On presentation of the Proctor Medal of the Association For Research in Vision and Ophthalmology to Dr. Herbert E. Kaufman

It is indeed a privilege to present the Proctor Medal to Dr. Herbert E. Kaufman on behalf of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology. It is also a pleasure to be involved with this presentation because I know how much the Proctor Medal means to Dr. Kaufman. This Medal is the highest award in vision research and is awarded to individuals who not only make significant contribution but also generally stimulate scientific pursuits. To quote the notice of the award of the first Proctor Medal that appeared in the American Journal of Ophthalmology (32:3, 1949), "the purpose of the medal is to stimulate research and to honor investigators who have made notable contributions in the basic fields of ophthalmology."

Dr. Kaufman graduated from Princeton University and then Harvard Medical School, both magna cum laude, spent 2 years at the National Institutes of Health doing ophthalmic research, completed an ophthalmology residency at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in 1962, and then went off to head the new Division of Ophthalmology at the University of Florida Medical School. Over the next few years, he enticed excellent ophthalmologists, scientists, and educators to come work with him and turned this fledgling Division of Ophthalmology into a notable institute not only for patient care and ophthalmic research (both basic and clinical), but also for the training of ophthalmologists and specialists in corneal and external diseases. In January 1978, Dr. Kaufman became Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Louisiana State University Medical Center.

As for notable scientific contributions, one can hardly think of ophthalmic herpes simplex infections, ocular antiviral agents, or advances in corneal surgery without simultaneously being aware of Kaufman’s contributions in these areas. It was in 1958 that Dr. Kaufman published his first paper on herpes simplex, and since then he has pursued this virus relentlessly from both the basic science aspect and the clinical setting. He has investigated not only ocular disease caused by this virus, but also dermatologic, gynecologic, and generalized systemic disease. More than one third of his over 350-publication bibliography is concerned with the diagnosis or treatment of disease caused by this virus. Dr. Kaufman was primarily instrumental in the development of 5-iodo-2’-deoxyuridine (IDU) as the first successful antiviral agent for man. This work has continued with numerous other antiviral agents including, most recently, trifluorothymidine. He developed an experimental animal model for herpes simplex viral infections in order to carry out the basic science aspect of diagnosing and treating the diseases caused by this virus. Besides his work with herpesvirus, his contributions in the general area of external ocular disease and corneal surgery are laudatory. His work with fungal infections of the eye, dry eye syndrome, and corneal dystrophies is well known. Many of the advances in the area of corneal transplantation surgery have been made by him, notably methods to make corneal tissue available for transplants,
cryopreservation, M-K medium, and contributions to make tissue banking a reality. Dr. Kaufman has also contributed new indications for penetrating keratoplasty and developed new techniques for this procedure and better methods for postoperative follow-up and care. As a scientist, he has followed up each of these contributions with data to prove their worth and has constantly worked toward "finding better ways."

Besides all the above individual contributions, Dr. Kaufman has immeasurably advanced ophthalmic research by his impact on others. The ability to inspire others, whether they are fellow scientists or students, is in my opinion one of the major reasons to bestow this honor. In this respect, Dr. Kaufman’s performance is exemplary. He has spurred many co-workers and scientists in his areas of interest to vigorously pursue solutions to problems. Many of his former students and, notably, fellows are now actively engaged in scientific pursuit. Besides being a practitioner and a scientist, Dr. Kaufman sets an excellent example and is a fine teacher. It gives me great pleasure to introduce Dr. Herbert E. Kaufman, the Proctor Medalist for 1978.

Thom J. Zimmerman