Introduction of R. F. Brubaker, Friedenwald Award Winner 1991

David G. Cogan

It is a great privilege for me to introduce the Friedenwald Awardee this year. I have been close to Dick Brubaker and his family for many years. I also knew Jonas Friedenwald well and am struck by the similarity of the two— their dedication to discovering basic processes underlying ophthalmic disease and their special interest in unraveling the dynamics of aqueous humor formation and circulation. I know Dr. Friedenwald would be as proud as I am on this occasion.

Dick was born in Macon, Georgia, in 1937. He attended Davidson College, graduated summa cum laude as valedictorian of his class, an auspicious accomplishment for entrance into a professional career. He then went to Harvard Medical School which some of us like to think is also an accomplishment. He interned at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Surgery and became a resident at the Mass Eye and Ear Infirmary.

As was customary at the Infirmary at that time, residents were paired, and Dick's running mate was the late Dave Worthen. Now the term “running mate” is ambiguous, but in the case of Dick and Dave, it can be interpreted literally. Not only did the two fulfill their clinical responsibilities together, but they ran in many of the local and national marathons. They also did fellowships in the Howe Laboratory where Dick associated with Drs. Kupfer and Kinoshita. Then Dick joined Dr. von Sallmann for 2 years at the National Institute of Neurologic Diseases and Blindness just before the launching of the National Eye Institute. So much for the background.

In what I choose to call leading events in the foreground, Dick married the attractive and accomplished Nancy Moore Ogle in 1965. The name Ogle is familiar to many of you. Nancy’s father was Kenneth Ogle, a professor of physiologic optics at the Mayo Clinic and a frequent contributor to the scientific program of ARVO. Dick’s appointment to the staff of the Mayo Clinic has obvious connections, but I will leave it to you to infer whether it was primarily the prestige of the clinic or the home of Nancy. In any case, Dick rose rapidly in the staff hierarchy to his present top position as chairman of the department. He has consistently declined to be moved from there despite numerous prestigious offers. It was there in Rochester, Minnesota that the three talented children were born.

Dick’s research accomplishments have been many. He modestly lists three: physiology and pharmacology of the eye, medical and surgical treatment of glaucoma, and computer applications in ophthalmology. However, there are many more that time and the formality of the occasion do not permit me to dwell on. I will only say he is a very human person, a “medley of a man,” as was once said about Chief Justice Holmes.

I give you Richard Fretwell Brubaker with great admiration, respect, and affection.