On the presentation of the Friedenwald Award in Ophthalmology to Dr. Venkat Reddy

This year's recipient of the Friedenwald award is Dr. Venkat Reddy, Director and Professor of the Institute of Biological Sciences, Oakland University in Michigan. The jubilation of this occasion is tempered by sadness at the absence of one who should have been a principal in this ceremony—Dr. V. Everett Kinsey, who met his untimely death last summer. Dr. Kinsey was elated that Dr. Reddy, his colleague, close friend, and partner in science for many years, was named the recipient of this distinguished award, and he was looking forward to introducing Reddy to the Association on this occasion. It is his role which I am trying to fill today.

Dr. Reddy is from an ancient royal family in India. His father was a landowner and had four sons, all of whom became successful in various careers in law, medicine, and business. One brother, a physician, had a tremendous influence on Reddy and encouraged him to broaden his horizons by getting his advanced education in the United States. He went so far as to support Reddy financially to take up graduate studies at Fordham University. At Fordham, Reddy obtained his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in biochemistry and stayed on the faculty for a short while. He then trained at Columbia University and spent a short while at the Banting-Best Institute. With this solid background he launched his career in the eye research field at the Kresge Eye Institute with Dr. Kinsey.

I have been always impressed by Reddy's equanimity, so cool and calm under fire. I believe this quality is a result of his wonderful family and his happy home life. His wife, Alvira, met Reddy when she was in his class at Fordham and later left medical school to raise a family. They have a son, a brilliant student, about to graduate from MIT, and a daughter, who also excels scholastically, about to complete high school. With all these intellects in one family, one might think life is always serious in the Reddy household. This is not the case. Alvira, with her tremendous sense of humor, sets the tone for the family so that no one in Reddy's household can take himself too seriously.

The history of science is dotted by outstanding achievements accomplished by teams or pairs of investigators: Pierre and Marie Curie, both extraordinary scientists, who combined their talents for their pioneering work on radioisotopes; Banting and Best, another tandem, working smoothly together in their discovery of insulin; more recently, Crick and Watson, who gained prominence in their struggle with the double helix. These are some of the scientist pairs who have won acclaim. In the vision research field we, too, have been fortunate to have outstanding scientist pairs. The Hubel-Wiesel team already have won many awards for their brilliant work on the field of eye research. To this illustrious group we should add the Kinsey-Reddy duo. Each scientist of these teams is outstanding in his own right, as evidenced by the fact that each has won either the Friedenwald or Proctor awards from our Association.

Dr. Reddy has distinguished himself not only as an excellent scientist but also as the...
Director of the Institute of Biological Sciences at Oakland University, where he has been an inspiring and outstanding leader. Under his direction, the Institute has become an independent department at Oakland, with expanded research activities, and it is rapidly becoming one of the leading training centers for basic eye researchers.

Dr. Reddy established himself as a creative scientist by his outstanding work on the movement of nutrients and electrolytes into the various compartments of the eye. He has broad interests and has opened up new areas of eye research. He was involved with Dr. Kinsey in the pioneering work on the chemistry of aqueous humor. He elucidated the many transport mechanisms that contribute to aqueous formation. Dr. Reddy’s studies on the transport of electrolytes and amino acids into the lens are considered as major contributions to our understanding of lens physiology. Moreover his recent findings regarding cataracts have served to catalyze many other studies.

Dr. Reddy’s work has been always characterized by a degree of depth and thoroughness that comes only from many hours of dedication in the laboratory. Although Dr. Reddy is obviously an excellent scientist, what makes him even more impressive is the warmth of his personality. If Dr. Friedenwald were present today, I feel certain he would be pleased that Dr. Reddy is receiving the award named in his honor.

Jin H. Kinoshita