Fight for Sight’s mission is to support and inspire eye and vision research by funding promising scientists early in their careers. This mission has been fulfilled consistently and with passion throughout our history.

OUR PAST

Mildred Weisenfeld began Fight for Sight (FFS) in 1946 after receiving a diagnosis of retinitis pigmentosa. Her magnetic personality and passion has propelled the organization forward.

FFS alumni are an international Who’s Who in Eye and Vision Research and include Paul Sieving, MD, PhD, Director, National Eye Institute. Dr. Sieving is shown with Norman Kleiman, PhD, President of FFS’s Board of Directors.

Mildred Weisenfeld began Lights-On, our annual Gala, in 1949. It was reinstated in 2012 after a two decade hiatus. Mildred is shown with Metropolitan Opera soprano Roberta Peters, one of the hundreds of performers who appeared at the event.

OUR PRESENT

FFS recognizes past grantees with an annual “Alumni Achievement Award”. Dr. Kleiman is pictured with Vinit Mahajan, MD, PhD, University of Iowa, our 2016 recipient, and Arthur Makar, FFS’s Executive Director.

FFS has brokered numerous funding partnerships with major eye and vision research organizations and foundations. Mr. Makar is pictured with Sandra Blackwood, Executive Director of the International Retinal Research Foundation, and Thomas Brunner, President and CEO of the Glaucoma Research Foundation, two of our current FFS funding partners.

FFS honors deserving individuals at its annual Lights-On gala. Dr. Kleiman is shown with 2016 honorees Dr. Joel Schuman, newly appointed Chair of Ophthalmology at New York University Langone Medical Center, and Vincent Favale, CBS Vice President for East Coast Late Night Programming.

OUR FUTURE

Dr. Yichen Wang, a doctoral student in the laboratory of Dr. Melinda Duncan at the University of Delaware, received a FFS/Aniridia Foundational International Summer Student Fellowship last year.

FFS continues its work to broker international partnerships. Dr. Kleiman met with scientists and clinicians from Lirot, the Israeli Research Association for Eye Health and Blindness Prevention, in 2015, resulting in our first international partnership.

FFS past, present and future. Janice Benson, FFS’s Associate Director, James Akula, PhD, a 2006 Postdoctoral Award recipient, Emily Swanson, a 2013 Summer Student Fellowship awardee, and Emily’s brother, Matt Swanson, who hopes to follow in his sister’s footsteps.

…and our commitment to eye and vision research continues with grants to the twenty promising scientists highlighted on page 2.
2016 GRANTS-IN-AID

Inherited Retinal Degenerations
Kinga M. Bujakowska, PhD
Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, Harvard Medical School
International Retinal Research Foundation Award

Retinal Neovascularization
Yannis M. Paulus, MD
University of Michigan
International Retinal Research Foundation Award

Glaucoma
Dorota L. Stankowska, PhD
North Texas Eye Research Institute

2016 POSTDOCTORAL AWARDS

Glaucoma
Amit K. Patel, PhD
Johns Hopkins University
Glucoma Research Award

Stem Cell Differentiation to Treat Eye Disease
Rebecca S. McGreal, PhD
Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Retinal Degeneration, Photoreceptor Skin Grafts
Kristan S. Worthington, PhD
University of Iowa

2016 SUMMER STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS

Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Meleha Ahmad
NYU School of Medicine
Harvey Knopman Award

Age-Related Cataracts
Ramachandran Balasubramanian
University of Delaware
Basil V. Worgul Lens Research Award

Fungal Endophthalmitis
Joshua W. Barbosa
Wayne State University
John and Anita LaSpina Award

Diabetic Retinopathy
Karen M. Wai
Cleveland Clinic
Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Award

Congenital Eye Defects
Soma Dash
University of Delaware
Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Award

Diabetic Retinopathy
Hannah J. T. Fisher
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Streilein Foundation for Ocular Immunology

Retinal Ganglion Cell Injury, Glaucoma
Timothy D. Holley
Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, U. of Miami School of Med.
Dr. James C. Tsai Award

Retinal Imaging
Rachel E. Linderman
Medical College of Wisconsin
Nicholas Cacciola Award

Corneal Transplants
Manuel Ramirez-Garcia
University of Rochester
Eye Bank for Sight Restoration Award

Smith-Lemli-Opitz Syndrome
Sriganesh Ramachandra Rao
University at Buffalo, SUNY

Aniridia
Matthew R. Riccetti
University of Dayton
Aniridia Foundation International

Retinal Photoreceptor Damage
Catherine T. Tran
Wayne State University

Not pictured: Elizabeth R. Curtiss, Wayne State University; Diabetic Retinopathy Kasra Zarei, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine; Glaucoma