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Summer, 2006

## Pre-Cut Tissue Available from Midwest Eye-Banks



**M**idwest Eye-Banks has announced that, as a new service to its surgeons, it now offers pre-cut corneal tissue for lamellar surgical procedures.

“As part of our continuing commitment to quality improvement, we constantly evaluate the services we provide, and look for ways to improve our service to the surgeons and their patients who depend on us,” explains Brad Tennant, Vice President, Clinical Operations. “Advances in corneal tissue processing technology and new surgical techniques have enabled us to obtain the equipment and training necessary to perform the pre-cutting procedures.”

Policies and procedures related to this new service have been reviewed thoroughly and approved by Midwest Eye-Banks’ Medical Advisory Committee. All technicians performing the procedures are EBAA-Certified Eye Bank Technicians (CEBTs) who have received specialized training, using the Moria Microkeratome System.

Tennant adds that, although pre-cutting procedures are performed exclusively at Midwest’s Ann Arbor, Michigan laboratory, pre-cut tissue is available to surgeons in all Midwest Eye-Banks service areas. “Our Corporate Tissue Distribution Coordinator manages all pre-cut lamellar tissue requests, monitors surgery schedules and ensures the requested tissue is delivered promptly,” he explains.

“Surgeons can count on the same superior clinical quality and customer service they expect with all surgical tissue provided by the Illinois Eye-Bank, the Illinois Eye-Bank, Watson Gailey, the Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey and the Michigan Eye-Bank,” Tennant adds. Surgeons interested in receiving pre-cut corneal tissue for lamellar surgical procedures should contact Midwest Eye-Banks at (800) 247-7250, or call the Corporate Tissue Distribution Hotline directly at (734) 780-2101.

## Eye and Vision Research Program Grant Awards Announced

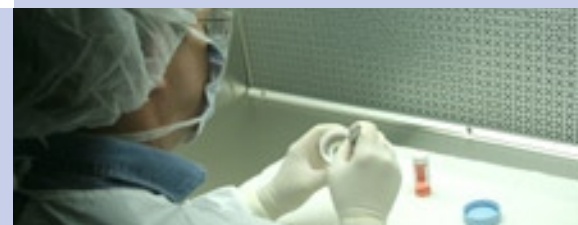
Midwest Eye-Banks has announced that the following researchers and projects will receive funding as part of its annual Eye and Vision Research Program for 2006-2007:

- Charlotte E. Joslin, O.D., University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, “Chicago-area acanthamoeba keratitis study.”  
**\$9,228**
- Surendra Basti, M.D., Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine, Department of Ophthalmology, “Can corneal epithelial stem cell kinetics be modified ex-vivo to yield a pure population of stem cells for transplantation?”  
**\$14,992**
- Ashok Kumar, Ph.D., Wayne State University, Kresge Eye Institute, “Regulation of TLR mediated-inflammatory response by dietary compound curcumin in the cornea.”  
**\$15,000**

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# Emergency Cornea Shipment Rescues Humanitarian Mission



Faced with a crisis, Mark Lister, M.D. called Midwest Eye-Banks' Tissue Distribution Coordinator and received much-needed corneal tissue at a moment's notice.

Just-in-time shipment of corneas doesn't usually require a surgeon to meet an incoming flight, within minutes of catching his outgoing flight to the Island of St. Vincent, near Grenada. But on January 26th, Dr. Mark Lister picked up a package of five corneas at Newark Airport, shipped hours before by Midwest Eye-Banks' Tissue Distribution Coordinator Holly DeMasi in Ann Arbor.

Dr. Lister, co-medical director of the Lions Eye-Bank of New Jersey, was leaving on a medical mission arranged by the medical school in Grenada. He was scheduled to perform six corneal transplants with Dr. Robert Fucigna. On the morning of his departure, he learned that there was only one cornea

available from another eye bank that had agreed to supply tissue for the mission. Dr. Lister immediately called DeMasi, realizing the critical time sensitivity of the situation.

The normal procedure to obtain eye tissue for a humanitarian mission involves a letter of request in advance, detailing the tissue needed and humanitarian purpose. The letter is reviewed by Midwest administration and a determination is made whether to provide the tissue and waive the processing fee. In this emergency, DeMasi scrambled to get administrative approval quickly.

"I told Dr. Lister that we were very lucky," says DeMasi. There happened to be an extra supply of corneas available. Usually, there are just enough corneas available to meet the surgery schedule each day. The only problem was that the corneas were all in Michigan and Dr. Lister was in New Jersey.

The corneas were shipped via airplane to the Newark airport terminal where Dr. Lister, waiting to board his flight, could pick them up. They arrived an hour before Dr. Lister's flight was to leave, and he was able to pick up the box of corneas in time to depart.

DeMasi likens this experience to emergency surgery requests. "A surgeon will call and say he's had a patient come in with a cornea perforation, and needs a cornea right away. I have to find a cornea and find the fastest way to get it to the surgery center or hospital."

For DeMasi, it was more or less business as usual. "A lot of times, if I get a call from a surgeon returning a cornea because the patient didn't come for surgery, I usually have that cornea redistributed to another surgeon before we even get it back to the lab," she says. "When it gets back to the lab, we quickly repackage it and send it to the other surgeon."

DeMasi works alone, with lab staff assisting during peak periods. "My phone never stops ringing," she says. Still, she hates a slow day.

(Note: Dr. Lister reported that the recipients of the corneas, the government of the Island of St. Vincent, and St. George's University School of Medicine are all extremely thankful for the generous donation of Midwest Eye-Banks' services, as well as Holly DeMasi's diligence.)

## Eye and Vision Research Program Grant Awards Announced

(Continued from page 1)

- Ali Djalilian, M.D., University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, "Evaluation of the function and persistence of transplanted limbal stem cells cultured on a collagen matrix." **\$15,000**
- Kenneth R. Alexander, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, "Visual noise and computational efficiency in retinal degenerations." **\$15,000**
- David N. Zacks, M.D., Ph.D., University of Michigan, Department of Ophthalmology, "Intravitreal linezolid in rabbits, "An electrophysiologic and histopathologic analysis." **\$15,000**
- David C. Musch, University of Michigan, Department of Ophthalmology, "Long-term follow-up of keratoconus graft recipients." **\$15,000**
- Deepak Shukla, University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, "Role of nectin-1 in corneal HSV infection." **\$15,000**

In addition to these research projects, \$2,000 stipends were awarded to five students involved in eye and vision research at the University of Illinois-Chicago, the University of Michigan and Wayne State University. This brings the total eye and vision research and student stipend funding provided by Midwest to \$124,220 for 2006-2007.

Midwest has awarded approximately \$2 million in seed money grants since its Eye and Vision Research Program began in 1980. Over the years, this funding has led to important scientific findings, including the discovery of a gene that, if defective, can cause early childhood blindness.

# Surgeon Profile: Catharine J. Crockett, M.D.

## Positions:

- Ophthalmologist, Eye Surgical Associates
- Medical Director, Illinois Eye-Bank, Watson Gailey
- Board Member, Midwest Eye-Banks

## Background:

- Undergraduate study completed at DePauw University, 1979
- M.D. completed at Indiana University School of Medicine, 1986  
Graduated with Highest Distinction
- Residency completed at Wills Eye Hospital, Philadelphia, 1990  
Fellowship in Cornea and External Disease

Eye Surgical Associates is a busy clinic on the campus of OSF St. Joseph Medical Center in Bloomington, Illinois. This is where Catharine J. Crockett, M.D. sees most of her patients. Although some of her patients come into the city from as far as an hour away, Crockett travels many miles on a routine basis to provide care at other clinics across the vast rural area.

“We have a lot of Apostolic Christians, farmers and other folks in the rural areas around here,” she explains. “They don’t always like to come downtown, so I work in other places where it’s easier for them to see me.”

Crockett has been a Board-certified ophthalmologist since 1991. She performs three major types of surgery: cataract surgery, cornea transplants and Lasik procedures. For several years, she was the only specialty-trained corneal surgeon in the Bloomington/Normal area; however, others have recently begun practicing in Springfield, Peoria and Champaign.

In addition to the growing number of corneal surgeons, Crockett notes growth in the field of transplantation. “Corneal surgery is evolving,” she says, pointing to

such new developments as Deep Lamellar Endothelial Keratoplasty (DLEK) in which the surgeon removes only the diseased endothelial tissue and replaces that tissue, rather than removing the entire cornea. Other advances include new types of contact lenses for patients with keratoconus, and new tissue adhesives for treating pterygia which help to minimize surgery time, avoid complications from sutures, and reduce pain following surgery.

Since 1996, Midwest Eye-Banks has operated the Illinois Eye-Bank, Watson Gailey, with Crockett as its Medical Director – a position she had held since 1994. The Eye-Bank is located on the southern edge of Bloomington, a short drive from Crockett’s main office. It was formerly housed at the BroMenn Regional Medical Center, and was then known as the BroMenn-Watson Gailey Eye-Bank. Dr. Crockett notes that the relationship between the Eye-Bank and surgeons has improved tremendously in recent years, ever since Midwest Eye-Banks and the Illinois Eye-Bank assumed management of the Watson Gailey facility. “Now there is more equitable distribution,” explains Crockett, “and we can have surgeries when we want.”

Today, in addition to serving as a volunteer Medical Director for the Illinois Eye-Bank, Watson Gailey, Crockett is also a member of Midwest Eye-Banks’ Board of Directors. “They are co-dependent roles,” she says. “Serving on the Board is an extension of being the Medical Director.”

Crockett’s professional memberships include the American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Medical Association, Illinois State Medical Society, Illinois Society of Ophthalmology & Otolaryngology, and the McLean County Medical Society.



Catharine J. Crockett, M.D. has been a volunteer Medical Director for the Illinois Eye-Bank, Watson Gailey since 1994, and is now a member of Midwest Eye-Banks’ Board of Directors.



Dr. Crockett performs a follow-up examination on cornea transplant recipient Vernon Peek.



One of Dr. Crockett’s patients, James Smiley, enjoys 20/15 vision following his transplant. Now, he can see “...better than you and me!” says Dr. Crockett with a laugh.

# Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey Announces Cinotti, Klein and Venturi as 2006 Visionaries of the Year



The Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey's 2006 Visionaries of the Year: Marshall Klein, Alfonso Cinotti, M.D. and Silvio Venturi.

The Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey presented Alfonso Cinotti, M.D., Marshall Klein and Silvio Venturi with its Visionary of the Year Award at a ceremony in Mountainside, New Jersey on June 12th.

Alfonse Cinotti, M.D., Professor and Chairman Emeritus of the Institute of

Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the New Jersey Medical School (NJMS), is credited with initiating the Lions Eye Bank in 1969. A specialist in cataracts and glaucoma care, Dr. Cinotti recruited Silvio Venturi and Marshall Klein to serve on an initial steering committee to form the Lions Eye Bank.

“My philosophy is find people who have an interest and the talent, give them responsibility, and let them work,” says Dr. Cinotti, who currently resides in Naples, Florida. “They understood what I wanted and got it done. I wanted to develop a functional structure that produced what we needed – we needed corneas for patient care and training ophthalmology residents.”

Venturi became the first President of the Lions Eye Bank in 1970. An engineer, Venturi is the founder and retired president of AMARK Industries. Dr. Cinotti's vision motivated him to

join the Board of Directors of the new eye bank. “He (Dr. Cinotti) was so dedicated to it... I thought, if someone could be so dedicated to this, it is something I could do to help other people and help him in his quest for making a better eye bank.”

Marshall Klein, Administrator of the Eye Institute, became the first Executive Director of the eye bank in 1970, which operated under the auspices of the Eye Institute, in the NJMS Department of Ophthalmology. Klein served as Administrator from 1972-2005, with the exception of a two year hiatus from 1980-82.

The Lions Eye Bank of New Jersey has been in operation since 1970 and is accredited by the Eye Bank Association of America.

SightLine is a publication of Midwest Eye-Banks, a 501(c)(3), independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the restoration of sight.

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