

EDITORIAL

This editorial

is different from those that have previously appeared. Because we publish six issues per year, commenting on national or international events, well after the fact, can easily be interpreted as inconsequential. However, the tragedy that befell the nation on September 11, 2001 will be part of American's short-term memory for many years.

Optometry is one of the country's youngest major health care professions. As such, its history is still fresh in the minds of many of today's practitioners. Indeed, many have been part of its evolving history. Each state has its particular history, from the fight to be recognized as a licensed profession, to the efforts for the privilege to use diagnostic and therapeutic pharmaceutical agents and beyond. Each schools and college of optometry too has its own unique history.

New York optometry has never been first in any of these battles. Its recognition and later privileging for the use of pharmaceutical agents occurred well after many states had attained them. However, this must be put in the context of, arguably, the strongest ophthalmological political resistance in the nation. Nevertheless, the New York genre of "can do" persistence eventually triumphed.

This type of persistence is particularly noteworthy in terms of the state's optometric educational institution. In the 1950's New York's only school of optometry was closed because of a major university's need to cow-tow to its medical school. However, from those ashes arose the Optometric Center of New York in New York City. It became a unique institution in terms of enlightened patient care and its educational programs. Students from some of the existing schools and colleges of optometry came for a summer internship that stressed the behavioral and developmental aspects of vision.

Later, it was among several optometric institutions that took part in a federally sponsored effort to prepare displaced Cuban practitioners for American licensure. Then, students from Europe, particularly Belgium, Holland and France attended summer internships over a number of years. After several unsuccessful attempts with New York City based universities to create a college of optometry, persistence resulted in the creation of the State University of New York, State College of Optometry some 30 years ago. In retrospect, all the battles and disappointments served to make New York Optometry more resolved and stronger.

The College is a part of New York City, and more to the point, the City is part of the College. As such, the recent terrorism had its profound effect on the College's students, faculty and staff. The eloquent guest editorial on page 131 in this issue by Associate Editor, Dr. Rochelle Mozlin, shows how a New Yorker deals with the tragedy and, as the case with the City, becomes stronger and proceeds in a new direction.

We dedicate this issue to the people of New York City and, most especially, to the students, faculty and staff at the State University of New York, State College of Optometry (SUNY). The cover is a photo of the twin towers taken in 1993 by OEP Art Director, Kathleen Patterson.

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