Remarks on the acceptance of the Freidenwald Memorial Award

Thank you very much, Dr. Kinoshita, for your generous words of introduction. It is indeed a great honor for me to be selected as the recipient of the Friedenwald Memorial Award, and I am deeply grateful to the Association for this high honor. I am particularly gratified that contributions of basic scientists should receive such recognition. Much of my work during the last 23 years was done in collaboration with many colleagues and coworkers.

Of all the colleagues with whom I had the privilege of working, Dr. V. Everett Kinsey had the greatest influence on the course of my career in ophthalmic research. It was he who first offered me a position at the Kresge Eye Institute to do full-time research and continued to provide encouragement and advice when we both moved to Oakland University. The uninterrupted association was to last until his death last July. On this memorable occasion for me, I am saddened that he is not present to share in this honor.

At the Kresge Eye Institute, I was also fortunate in having the benefit of the keen intellect of Dr. Elek Ludvigh, who had the unique ability to translate biologic concepts into mathematical equations. These two basic scientists, who had spent many years with Drs. Cogan, Grant, and Verhoeff at the Howe Laboratory, had clearly set high standards for me and paved the way for other basic scientists to emulate.

In 1956, the year I entered ophthalmic research, there were few positions for basic scientists in ophthalmology. There was also a reluctance on the part of these scientists to join clinical departments because of the feeling that they might be isolated from the mainstream of their peers. In the last two decades, however, there has been a perceptible change in both the availability of faculty positions for basic scientists in ophthalmology and the attitude of these scientists toward joining clinical departments. The number of such positions is still very limited, and only a few departments can claim the luxury of having more than one or two basic scientists. If we are to attract and retain well-trained scientists in ophthalmology, it is important that we redouble our efforts. In this effort, the National Eye Institute could play a greater role than it has already done, through an expansion of the Academic Investigator and Career Development Awards. In the interest of assembling a "critical mass" in each department, I believe the current practice of making only a single award to any one Institution should be revised so as to make all qualified candidates in a center eligible for these awards within the constraints of the expanded budget for this category.

A significant part of eye research has been and continues to be supported by the departments of ophthalmology. A reverse experiment, so to speak, has been tried at Oakland University. Eleven years ago, Dr. Kinsey and I were given an unique opportunity to establish a Research Institute at Oakland through a facilities grant from the National Institutes of Health. Our Institute has added a significant number of positions for basic scientists who are committed entirely to ophthalmic research. In the absence of an ophthalmology department at Oakland, we have maintained a close working relationship with the Kresge Eye Institute. This type of interaction between clinicians and basic scien-
tists is important because the study of the disease process requires a broader approach and perspective than a scientist trained in a traditional discipline is accustomed to.

During my tenure at both Institutions, many colleagues and co-workers have made significant contributions to the work I shall discuss. I gratefully accept this distinguished award, realizing fully that it is given for investigations pursued not by myself alone but also by my past and present associates.

Venkat N. Reddy