

HOMER HALL HENDRICKSON, O.D., D.O.S. 1914-1991 A TRIBUTE

Robert A. Williams, Executive Director, OEP Foundation



...tribute to whom tribute is due...
Romans 13:7

Friend to all, mentor to many and leader in behavioral optometry for more than 50 years, Homer H. Hendrickson, O.D., D.O.S., passed away on March 30, 1991 after a brief illness. His counsel, as well as his wit and wisdom, will be greatly missed by all who knew and worked with him.

Homer's professional life revolved around the OEP Foundation. He served in official capacities for OEP for more than 40 years. However, in the true spirit of the renaissance man that he was, Homer also served many other organizations with the same zeal and commitment that he devoted to OEP. He was a Kiwanian with more than 40 years of perfect attendance. He was a member of the Board of the Studt Foundation, the California Optometric Association Board of Directors, as well as the Board of Trustees of the Southern California College of Optometry. Most of all, he was a devoted husband and father. Homer is survived by Marie, his wife of 52 years, his daughter, Carol Van Arsdall and grandson, Greg Van Arsdall.

Homer began his professional career when he matriculated at the then Los Angeles School of Optometry in 1936 after completing his pre-optometry education at Fullerton Junior College. After graduation in 1938, he became an associate in the private practice of Lester A. Girsh, O.D., in Santa Barbara, California. During World War II, Homer was an ensign in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1946, serving as a communications expert on the island of Tarawa. After the war he established a practice in Temple City, California, where he practiced until retiring in 1983.

Organized optometry commanded Homer's attention from the early years of

his career. He served as Tri-Counties Optometric Society President in 1942 and as San Gabriel Valley Society President in 1949. His committee appointments in local societies, the California Optometric Association and the American Optometric Association are too numerous to list.

His affiliation with his alma mater began in 1953 with his election to the presidency of the Los Angeles College of Optometry (LACO) Alumni Association and an ex officio position on the LACO Board of Trustees. He remained on the LACO and Southern California College of Optometry (SCCO) Board of Trustees until 1978, serving as Vice Chairman from 1956 to 1959, Chairman of the Board from 1959 to 1965 and Treasurer from 1970 to 1977. He left the SCCO Board of Trustees to concentrate on OEP, following the deaths of the OEP founders, Drs. A. M. Skeffington and E. B. Alexander in March and June of 1976, respectively.

The Board of Trustees, administration and faculty of the Southern California College of Optometry were extremely saddened by the loss of our dear friend, distinguished colleague and loyal alumnus, Dr. Homer H. Hendrickson. Over the 87 years of SCCO's history, Homer was truly one of the College's most outstanding alumni. His willingness to serve his alma mater, sharing his many talents and giving countless hours, helped shape the direction of this institution at critical times in SCCO's development. A 1938 graduate of Los Angeles School of Optometry, Dr. Hendrickson served as president of the Alumni Associa-



■ Richard L. Hopping, O.D., Marie Hendrickson, Homer H. Hendrickson, O.D., and Mrs. Hopping at a luncheon honoring Dr. Hendrickson, February, 15, 1991, COA Congress, Sacramento, Calif.

tion in 1953 and from 1954 to 1978 as a member of the College's Board of Trustees. In 1973 he was awarded the honorary degree Doctor of Ocular Science from this institution, a well deserved honor. SCCO was deeply indebted to Dr. Hendrickson for his lengthy and distinguished record of leadership as a board member, committee chairman and board chairman during those many years and selected him to receive the College's first Alumnus of the Year award in 1983. His service included chairing key committees among which were the 50th anniversary celebration in 1954, the LACO clinic building and fund development and the presidential search committee. We were privileged to reap the benefits of his knowledge and his talents and his example will continue to serve us well. Indeed, on one of the last occasions that Homer had the opportunity to speak to his colleagues, when he must have realized he had not many times remaining to express his concerns for the future, he related his dreams for this profession and issued a challenge to each of us to continue to work toward solving the vision needs of patients and to strive always to better the optometric care we administer. This College, the profession and his many friends will sorely miss him, but we will always cherish our memories of Homer for they are filled with gratitude for this multifaceted, quiet, dedicated, humble man who has left such an indelible and unique mark on this College and on our profession.

*Richard L. Hopping, O.D., D.O.S.
President, Southern California
College of Optometry*

Assuming the dual role of President and Executive Director of the OEP Foundation in 1976, Homer devoted most of his time and effort to OEP for the next seven years. In 1981 he lead the search process for hiring the first full-time, professional Executive Director for the Foundation, appointing Linda Grussemeyer to that role. However he retained the position of President until his retirement from the Board and from private practice in 1983.

This dedication to OEP was not new.



OEP Section on Children's Vision Care & Guidance, back row from the left: R. Wayne Knight, G.N. Getman, Robert W. Henry. Front: Homer Hendrickson, Cavonne Matue, George Slade.

Homer's career with OEP began in 1940 when he enrolled as a Clinical Associate. In 1946 he formed the San Gabriel Valley OEP Study Group and became its chairman, a position he held until 1962. He was selected as a charter member of the OEP Foundation Board of Directors in 1957, when the status of the Optometric Extension Program changed from proprietary to not-for-profit.

From 1960 to 1973, Homer was a member of the five-person team of the OEP Children's Vision Care and Guidance Section, with G. N. Getman, Wayne Knight, Bob Henry and George Slade. This team conducted hundreds of vision development seminars for thousands of optometrists around the world during a 15-year period. Homer personally conducted 31 two- and three-day seminars as a member of this Section.

Homer became the Associate Executive Director of OEP Foundation in 1964, working closely with Dr. E. B. Alexander, its founder, President and Executive Director. In 1969, he assumed the added responsibility of editing all publications, educational curricula and media material for OEP. He remained OEP Editor until his retirement in 1983, after which time he continued to edit selected books and curriculum and served on several OEP committees and as consulting editor for the Journal of Behavior Optometry.

When Dr. E.B. Alexander and Dr. A.M. Skeffington died in 1976 it was the opinion of some that this would be the end of the OEP Foundation. The responsibilities of the President of the Foundation and Chairman of the Board of Directors fell squarely on the shoulders of Dr. Homer Hendrickson. Homer was a working President with many years of experience by virtue of collaborating with Dr. Alexander in the organization's administration.

I know of no one who could have assumed those responsibilities while continuing his other role as editor of curricula, and the many other chores that only Homer could do at that time. He went on to train new Board members and lead the OEP Foundation through a transformation that included an in depth study and evaluation of the Foundation and personnel by the American Society of Association Executives, the bringing on board of an executive director, a move of the office from Duncan, Oklahoma to Santa Ana, California, developing the groundwork AND putting into motion a whole new written and seminar delivery system and reorganizing the staff and volunteer administrative system. Homer was, indeed, the man for the times. He gave generously of himself in so many ways. He gave up his vision therapy practice and much of his general practice as well as parts of his office and home for OEP use. He gave of his time away from home and office without complaint. Yet, we



OEP Board of Directors 1984, back row from the left: Jimmy Tumblin, Charles McQuarrie, J. Baxter Swartwout, Tole Greenstein. Front row: President Homer Hendrickson, Linda Grussemeyer.

all know how much he valued and missed both. Those of us on the board at that time knew he was also giving up considerable income to make the time to do all he was doing to assure the future of one constant, dependable source of continuing education in behavioral optometry--the Optometric Extension Program. But, that was his one consistent bottom line purpose. OEP Foundation had to survive and continue to grow and develop with the times.

Everything that he did, he did whole heartedly, enthusiastically and skillfully whether it was for Kiwanis, the Studt Practicum, the SCCO Board of Trustees or the many other endeavors he made time to lend his many talents.

We loved and respected this man and shall never forget the gift of his presence in a time requiring clear thinking, steady leadership and hard decisions.

*J. Baxter Swartwout, O.D.
President, OEP Foundation*

During his tenure as Associate Executive Director, Homer was instrumental in the expansion of behavioral optometry around the world. He provided invaluable support to the European Society of Optometry (SOE) when that organization reached out around the world for guidance and support in 1967. He was the first leader in behavioral optometry and OEP to conduct a lecture tour in Australia soon after the optometrists in that country were introduced to the concepts of preventive vision care in 1970.

January 1972. A cold and snowy winter day in Luxembourg. Bad weather conditions delayed our flight and our arrival in New York. Another few hours of flying and we landed in Orange County, California on a warm sunny spring day. From a cold winter to a warm springtime. The hotel swimming pool was very attractive and my wife wanted to enjoy it immediately. As for me, I had only one aim that was essential in my opinion: to discover what Optometry was, the true Optometry, I mean.

I thus met and sat down with two smiling and kind men. Taking out of my pocket a little black booklet, I



In front of the new OEP headquarters in Santa Ana, Calif. from the left: Jimmy Tumblin, G.N. Getman, Mrs. Getman, Mrs. Hendrickson, Homer Hendrickson.

asked them, "Please tell me what this means." So began European Optometry. My interlocutors were Homer Hendrickson and Charlie Margach. On that day, in January 1972, in Santa Monica, a full day was spent in questioning and getting replies. The European Society of Optometry found her Golden Gate. At the end of the meeting, Homer gave me a box, a large box, full of books and he told me: "This contains all of Skeffington's works, Harmon's studies and everything concerning clinical optometry." At that time it was not yet Behavioral Optometry. OEP headquarters were still in Duncan, Oklahoma. Before leaving, Homer added: "The European Society of Optometry may translate and publish this material free of charge. We do not claim any royalties from you." On that day, at that meeting with Homer and Charlie, we may say that European Optometry was born. I have always been most grateful to Homer, who was later granted Honor Membership from the European Society of Optometry. He was a great and generous man. From that meeting in Santa Monica, each time a European optometrist did, does or will do a Skeffington Syndrome Case Analysis, he/she had, has or will have Homer by his/her side. Both Homer and Charlie have now passed away. Physically only. They are, they will be with European Optometry. Forever. Homer, I will never forget your

greatness and your generosity, which helped us to bring European Optometry from a dark winter to a bright springtime.

*Ugo Frescura, F.A.A.O.
President, European Society of Optometry*

It is with great sadness, both personally and for Australian optometry, that we note the passing of Homer Hendrickson, O.D.

Homer was a major stimulus to the establishment of behavioural vision care concepts in Australia. His lecture tour to Australia in 1970 provided a small core of optometrists with their first insights into developmental optometry and visual training.

As President of the Optometric Extension Program Foundation, Homer was always generous with advice, guidance, assistance and encouragement to the early Australian organization that was formed to represent optometrists attempting to provide behavioural vision care.

Many Australians, ourselves included, experienced personally the camaraderie and friendship of a truly professional optometrist with an earnest desire to improve the visual welfare of mankind.

The Australasian College of Behavioural Optometrists recognized Homer's contribution to optometry in Australia and New Zealand by awarding him a Life Fellowship of the College in March 1991.

*Graham Peachey, President
Chris Henderson, Secretary,
Australasian*

College of Behavioural Optometrists

Douglas McElfresh gave the eulogy at the memorial service for our dear friend and colleague, Homer Hendrickson. His words were brief and simple, but left everyone impressed in knowing the priorities in Homer's life. Family came first, to be followed by his service to his community through the Kiwanis and through his profession of optometry. Homer Hendrickson's leadership in OEP was administered with deep conviction and great dedication. At all times he avoided the limelight, but in the end, his firm beliefs left their

mark on all who had the privilege to meet and interact with him.

*Selwyn Super, Dip. Optom., M.Ed.
OEP Associate National Director
Republic of South Africa*

In 1975 Homer was asked to serve on the Board of the newly established Studt Foundation. The Studt Foundation was chartered and funded by O. Walter Studt, O.D., and his son, Donald Studt, O.D., to provide an introduction to behavioral optometry to optometric students at the Southern California College of Optometry and other institutions around the country. The Studt Foundation has sponsored more than 50 one- and two-day vision therapy practicums in California and Pennsylvania since 1975.

Homer's passing left optometry, the Studt Foundation, and all those who had the fortunate opportunity of knowing him, a void that may never be filled.

Homer was a totally dedicated man, first to his wife Marie and their family, and secondly, and most fortunately for all of us, his beloved optometry. The Kiwanians were also a grateful beneficiary of his dedication.

His optometric insight and understanding, his direction and guidance, his ability to grasp the subject at hand were totally unique and unsurpassed. His ability to edit complex materials is well known. When there was a meeting or phone conversation or an edited document returned, we always learned from Homer and we loved him for that.

As the Foundation was preparing for our 51st Practica this month, we suddenly realized what a tremendous loss there has been within our organization during the past 11 1/2 months.

First, the loss of Jerry Getman on April 9, 1990. Jerry was the program chairman for the Foundation since its inception. With Homer's help, he masterfully put together 47 successful Practica, not only in California but also five accredited two-day courses at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry.

Secondly, Homer's untimely passing on March 30, 1991. It was in 1975 that my dad, Walter Studt, Homer

and I formed and set the direction for the Studt Foundation. Without his unbelievable knowledge and guidance, his total willingness to participate in any job and unselfish donation of countless hours, we would not be enjoying the huge success that we enjoy today. Homer initiated many concepts and approaches for the Foundation, including the accreditation of the Practica for the state's continuing education program. Homer resigned from the Board of Directors last December after 50 Practica had been completed.

We will all somehow survive and hope to excel in our endeavors (with Homer the word "hope" would not be needed). We will miss him deeply, but we can be happy that he left with us all that knowledge he gathered these past decades in his pursuit to forward the cause of behavioral optometry. This knowledge will always be there for us to draw upon. Thank you, Homer, from all of us; thank you, Homer, my optometric dad.

*Donald Studt, O.D., President
The Studt Foundation*



G.N. Getman (l.) and Homer Hendrickson (r.)

Many honors and awards were bestowed on Dr. Hendrickson throughout his distinguished career. In addition to being named Optometrist of the Year in 1960 by the California Optometric Association, where he served as Secretary of the Board for five years, the COA honored him with the Distinguished Service Award in 1968. He was named Trustee Emeritus by his alma mater, the Southern California College of Optometry, in 1981 and the Alumnus of the Year by SCCO in 1983. He received the first G. N. Getman Award, named after Jerry Getman, his close friend



Dr. Hendrickson

and lifetime colleague, from the College of Optometrists in Vision Development in 1971 for his dedication to developmental optometry.

Homer Hendrickson, my mentor, my colleague, my friend. Homer's unselfish sharing of Skeffington optometry has helped mold and shape my optometric career. How I now wish I had taken more opportunities to learn from him—about the long history and rich legacy of behavioral vision care. Homer, tireless worker. Author. Editor. Lecturer. Administrator. For OEP, for the profession, for all of us.

There are few who touch our lives with such profound kindness and grace. It is difficult to put into words the appreciation I feel for all he gave me, both professionally and personally. My heart reaches out to Marie, who knows there was so much more work this gentle leader wanted to accomplish.

On behalf of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development, thank you, Homer, for simply being you.

*Gary Etting, O.D., F.C.O.V.D.
President of the College of Optometrists
in Vision Development*

In a crowning statement to Homer's dedication to optometry, the American Optometric Association honored him in 1984 its highest award to an optometrist, the Distinguished Service Award.

In recent months, Homer was recognized by several groups for his lifetime dedication to the profession. Dr. Donald Studt reluctantly accepted his resignation from the Studt Foundation Board of

Directors and recognized Homer and Marie with a reception in their honor. The California Optometric Association dedicated the Awards Luncheon at the 1991 COA Congress to Homer. The Southern California Vision Therapists were to have honored him at their meeting in April, 1991. He passed away one week before the meeting was held.

Homer's commitment to educating his optometric colleagues continued until his last days. An essay on the "Skeffington Syndrome Case Analysis," his final of more than 100 articles and publications, is printed in this issue of the *Journal of Behavioral Optometry*. OEP is in the process of publishing A. M. Skeffington's *Practical Applied Optometry*, newly revised and edited by Dr. Hendrickson, as well as an original new book, *Eponyms*, which Homer described as a source and partial dictionary for behavioral optometry. This work lists and describes individuals, procedures, equipment, products and theories or concepts which have been developed, invented or written about by optometrists and others over the past 60 years.

I first met Homer Hendrickson as a young administrator at the Southern California College of Optometry in 1975 while he was serving on the Board of Trustees. The immediate kinship that formed was followed by a deep and lasting friendship and mentor relationship. After his retirement from active duty with OEP in 1983, for the first time in more than 40 years Homer had some time to step back from the day-to-day operations of the Foundation. He had the opportunity to assess his life's work and plot the direction for the next 60-plus years of OEP activities. In a letter to then AOA President-Elect, David Sullins, O.D., in 1989, Homer wrote:

Some possible programs are:

A. Develop undergraduate awareness. Encourage all ASCO institutions to inaugurate a program, in the first month of the freshmen's year, in the optometry curriculum, having every student experience a complete optometric examination, whether there is a perceived or expressed need or not, so each will know what optometrists do. For some it will be the first time! And it would give upper classmen the opportunity to have another patient, as well as communicate and encourage. More im-



Dedicating the Skeffington Memorial Library, from left: Robert A. Williams, J. Baxter Swartwout, Homer Hendrickson.

portantly, it should include the prescribing of optometric visual training (VT) for every student, whether there is a need or not, to experience a) enhanced visual performance as the result of VT, and/or b) remedial care if there is a previously undetected or diagnosed visual problem, and c) the benefits thereof. In addition, if there is a diagnosed need for stress-relieving lenses, they should be prescribed and a subsequent (progress) examination made to determine their effect and benefits, i.e., a) maintenance of the current visual status, b) prevention of visual maladaptations, and c) enhancement of visual performance. Having experienced the benefits, those students will be supportive of the care when they graduate and practice, whether they provide the care or not.

It makes no sense that the vision care we are and should be trying to "sell" to the public is not good enough for optometric students, our upcoming colleagues. If we have any belief and proof that judiciously prescribed plus lenses, properly worn, can influence intellectual performance, why do we not give this advantageous help to those who are entering the heavy academic optometric courses? Isn't it possible that if the students are personally experiencing the benefits of such achievement lenses, they will almost automatically become better and successful optometrists in spite of increased competition?

Moreover, some currently practicing optometrists have experienced the process and the benefits by becoming patients of nearby colleagues. AOA members could be encouraged to do the same as part of the internal program. This could lead to and be a part of a program of:

B. Practicing optometrists learning to identify and refer to colleagues for the unique optometric services. Through PEP, encourage and teach AOA members how to test and identify patients who need the care which has been outlined above.

If some optometrists, for whatever reasons, choose not to provide the unique care, they can and should make simple tests that identify patients in need, and then refer them to colleagues (not competitors) for those special and unique services.

The traditionalists can examine, identify and refer for VT, reexamine after a colleague's VT and provide the behavioralist's recommended stress-relieving lenses to a) maintain the new or current refractive status, b) prevent regression of newly acquired visual skills or certain maladaptations (increased myopia, suppression, etc.), and c) enhance visual information processing, visual achievement or performance. Thus, all of optometry can be a part of the unique profession and care that can, has, does and will make a difference in our country and society.

The program could include lectures/demonstrations at AOA Congresses and other educational meetings to teach the process of identifying and referring, and the benefits.

If vision is dominant, then the unique services of optometry can do their part in helping people of all ages reach their potentials.

In weekly telephone conversations and periodic meetings, Homer detailed his vision of the future of OEP and optometry.

"The need is so great. We have only scratched the surface. There are so many populations that need our kind of care. Tole [Greenstein, former OEP Vice-President] used to say that behavioral vision care is the best kept secret in health care.

If all that need it ever find out what we have, the demand will be so great, we won't be able to keep up with it. Athletes, computer users, learning disabled, illiterates, displaced workers, preschool children, juvenile offenders, they all need our help and don't know it. We have to talk louder and more often to all of these groups. We have to demonstrate the need. We have to prove to the world beyond the shadow of a doubt that behavioral vision care is valid and valuable. And, we have to take it to the consuming public."

In his comments at the Studt Foundation reception and the COA Awards Luncheon, Homer challenged all of us to move forward, to carry on the mission that the founders of OEP established in 1928: "To advance human progress through education in behavioral vision care."

Homer was my mentor and he was my friend. Above all, his infectious enthusiasm will drive all of us to greater heights for our profession and the people we serve.

I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can

do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

That proverb could have been written by or about Homer Hendrickson. Homer was nothing if he was not kind. Homer did nothing, if he did not do good. We all had the privilege of knowing him, working with him and benefiting from his kindness and his good. We are all better that he was in our lives; we are the lesser that he has gone. He cannot be forgotten because he is a part of us, a part of the very fiber of our existence. He added to our lives in such a way that we are inseparable from him.

I am reminded of the words spoken by President Lincoln in 1863 on a battlefield in Pennsylvania. "The world will little note nor long remember what we say" about Homer, but the world will never forget what he did. His accomplishments, which have been and will be well chronicled, were of such note that our world will never be the same. His dedication to the welfare of mankind was unsur-

passed and rarely equaled by others. Some are born to greatness, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them. Homer was a great man. He did not strive for recognition or leadership. He simply accepted the role of a leader when it was thrust upon him. He did not sidestep the mantle of leadership when it was apparent that this was the role that he needed to play. In accepting leadership, he did it not to achieve greatness or recognition, but because he was needed.

It is now for us the living to accept the challenge that Homer laid before us, throughout his life, in both word and deed; to build upon the foundation that he so ably laid; to continue the work he started; to show kindness and do good for all humanity. The world was his stage and all people were his colleagues. To him and because of him, we rededicate our lives to the service of humanity.

To the family, Marie, Carol, Jim and Greg, we share your loss just as you shared Homer's life with us. To Homer, may God speed.

ANNOUNCING HOMER HENDRICKSON AWARD 1991

A \$1,000 annual award presented to an optometrist who has developed an outstanding optometric project to serve the behavioral vision care needs of the community.

Award deadline July 1, 1991

For complete details on the award or to submit an entry, contact:

Homer Hendrickson Award
c/o OEP Foundation
2912 South Daimler Street
Santa Ana, CA 92705
(714) 250-8070

This award was established and funded by David Dzik, O.D.