those from Latin America had to travel from 12 to 20 days by ship to reach the United States and nearly 12 hours additional travel by train from the Atlantic seaboard to Cleveland.

The idea of establishing a new nucleus in ophthalmology of international scope based in the Western Hemisphere was conceived by Harry S. Gradle, M.D., from Chicago, one of the most distinguished ophthalmologists in the United States at that time and by Moacyr Alvaro, M.D., a prominent ophthalmologist from Sao Paulo, Brazil. World War II had interrupted the International Congress to be held in Europe. Interruptions of similar nature had occurred in the past with previous wars and unstable political situations. A group of prestigious leaders in the United States felt motivated to establish a new international forum in ophthalmology for the exchange of scientific views considering the rapid progress of science in the New World.

The Initial Planning

The initial correspondence for coordination and organization which led to the formation of the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology was started in May, 1939 between Drs. Moacyr Alvaro and Harry Gradle. The plan required the financial and professional support of a strong ophthalmological society. This plan was presented to the Council of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, the largest society of our specialty in the United States or for that matter in the world even at that time and was quickly adopted. The Academy then appointed a Committee to initiate the proceedings as rapidly as possible.

This Committee was chaired by Dr. Harry S. Gradle with two members, Dr. Conrad Berens, a prestigious ophthalmic surgeon from New York and Dr. Moacyr Alvaro from Sao Paulo who was a member of the American Academy (Fig. 3). Moacyr Alvaro was one of the founders of the Escola Paulista do Medicina do Brazil where Rubens Belfort Mattos Senior was already an outstanding Professor (Fig. 14). This Institution was later transformed into the Federal University of Sao Paulo where Dr. Rubens Belfort Jr. is now Professor and Chairman and President – Elect of the PAAO (Fig. 60).

The Relations with the American Academy

For historical perspective, sixty years ago the Pan American was born with the support of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Through these six decades both institutions have enjoyed a close relation of mutual respect and independence and have closely worked together to fulfill the aim of elevating the standards of ophthalmology in the Western Hemisphere (Figs. 25 and 43).
First and second Seats respectively of Prevention of Blindness Hospital in Mexico (Figs. 8 & 9)

Third and Present Building for Prevention of Blindness Hospital Luis Sanchez Bulnes in Mexico (Fig. 10)

1987 - Feliciano Palomino Dena (center) receiving Honor Award from Benjamin Boyd, President (left), and Robert Drews, Past President (right) (Fig. 11)

Modern Building, Instituto Conde de Valenciana (Fig. 13)

Instituto Conde de Valenciana. Director Dr. Enrique Graue (center) Dr. Arturo Espinosa (left) and Dr. Jose Luis Tovilla (right), President of the PAAO Congress held in Cancun, Mexico, D.F. (Fig. 12)
The First Executive Committee

During the business meeting of the first Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology held in October 11, 1940 the general plan of operation for the continuation of the Pan American as an Institution was accepted. The presentation and acceptance of a formal constitution was reserved for some future meeting. Harry Gradle was elected first President, with two Secretary Treasurers, Conrad Berens for North America and Moacyr Alvaro for South America. (Fig. 3)

How Language Barriers were Overcome at the First Congress

The success of this first meeting in spite of the language barriers proved the interest of the participants and the ability of the organizers. There was no simultaneous translation available. Every paper had been submitted several weeks previously and had been abstracted and condensed to some ten or twelve paragraphs. This text (digest) was translated into English for the Spanish and Portuguese papers and into Spanish and Portuguese for the English papers. The abstracts were then put on to lantern slides and projected as the paper was presented in the original. Thus, all members were enabled to follow the context of the papers regardless of the language and could discuss the papers in their own language. The discussion of each paper was opened by a previously appointed member. An English speaking ophthalmologist discussed the papers from Latin America and viceversa.

The Succeeding Congresses

After Cleveland, the second congress convened at the other end of the Hemisphere, in Montevideo, Uruguay in November 1945; the third was held in Havana, Cuba, in 1948; the fourth in Mexico City in 1952. Between these major congresses, there were a series of interim meetings on land and aboard cruise ships which stimulated the participation of more members and the creation of more friendships.

Important Contacts in 1956

The human warmth of the then small Pan American Congresses were conducive to the spontaneous establishment of personal friendships, sometimes with outstanding personalities. During the Pan American Congress in Chile, in 1956, a warm personal relation was established between Dr. Boyd and personalities of high prestige that were to cement the consolidation of the PAAO. In particular, with A. Edward Maumenee, (Figs. 17, 18, 35) who had just been appointed Professor and Chairman at the Wilmer Institute, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and with John M. McLean, (Fig. 21) also recently appointed Professor and Chairman at New York Hospital. Dr. McLean was the pioneer of suturing the intracapsular cataract wound using catgut sutures, a grand step forward in cataract surgery. Both Drs. Maumenee and McLean became Presidents of the PAAO. Maumenee and McLean became Dr. Boyd’s mentors and close advisors for a lifetime.

The Role of the PAAO During Its First Stage

To perceive what the Pan American was then, and the limitations confronted by its leaders, we must keep in mind the serious barriers that doctors in Latin America had to overcome, especially limitations in transportation, communications and language barriers.

The Pan American was considered primarily as a remarkable organization for promoting international good will in a group of truly outstanding, influential physicians in different countries of the Western Hemisphere. In this role it contributed much to the ophthalmologists of the countries involved. Its
Prof. Renato de Toledo, from Brazil, Secretary for South America, 1960-1962 (Fig. 15)

Dr. Jorge Malbran, Argentina (Fig. 16)

A. E. Maumenee receiving the PAAO Gold Medal from Benjamin Boyd for presentation of the Gradle Lecture (Fig. 17)

From Brazil – Rubens Belfort Mattos Sr. (left) and Moacyr Alvaro (right) (Fig. 14)
After culminating one quarter of a century as Executive Director, he stepped down and was elected President for the period 1985–1987.

Dr. Boyd had initiated with particular success the launching of HIGHLIGHTS OF OPHTHALMOLOGY as a small publication in both English and Spanish. The Nominating Committee considered that this young man might lead the PAAO into a promising future (Fig. 5).

The Search for a New Leader

In 1950 Dr. Gradle had passed away and in 1959, when the Association was getting ready for the VIth major congress to be held the following year in Caracas, Venezuela, Moacyr Alvaro, its Executive Director since its foundation, suddenly died (Figs. 3 and 14).

This left the Association with a vacuum in leadership. A Nominating Committee, presided by William Benedict, M.D., Executive Secretary of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolar-ynesiology, began to search for candidates to take over the key position left open upon Dr. Alvaro’s death. The Committee focused essentially on candidates from Latin America that would be academically and personally acceptable to members from the United States and Latin America.

The New Executive Committee

The Executive Committee that launched the Second Period was composed, in addition to Dr. Boyd, by Prof. Jorge Valdeavellano, M.D. (Peru) as President, (Fig. 4) J. Wesley McKinney, M.D. from the United States (Figs. 4, 5) and Prof. Renato de Toledo, M.D., from Sao Paulo, Brazil (Fig. 15).

First Priorities in the Second Stage

In those twenty seven years, between 1960 and 1987 with the very active input of nine different Presidents, eight Secretary Treasurers and two Deputy Secretaries who occupied their respective offices one at a time in orderly succession, the objectives of the Association were changed. They elected education and training as the first priority. These two priorities were essential in order to attain the aim of raising the standards of the practice of ophthalmology in the Western Hemisphere.

During the first meeting of the Board of Directors following the 1960 election, Dr. Boyd emphasized that, in order to accomplish their aim, they needed to actively involve the most prominent
leaders of ophthalmology in the different countries and regions of Latin America, the United States and Canada. The leading ophthalmologists were mostly influential in their own countries, which was their “sphere of influence”. Because of lack of communications, most of them were not aware of the valuable work and contributions to ophthalmology made by colleagues in other countries of Latin America. For the most part, they did not even know each other personally. In addition, the prominent ophthalmologists from the United States and Canada did not know the values existing in Latin America.

He also emphasized that support from others is gained on merits. The leaders of the Second Stage even at this early phase had to show that important activities were already being undertaken. Consequently, they prepared a program to be presented to those in the front line whose support he personally was going to request on behalf of the Pan American.

**A Crusade for Support**

In order to overcome enormous barriers in communications, at a time when there were no faxes, no e-mails, no credit cards to facilitate payment of dues, and very slow, unreliable and expensive telephone communications, Dr. Boyd decided to travel in order to personally meet and invite the main leaders of major countries to “join the crusade”. He covered these extensive travel expenses from his own personal resources.

**Reaching the Mexican Giants**

Mexican ophthalmology was and is increasingly identified as being in the front line for its dedication to teaching and research and top eye care. The
Mexican giants that became closely involved with the Pan American were: 1) Luis Sanchez Bulnes, M.D. (Fig. 6) founder and leader of Mexico’s one of two of the largest and most influential teaching hospitals, known first as “Asociacion Para Evitar la Ceguera en Mexico”. The historical document establishing the Foundation that financially supported this unique institution is shown in Fig. 7. It is shown here for posterity. The group from “La Ceguera” went through three stages of evolution symbolized by three buildings occupied at different times between its first headquarters in 1918 (Fig. 8), to a larger second building (Fig. 9) and to its third, ultramodern facilities now located in the beautiful building that has deservedly been given the name of its founder, Dr. Luis Sanchez Bulnes (Figs. 10 and 6). Not only was Sanchez Bulnes the founder. He was considered by many of his colleagues as “The Maestro” who dedicated his life, spirit and drive to the consolidation of the institution.

His main collaborators at the time were Daniel Silva L., M.D., and Teodulo Agundis, M.D. At present, the hospital has 51 staff members and 49 Residents in training. They attend 172,000 outpatients and 12,000 surgical procedures per year. Hugo Quiroz M., M.D., is the founder of the hospital’s experimental surgery laboratory that is a leader in ophthalmic research, nationally and internationally. Dr. Quiros is also Chief of the Retina Department.

The second giant was Feliciano Palomino Dena, M.D., one of Dr. Boyd’s key advisors for many years (Figs. 11 and 19). Dr. Palomino was a dedicated teacher who became the first Medical Director and Head of the Organizing Committee of the Instituto Conde de Valenciana, Mexico’s other major teaching and highly influential eye hospital. The Instituto Conde de Valenciana in Mexico was founded by Enrique Graue Diaz, M.D., who became its first President. The Conde de Valenciana is a grand institution now led by Dr. Enrique Graue, son of the founder (Fig. 12). Enrique Graue is one of Mexico’s most prominent ophthalmic surgeons and Vice-President of the PAAO (2001-2003). The new multimillion dollar facility of the Conde de Valenciana is shown in Fig. 13. It has 48 staff members, trains 55 Residents, 30% of whom are non-Mexicans. 145,000 outpatient consultations and 8,000 operations per year reveal the magnitude of this institution.

There was a third very prestigious ophthalmologist at the time in Mexico, Dr. Magin Puig Solanes, Chief of Ophthalmology at the General Hospital. He trained a good number of ophthalmologists who later played a very important role in Mexican Ophthalmology. Personally he played a limited role in Pan American activities.

Dr. Sanchez Bulnes (Fig. 6) and Dr. Palomino Dena (Figs. 11 and 19) became convinced of the importance of supporting the Pan American and contribute to fulfill its aims. They both became crusaders within and outside Mexico to convey the message and provide support. Sanchez Bulnes was elected by the Council as temporary President of the PAAO in 1971 during a short illness of the President, Professor Alberto Urrets Zavalia. Dr. Palomino Dena was elected President for the period 1977-1979.

The Brazilian Leaders

In the early 1960’s, air travel was through the DC-3 that took twice as long to reach their desti-
Charles Schepens and his alumni. Schepens’ input in training top retina surgeons who later became prominent leaders of the PAAO was essential in the development of the organization. Alice McPherson, M.D. (extreme right), Felix Sabates, M.D., (extreme left) Dr. & Mrs. Schepens at center (Fig. 22).

Lorenz Zimmerman, (right) Head of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and Professor Juan Verdaguer T., Professor and Chairman, University of Chile. Dr. Zimmerman and Dr. Michael Hogan were the pioneers in the development of ophthalmic pathology in South America. Dr. Verdaguer became President of PAAO 1997-1999. (Fig. 20)

John M. McLean, President 1964 – 1968, the tallest in the group, third from right to left. Duque Estrada from Brazil (left) Alvaro Rodriguez from Colombia (right) (President 1983-1985). To McLean’s right, Valdeavellano (President 1960-1964), Juan Arentsen from Chile, at Valdeavellano’s right. At the time Arentsen was Secretary Treasurer for South America and later became President (1975-1977). Rodriguez Barrios, fourth from left to right (Fig. 21).

Richard Troutman, M.D. and his wife Suzanne Veronneau – Troutman, M.D. He was the initiator of the Microsurgical sub-specialty in the PAAO (Fig. 23)
nation than the present jets. Dr. Boyd traveled to Sao Paulo, Brazil where the Pan American was partly born. He went directly to the source, the Escola Paulista do Medicina and met the two heirs of Moacyr Alvaro’s legacy: Rubens Belfort Mattos Sr. (shown in Fig. 14 with Moacyr Alvaro) and Renato de Toledo, (Fig. 15) one of Dr. Alvaro’s proteges who had temporarily assumed the duties of Secretary Treasurer for South America. They both accepted Dr. Boyd’s invitation to build the image of the Pan American in Brazil. Dr. Boyd was particularly impressed with Belfort Mattos Sr.’s intelligence and readiness to undertake a most difficult task. He later was joined by the late Werther Duque Estrada, M.D., Professor and Chairman of Ophthalmology at the University of Rio de Janeiro who had valuable contacts in international ophthalmology. Rubens Belfort Sr.’s dedication to the Pan American probably influenced his talented son, Rubens Belfort Jr. who later became the full Professor at the Escola Paulista and is President Elect of the PAAO at the time of this writing (2001).

Dr. Boyd moved on to Belo Horizonte to invite the collaboration of Dr. Hilton Rocha, who was an institution in Brazil. He had an imposing personality and later participated with particular success in the Pan American Congresses.

The Leaders in Argentina

Ophthalmology in this vast and important country was enriched by a good number of personalities. Dr. Boyd’s initial efforts found only limited enthusiasm perhaps because of the strong European influence in medicine and in higher education ingrained in Argentina. There were two outstanding personalities who responded positively from the very beginning. Although European trained, and more comfortable in French than in English, they perceived the importance and potential future of the Pan American. These personalities were:

**Jorge Malbran, M.D.** (Fig. 16) whom Dr. Boyd met through his son Enrique Malbran, President of the PAAO during 1989-1991 (see Fig. 64). Jorge Malbran’s name and reputation carried enormous respect and admiration. He accepted to organize and lead the first team of PAAO’s Visiting Professors in South America when this highly successful program was initiated. His support opened many doors and enabled the PAAO to plant the seeds of the Pan American movement in Argentina.

The Second highly prestigious personality in Argentina was Professor Alberto Urrets Zavalia Jr., M.D., a brilliant and courteous man, well known in Argentina and abroad for his significant contributions to ophthalmology, particularly on Retina. He firmly embraced the cause of the PAAO and later became President of the PAAO (1968–1972).

Influential Personalities in the Medium-Sized and Smaller Latin American Countries

Outstanding personalities of the immediate past generation in the medium-sized and smaller countries promptly accepted to participate and embraced the Pan American firmly and with enthusiasm. They eventually became a strong group within the Pan American’s leadership from the 1960’s on.

Those that left a lasting influence were: Rodriguez Barrios, M.D., from Uruguay, a brilliant neuro-ophthalmologist. Juan Verdaguer Senior, M.D., Professor and Chairman at the University of Chile, the same position that his son and immediate Past President of the PAAO, Prof. Juan Verdaguer Jr., M.D., later occupied with particular distinction. Honorio Campuzano, M.D., from Paraguay, who dominated his country’s ophthalmology for a quarter of a century.
Stephen Ryan – Secretary Treasurer, 1985-1991, shortly after publication of his famous series *The Retina*. Dr. Ryan’s mentor was A. Edward Maumenee, with whom he trained at the Wilmer Institute (Fig. 26).

Dunbar Hoskins, M.D. (left) Executive Vice-President, AAO, with his mentor Robert Shaffer, M.D. (right). Dr. Hoskins was PAAO’s Secretary Treasurer for North America 1975-1985. He, William Conner and Benjamin Boyd made the final decisions when the PAAO permanent office was established in the USA in 1985 and selected Teresa Bradshaw to be the administrator (Fig. 25).

Ben Boyd (left) and Robert Drews (right). Dr. Drews was Secretary Treasurer from 1965-1975 and later President of the PAAO (1991-1993). He has had a long standing influence on the decisions made at the PAAO (Fig. 24).

Francisco Contreras, M.D. (Peru) receiving the Prevention of Blindness Award from the St. Louis Society for the Blind. Dr. Contreras is a major leader in Prevention of Blindness (Fig. 27).
From Venezuela, the late Jesus Rhode, M.D., Professor and Chairman of the University of Caracas, backed with fervor Dr. Boyd’s nomination as Executive Director at the time of the election in 1960. Also from Venezuela, Dr. Edward Grom, a dedicated teacher, Dr. Rafael Cordero Moreno, a first-class ophthalmic pathologist who became President in the period 1979-1981 and Dr. Oscar Beaujon, who later became President of Venezuela’s Academy of Medicine. From Venezuela, the outstanding personality that continues to exert significant influence within the PAAO is Dr. Rafael Gonzalez Sirit, a highly respected clinician, completely dedicated to the progress of ophthalmology through the Pan American. He became and continues to be one of Dr. Boyd’s most trusted advisors.

Professor Alfonso Gaitan Nieto, M.D., a symbol of advance and progress in ophthalmology in Colombia (Fig. 29). Dr. Humberto Escapini from El Salvador, who trained with Ramon Castroviejo and became an influential personality in Central America, particularly because of his clinical research demonstrating the relation of Vitamin A to corneal dystrophies in children. Dr. Escapini was essential in convincing his country’s government to add Vitamin A to children’s milk.

**The Great Leaders from the North**

The strong support that was received from great leaders of the immediate past generation in the United States was vital for success. They provided their highly recognized names, positions and insights and enhanced the scientific and social activities organized by the Pan American. They responded to the hospitality and warmth they received from Latin Americans. They also perceived from Latin America a genuine desire to learn, to become updated and be involved in the latest advances of the profession as practiced in the United States at the highest levels.

Among the highly selected nucleus of leaders of that generation, those that left the most deep and lasting influence were:

A. Edward Maumenee, M.D. (Figs. 17, 18) Professor and Chairman at the Wilmer Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. **Ed Maumenee’s** brilliance, positive initiatives, warmth and strong support of the Pan American’s programs enabled them to flourish, particularly with Fellowships, improved techniques for better presentation of the scientific programs at the Congresses, his bringing of the cream of U.S. ophthalmologists to attend the annual Pan

**The Strong Leaders from the Caribbean Region**

Guillermo Pico, M.D., (Fig. 37) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, transformed the Pan American by establishing and leading the Basic Science and Clinical Course, one of the most successful educational activities in the Western Hemisphere, under the responsibility of the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine and sponsored by the PAAO.
Professor Juan Verdaguer, M.D. (Chile), prestigious retina specialist and dedicated teacher, who has given 25 years of his professional life to the PAAO and became President (1997-1999) (Fig. 28).

1980. The frequent Working Sessions with Teams of Advisors. Ben Boyd (white shirt), Francisco Contreras to his right, Verdaguer to his left, Alfonso Gaitan Nieto (bent) from Colombia, a lifetime friend and advisor (Fig. 29).

Two highly outstanding Presidents: Dr Alvaro Rodriguez (right) Dr Robert Drews (left) during Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology, 1971, Bogota, Colombia (Fig. 30).
American Receptions during the Acamerican Academy meetings. Maumenee was fundamental in the creation of the Pan American Ophthalmological Foundation, which Benjamin Boyd considered as the financial arm of the Pan American in its educational activities. Maumenee became President of the PAAO in 1972 and gave his heart and mind to the Pan American. The PAAO has created a highly deserved Honor Medal in his memory.

Edward Norton, M.D. Head of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami was a strong force in education within the PAAO (Fig. 18). Norton had trained with John M. McLean (Fig. 21). To this date, the Bascom Palmer’s nucleus of patients are 50% from Latin America. Almost all main members of the staff have learned Spanish to better communicate with patients. This initiative was established by Norton.

Robert Shaffer, M.D. gave his heart and soul to the Pan American Educational Programs (Fig. 19). Shaffer was one of the world’s top glaucoma experts. His book “Becker and Shaffer” has enjoyed strong popularity for many years.

Lorenz Zimmerman, M.D., Head of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington (Fig.20) and Michael Hogan, M.D., Professor and Chairman at the University of California in San Francisco were the two main personalities responsible for instituting Ophthalmic Pathology as a formal subspecialty in Latin America.

John M. McLean, M.D., Professor and Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology at New York Hospital, who became President of the PAAO in 1964 – 1968. McLean pioneered the use of catgut sutures to close the wound in intracapsular cataract extraction, a technique that revolutionized cataract surgery at the time. Previous to McLean’s technique, the wound had to seal by keeping the head immobile with sand bags on the sides of the head for long periods.

Charles Schepens, M.D. (Fig. 22). He never occupied a position as officer of the PAAO but contributed significantly to the programs of ophthalmology in Latin America by training future leaders whose dedication to the PAAO has been essential to its growth and consolidation. Schepens became the busiest retinal surgeon in the world after his introduction of binocular indirect ophthalmoscopy and shortly later, the use of scleral buckling procedures. This did not impede his giving of time and efforts to train Fellows from all over the world.

The most significant leaders of the PAAO who trained with Schepens are Alice McPherson, M.D. (Figs. 22 and 33), Chief of Retina at Baylor, President of the PAAO 1995 – 1997, President of the Pan American Ophthalmological Foundation 1997 – 2000. Alvaro Rodriguez, M.D. creator of the Colombian Ophthalmological Foundation, President PAAO 1983 – 1985, Felix Sabates, M.D. (Fig. 22) Head of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Eye Foundation of Kansas City, University of Missouri, one of the Pan American’s most respected leaders for the past 30 years. Dr. Sabates has successfully organized Pan American Courses in the USA and provided effective help with Fellowships. The respect that Dr. Sabates inspires makes him a symbol of achievement of MD’s born in a foreign country (Cuba) and who remained in the U.S. because they were unable to return to their country of origin.

Richard Troutman, M.D., (Fig. 23) Professor and Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology at New York State University at the time. Troutman’s prestige as one of the world’s top corneal surgeons, who first introduced, implemented and taught the use of the operating microscope in the United States led to the spread of Microsurgery. He left a strong influence in the PAAO through his sustained teachings and training of young Fellows from Latin America, particularly in Keratoplasty and Cataract Surgery, all of whom returned to their countries to actively participate in the then new subspecialty of Microsurgery.
(1985). William C. Conner (left), then Alcon’s Chairman and CEO, displaying Honor Certificate in recognition of Alcon’s support of the Puerto Rico Basic Science and Clinical Course. He is accompanied by his wife Mary Frances, Dr. Miranda and Dr. Guillermo Pico, (Directors of Course) (right) (Fig. 31).

Mr. Tim Sear, former President of the Pan American Ophthalmological Foundation, now President and CEO of Alcon Laboratories. Tim Sear has always demonstrated a profound dedication and interest to serve the Pan American (Fig. 32).

Alice McPherson, M.D. (center), with two highly distinguished former Presidents of the PAAO, Bradley Straatsma, M.D. (left) and Francisco Contreras (right). Dr. McPherson is holding a special plaque of recognition for her outstanding performance as President of the PAAO (1995-1997) and President of the Pan American Ophthalmological Foundation (1997-2000). Dr. McPherson is receiving the Benjamin F. Boyd Humanitarian Award in 2001 (Fig. 33).

David Pyott (left), new President of the Pan American Ophthalmological Foundation and President and CEO of Allergan. Gavin Herbert Jr. (center) founder and Chairman of Allergan, Dr. Benjamin Boyd (right) wearing his Medal as President of the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis (1994-1998) (Fig. 34).
Main Achievements

An important Award is presented by the PAAO at every major congress in recognition of Dr. Troutman’s contributions and those made by his talented wife Suzanne Veronneau-Troutman, M.D.

Richard Simmons, M.D., from Boston, one of the world’s most prominent glaucoma experts. Dr. Simmons’ mentor was Dr. Paul Chandler, one of the “giants” of U.S. ophthalmology. Dr. Simmons created several fellowships on glaucoma for Latin Americans. Those that were accepted (by contest) were privileged to work under his direct supervision.

Louis Girard, M.D., Professor and Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology at Baylor University School of Medicine in the late 70’s. Girard had a special personality that conveyed warmth and friendship. He never missed a PAAO Congress. For many years, he was a pioneer in the organization of Courses on the new types of Contact Lenses (important at the time) and on Keratoplasty, in which he was an expert.

The Main Priorities of the Second Stage

The achievements obtained during that second period are vast.

In this second stage which lasted twenty seven years the key leaders changed the objectives of the Association and selected as the first priority that of education and training. Raising the standards of the practice of ophthalmology in the Western Hemisphere became their primary aim. By involving the most prominent leaders of ophthalmology in the Americas in this mission, many of whom participated very actively, increasing numbers of ophthalmologists from all nations began to take part in the activities of the Pan American. As a consequence of this movement, the professional and personal friendships among the ophthalmologists of the Americas were strengthened by close sharing of experiences and the input of many ophthalmologists oriented toward a common goal.

The period between 1960 and 1987 was the era of coordination and organization, creating a strong membership structure, consolidating the finances and the administrative part of the Association, continuously educating and training vast numbers of clinical ophthalmologists of the upcoming younger generations.

The Role of the Pan American Receptions

They were held every year at the annual meeting of the American Academy and became the “highlights” of these meetings. Attending the Pan American Reception was considered “a must” by the major leaders in ophthalmology of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. All ophthalmic industry was represented by their Presidents and CEO’s and other Executives at the top. These annual receptions were marked by distinction and class. The emphasis was on an atmosphere conducive to talk, exchange of views and developments.

The Key Leaders of the Second Stage

We outlined the great leaders of the immediate past generation who contributed significantly to facilitate the PAAO’s continued efforts to reach its aims. Let us recognize the people who worked hand-in-hand during this second stage.
Opening Ceremony of the Pan American Congress held in Bogota in 1971. President Pastrana of Colombia, father of Andres Pastrana, Colombia’s President at present, is presiding the ceremony. Shown (left), Dr. Luis Sanchez Bulnes, acting President of the PAAO. President Pastrana is the third from left to right. The Minister of Health followed by Dr. Benjamin Boyd, Dr. Maumenee, Dr. Drews, John McLean’s widow, Alfonso Gaitan (extreme right). Please observe all the flags in the background. This Congress was presided by Dr. Alvaro Rodriguez, Colombia’s most prominent ophthalmologist who became President of the PAAO in 1985-1987 (Fig. 35).

Opening Ceremony of Pan American Congress in Chile. Members of the Board sitting on stage, listening to Dr. Boyd’s keynote address (not shown). **Front Row** (right to left): Palomino Dena, Maumenee, Belfort Senior, Jules Francois (President of International Council), Drews, Urrets – Zavalia and Straatsma. **Second Row**: Guillermo Pico, Verdaguer, Derrick Vail (partly hidden), Eduardo Arenas, Roberto Sampaolesi, Robert Shaffer (Fig. 36).

(1975) Derrick Vail (extreme right) receiving the Puerto Rico Basic Science and Clinical Course Award for his support through the AJO (American Journal of Ophthalmology). Guillermo Pico, Director of Course on left with Dr. Benjamin Boyd, center. Derrick Vail was Editor in Chief of the American Journal of Ophthalmology and Professor and Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology, Northwestern University School of Medicine (Fig. 37).
Dr. Boyd had the privilege of working with nine Presidents and one Interim President. (See listing of Presidents in Page 5). The four dedicated Secretary Treasurers in North America and four in South America were essential in helping build the Association during this second stage from a very small group of professionals to its modern and vast structure. They were from North America, J. Wesley McKinney, M.D. (1960-1965) (Figs. 4 and 5), Robert C. Drews, M.D. (1965-1975) (Figs. 11 and 24), Dunbar Hoskins, M.D. (1975-1985) (Fig. 25) and Stephen Ryan, M.D. (1985-1991) (Fig. 26). For South America, Renato de Toledo, M.D. from Brazil (1960-1962) (Fig. 15); Juan Arentsen, M.D. from Chile (1962-1974) (Fig. 21); Francisco Contreras, M.D. from Peru (1974-1985) (Figs. 27, 29) and Juan Verdaguer, M.D. from Chile (1985-1992) (Figs. 28, 29). Two Assistant Secretaries from Brazil, Dr. Rubens Belfort Mattos Senior (Fig. 14), and Dr. Werther Duque Estrada (Fig. 21) as well as the Secretary for Mexico and Central America, Dr. Feliciano Palomino Dena enhanced the work performed by this valuable team. Drs. Drews, Contreras and Verdaguer became Presidents during the third stage of the PAAO (1987-2001).

From the group of former Presidents of the PAAO that are still alive and that were particularly outstanding in their initiatives and effectiveness during the PAAO’s second stage, the one that shined with particular light is Alvaro Rodriguez, M.D., from Colombia (Figs. 21, 30, 61).

THE MAIN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Following the 1960 election the new leaders started with no money, a dedicated Secretary Treasurer in North America, (Dr. J. Wesley McKinney from Memphis, Tennessee), and no working administrative office in South America. They had the names and addresses of the members of the Council representing different nations but no list of active members in Latin America and very few in the United States. The organization for payment of dues from Latin America was barely beginning and very difficult because of restrictive local laws and regulations (Fig. 5).

Building a Membership

They needed to build a membership. Only a few hundred members (250) were present at the 1960 Congress in Caracas. Many thousands register at the Pan American Congresses today. The Pan American passed through a stage of rapid and strong evolution. An almost permanent drive for new members was undertaken. A data base was built with names and addresses of thousands of potential members throughout Latin America and the United States. This was done manually. No computers were available at the time. An update of Presidents and Board of Directors of the ophthalmological societies of each nation was created manually with their respective addresses. Air mail was the order of the day. No fax or e-mail existed.

Establishing Means of Communications and Collection of Dues

As part of the membership drive they established Newsletters to communicate with members and inform potential members. The Association organized a more effective system for collection of dues from individual members throughout the Hemisphere, under one single Treasury. There were no credit cards to facilitate payments. When credit cards
Mr. Tim Sear, now Alcon’s President and CEO, then Senior Vice President, presenting a check to Dr. Manuel Miranda. Dr. Miranda replaced Dr. Guillermo Pico as Head of Ophthalmology Department, Univ. of Puerto Rico and organizer of Puerto Rico Basic Science and Clinical Course. Alcon’s tradition regarding financial donations has always been to support education, not social activities (Fig. 38).

(1980) Carlos Vera Cristo (standing), founder and driving force behind the Andean Course. Sitting (at center) Dr. Benjamin Boyd at inaugural ceremony of one of the courses (Fig. 39).

(1983) The Founders of the Southern Cone Course. **Left to right:** Dr. Mario Perez Genovesi (present Director), Dr. Adolfo Gomez Morales, Dr. Gustavo Piantoni (head bent to the right) (Fig. 40).
first appeared in Latin America, they were exclusively used within national borders. They were not accepted internationally. This restriction lasted until 1985. Payments by check in U.S. dollars were possible only if the member had a checking account in the United States, a facility that only very few had at the time. As a consequence, members in Latin America had to go to the bank and apply for a US$20.00 check to be made officially by the bank. These details would not merit being part of this text were it not because they explain the difficulties involved in paying dues in Latin America. The Treasurer, which operated from the United States, many times was disappointed at not receiving payments (See Fig. 5) This was mistakenly interpreted as lack of interest on the part of Latin Americans.

Creating the Pan American Ophthalmological Foundation

This was a very wise and effective initiative. J. Wesley McKinney, M.D. was Treasurer at the time (Fig. 4). A. Edward Maumenee, M.D. was the first President (Fig. 17). Dr. Boyd’s concept was that the Foundation would serve as the main financial source for the educational programs of the Association.

In order for the Foundation to receive donations it had to apply for special status to the United States Government. Every President and Treasurer of the Foundation have to be vigilant to maintain its activities within certain rules and regulations in order to facilitate receiving donations. At first, the Foundation built its funds slowly because it depended upon small donations from members of the PAAO. The funds were very carefully invested and expenses maintained to a minimum to allow a more rapid increase of capital.

After several years, Dr. Maumenee suggested that the President should not be a physician but a business man in order to manage and administer the Foundation with business know-how. William C. Conner (Bill) was the first businessman to preside the Foundation (Fig. 31). Bill Conner was the founder of Alcon Laboratories and the driving force behind its great success. He was the top man at Alcon (President and CEO) when he was elected to preside the Foundation. He did so for years until his death. He was replaced by Tim Sear. Alcon’s Senior Vice President for International Operations of Alcon until 1997 when he was promoted to Alcon’s top position (President and Chief Executive Officer). Tim Sear’s leadership was fundamental in the financial strengthening of the Foundation (Fig. 32).

In 1997, when Tim Sear was selected to become Alcon’s top position, he stepped down as President of the Foundation. The Board decided to elect a top ophthalmologist with vast experience in the functioning of Foundations. Alice McPherson, M.D. (Fig. 33) was unanimously elected as President of the Pan American Ophthalmological Foundation in 1997, after she finished her term as President of the PAAO.

Alice McPherson applied her vast experience in Foundations to the PAOF. She further strengthened the administration, the finances and the services provided such as Fellowships, financial aid for establishment of Eye Banks and other important programs of value to different countries in Latin America.

Dr. McPherson was replaced by David Pyott in October 2000. Mr. Pyott is the President and CEO of Allergan, a young, brilliant and highly effective new leader in Ophthalmic Industry (Fig. 34).
Polarizing the Basic Courses into three major Centers of Excellence. This map shows the annual geographical migration of Fellows and Professors into the three major centers of excellence. The red arrows reveal the displacement of teaching staff and Fellows from the entire continent into Puerto Rico. The blue arrows show the movements into Medellin, Colombia from surrounding countries. The green arrows trace the route of displacement from Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay into Buenos Aires. This extensive region is known as Cono Sur (Southern Cone) (Fig. 41).

Bruce Spivey, M.D. As Executive Vice-President of the AAO, and world leader, Spivey established a highly effective program of cooperation with the PAAO (Fig. 43).

The Pan American’s Centers of Excellence for teaching young MD’s who won a fellowship Puerto Rico, Andes, in Colombia (now in Ecuador) Southern Cone (Fig. 42).

Carl Kupfer, M.D. (left) and Harold Stein, M.D. (right) at a formal reception hosted by Professor and Mrs. Benjamin Boyd in year 2000 to commemorate the printing of the 15 millionth copy of HIGHLIGHTS OF OPHTHALMOLOGY. Dr. Stein from Toronto is a dedicated member of the PAAO and influential member of the Board of Directors of HIGHLIGHTS (Fig. 44).
The Financial Contributions of PAAO Congresses to the PAAO Programs

The History Behind It

The Association itself always had a very tight and limited budget. The only income received was from dues and small donations.

Dr. Feliciano Palomino Dena from Mexico was aware of this reality after having served as President in 1977-1979. He advised Dr. Boyd to present to the Board a formal Resolution that would in effect commit the Organizing Committee of each PAAO Congress to provide the Pan American (through the Foundation) a percentage of the net income derived from each Congress. Dr. Boyd presented the Resolution and its merits to the Board and it was unanimously approved. The Organizing Committee of the first Congress to be held after the Resolution was approved was not happy with this clause but understood its fairness. To prevent future disagreements, this clause is presented by the PAAO to every organizing committee before the Seat of the Congress is approved by the PAAO. This is now a reality that presents no obstacles. This financial contribution of the PAAO Congresses to the activities of the PAAO has proven to be fundamental for the continuation of the PAAO’s educational programs.

The Pan American Congresses

The Pan American Congresses of Ophthalmology have become scientific and professional meetings of the highest quality.

Every one who has participated in the organization of a Congress or a Course in his/her country knows first hand the significant amount of work this implies. To organize a Pan American Congress is really a major enterprise. The institutions known for periodically holding first rate major meetings always have a permanent highly trained staff that organize the meetings over and over again.

The PAAO Congresses present a different and difficult challenge. Each Congress is organized in a different country by a different group. This is part of the PAAO’s philosophy to stimulate the establishment of personal contacts and interaction through the input of people of different backgrounds and cultures. But the learning curve for each organizing committee may be long and demanding. In order to help and supervise the process and work of organizing committees, Dr. Boyd traveled to 10 different nations to personally meet with each organizing committee. This has become unnecessary with the availability of computerized systems and communications by fax and the internet.

The great success of the PAAO’s Congresses, with a blend of science and human warmth, is a tribute to the dedication of the people from different countries that openly compete for having the Congress held in their country. The opening ceremonies during the PAAO’s second stage were highly formal, usually presided by the President of the host country.
(1998) Hans Grieshaber, (left) President and CEO of Grieshaber and Co. faithful and strong supporter of PAAO activities. Member of the Board of Directors of the Pan-American Ophthalmological Foundation until 1999. Dr. Boyd (right) Photo taken at Dr. Boyd’s private office at home (Fig. 45).

Keynote address given by Dr. Boyd on April 15, 1961 at Dedication Ceremony of Alcon’s new facilities. From the very beginning Dr. Boyd decided to emphasize to Ophthalmic Industry leaders the importance of this new movement in ophthalmology (Fig. 46).

Alcon’s First “home”. Very small and modest (Fig. 47).

Alcon’s present “home”. When compared with Fig. 47, the change is dramatic (Fig. 48).
and attended by the very top personalities of ophthalmology in the Western Hemisphere (Figs. 35, 36). The flags of all nations were in the stage (background).

The Three Basic Science and Clinical Courses

One of the great achievements of the Association was the formal sponsorship of the three Basic Science and Clinical Courses which now cover the whole Latin American region. **The University of Puerto Rico’s Course** was established in 1968 by Guillermo Pico, M.D., a man of great vision, dedication and executive capacity (Figs. 31, 37). This is the only medical Postgraduate Course **in the world** where Fellowships are granted to 17 nations and in which the Fellows are selected by a contest in each country. During its 32 years of existence, this Course has functioned with much success every year. It has graduated 1800 Latin American ophthalmologists. After Dr. Pico’s retirement, it was continued by Dr. Manuel Miranda (Fig. 31). It is now ably led by Dr. William Townsend, Professor and Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Puerto Rico.

**The History Behind the Selection of Fellows**

When Dr. Pico began to structure the Course, including the financial support, he requested the PAAO’s support. Dr. Boyd traveled five times to San Juan before the Course was officially inaugurated. **Pico** rightly envisioned that the Pan American, with an already organized infrastructure could become responsible for selection of the candidates to whom the fellowships would be granted, independent of political and personal pressures. He and his Department might be placed in a difficult situation by friends or “friends of friends” who wanted their nominee to be granted a fellowship even though he/she had not fulfilled all the requirements to become the country’s first choice. The PAAO, with its already hemispheric reach and representatives in each country was the ideal organization to open the fellowship contest and select the winning candidates. The PAAO did not unilaterally grant the fellowships nor announce the winner. The PAAO informed the Ophthalmology Department at the University of Puerto Rico of its selection and it was (and is) the Department that officially communicates with each nominee and grants the fellowship.

This system of divided responsibilities has worked almost foolproof since it was instituted in 1968 by common agreement between the University of Puerto Rico and the PAAO then represented by Benjamin Boyd.

**The Financing of the Puerto Rico Course**

This was difficult at the beginning, as happens with every program at its inception, until results are there for all to see. This Postgraduate Course was an immediate success and has maintained its very high quality through the years. Part of the financing initially was received from the International Eye Foundation then led by the late **John Harry King, M.D.**, and through the ophthalmic industry. Merck, Sharp and Dohme was a steady donor. The largest financial contributions were received from Alcon Laboratories (Figs. 31 and 38) following Alcon’s policy to contribute financially to education instead of social activities.
(1998) Professor Joaquin Barraquer, Chief of the Barraquer Eye Center in Barcelona, Spain (left), Professor Benjamin Boyd (right). The Barraquer Institute in Barcelona has provided more fellowships than any other institution outside the Americas (Fig. 49).

(1999) Professor Juan Murube, (right) Chief of Ophthalmology at the Ramon y Cajal Hospital in Madrid, Spain. Professor Benjamin Boyd (left) (Fig. 50).

Professor Jules Francois (Belgium) (left), with Professor Jorge Malbran from Argentina to his left (also Fig. 16) and two other distinguished colleagues (Fig. 51).

(1968) Professor Hermenegildo Arruga (right) and Professor G. Meyer Schwickerath (left) at a round table discussion during a Pan American Congress (Fig. 52).
**The Andean Basic Science and Clinical Course**

_Sponsors_ by the Pan American took place every two years in Medellin, Colombia. It was also established in 1968. Its founder and long time leader was **Dr. Carlos Vera Cristo**. It has graduated 800 ophthalmologists from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela and some countries of Central America.

This Course remained alive and successful through the determination and dedication of its founder, **Carlos Vera Cristo, M.D.** (Fig. 39) and by some of its faithful Professors. **Francisco Contreras, M.D.** was constant in his support (Figs. 27, 29). The teaching staff was not financially compensated. Those coming from abroad lodged at the high school building where classes were given and that Dr. Vera Cristo had obtained as a gesture of solidarity from a religious order to be used during the summer vacation period. The Fellows were all young practicing ophthalmologists (not Residents) and each paid their way.

The Andean Course continues to be a functional Biennial Course now being held in Quito, Ecuador.

**The Southern Cone Course**

Sponsored by the Pan American, it was established in 1983. Dr. Boyd travelled to Argentina to represent the PAAO at the inaugural ceremony. This is an annual Postgraduate Course held in Buenos Aires (Fig. 40). It has graduated 800 ophthalmologists from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru. Its first Director was **Dr. Adolfo Gomez Morales** from Argentina who, from the beginning, was firmly supported by **Dr. Mario Perez Genovesi** and **Dr. Gustavo Piantoni** (Fig. 40), Secretary General and President (respectively) of the XXIII Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology held in Buenos Aires, July 21-25, 2001. For the past 10 years the Coordinator and main leader of this Course has been and continues to be **Mario Perez Genovesi, M.D.** from Argentina. **Dr. Perez Genovesi** (Fig. 40) has obtained the active collaboration of Argentina’s top ophthalmologists and has maintained the Course at very high academic levels as perceived by the teaching staff and curriculum and its increasing prestige.

The thousands of young people who have seen a new light into modern ophthalmology through these three Courses (Puerto Rico, Andean and Southern Cone), constitute a living memorial to the pioneer work of its founders and Directors. The annual migration of fellows and professors into the three major Centers of Excellence where the Courses are held is shown in Figs. 41 and 42.
Ms. Teresa Bradshaw, Director of the Pan American Central Headquarters. Ms. Bradshaw has been responsible for the administration of the PAAO since 1985 (Fig. 53).

Ms. Terri Grassi, Assistant Director of PAAO’s Central Administrative Office (Fig. 54).

(1996) Dr. Newton Kara Jose, from Brazil (right), major leader in Prevention of Blindness in Brazil. Professor Rubens Belfort Jr. (left) The late Professor Rubens Belfort Senior, (center) (Fig. 55).

(1997) Dr. Everardo Barojas (left), leader in Prevention of Blindness in Mexico. Mrs. Pilar Barojas (center). Jack Dodick, M.D., the prestigious cataract surgeon from New York (right) (Fig. 56).
The Visiting Professors Programs

The PAAO’s Visiting Professors Programs has been one of the Association’s most successful programs. Highly selected ophthalmologists presented first class courses usually lasting several days in every country in Latin America. The teaching staff flew into three countries to present the Course, one country at a time to complete a 12 day journey. A total of 151 Visiting Professors have participated in this joint program with the Ophthalmological Societies of the different countries.

This program was enormously successful during the first 10 years. At present, with the increase in facilities of communications, courses congresses, e-mail and first class publications, it has been re-structured. It is now limited to the participation of Visiting Professors who travel to a specific country to participate and enhance the Scientific Program of National Congresses organized by National Societies. The Visiting Professor travels to one country, sponsored by the PAAO, at the request of the National Society of that country.

The Fellowships Program

A wide range of Fellowships supported by non-governmental contributions was placed into effect for the entire 27 years of this period and has extended into the third stage of the PAAO (1987-2001). The Fellowship Program under the direction of Alice McPherson, M.D. in the last few years (Figs. 22, 33) is vast in reach and of very superior quality. Over 50 Fellowships now available in the United States and Latin America offer training in multiple specialities.

The Pan American Societies in the Sub-Specialties

With the increased emphasis on subspecialties the PAAO created Pan American Societies in the major sub-specialties. They were responsible for organizing the scientific program in their respective fields during each Pan American Congress. The most active were: 1) Ocular Pathology; 2) Microsurgery; 3) Glaucoma; 4) Strabismus; 5) Investigative Ophthalmology.

As ophthalmic surgery became increasingly microsurgical procedures, the Microsurgery Society eventually lost its role in teaching and became less important. It had done its job with great success.

The Eye Banks

The PAAO established a Pan American Society of Eye Banks in order to stimulate the creation of institutionalized eye banks throughout Latin America. At the time, most corneas had to be imported, an expensive and complex process. To have well organized and functioning Eye Banks was a necessity. This initially became a very hard task, particularly because in order to be successful in acquiring donor eyes, each country had to go through changes in tissue-donor laws and regulations. The initial resistance has been successfully overcome. Today, eye banks operate without major restrictions in practically every country.

The Residency Training Programs

The Pan American has played a major role in the creation and strengthening of formal Residency Training Programs in Latin America. For many years the training of young ophthalmologists in Latin America was done through the European system of preceptorship. Gradually and firmly, through the influence of young people who trained in the United States that later became leaders in their countries and with the guidance and support from prestigious Chairmen of Departments in the United States the Formal
Dr. Juan Batlle, leader in Prevention of Blindness and Restoration of Sight in the Caribbean, with headquarters in the Dominican Republic. Dr. Batlle received the Carl Kupfer Award (Fig. 57).

The Pan American’s Major Centers of Action: The stars identify the areas from where most of the leadership in Latin America manages the educational programs. **Mexico:** The Executive Director Dr. Martínez Castro and Dr. Everardo Barojas (Prevention of Blindness). **Caribbean:** Dominican Republic with Dr. Juan Batlle (Prevention of Blindness) and Puerto Rico (Basic Science and Clinical Course) **Panama:** still a center for consultation and advice. **Colombia:** The Andean Course, now moved to Quito, Ecuador. Also, the Colombian Foundation of Ophthalmology, led by Dr. Alvaro Rodriguez, a most important institution. **Peru:** Dr. Francisco Contreras, Center for Prevention of Blindness. **Brazil:** Home of the President Elect, Dr. Rubens Belfort Jr. and Dr. Newton Kara (Prevention of Blindness). **Chile:** Dr. Juan Verdaguer, immediate Past President. **Buenos Aires:** Gustavo Piantoni, M.D., President of the XXIII Congress of Ophthalmology, Dr. Mario Perez Genovesi, Director of the Southern Cone Course; and Dr. Enrique Malbran, highly influential Past President (1989-1991) (Fig. 58).

(1997) (Left to Right) Dunbar Hoskins, M.D., PAAO’s Past Secretary-Treasurer for North America and now Executive Vice-President of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, Robert Shaffer, M.D., influential leader for many years; Paul Lichter, M.D., President of the PAAO; Benjamin Boyd, M.D (Fig. 59).
Residency Training Programs were established in countries where they did not exist and were enhanced where they existed. This process began in 1980. The Association also stimulated the improvement of training in the Residencies already established.

New By Laws

In 1985, the Association adopted a new document of By-Laws adapted to what the Pan American Association was then, its present needs at the time and its future.

Major Alliances

In addition to the wide support received from different sources, outlined in previous pages, the Pan American’s programs and activities were strongly influenced and enhanced in both the second (1960-1987) and third stages (1987-2001) by its close relation with three major forces:

1. The American Academy of Ophthalmology
2. The National Eye Institute (NIH)
3. Ophthalmic Industry

1. The American Academy of Ophthalmology

As previously outlined, the PAAO was created with the backing of the AAO, then the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology. This was followed by a semi-dormant period (never antagonistic) in which the working relationship was there but not in any way decisive.

This atmosphere changed significantly when Bradley Straatsma, M.D. (Figs. 1, 33) was elected President of the AAO and Bruce Spivey, M.D. (Fig. 43) became the AAO’s Executive Vice-President. After major changes in the Academy’s inner structure and organization, Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology decided to have a friendly separation.

Dr. Spivey, Dr. Straatsma and Dr. Boyd developed a close professional and personal relation that led to major facilities for the PAAO. Dr. Straatsma has and continues to be a very influential leader in the AAO. For the PAAO he is an inspiring leader of great force and vision. He was elected President of the PAAO for the period 1987-1989 succeeding Dr. Boyd (as President). He was instrumental in the creation of the Benjamin F. Boyd Humanitarian Award and Gold Medal, which is one of the most coveted awards presented by the Pan American every two years to the person or persons who have most contributed to the progress of ophthalmology in the Western Hemisphere. Dr. Straatsma extended his positive influence to the Pan American Ophthalmological Foundation and has been alert to keep stimulating the working relation between the AAO and the PAAO.
Benjamin Boyd, M.D. (second from right) receiving the Moacyr Alvaro Gold Medal from Rubens Belfort Jr. (left), 1996 in Sao Paulo. Second from left, Dr. Adalmir Mortera Dantas, Professor of Ophthalmology at the Federal University in Rio de Janeiro and Brazil’s top neuroophthalmologist. To his left the late Professor Rubens Belfort Senior (Fig. 60).

Bronwyn Bateman, M.D. (Blue coat) visiting the Colombian Foundation of Ophthalmology in Bogota. To her left, Alvaro Rodriguez, M.D., former PAAO President and founder of the Institution. Dr. Bateman is the PAAO’s President Elect (Fig. 61).

Francisco Martinez Castro, M.D., PAAO’s Executive Director (Fig. 62).

Gustavo Piantoni, M.D., President of the XXIII Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology, July 21-25, 2001. Dr. Piantoni is PAAO’s Secretary for Spanish speaking countries (Fig. 63).

Enrique Malbran, M.D., (second from left to right) PAAO’s Past President (1989-1991) and now Vice-President of the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis. Dr. Malbran is one of Latin America’s most prestigious ophthalmic surgeons. He is here accompanied by other personalities (to his left): Drs. Alvaro Rodriguez and Francisco Contreras (Past Presidents), (to his right) Dr. Ricardo Dodds, Head of one of Argentina’s top ophthalmic institutions (Fig. 64).
Bruce Spivey, M.D. (Fig. 43) was the most effective leader in the history of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Through his policies, Spivey positively transformed ophthalmology in the United States and eventually worldwide. When Spivey stepped down he was replaced by Dunbar Hoskins, M.D., today’s major force in the U.S. ophthalmology in his position as Executive Vice President of the AAO. Hoskins was former Secretary – Treasurer of the Pan American (Fig. 25).

Because of the great delays in the distribution of mail within Latin America, often the AAO members from Latin America who wanted to attend the AAO’s annual meetings received the AAO’s scientific program quite late. When they applied for Courses, the most popular were already filled. For the same reason, they had problems with the selection of hotel reservations. In addition, during the “lost decade” of the 1980’s in Latin America, young ophthalmologists did not earn sufficiently to pay for registration at the annual meetings.

Dr. Spivey, representing the Academy, and Dr. Boyd, representing the Pan American, arrived at agreements that overcame all these problems. For a trial period, ophthalmologists in Latin America received the programs by air mail so they could register for selected courses promptly. While the financial and currency crisis in Latin America lasted, young ophthalmologists were allowed a lower rate for registration. This situation has been overcome, but it was Spivey through his leadership and vision that stimulated the attendance of Latin American ophthalmologists to the AAO. Today, through his policies and those of Dunbar Hoskins, more registrants from Latin America attend the American Academy annual meetings than from any other region of the world. As a matter of fact, the Commercial Exhibitors do so much business with ophthalmologists from Latin America that all major companies have at least one or two representatives in the Exhibit floor that speak Spanish and Portuguese.

2. The National Eye Institute (National Institutes of Health)

Carl Kupfer, M.D., who recently stepped down as Director of the National Eye Institute, was a major influence within the Pan American (Fig. 44). Kupfer developed a personal interest in the activities of the PAAO since the early 80’s, particularly in Prevention of Blindness. At a meeting in Dr. Boyd’s hotel suite in San Francisco with the PAAO’s Executive Committee, Dr. Kupfer outlined and designed strategies for the creation and operation of Cataract Free Zones in Latin America and Courses to implement the techniques of Research. The latter were oriented to teach clinical ophthalmologists in Latin America how to arrive at objective conclusions after undertaking research with large amounts of clinical data.

The PAAO has created the Carl Kupfer Prevention of Blindness Award that is presented at each PAAO Congress.

3. The Major Role of Industry

The leaders of ophthalmic industry have come to be personally recognized by the top clinical and surgical personalities realizing the importance of business to the progress of ophthalmology. At a Board meeting in 1985, Dr. Boyd emphasized the importance of industry and the desirability to have them as partners and friends, not distant.
Bill Conner, Alcon’s first Chairman (Fig. 31), Gavin Herbert Jr., Allergan’s founder and Chairman at the time (Fig. 34), Tim Sear, then Alcon’s Senior Vice President and now President and CEO (Fig. 32, 38) and Hans Grieshaber (Fig. 45), then Chairman of Grieshaber and Co., were in the PAAO’s inner circle for the entire 27 year period of the PAAO’s second stage and continue to participate in PAAO’s activities through professional and business support and advice.

On April 15, 1961 Dr. Boyd was invited to present the keynote address at the Dedication Ceremony of Alcon’s new facilities. He selected the subject: “The Role of the Pan American in the Future of Ophthalmology in the Americas” (Fig. 46).

The fact that he decided to speak about the Pan American’s future role in ophthalmology is historically very meaningful. It reveals that from the very beginning as the PAAO’s top executive Dr. Boyd decided to “spread the word” about this new movement in ophthalmology and to call attention to ophthalmic industry leaders of the importance of this mission.

Alcon’s old facilities were very modest (Fig. 47) The evolution of the company since then until having the present facilities (Fig. 48) are witnesses of the great business talent of its top executives.

The Solidarity from Outside the Americas

The Pan American has been enriched through the years by solidarity from distinguished personalities outside the Americas, essentially Europe.

Professor Joaquin Barraquer, M.D., (Fig. 49) Director and Chief Surgeon at the Barraquer Eye Center in Barcelona and Professor of Ophthalmology at the Autonomous University in Barcelona, Spain has provided more fellowships and opportunities for postgraduate training of Latin American ophthalmologists than any other single institution. Professor Juan Murube, M.D., Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Alcala and Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology at the Ramon y Cajal Hospital in Madrid, Spain (Fig. 50) has allowed for one fellow every year during the past 12 years. Professor Jules Francois, M.D., from Belgium (Fig. 51) distinguished President of the International Council of Ophthalmology until 1990 and Professor H. Arruga, (Fig. 52) the very prestigious Spanish ophthalmic surgeon (for his development of techniques for retinal detachment and intracapsular cataract extraction) attended every Pan American Congress until passing away from illness.

The Establishment of the Permanent Office

From 1960 through 1985, the center of operations was at the Executive Director’s office in Panama, with the valuable help of the Secretary – Treasurer. The Administrative Head of the Panama Office was Ms. Kayra Mejia. She was a key person in the administration of PAAO Programs for 27 years. When Dr. Boyd decided to step down and informed the Board of Directors that he would no longer manage the business of the PAAO after his period as President (1985-1987) the Board wisely considered it necessary to establish a permanent office with full time staff to take care of the multiple activities and business involved with a growing and successful organization.

The Board decided to establish the office in the United States where most of the financial business took place. Bill Conner, still Chairman of Alcon,
offered logistical support. The main problem was to find a multilingual top quality person capable of managing the office and communicating with members in their own language. A Search Committee was established. The meeting point where candidates would be interviewed was at Bill Conner’s private club in Fort Worth. Dr. Boyd flew several times from Panama and Dr. Hoskins (Secretary – Treasurer) did so from San Francisco.

After turning down several candidates, a unanimous choice was made: Ms. Teresa Bradshaw (Fig. 53). She took over on July 17, 1985 and organized the office beautifully. Multilingual, both in speech and writing, with a very pleasant personality, soft spoken and efficient, she became a significant asset to the Pan American from the very beginning. The office was established in Arlington, Texas, close to Fort Worth, a central location where the leaders of the PAAO could meet without very long travels. Ms. Bradshaw manages all aspects of the Pan American’s administrative and business needs. To members and officers, she is a symbol of reliability and strength.

The PAAO continued to grow and the Board decided to hire an assistant for Teresa Bradshaw. Ms. Terri L. Grassi started working at the PAAO’s central office on July 1st, 1987. Ms. Grassi is efficient, kind and loyal.

Teresa Bradshaw and Terri Grassi (Fig. 54) have been and continue to be key persons in the growth and success of the PAAO.


Since 1987, new distinguished and effective leaders have continued the Association’s educational programs and membership activities with sustained efforts. Now that the level of training and education in Latin America has been significantly elevated, the Pan American has given a great deal of time and effort to activities in prevention of blindness.

The Emphasis on Prevention of Blindness

Francisco Contreras, M.D. (Figs. 27, 29, 33) is the unquestionable leader in prevention of blindness in the Western Hemisphere. After he finished his terms of office as PAAO’s Secretary for South America, then Executive Director and then President of the PAAO, Contreras has intensified his fundamental interest and activities in this field. He has been selected by the International Association for Prevention of Blindness, affiliated to the World Health Organization as their official representative in Latin America.

Contreras emphasizes that the importance of the age we live in is not only because we entered a new century. We must face the problems we encounter in ophthalmology in relation to the explosive advances in technology and the many existing social problems. This seemingly may lead to increasing differences between those that have and those that have not. Unless ophthalmologists approach these changes with the right focus and take proper measures, ophthalmologists will be left behind, in their role in the community, will lose their traditional prestige and status in society and will be seen as only adept to operate medical and surgical equipments.

There is a synchronized movement of Prevention of Blindness in Latin America in which the other major leaders are Dr. Newton Kara, M.D. in Brazil (Fig. 55), Everardo Barojas, M.D., in Mexico (Fig. 56) and Juan Batlle, M.D. in the Caribbean (Fig. 57), with headquarters in his country, the Dominican Republic.
Because of his significant contributions to the restoration of sight and prevention of blindness, Juan Batlle received the Carl Kupfer Award presented to him at the joint meeting of the American Academy - Pan American held in 1999 in Orlando, Florida.

Newton Kara, Everardo Barojas and Juan Batlle have been doing continuous, intensive work in prevention of blindness for years. One of their main achievements, together with Contreras and partly with Juan Verdaguer (Chile) and Oscar Beaujon (Venezuela), has been to organize and make a reality of the Cataract Free Zones, originally designed by Carl Kupfer. Their goals are: 1) Reduce the backlog of Cataract Blindness. 2) Decrease the level of Cataract Blind to a minimum within a specific period of 6 months after the work was started. 3) Stimulate the Role of Volunteer Organizations in the identification of the causes of blindness 4) No money exchange.

THE PRESENT MAJOR PLAYERS

At present, the major players of the PAAO have contributed to further modernize the administration at the head office and intensify the educational and training programs through the major centers of action of the Pan American (Fig. 58).

These present major players are: Paul Lichter, M.D., President 1999-2001 and Secretary Treasurer for North America previous to becoming President (Fig. 59). Dr. Lichter is Professor and Chairman at the University of Michigan and was elected President of the American Academy of Ophthalmology at the AAO’s celebration of its centennial (1996). He is a highly prominent personality in the field of Glaucoma.

Professor Rubens Belfort Jr., M.D., PhD, MBA (Fig. 60), Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Federal University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Dr. Belfort is the President Elect of the PAAO at the date of this writing (May 31st, 2001) and will act as President for the period 2001-2003. Dr. Belfort is one of the top ophthalmologists in Brazil, Past President and very active member of the Brazilian Council of Ophthalmology, and an authority on Inflammatory Diseases of the Eye.

J. Bronwyn Bateman, M.D. (Fig. 61) President Elect for the period 2001-2003. Dr. Bateman is the Department Chair, Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Institute, University of Colorado. She has been the PAAO’s Secretary-Treasurer for North America during the last six years, a highly distinguished ophthalmologist, dedicated teacher and eminent investigator.

Enrique Graue, M.D. (Fig. 52) Director of the Institute Conde de Valenciana in Mexico is the new Vice President (2001-2003).

Francisco Martinez Castro, M.D. (Fig. 62) from the University of Mexico, PAAO’s Executive Director for the past six years. He has given a significant amount of efforts and time to make his role highly productive. Martinez Castro is a distinguished member of the staff at the Instituto Conde de Valenciana in Mexico (Fig. 13), and a prestigious specialist on Inflammatory Diseases.

Dr. Gustavo Piantoni, M.D. (Fig. 63), PAAO’s Secretary for Spanish speaking members, elected President of the XXIII Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology in Buenos Aires, July 21-25, 2001. Dr. Piantoni is Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Buenos Aires and a highly respected personality in Argentina.

Mr. David Pyott (Fig. 34), new President of the Pan American Ophthalmological Foundation, Allergan’s President and CEO.

Several Past Presidents continue to be involved in the affairs of the PAAO and logically exert influence in its decisions and policy, mainly Bradley Straatsma, M.D., Alice McPherson, M.D., Francisco Contreras, M.D., Robert C. Drews, M.D., Juan Verdaguer, M.D.
Richard L. Abbott, M.D., of San Francisco, is the new Secretary Treasurer for North America. The new Executive Director is Dr. Cristian Luco, M.D., of Chile. Carlos Nicoli, M.D., Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Buenos Aires, and Director of the “Oftalmos” Eye Institute, Argentina, is the new Secretary for Spanish speaking members. Drs. Abbott, Luco and Nicoli will start their new duties in August, 2001. The thousands of ophthalmologists affiliated to the Pan American look forward to stimulating leadership from the new officers.

The Legacy to New Generations

One of Dr. Boyd’s most effective messages during the presentation of the Academia Oration is that in the last few years, the scientific standards of ophthalmology in Latin America have reached their highest levels. This has been attained in great part because of the PAAO’s vast and continuously active educational programs and its permanent role in cross fertilization of human relations and scientific knowledge. The Pan American Association has been the generating force and the center around which this notable progress has taken place.

He also considered important for the new generations to take notice that the leaders of the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology have never rested in their efforts to elevate the standards of ophthalmology, a legacy that is passed along for the benefit of the new generations. They have worked and toiled hard to provide the new generations with a higher scientific level in which to start their mission for ophthalmology. The PAAO’s leaders are all volunteers, and contribute their precious time, dedication and efforts without receiving financial remuneration.
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