

UPSTATE OPHTHALMOLOGY IN FOCUS

WINTER 2023

NEWS FROM OPHTHALMOLOGY AND VISUAL SCIENCES

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

Let's stop the sneak thief of sight

Glaucoma is a disease that many people have heard of, but few really understand. It has often been referred to as "the sneak thief of sight." I think that is a very apt description. Unlike other vision-threatening diseases, early glaucoma has no symptoms. Your eye doesn't hurt. Your vision still seems clear. Your eye looks healthy and normal. But while there are no symptoms early on in glaucoma, the disease is at work, damaging the optic nerve.



Robert Fechtner, MD

Most commonly, the greatest contributing cause of glaucoma is high eye pressure. A common test for glaucoma is a measurement of eye pressure. But even a normal pressure measurement cannot guarantee that you don't have glaucoma because the pressure in the eye varies up and down. The only reliable way to detect glaucoma is with a comprehensive eye evaluation by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

Glaucoma is relatively common affecting about one in 100 people during their lifetime. Fortunately, we can usually save vision with early diagnosis and treatment. The risk of glaucoma increases as we age.

Who is the greatest risk for glaucoma? If you have a first-degree relative (parent, sibling) you are 10 times more likely to develop glaucoma yourself. Glaucoma is also more common in people of African, Hispanic, Latino, and Asian descent.

The main goal of glaucoma awareness month is to get the message out, "get your eyes tested."

If you are over age 40 you should have a comprehensive eye examination, every three or four years. After age 60 this should be an annual examination. If you are in any of the high-risk groups for glaucoma, it's a good idea to get your eyes tested every year after age 40.

The best treatment for glaucoma is early detection. The disease is unforgiving, and any vision you lose cannot be restored with even the best treatment.

So, take the opportunity during glaucoma awareness month to schedule a comprehensive eye examination if you haven't had one in a few years. Don't let the sneak thief of sight steal your vision!

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month



The first month of the year is dedicated to raising awareness of glaucoma, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Awareness is needed because glaucoma has no noticeable symptoms in its early stages. Vision loss can increase so slowly that people affected sometimes don't notice the changes until their vision has been reduced.

The loss of vision is due to damage to the optic nerve at the back of the eye. That damage is caused by increased pressure within the eye. The damage progresses over time, making glaucoma the No. 1 cause of irreversible blindness in the United States.

Glaucoma can be treated with medication and, when necessary, surgery. The key to successful treatment is early detection before the damage becomes too great. The best way to detect glaucoma: routine, comprehensive eye exams.



Center for Vision Research celebrates 25th anniversary

With scientists, clinicians, well-wishers and a former governor in attendance, the Center for Vision Research celebrated its 25th anniversary this fall with a symposium at the Everson Museum of Art.

The celebration included Lawrence Chin, MD, Dean of the Norton College of Medicine; at Upstate Medical University and interim SUNY Chancellor Deborah F. Stanley, JD. The keynote address was delivered by former New York Gov. David Paterson, JD, New York's first visually impaired governor.

"It was an honor to host these leaders," said William Brunken, PhD, director of the Center for Vision Research. "Their support helped the CVR reach this milestone. With continued support we look forward to many more milestones to come."

Robert Fechtner, MD, chair of the Ophthalmology Department and Vision Sciences declared the event a success. "There was much to celebrate and this symposium helped underline that the field is moving forward to the day when blindness will be no more."



Left: Marla Beth Feller, PhD, the Paul Licht Distinguished Professor in Biological Sciences and Member of the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute at the University of California, Berkeley and Upstate Professor Yingxi Lin, PhD, share thoughts during the 25th Anniversary Symposium.

Right: William Brunken, PhD, director of the Center for Vision Research; Deborah Stanley, JD, interim chancellor of the State University of New York, David Paterson, JD, former governor of New York and symposium keynote speaker and Robert Fechtner, MD, chair Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science at the symposium.



Upstate Professors John Hoepner, MD, and Barry Knox, PhD, at the symposium celebrating the Center for Vision Research that they, along with Robert Barlow, PhD, founded 25 years ago.



WHAT PATIENTS SAY

In its continuing effort to improve Upstate Ophthalmology's University Center for Vision Care asks patients for feedback following appointments and procedures. The comments are compiled and shared within the organization.

Below and elsewhere in this newsletter are comments from patients. We thank all who have taken the time to share their valuable feedback, both positive and otherwise, and hope that when you are asked, you will share your thoughts.

We had a very good experience at your facility. Everyone is very nice and helpful.

Polite and helpful

Excellent service!

Front desk staff was great. Especially Bea I think her name was.

The staff was very responsive and polite

Dr. Swan is one of the nicest docs I ever met. Staff is very nice, courteous and professional.

Good experience always, thank you!

The care providers have always treated me with dignity and respect.

In all, the entire team was very helpful and informative.

Dr. Ganapathy was very understanding with me being nervous about having a laser procedure.

Impressive!

Dr. Merriam is a caring, thorough doctor.



Researchers develop biopolymer hydrogels to grow ocular cells

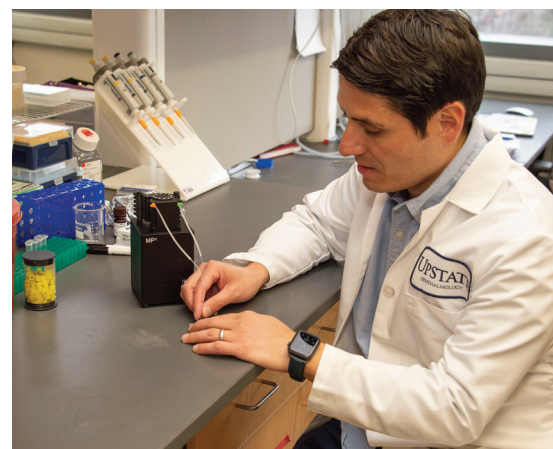
Our collective understanding of many cell-based processes is derived from studies performed on artificial flat materials such as plastic and glass. While the simplicity of such standard culture materials is attractive, cells grown in these abnormal environments tend to display abnormal behaviors.

To overcome this major limitation, the laboratory of **Samuel Herberg, PhD**, at Upstate Medical University is developing biopolymer hydrogels to provide a more realistic three-dimensional microenvironment to ocular cells. The research in his group focuses on the aqueous humor outflow tract in the front of the eye, namely the trabecular meshwork and Schlemm's canal. "We use 3D bioengineered hydrogels made from extracellular matrix proteins found in the native tissue, and primary human cells isolated from surgical specimens," he explained. Herberg and his team are interested in determining how trabecular meshwork and Schlemm's canal cells, and their extracellular

matrix, contribute to fibrotic-like tissue abnormalities that are known to cause elevated intraocular pressure in glaucoma.

Hydrogels can also be used to study the back of the eye as well. The laboratory of **Preethi Ganapathy, MD/PhD**, grows cells from the optic nerve into 3D structures. Culturing the cells in 3D lets investigators study how cells communicate with each other normally and in glaucoma. "We use the system to study how high intraocular pressure damages optic nerve cells, so we can learn how to make these cells more resilient to high pressure." Currently, the model includes astrocytes, which are a major helper cell to retinal neurons. A future goal is to include neurons in the system to study how astrocyte behavior changes the response of neurons.

Herberg and Ganapathy's research is currently supported by funding from Research to Prevent Blindness and the National Eye Institute.



Samuel Herberg, PhD in his upstate lab.

Department members reach years-of-service milestones

Several members of the Upstate Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences teams marked significant career milestones in the past year.

Chair Robert Fechtner, MD, reached the fifth anniversary with Upstate. So did **Audrey Bernstein, PhD**, **Gale Riddell** and **Dawn Runeare**.

Robert Hill, MD, and **Allison Ziober** marked 10 years with Upstate.

Lenore Hall reached the 15-year-mark.

Three employees hit the 20-year milestone: **Margaret "Molly" Blandford**, **Mary Ann Jardin** and **Judy Dunn**, who has since retired.

Mindy Cole reached 25 years with Upstate.

Christine Sperduti, who started with Upstate when Ronald Reagan was president, marked 35 years.



WHAT PATIENTS SAY

All was good.

I needed urgent care because I lost my glasses and the scheduling staff accommodated me and took care of me.

Very good experience.

We went to the wrong place by accident and were a couple of minutes late. The woman at reception was very understanding and lovely.

He was outstanding.

I loved Dr. Merriam. Great personality and demeanor. He listened to me. I am completely comfortable with him performing a very tricky surgery on my eye.

Dr. G is amazing!

Very good experience. No complaints.

Dr. Swan is awesome. Caring and thorough. So glad he is my caregiver!

Dr. Swan was amazing. He was very thorough, efficient and personable. He examined my eyes and my eyelid, which is drooping, and resolved that it was not neurologic. Great news, indeed!

Dr. Liegel is GREAT!

Very good.

Dr. Merriam was very personable. He spoke to both me and my son to make sure we understand. He was very friendly and we appreciate him.

The best.

I had a good experience.

I don't feel like I waited at all really. Dr. Merriam has many pediatric patients with significant ophthalmology issues. Given that, waiting a few minutes was nothing and no trouble at all.

No delays.

Very good experience.

Very quick service.

Wait times were very reasonable.

Nurse was very courteous and explained everything.

The nurse was very helpful, knowledgeable and professional.



New PhD candidates join the Center for Vision Research

Four graduate students recently joined the Center for Vision Research as PhD candidates. The PhD takes years of research in an established laboratory leading to an independent career as a scientist. In answering a survey, the new candidates shared some of their history and hopes for the future in ophthalmology.



Camille Chin has joined the lab of Preethi Ganapathy, MD/PhD

How did you become interested in ophthalmology?

I became interested in ophthalmology after realizing the unique advantages of the eye as a model system. It is a way to study the complex interplay between neurons and other cell types in a region somewhat sequestered from the brain. It is a beautiful system to study.

What made you decide to go into research?

I decided to go into research after learning that I have a passion for discovery and defining the unknown. Also, I want to be able to help people and research is a substantial way to achieve that goal.

Who among family, friends, teachers or others influenced your path in life? How?

My brother’s lifelong struggle with schizoaffective disorder and autism has driven me to pursue research. While psychiatry was my initial passion, my eyes have been opened to the wonderful world of vision.

Is there an aspect of vision or the eye you find particularly interesting?

I’m interested in the connection between the brain and the eye, particularly the role of emotional stress in the development or progression of disease.

Other interests?

I enjoy watching true crime, especially unsolved mysteries or missing persons cases. I also love cats and guinea pigs.



Rajanya Ghosh has joined the laboratory of Samuel Herberg, PhD

How did you become interested in ophthalmology?

Interestingly, ophthalmology was not on my mind when I joined Upstate for my PhD. However, I always wanted to work in disease biology and wanted to be a part of clinical research. When I interacted with Dr. Samuel Herberg for the first time and came to know about his research to develop a disease model for glaucoma using hydrogels, it really seemed intriguing to me. I was really interested to explore the junction of ophthalmology, biochemistry and biomedical engineering and ended up joining ophthalmology. Also, I have to say the collaborative environment of the ophthalmology department made me join the Center for Vision Research.

What made you decide to go into research?

Biology has always fascinated me since childhood. It is mysterious, alluring, and to me, a way of life. In high school, I got an opportunity to represent my school at a four-day-long science workshop that was held to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and hands-on experiences. My interest dwindled between the harmonic motion of the pendulum; Fibonacci sequence allured me; colorful chemicals and soda volcanoes attracted me, but I lost my heart to the magic called ‘life!’ This was the place where I first realized my love for Biology, and that love never ends. Pursuing a career in scientific research has always been on my radar. The idea of scientific discovery, yearning to learn something new, always provides me a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction that drives me forward. In this regard, a Ph.D. was the most important step that would take me closest to my dream of being a formal scientist.

Who among family, friends, teachers or others influenced your path in life? How?

My parents always have been my biggest support throughout my journey. They have always influenced me to do what I love. Research is something I always was interested in since my undergraduate days and thus had been a part of some undergraduate research as well. By the time of my masters, I knew I wanted to work with diseases as the human body was really intriguing to me. My professors in my undergrad and masters too had a great influence on me.

Is there an aspect of vision or the eye you find particularly interesting?

I am incredibly passionate about the biomechanics of the front of the eye, and particularly how the resistance in the outflow system through aqueous humor plays a role in the pathophysiology of Glaucoma. I am looking more into identifying how Human Trabecular Meshwork (HTM) cells acquire and retain information about their accumulated mechanical history, and the extent to which this contributes to the persistence of glaucomatous TM cell pathobiology.

Other interests?

I love to paint. And I love travelling. Travelling just makes me so happy.



Christine Tilstra-Smith has joined the laboratory of Audrey Bernstein, PhD

How did you become interested in ophthalmology?

In a sense, my appreciation for ophthalmology grew because I entered Dr. Audrey Bernstein’s lab. My original interest was (generic, unspecified) tissues that didn’t have high or direct blood supply and would struggle with recovering from injuries and scarring. You might notice the overlap.

What made you decide to go into research?

Growing up, whether or not I asked “why” or “how,” my parents told me anyways. This kind of set a precedent for how I approached things. Eventually, in undergrad, I had the opportunity to work in a lab over the summer and found it to be very fulfilling. When I compared that summer to the year I spent at medical device company, I knew I had to get back to a research focused environment.

Who among family, friends, teachers or others influenced your path in life? How?

If I listed everyone and how, we might have a novella on our hands. However, the short list definitely includes my parents, my brother and sister-in-law, and my best friend Cindy. I’ll take a moment to highlight my sister-in-law, because she just walked (well, would have if my nephew wasn’t ready to be born) for her PhD last August (2022), so we’ve had a lot of conversations about the subject. She’s in a very different field, but her advice has so far been sound and extremely helpful as I start my own PhD journey. Honestly, she’s my current role-model for how I measure success.

Is there an aspect of vision or the eye you find particularly interesting?

Not to be biased, but I’ve really come to appreciate the structure of the cornea. The cornea has multiple layers, and yet remains a clear tissue, that’s just neat. I also am really intrigued by how immune cells enter and act in certain eye tissues, so I’m glad my research will allow me to investigate this more.

Other interests?

I enjoy being as physically active as I can be, puzzles (word or jigsaw), and reading when I can. I also enjoy playing or cuddling with my cat, whichever she’s in the mood for it.



Faizan Zaidi has joined the laboratory of Peter Calvert, PhD

How did you become interested in ophthalmology?

I was introduced to ophthalmology through my conversations with Dr. Peter Calvert about his research and subsequent rotation in his lab. I was interested in protein transport mechanisms. In Dr. Calvert’s lab, I was exposed to microscopy and other research tools that further enhanced my interest and led me toward research in ophthalmology.

What made you decide to go into research?

I have been interested in research since I took the Scientific Research class in high school. The class was for three years where I learned to read journal articles and make posters and presentations. I was also able to communicate with scientists at local universities. I eventually joined a research lab for my senior year in high school. From there on, I was involved in scientific research projects in my undergraduate and master studies.

Who among family, friends, teachers or others influenced your path in life? How?

My parents have had the largest influence on my life. They have sacrificed to a great extent when moving to the United States from India. They have provided me with great educational opportunities and resources for which I cannot thank them enough. Additionally, my grandmother who was a drug researcher helped me steer toward science from an early age.

Is there an aspect of vision or the eye you find particularly interesting?

I find proteins that are involved in phototransduction process fascinating in terms of how proper transport and localization are important for their functions and for the vision process. I am also interested in exploring how the behavior of these protein changes once they are transported to different photoreceptor compartments.

Other interests?

I like to play and watch sports such as basketball and football.



WHAT PATIENTS SAY

One of the first eye doctors that clearly understood the issues unique to my eye alignment and he was very honest about what could be done and the success/results to expect. Very helpful to have a sound understanding of options and implications.

Individual workers are very attentive to listening and responding and making the head doctors aware of what they perceive is pertinent to pass on!

My tech/nurse was great! I can't remember her name but she was friendly and very thorough.

Mary Beth is such an asset to your office

The doctor and staff were very efficient and treated me as a person.



Center for Vision Care welcomes new residents

The Center for Vision Care recently welcomed three new residents. In response to survey questions, they share some of their history and what attracted them to the ophthalmology field. Be sure to see Isaac Kim’s explanation for why he decided to focus on ophthalmology.



Mahin Choudhury

How did you become interested in ophthalmology?

I initially liked the idea of working in a clinic as a primary care physician and longitudinally caring for patients. After some surgical exposure, I started searching for clinic-based surgical subspecialties as working in the operating room had a unique sense of excitement and technical detail that I needed in my career. I had LASIK surgery done while in undergrad and I shadowed my hometown ophthalmologist for a few weeks. Getting that firsthand insight from both the clinician and patient perspective made it apparent how amazing it would be to enter a field helping patients preserve or restore vision.

What made you decide to study medicine?

Coming from a family of physicians, it was always in the background as a possible career choice. As I explored other career options, I ultimately gravitated to my experience in medicine as both exciting and rewarding unlike any other. No other career offered me the ability to work together with patients throughout my day trying to piece together symptoms and exam findings into a working diagnosis. The sense of accomplishment you get effectively treating patients and seeing how much of an impact you had on their lives makes me glad I chose to pursue a career in medicine.

Who among family, friends, teachers, or others influenced your path in life? How?

My father, an internal medicine physician, helped shaped my interest in the field. A lot of my formative experiences watching how much you could truly help improve someone’s life came from times working at his office. He shaped my initial goal of wanting to go to medical school, and as I explored specialties I chose ophthalmology partly because of my older brother, a retina specialist. He helped introduce me to the field, gave me insight on how to get involved, and getting to scrub in and watch vitrectomies from the microscope swayed me away from any other specialties I was considering.

Is there a particular aspect of vision or the eye you find particularly interesting?

I am torn between the cornea and the retina. Treating different corneal pathologies and observing corneal transplants in the OR has made it one of the contenders for a possible fellowship down the line. But retina is a strong contender as well; examining the retina is a technical challenge that offers a window into a variety of different systemic diseases the patient might have. And the surgeries, whether it is a scleral buckle or a retinal detachment repair, are equally as exciting.

What’s one thing about you that no one could tell from looking at you?

I love trying new things all the time, and never want to dismiss a new potential hobby until I’ve tried it at least once. This leads me to having an array of different interests you might not think I would be into on first sight. Some common ones are weightlifting, tennis, video games and hiking. But I also enjoy cooking and painting, and recently started trying out yoga.



Isaac Kim

How did you become interested in ophthalmology?

I was born in South Korea but grew up living in New Zealand, Canada and the United States. I spent a good portion of my life in Toronto, which I called home before Syracuse. I studied at the University of Western Ontario and the University of Michigan prior to pursuing medical education and ophthalmology residency here at SUNY Upstate.

What made you decide to study medicine?

I always knew while growing up that I wanted to pursue a career in medicine. I started medical school with an open mind with aims to explore as many specialties as possible. It was early on in my first year of medical school when I attended the ophthalmology interest group meeting. Dr. Fechtner was giving his sales pitch on why ophthalmology is the best field in medicine. I remember him starting his talk by reminding everyone the correct spelling of Op-h-thalmology and ending by challenging the students to find an unhappy ophthalmologist, because they simply do not exist. He was right — I have yet to come across an unhappy ophthalmology resident or faculty.

Who among family, friends, teachers, or others influenced your path in life? How?

Shortly after the introductory meeting, I reached out to Dr. Ganapathy for shadowing opportunities during her clinic and operating days. She guided me through the basics of a slit lamp eye exam, cataract surgery, and various glaucoma surgeries. As a first-year medical student, I was fascinated by the amount of anatomy, medicine, and surgery the eyes had to offer. I knew ophthalmology was the field for me and I made a commitment early on to become an eye specialist. I am glad I attended that meeting because that day led me to where I am now, on an exciting journey to become an ophthalmologist.

What’s one thing about you that no one could tell from looking at you?

Outside of medicine, I love spending time on a golf course, on my road bike, and exploring new restaurants with my wife. My biggest support system is my immediate family that consists of my wife, mother, brother, and sister. My mother is a retired pharmacist. My brother is a dentist. My wife and sister are also in medicine. All of us being in healthcare, we understand the commitment and sacrifices each of us make to become professionals and to have an impact on our patients’ lives. They are the ones keeping me going and to be the best version of myself.

Having just started intern year, I am excited to work with and learn from my senior residents, faculty mentors, and clinic staff. I look forward to the next four years here at SUNY Upstate for my ophthalmology residency training under the leadership of our program director Dr. Swan.



Cory Christensen

How did you become interested in ophthalmology?

During undergrad at the University of Iowa, I looked for research positions and ended up in a Glaucoma lab. After graduation, I moved to Tucson, Arizona, for a few years and needed a job. My connections from that lab teed me up for a technician/research position with a local ophthalmology group. By the time I started clinical rotations in medical school, I had enough exposure to this field that my mind was made.

What made you decide to study medicine?

I shadowed an ER doc in undergrad and thought it was so cool. Then I went home after that shift and remembered how awful my grades were. So, I worked hard to trick myself into loving physics and chemistry.

Who among family, friends, teachers, or others influenced your path in life? How?

My dad grew up the middle of five children on an Iowa farm. He’s one of the brightest people I know and even had a college scholarship out of high school, but still had to decline because he could not afford school. He instead has worked at a factory since the day he turned 18. Meanwhile, my sister and I both graduated college – an opportunity he never had.

Is there a particular aspect of vision or the eye you find particularly interesting?

I’m undifferentiated for now. But since Dr. Fechtner and Dr. Swan will read this, I’ll say Glaucoma and Uveitis.

What’s one thing about you that no one could tell from looking at you?

People usually seem surprised I’m from Iowa. I can’t even say it was a decent-sized place. By age 10 I probably knew every person in my town and the surrounding towns.



Upstate Ophthalmology Residency Ranks Highly

A national survey of ophthalmology residency programs rated Upstate’s among the top in New York state.

The survey was conducted by Doximity, an online networking service for medical professionals that is sometimes known as “LinkedIn for doctors.” The survey was taken in the spring of 2022 and included residents and alumni of resident programs.

The survey ranked Upstate’s Ophthalmology Residency sixth in New York state. The top four spots went to New York City-based programs.

“It is gratifying to see our program being recognized in this national survey,” said Robert Swan, MD, director of the residency program. “We take great pride in the program and in the residents it has been our privilege to train. We are training the next generation of ophthalmologists for Central New York.”



WHAT PATIENTS SAY

I am very pleased to observe the various care providers wash/cleanse their hands before attempting to service me/my eyes.

All of the staff was amazing

I am quite pleased and thankful to Dr. Jordan A. Ueberroth's service of care. He treated me with dignity and respect. And I experienced him as focused, thoughtful and possessing a genuine care and concern for patient care. He was open to listening to my concerns about the trouble I am having with my right eye at present. He demonstrated a sincere passion to respond to my Inquiry with a specific, appropriate and clear response.

Dr. Swan always impresses me and his staff also (wish I had a name to give you. Next time I will note the names of assistants.)

EVERYONE WAS GREAT!

I feel confident that Mary Beth and Dr. Merriam have my best interests at heart. I'm confident with their decisions.

Amazing.

I had a very good experience.

Staff was very professional and helpful.

Always a pleasure!

I had a good experience.

Always a good experience with Dr. Swan.



The Physicians and Researchers of Upstate Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences

With a team of physicians specializing in vision care and research, Upstate Ophthalmology is by far the largest provider of vision care in the region and a vital place of research.

Chaired by Robert Fechtner, MD, Upstate's Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences department is a multifaceted organization that provides eye care services through University Center for Vision Care. The Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences Department includes experienced practitioners who serve as faculty at Upstate Medical University, helping educate the next generation of eye-care professionals. The specialists listed below can be reached at Upstate through University Center for Vision Care at 315 464-5230.

Edita Abazaga, OD
Clinical Instructor Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Optometry

Mirjeta Abazaga, OD, FAAO
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Optometry

Samuel Alpert, MD
Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Medical Director of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Glaucoma
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Robert Fechtner, MD
Professor and Chair of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Glaucoma
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Preethi Ganapathy, MD/PhD
Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Assistant Professor of Neuroscience and Physiology
Glaucoma
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Katherine Liegel, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
General Ophthalmology

Stephen Merriam, MD
Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Associate Professor of Pediatrics
Pediatric Ophthalmology

Robert Swan, MD
Associate Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Residency Program Director of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Uveitis

Research Faculty

With approximately \$3 million in its current annual research funding, the Upstate Center for Vision Research has obtained more than \$39 million funding in its quest to understand and eliminate blinding diseases. Upstate's team of scientists work on the cutting edge of ocular research and knowledge from modern facilities on Irving Avenue in Syracuse.

Audrey M. Bernstein, PhD
Associate Professor

William J. Brunken, PhD, FARVO
Professor

Peter D. Calvert, PhD
Professor

Preethi S. Ganapathy, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor

Samuel A. Herberg, PhD
Assistant Professor

Barry E. Knox, PhD
Professor

Reyna I. Martinez-De Luna, PhD
Research Instructor

Francesca Pignoni, PhD
Professor

William J. Spencer, PhD
Assistant Professor

Eduardo C. Solessio, PhD
Associate Professor

Andrea S. Viczian, PhD
Assistant Professor

Michael E. Zuber, PhD
Associate Professor

Volunteer Faculty

Practicing eye-care professionals bring a depth of experience to Upstate Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences. Volunteer faculty help train students and residents to care for patients and understand real-world challenges.

Thomas Bersani, MD
Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Oculoplastics

Mark Breazzano, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Cynthia Briglin-Mavady, MD
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences

Jamin Brown, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Bryant Carruth, MD
Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Oculoplastics

Lawrence Cecchi, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Tahsin Choudhury, MD
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Arthur Coli, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Cornea/External Disease

John Costello, DO
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Patrick Costello, MD
Resident Instructor

Anthony DeVincintis, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Glaucoma

Justin Dexter, MD
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Robert Druger, MD, PhD
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Joseph Gale, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Michael Geiss, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

William Griffith, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor

Lev Grunstein, MD
VA Medical Center
Clinical Assistant Professor

Michael Gzik FCLSA ABO/NCLE, COT
Resident Instructor

Carl Hanig, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Oculoplastics

Alexander Harris, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Robert Hill, MD
Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Oculoplastics

Charles Mango, MD
Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Adam Miller, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Michael Moore, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Robert Morason, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Cornea/External Disease

Kenneth Novak, MD
Clinical assistant professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Patrick Oellers, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Evis Petrela, MD
Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Arlene Ratanasit Grunstein, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor

Timothy Riccardi, MD
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Division Chief of Ophthalmology
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Kevin Rosenberg, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Bryan Rutledge, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Marc Safran, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Pediatric Ophthalmology

Rajeev Seth, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Robert Slavens, MD
Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Samuel Spalding, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Stephen Spitzer, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Cornea/External Disease

John Sveen, MD
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Tina Taggart, MD
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Xiaofei Wang, MD, PhD
Clinical Assistant Professor

Robert Weisenthal, MD
Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Cornea/External Disease

Matthew Weinstein, DO
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Steven Williams, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Retina

Leslie Woodcock, MD
Clinical Instructor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Comprehensive Ophthalmology

Emeritus Professors

Upstate Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences is proud to count among its greatest assets emeritus professors who remain committed to improving eye health.

Ann Barker-Griffith, MD
Professor Emeritus and former Interim Chairwoman

William Griffith, MD
Professor Emeritus

Robert Hampton, MD
Professor Emeritus

John Hoepner, MD
Professor Emeritus and Former Chairman

James Kinsey
Clinical Professor Emeritus

Walter Merriam, MD
Professor Emeritus

Leon-Paul Noel, MD
Clinical Professor Emeritus

Charles Teitelbaum, MD
Professor Emeritus

Paul Torrisi, MD
Professor Emeritus