

EDITORIAL

Dr. Neil Draisin

The induction of officers for the Southeastern Congress of Optometry (SECO) was held, March 4, 2011 in Atlanta. This meeting of optometrists, their staffs, suppliers and friends registered 9,200 individuals. This is the largest optometric meeting in the world. What was unique about this particular meeting was the induction of Dr. Neil Draisin as its 87th president. Celebrating with Dr. Draisin was his wife Carolyn, their three children, Alison, Leslie and David. Many of his office staff also attended, including his optometric partner Dr. Jennifer Smith.

Neil began private practice in Charleston, SC in 1972. He graduated from the College of Charleston with a degree in biology. He then attended and graduated from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. He completed a post graduate program in pediatric optometry and vision therapy at the State University of New York, State College of Optometry in Manhattan. He has been an active associate of the Optometric Extension Program Foundation (OEP) since his optometry school days. He is also a fellow of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD), and served in all the chairs of COVD including the presidency during 1992-93. Since the inception of his behavioral optometric practice, Dr. Draisin has been active in his community and in his profession. He has also previously served as the president of the South Carolina Optometric Association.

This is not only a great honor for Dr. Draisin and his family but for behavioral optometry. Behavioral optometry shares in this and salutes Neil for his accomplishment. Below is an excerpt from his remarks at his inauguration.

The Southern Council was established in 1924 with a goal to educate and expand optometry's role. We are about optometric education, which is why SECO is known as the "education destination." I first attended SECO in 1972. Over the years I have seen us grow through three hotels and exhibit spaces to our present location in the Georgia World Congress Center. I have also seen our attendance grow to over 8,000.

Our mission statement is- "To advance the profession of optometry worldwide to benefit public health and well being through education, professional networking and strategic partnerships." We have remained faithful to that mission. Yet, just as Disney and Ritz-Carlton never rest on their laurels, neither will SECO. Our goal during the coming year will be to make a first-class organization and meeting even better.

We will continue to assist our member states through the process of educational grants, we also will continue to elevate our educational program and expand our scope of practice. For our southeastern optometry schools, we will continue to support your programs in the form of grants, endowments, and an educational program at our SECO meeting that is tailored for your students. We also will seek your help and guidance in our student program and make this a priority. Your students are the future of our profession.

To our international guests and affiliate members, we plan to continue to explore ways to increase optometric education opportunities in your respective countries. With regard to our special role with the United Kingdom,

we look forward to continuing to improve upon our joint biannual meetings. To the AOA, we thank you for all of the changes you have made in the last few years and for being responsive to the ever changing landscape in Washington. The Southern Council will continue to work with you whether it be in continuing education guidelines, certification or legislation for our states to continue to improve our patients treatment options.

John Wooden, the great UCLA basketball coach said, "Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be." We have superlative programs built on a well-oiled process, but all great organizations try to be better. We need to always strive to make the very good even better. To this end, we want SECO to be at the forefront of educating optometrists to meet the demand for developmental eye care services.

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W.C. Maples, O.D., M.S.

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Our country's #1 priority is securing our future through education. This focus on education is a great opportunity for us to restore balance within our profession. InfantSEE® is a great way to begin the process. Yet, we can and we need to do more beyond infancy to make sure the child's visual system is developing normally. According to the AOA, one in four children has a vision problem. One child in 100 is autistic and the number of children with developmental vision problems is steadily increasing. Optometry has the skills to provide help to children in these areas and the AOA clinical practice guidelines tell us it our professional responsibility to do so.

Our profession has pioneered in the diagnosis and treatment of vision-related learning problems and we need to be sure our colleagues are trained to meet the increasing demand for these services. There is a strong unmet need to optometrists to provide visual rehabilitative services in hospitals across the country. We need to educate our colleagues to provide that care. We owe it to ourselves and to society to meet this challenge.

With increasing technology and the advent of 3-D movies and TV, we need to insure our patients have excellent binocular function. Three to five percent of our populations has no binocularity. They will be missing not only the emerging entertainment technology today, but will find themselves limited to the job markets of the future. Public awareness has been significant as a result of the case of Dr. Sue Barry, a neurobiologist, who is the wife of an astronaut. Sue had three strabismic surgeries as a child leaving her with virtually no chance to have binocularity; but she was referred by her family primary care optometrist to another OD in her home town who provided vision rehabilitative services. She now has binocular vision and her best selling book, "Fixing My Gaze" has caused an unprecedented demand by adults to regain binocular vision and stereopsis. Even though she had three surgeries, she was able to successfully restore her binocular vision. The public is now aware of what we have always known; strabismus and amblyopia can be successfully treated

at any age. Blogs and various social networking sites are rapidly increasing the number of patients who will be seeking developmental vision services through the lifespan. Our job is to educate our colleagues and the public about treatment options.

We need to hone our skills to meet the demand of our evolving world. This doesn't mean you need to provide developmental vision care in your practice setting. Like Sue Barry's primary care OD, you can do a great service for your patients by collaborating with a colleague who does and each year, there will be more of us. The Southern College of Optometry has recognized the need to expand our scope of practice and skills in the area. Three years ago began a groundbreaking private practice residency program to insure that more graduates will be prepared to meet this need; who better to serve than us?

This area involves not just kids. There are neurological cases due to head trauma and strokes. Care is needed for our aging population. These aspects compliment and extend the optometrist's role in health care. We need to learn to evaluate, triage and interact with colleagues who are doing this work. It is a natural fit for us, here today, to help prepare optometrists to meet the challenge. It will require blending knowledge of disease and ophthalmic optics with functional vision; and who better to do that than SECO?

It is through this effort that we will continue to elevate SECO's great tradition in education. It is just one more way to make this program great.

John Wooden said, "If I am through learning, I am through." The leadership of SECO will be particularly important as we navigate through the many obstacles facing us in the near future. I am confident that working together we will exceed our own high expectations and demonstrate to all of our peers the importance and the power of SECO's mission.

Thank you.

It is indeed refreshing to see behavioral optometrists involved in organizations such as SECO. It suffices to say that one cannot influence the system by being out of the system. I encourage all our readers to become involved in the organized community and professional organizations in

your area. It is an excellent way to share the good news of behavioral optometry. Well done, Neil.



Neil Draisin, O.D.