Some reflections about the Friedenwald Award and ARVO

I was very pleased and surprised when notified that I was to receive the Friedenwald Award. The Friedenwald name was well known to me as a small child in Baltimore. Jonas Friedenwald’s uncle, Edgar Friedenwald, had been my pediatrician, and his ophthalmologist father, Harry Friedenwald, did the refraction that led to my first glasses in 1937. I recall the waiting room, reading an early hardbound volume of the National Geographic Magazine and pushing it farther and farther away from me as the homatropine drops took effect. When I was summoned to the examining room, a kindly old man said “I noticed that you like to read old books. I will show you something.” He withdrew a hand-illuminated medical manuscript from a glass case and let me examine it. I was astounded by this demonstration that one could be a kind scholar and at the same time have a practical profession. One can imagine the environment that existed for the young and gifted Jonas Friedenwald whose later great accomplishments led to the creation of the award in his name.

Most of the people I have been privileged to work with and learn from are in this audience, and I am indebted to all of them. I am also indebted to the chairman of our department, Bob Kalina, who has provided the sustained support and intellectual climate in which laboratory scientists can thrive and enjoy working in a clinical department.

The ARVO meeting is by far the best source of current information and informative discussion in the field in which I work. Each year there seem to be more papers of compelling interest, and for me to miss this meeting is akin to enduring sensory deprivation. Whether or not my research efforts are worthy of special recognition, I have always appreciated the opportunity to work in this interesting field and in that spirit I gratefully accept the Friedenwald Award.

Sidney Futterman
Publications of Dr. Sidney Futterman


