



FIGHT FOR SIGHT

FIGHT FOR SIGHT 2018-2019 Annual Report

- Investing in Eye and Vision Research Since 1946 -



Welcome

Dear Supporters, Alumni, Mentors and Friends,

We are pleased to share Fight for Sight's (FFS) 2018-2019 Annual Report with you. Over seven decades ago, FFS's Founder Mildred Weisenfeld, who lost her sight from retinitis pigmentosa, started our organization determined to cure blinding eye diseases by funding promising eye and vision researchers early in their careers. In 2018 and 2019 we funded 34 new clinical and academic researchers from some of the nation's most prestigious institutions including the Schepens Eye Research Institute, United States Army Institute of Surgical Research, University of Washington, Cleveland Clinic and University of Houston, to name but a few. The thumbnail descriptions included in this report briefly describe their work. FFS is thrilled to be the first source of funding for many of them.


In recent decades, FFS has funded extraordinary eye and vision science, including the development of the intraocular lens, donor cornea preservation, various applications of ophthalmic lasers, glaucoma therapies and ocular stem cell research. Many of our past grantees have gone off to receive significant and prestigious funding – FFS Board member and past grantee, Joel Schuman, MD, received the Chapalimaud Award, the world's most prestigious vision research prize. We are confident that our 2018-2019 grantees will follow in the steps of Dr. Schuman and others like him.

FFS is dependent of donor generosity to support our critically important grant award program. Support is raised each year by direct mail and social media, through our annual Lights-On Gala and Strike for Sight, a bowling event started almost a decade ago by John LaSpina, another Board member. We are also grateful for ongoing funding partnerships with other vision non-profits including American Macular Degeneration Foundation, International Retinal Research Foundation, Aniridia Foundational International and Saving Sight, to list but a few. These mutually beneficial partnerships allow both organizations to fund critical research while wisely stewarding their donor dollars.

During 2019, FFS received one of the largest gifts in its history, a \$500,000 contribution from the estate of Madame Mae Sun Wang. Interest from this magnificent gift will be used to fund glaucoma and macular degeneration research. Generosity such as Madame Wang's ensures FFS's future. Please consider including us in your estate plans. A planned gift will help fulfill Mildred's dream of eye and vision research for generations to come.

As always, we thank you for your partnership with FFS during the past two years – as a donor, grantee, Scientific Review Committee member, fundraising volunteer or friend. We look forward to continuing our work together, curing blinding eye diseases and finding better treatments for those afflicted with vision disorders.

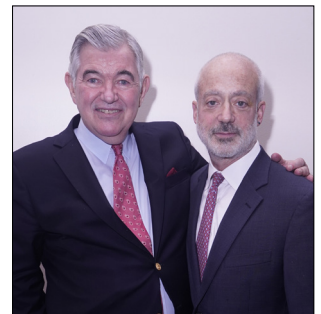
Sincerely yours,



Norman J. Kleiman, Ph.D.
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Arthur Makar
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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On the Cover (clockwise)

Mary Elizabeth Hartnett, MD, University of Utah Moran Eye Center and **2018 ARVO Weisenfeld Award winner**, with Sheila West, PhD, Wilmer Eye Institute and the Department of Epidemiology at John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, **ARVO's 2019 Weisenfeld Award winner**.

Eve J. Higginbotham, SM, MD, Vice Dean for Inclusion and Diversity of the Perelman School of Medicine, and Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Pennsylvania, received the **2019 Physician Scientist Award at the 2019 FFS Lights-On Gala**. She received a **1985 FFS Grant-in-Aid**.

James Wang presented an estate gift of \$500,000 to Norman Kleiman, PhD, FFS Board President, during the 2019 **Lights-On Gala**. It will be used to **fund glaucoma and macular degeneration research**.

Paul Sieving, MD, PhD, Director of The National Eye Institute, who received a **1980 FFS Grant-in-Aid**, was recipient of our **2019 Alumni Achievement Award**.

Research



In 1980, while a Resident in Ophthalmology at the University of Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, I received a Fight for Sight **Grant-in-Aid** to study the early receptor potential (ERP) in several human hereditary retinal diseases. Like many others, this helped me in establishing my credentials in eye and vision research. Later, as a faculty member at the University of Michigan and now in my current role as Director of the National Eye Institute, NIH, I have come to appreciate and respect Fight for Sight's grant program even more for a variety of reasons: among them that it serves as an entry point for fledgling researchers, many of whom go on to international prominence. This program also creates life-long linkages between giants in ophthalmology and those on the cusp of their careers. I dare say my own career might have taken a different trajectory without early support from Fight for Sight. I applaud the organization for its role ensuring the development of world-class eye and vision scientists for over seven decades.

Paul A. Sieving, MD, PhD, Director, National Eye Institute, National Institute of Health



Since 2014, Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine has received five Fight for Sight awards. One of the significant non-financial benefits of the program is in how former FFS grantees mentor their younger colleagues. Rebecca McGreal, PhD, who received a 2016 **Post-Doctoral Award**, was mentored by Alves Cvekl, PhD, recipient of a 1998 Grant-in-Aid. Other faculty, myself included, have also served as mentors, learning more about FFS in the process. This institutional peer support is often the beginning of rewarding professional affiliations and lifelong friendships.

Roy S. Chuck, MD, PhD, Chair, Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine

In 1989, while a fellow at Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, I received a Grant-In-Aid which, as it did for so many of my colleagues, helped launch my career as an ophthalmology researcher. A few years later, while at New England Medical Center - Tufts University, I had the opportunity to mentor Drs. Tamar Pedut-Kloizman and Lisolette Pieroth, who received a FFS Post-Doctoral Award (1995) and **Summer Student Fellowship** (1996) respectively. Dr. Pedut-Kloizman has gone on to a distinguished career at Bnai Zion Medical Center in Haifa and has also collaborated with me on scholarly articles relating to glaucoma. Dr. Pieroth has also gone on to a distinguished career in ophthalmology and, like Dr. Pedut-Kloizman, has been a collaborator on scholarly works. This is at the heart of a Fight For Sight grant, where someone who begins as a mentor, becomes a colleague and friend in the decades that follow. Mildred Weisenfeld would be proud of how her original vision has grown.

Joel Schuman, MD, Chair, Department of Ophthalmology, NYU Langone Health



2018

2018 Grants-in-Aid (GIA) are intended to fund pilot projects and generate preliminary results for investigators who have limited or no other research funding. Grants-in-Aid are awarded to junior faculty members who are developing their independent scientific skills. A majority of Grant-in-Aid recipients go on to successfully compete for larger, multi-year awards from NIH or other governmental and private sources, utilizing preliminary results generated by their FFS-funded GIA award.



Gregory Bramblett, MD, PhD

Preservation and Restoration of Vision
after Traumatic Optic Nerve Injury
US Army Institute of Surgical Research
[FFS – MTEC Grant-in-Aid](#)



Jae-Hyun Jung, PhD

Field Expansion for Acquired
Monocular Vision
Schepens Eye Research Institute



Jordan Greco, PhD

Characterization of an Ion-Mediated
Protein-Based Retinal Implant
University of Connecticut
[FFS – International Retinal Research
Foundation Grant-in-Aid](#)

2018 Post-Doctoral Awards support individuals with a doctorate who are interested in academic careers in basic or clinical research in ophthalmology, vision or related sciences. Awardees typically spend a year or more engaged in vision and eye research under the supervision of a senior scientist/clinician mentor.



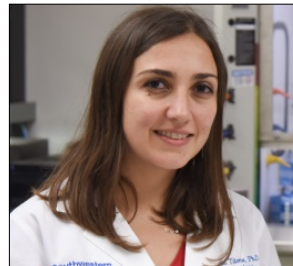
Henri Leinonen, PhD

Preventing retinal degeneration
with FDA-accepted compounds
Case Western Reserve University
[FFS – Curing Retinal Blindness
Postdoctoral Award](#)



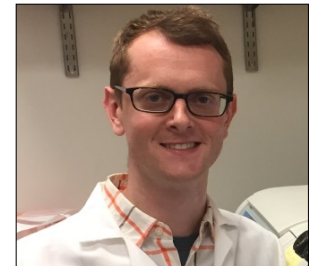
Mohamed M. Ibrahim, PhD

Novel glaucoma therapy
*University of Tennessee Health
Science Center*



Rossella Titone, PhD

Autophagy in corneal infection
UT Southwestern Medical Center



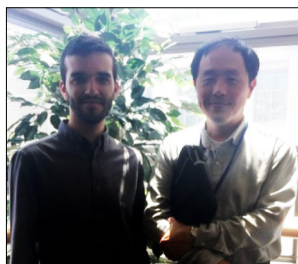
Keirnan Willett, MD

Vascular biomarkers in retinal
gene therapy for Leber Congenital
Amaurosis & Choroideremia
University of Pennsylvania
[FFS – Choroideremia Research
Foundation Postdoctoral Award](#)

In 2018, we supported twenty **young scientists** –
from eighteen universities –
researching twenty eye-related diseases.

2018

2018 Summer Student Fellowships are awarded to undergraduates, graduate and medical students interested in pursuing eye-related clinical or basic research. For most students, this is their first exposure to eye or vision research, and the experience has helped influence many students to choose academic ophthalmology or eye and vision research as a full-time career.



David Castillejos

Small molecule regulators of retinal cell function

Columbia University

Mentor: Jonathan Lin, MD, PhD



Kore Chan

Rapalog therapy to mitigate Vigabatrin retinal toxicity

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Mentor: Gillian McLellan, PhD



Amy Evans

Molecular mechanisms of signal transmission in retinal photoreceptor cells

University of Iowa

Mentor: Sheila Baker, PhD



Daniel Hass

Glaucoma therapy

Pennsylvania State University

Mentor: Colin Barnstable, DPhil

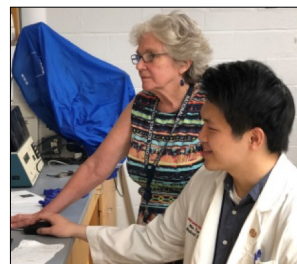


Jaeyoung Heo

Primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG)

Case Western Reserve Univ.

Mentor: Douglas Rhee, MD



Min Tae Kim

Corneal wound healing in diabetes

Boston University

Mentor: Vickery Trinkaus-Randall, PhD

[FFS – Saving Sight Summer Student Fellowship](#)

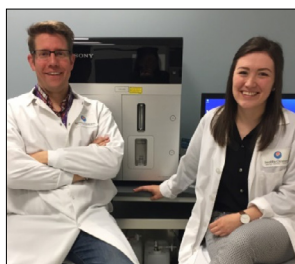


Christopher Le

Biomarkers for measuring glaucoma progression

University of Maryland

Mentor: Osamah Saeedi, MD

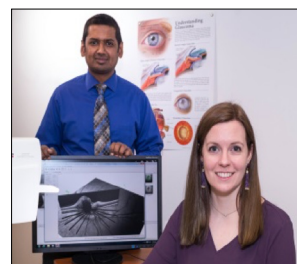


Nicole Mattson

CRISPR/Cas9-based gene therapy for inherited visual disorders

University of Washington

Mentor: Tim Cherry, PhD

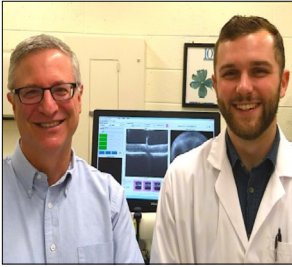


Laura Pardon

Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) diagnosis in Papilledema

University of Houston

Mentor: Nimesh Patel, OD, PhD



Collin Richards

Retinal rod cell mitochondrial reserves during oxidative stress

Wayne State University
Mentor: Bruce Berkowitz, PhD



Weilin Song

Epidemiology of age-related macular degeneration

Cleveland Clinic
Mentor: Rishi Singh, MD

FFS – American Macular Degeneration Foundation Summer Student Fellowship

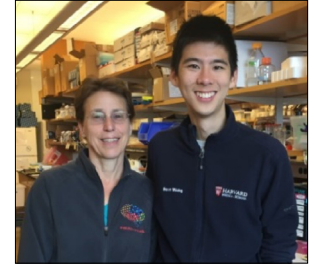


George Tye

Glaucoma risk and structural differences between ethnicities

Case Western Reserve University
Mentor: Carol Toris, PhD

FFS – Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Foundation Summer Student Fellowship



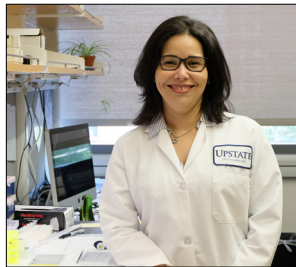
Sean Wang

Therapeutic targets for treating retinitis pigmentosa

Harvard Medical School
Mentor: Constance Cepko, PhD

2019

2019 Grants-in-Aid (GIA)



Reyna Martinez-DeLuna, PhD

The Role of B2 and γ 3-Containing laminins in intrinsically photosensitive ganglion cell development

Upstate Medical University, SUNY

FFS-International Retinal Research Foundation Grant-in-Aid

2019 Post-Doctoral



Srikanesh Ramachandra Rao, PhD

Studies on the requirement of dolichol synthesis-dependent N-glycosylation during photoreceptor development

University at Buffalo, SUNY
Mentor: Steven Fliesler, PhD

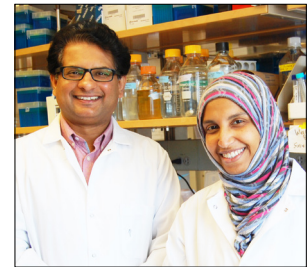
2019 Summer Student Fellowships



Samuel Adade

Neural innervation of superior oblique muscle during vertical vergence in non-human primates

University of Houston
Mentor: Vallabh Das, PhD



Salma Al Saai

Investigation of TDRD7 Function in lens development and cataract pathobiology

University of Delaware
Mentor: Lachke Salil, PhD

FFS – Basil V. Worgul Lens Research Award

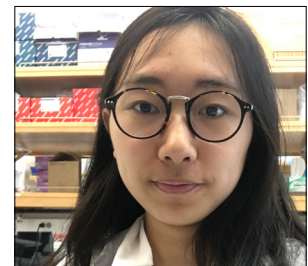


Elisa Arlotti

Memory T cells in the parthenogenesis of glaucoma

Schepens Eye Research Institute
Mentor: Dong Feng Chen, MD, PhD

FFS – Aniridia Foundation International Award

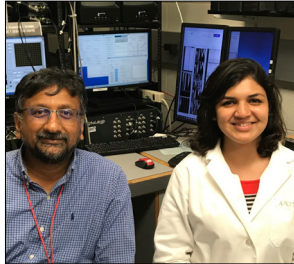


Xiaoke Bi

ATF6 signaling of unfolded protein response is essential for cone photoreceptor survival

University of California, San Diego
Mentor: Jonathan Lin, MD, PhD (Not Shown)

2019 Summer Student Fellowships



Apoorva Karsolia

Properties of primary somato-sensory cortex eye position neurons in strabismic monkeys

University of Houston
Mentor: Vallabh Das, PhD



Nicole Karson

Functional and structural retinal examination outcomes in patients with prediabetes and type 2 diabetes

University of Houston
Mentor: Wendy Harrison, OD, PhD



Ashley Park

Quantification of the effect of IOP lowering on erythrocyte velocity in episcleral veins in vivo

University of Maryland
Mentor: Osamah Saeedi, MD



Ali Salehi

Detecting progression of glaucoma from optic nerve head images using a convolutional neural network

University of Memphis
Mentor: Balasubramanian Madhusudhanan, PhD



Ari Stoner

Objective measurement of sleep quality and physical activity in open-angle glaucoma by actigraphy

University of Colorado
Mentor: Leonard Seibold, MD



Andrew Suscha

Anti-inflammatory dietary tryptophan metabolites and diabetic retinopathy

University of Wisconsin, Madison
Mentor: Nader Sheibani, PhD



Tu Tran

CRISPR/Cas9 - mediated gene editing to suppress choroidal neovascularization

University of California, Davis
Mentor: Glenn Yiu, MD, PhD

[FFS – American Macular Degeneration Foundation Summer Student Fellowship](#)



Kalila Wash

Advancing stem cell based therapeutics for age-related macular degeneration

University of California, Santa Barbara
Mentor: Dennis Clegg, PhD

[FFS – American Macular Degeneration Foundation Summer Student Fellowship](#)

Congratulations
to all of our
2018 and 2019
Grants-in-Aid,
Post-Doctoral
and
Summer Student
awardees!

Scientific Review Committee (SRC)

The Scientific Review Committee (SRC) is charged with reviewing and evaluating grant applications for Summer Student Fellowships, Post-Doctoral Awards and Grants-in-Aid. It is composed of prominent research scientists, academic ophthalmologists and clinician scientists representing a broad range of disciplines in ophthalmology, vision and eye research. Many received a FFS grant earlier in their career and/or have served as FFS mentors to succeeding generations of awardees.

FFS strives to create a diverse group of reviewers representing many of the finest academic and clinical institutions across the country, who help us choose the best and brightest young students and scientists for our awards. Our review process is modeled on the peer review system utilized by the National Institutes of Health, which evaluates and ranks each application on scientific merit, strength of institutional resources and clinical relevance. The SRC meets annually to review award applications. We are extremely grateful for their assistance, dedication and hard work.

2018 and 2019 Reviewers

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Johns Hopkins University

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Jules Stein Eye Institute, UCLA

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Northern Illinois University

Marjean Kulp, OD,
Ohio State University

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Bryan S. Lee, MD,
University of Washington

Shu-Hong Chang, MD,
University of Washington

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how to be a
part of our
research awards
please visit
fightforsight.org

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University of Wisconsin

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University of Wisconsin

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Vanderbilt University

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Rebecca M. Sappington, PhD,
Vanderbilt University

Ashok Kumar, PhD,
Wayne State University

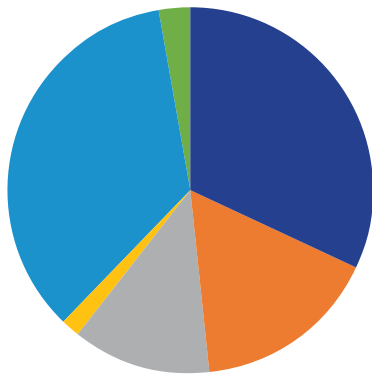
Robison V. Paul Chan, MD,
Weill Cornell Medical College

Thomas Grippo, MD,
Yale University

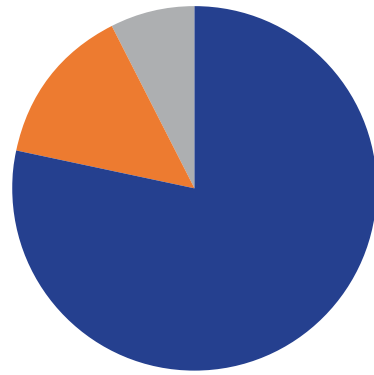
Finances

2018 Financial Highlights

Source of Funds	
Contributions and grants	\$92,002
Legacies and bequests	\$46,097
Interest and dividends	\$35,590
Rental income	\$4,200
Special events	\$100,063
Other revenue	\$7,703
Total operating revenue	\$285,655

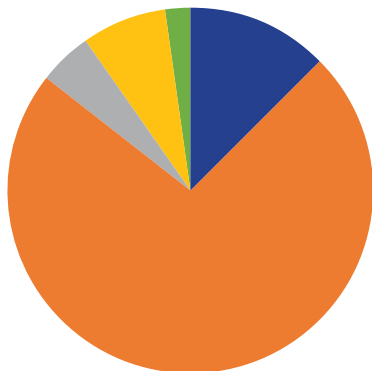


Expenses	
Program services	\$514,643
<i>Supporting services:</i>	
Administration	\$93,790
Fundraising	\$47,571
Total expenses	\$656,004
Change in net assets	(\$370,349)

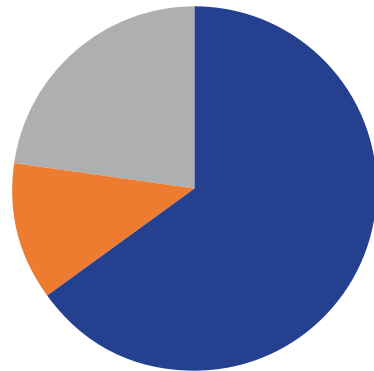


2019 Financial Highlights

Source of Funds	
Contributions and grants	\$96,591
Legacies and bequests	\$557,893
Interest and dividends	\$37,395
Special events	\$57,181
Other revenue	\$15,500
Total operating revenue	\$764,560



Expenses	
Program services	\$394,918
<i>Supporting services:</i>	
Administration	\$74,410
Fundraising	\$136,279
Total expenses	\$605,607
Change in net assets	(\$158,953)



Thank You

Fight for Sight recognizes and **thanks all** of the organizations listed in our **Partner Spotlight** as grant partners, allowing us to co-fund scientists in specialized areas of eye and vision **research.**

We **thank all** of our **donors** for their **generosity** in helping **Fight for Sight** provide grants to uniquely qualified students.

Partner Spotlight



Since 2012, we have co-funded Summer Student Fellowships focusing on macular degeneration through our partnership with AMDF.



Fight for Sight co-funds a Summer Student Fellowship focused on aniridia research in partnership with Aniridia Foundation International.



A Summer Student Fellowship, Post-Doctoral Award and Grant-in-Aid are eligible for funding in partnership with the Choroideremia Foundation.



A new Post-Doctoral Award was created in partnership with the Curing Retinal Blindness Foundation.

Earl & Shirley Herbst
Eye Research Fund

Two Summer Student Fellowships are offered annually through a partnership with the Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Fund.

GLAUCOMA
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

A Post-Doctoral Award and Summer Student Fellowship are funded in partnership with the Glaucoma Research Foundation.



Fight for Sight funded its first annual Grant-in-Aid with the International Retinal Research Foundation in 2013. Two Grants-in-Aid are now funded through this partnership.



A Summer Student fellowship is available through a partnership with Lirot, the Israeli eye and vision research organization, restricted to students studying in Israel.



A partnership related to transplantation of eye tissue was formed in 2012 between Fight for Sight and the Lions Eye Institute for Transplant & Research.



A Post-Doctoral Award or Grant-in-Aid with The Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC) focuses on vision restoration after traumatic nerve injury.



In partnership with the North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society, we offer a special research fellowship for neurology or ophthalmology residents or fellows pursuing academic research in neuro-ophthalmology.



We have offered a Summer Student Fellowship focusing on ocular immunology in partnership with the Streilein Foundation.

THE EYE-BANK
FOR SIGHT RESTORATION, INC.

Since 2011, we have partnered with The Eye Bank for Sight Restoration, co-funding a Summer Student Fellowship related to corneal transplantation research.



We have partnered with Women'sEyeHealth.org to fund a Summer Student Fellowship to study gender-based disparities in vision health, treatment and/or eye disease prevention.

Basil V. Worgul
Lens Research

Fight for Sight awards the Basil V. Worgul Lens Research Summer Student Fellowship to honor the memory of Professor Basil V. Worgul, who was internationally recognized for his work in radiation cataract.

2018 Donations

LAMP LIGHTERS

\$5,000+

Eduardo Alfonso, MD
American Macular Degeneration
Foundation
Laszlo Bito, PhD
Credit Suisse Americas Foundation
Curing Retinal Blindness Foundation
Estate of Israel &
Ruth Kamaiko Trust
Estate of Lester Sternfels
Estate of Marjorie Louise Connors
Glaucoma Research Foundation
International Retinal Research
Foundation
Norman J. Kleiman, PhD &
Laurin B. Kleiman
Gaby Kressly
John & Anita LaSpina
Frederick Moss
NYU Langone Medical Center,
Joel Schuman, MD, FACS
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Mildred Mosler Weisenfeld

is known in the ophthalmology community as the founder, in 1946, and executive director of Fight for Sight.

In fulfilling her lifelong commitment to research into all forms of visual loss and blindness, Mildred became a role model for philanthropists in medical science. Her broad, long-term outlook and her understanding and realistic support of scientific inquiry were applied faithfully and optimistically to her personal goals for research.



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If you are an eye and vision researcher, consider **joining our Scientific Review Committee**. Membership applications for this critical group of scientist/educators are available on our website, www.fightforsight.org. Go to the "About Us" tab, then to the Scientific Review Committee section.

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