

EMPOWER

An OWL Magazine



fall 2021

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Grateful for a Stellar 2021



In every decision I made, I kept OWL's vision of 'advancing diversity in leadership' top of mind and as my guiding force.

Abigail Markward

As I reflect upon my year as President of Ophthalmic World Leaders, I am grateful to the OWL organization for allowing me the opportunity to give back to a group that has given so much to me over the past 17 years. I am truly honored and humbled to have been appointed to this role. Over the past year, I have been reminded of the value of collaborative relationships, showing kindness and understanding to others, and a heartfelt reverence for the unique and varied strengths and traits of our membership.

In every decision I made, I kept OWL's vision of 'advancing diversity in leadership' top of mind and as my guiding force. **Three main goals served to support this vision:**

- **Continue to strengthen our educational and networking opportunities through a greater mix of live and virtual event programming**
- **Maintain and grow our sponsorship and membership contributions**
- **Establish more internal efficiencies to support continued and sustained growth for the future**

I am pleased to report that we have met these goals. In addition to our Signature Events at ASCRS and AAO, we developed several other programs, including our Inequity of COVID series, an Eyes on Inclusion webinar co-hosted with Alcon, the Get-on-Board with OWL Program and our upcoming Leadership Summit. Our sponsorships and memberships have grown and have enabled us to plan for an even more successful 2022. We have also re-imagined two committees and retained Pascale Communications for our digital PR outreach strategy and execution while also launching a new OWL logo. All of this in under 1 year!

Of course, all of this is possible because of the amazing volunteers that give their time to OWL. Their commitment and passion for the organization is the driver of these huge steps forward.

I hope you will enjoy this Fall 2021 issue of the Empower magazine. Highlights include our awards finalists, as nominated by the OWL membership and selected by our Awards Nominations Committee. Upon reading their nominee statements, it is clear these talented individuals represent OWL's vision and mission incredibly well and the ophthalmic community is richer for having them be a part of it. I'd like to also give thanks and recognition to our Champion members noted in this edition. We sincerely appreciate your commitment to and support of OWL!

Although I am concluding this chapter of my OWL experience, I look forward to staying involved and connected to the organization to support the mission of advancing diversity in leadership.

Warmest regards,

Abby



New for 2022 LEADERSHIP - SUMMIT -

February 3 - 4, 2022
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Targeted at people in mid-career looking to prepare for career advancement, OWL's new Leadership Summit aims to create skilled future leaders who will build and lead diverse teams.

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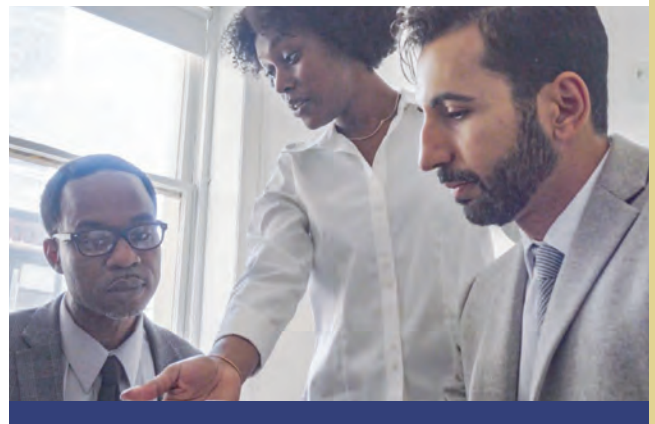
- Social Media in Today's World: How & Why



- Negotiate with confidence - whether for career advancement, or to become more effective at work



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Considering if this Summit is Right for You?

Find out more on our website:
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Contact: www.owlsite.org - gfries@owlsite.org - 919-267-6478

Champion Members are advocates and champions of the OWL Mission, Vision, and Values; they are leaders in their organizations; they actively recruit new OWL members; and they contribute significantly in OWL by attendance, and leadership at Board or Committee levels.

Learn more | www.owlsite.org

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Nominees for the 2021 OWL Awards

OWL is pleased to introduce the nominees for the Visionary Leader Award sponsored by Ziemer, Catalyst Award sponsored by CorneaGen, and Rising Star Award sponsored by BVI Medical. The winner in each award category will be announced at the OWL Signature Event & Awards Ceremony.



Visionary Leader Award

OWL's Visionary Leader Award honors an individual who has paved the way for diversity in their field through significant achievement. Nominees should have demonstrated leadership in their field through their careers.



Abigail Markward

ABBY MARKWARD

has more than 20 years of experience in the ophthalmic industry. She is currently the Head of Business Development

for PentaVision, an ophthalmic publishing company. She has extensive experience in advertising, marketing, and product management, and has worked for companies such as Johnson & Johnson and Bausch + Lomb.

Ms. Markward is the President of OWL and has been a hard-working supporter and visionary leader of OWL for nearly a decade. During that time, she has been instrumental in creating innovative, informational and inspirational OWL programs and digital events. Since 2009, she has been a dedicated volunteer for SightLife, a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating corneal blindness worldwide. On behalf of SightLife, she traveled to Nepal for the Women Advocates' Trip. "Abby is the kind of person who adds value to everything she touches," said one of her nominators. Ms. Markward has mentored others throughout her career. In nominating her, a colleague emphasized that "I can think of few people in this industry with greater dedication to enhancing diversity, supporting others' career paths, and a strong commitment to growing the OWL organization."

JIM MAZZO is Executive Chairman of Neurotech, a retinal implant company, and CEO and President of Avellino Labs, a biotechnology and genetic science company. He also serves as an adviser or board director of several other ophthalmic companies. As one of the ophthalmic industry's most respected business leaders, Mr. Mazzo has a reputation for building and leading world-class companies, including Allergan, Advanced Medi-



James V. Mazzo

cal Optics, Abbott's global ophthalmology business, AcuFocus, and Carl Zeiss Meditec. He serves on the ASCRS Governing Board, the AAO Foundation Advisory Board, and the AGS Foundation Advisory Board. He has been recognized as a Top 100 Innovator in Ophthalmology multiple times and in 2021 received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

A nominator noted that Mr. Mazzo not only mentors, but is also an active advocate for them and many others in the industry. "He loves our industry and is completely dedicated to ensuring we have well-rounded, passionate leaders at every level — he is an example of what we want to have in our senior leaders!"



Jai Parekh, MD, MBA

JAI PAREKH is CEO and co-founder of EyeCare Consultants of NJ, a comprehensive ophthalmic practice serving 7 counties in New Jersey. He has held consulting and strategic roles for numerous eye care companies, most recently serving for 5 years as Chief Medical Officer of Global Eye Care for Allergan. Dr. Parekh serves as a Trustee, Chief of Cornea and Medical Director of the Research Institute at St. Joseph's Health, where trials in COVID-19 made the Center one of the top research facilities in the NY-NY area. Additionally, by co-chairing multiple philanthropic and strategic initiatives he helps to raise awareness and funds for the underserved, striving to change what the eyecare profession can do overall for healthcare — locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

As a key board member for OWL, Dr. Parekh continually demonstrates his commitment to advancing diversity in ophthalmology through volunteering his time and talents and sharing his gifts with others in the ophthalmic industry.

Catalyst Award

OWL's Catalyst Award honors an individual who has contributed significantly to helping others advance their career in eye care. Nominees should have demonstrated leadership in supporting the advancement of diversity.

WAYNE CAULDER is Head of U.S. Sales, Ophthalmic Devices for Carl Zeiss Meditec. He has held previous roles with ISTA Pharmaceuticals, Vision Care Ophthalmic Technologies, and i-Optics, which he co-founded. Mr. Caulder is known for creating a culture of high performance and personal development for his teams. He enjoys taking a vision and making it a reality through strategic development and a keen business acumen. He is currently spearheading major strategic shifts for transforming his organization from a functional focus to an enabler of innovation for the ophthalmic business, as well as integrating the digitalization of devices to support a solutions approach initiative for customers.



Wayne Caulder

Within Zeiss and throughout his involvement in ophthalmology, Mr. Caulder has worked hard to lead and mentor others. A nominator said that he "seems to constantly boost the careers of everyone around him."

ARTHUR CHAN is the vice president of medical affairs at Tarsus Pharmaceuticals. Originally from Calgary, Canada, he received his PhD in biomedical engineering from the University of Washington and holds an MBA specializing in pharmaceutical and healthcare marketing.

Dr. Chan is a leader with a passion for mentoring others and giving back, and someone who has brought the ophthalmic community closer together during the pandemic. He opens doors for many eye care professionals who are looking to work with industry or are new to industry.



Arthur Chan, PhD, MBA

He's also a diversity, equity and inclusion champion at Tarsus (and formerly at Novartis) who intentionally and successfully builds teams of individuals with diverse roots and life experiences. He recently collaborated with last year's OWL Catalyst award winner, Dr. Renee Bovelto, to bring awareness to the importance of diversity among clinical trial participants and investigators, and inspired residents at Howard University to partner with industry by sharing how to get involved with research. "Arthur Chan is a great example of a leader, mentor, influencer and friend," said his nominator. "While at Alcon he not only supported the creation and growth of a new surgical medical affairs field-based team, but also mentored each team member in their new role. He took the time to ensure their professional and personal successes."



Jeanne Taylor Hecht, MBA

JEANNE TAYLOR HECHT is CEO of JTH Consulting, LLC, which provides business management, governance, strategy and growth consulting, and the former CEO of Ora, Inc. She also serves as a Non-Executive Director on three Boards of Directors, including 2 that are publicly traded. She commands broad knowledge and deep expertise in the life sciences arena, specializing in guiding international companies through healthy growth – thoughtfully, strategically, and with unyielding integrity.

Earlier in her career, Ms. Hecht held many senior roles at Iqvia (formerly Quintiles IMS Holdings, Inc.), where she served as president of the Quintiles WIN (Women in Networking) group, and she continues to promote and support the development of women in ophthalmology, advising talented women leaders how they can serve on corporate and advisory boards. She also volunteers with several nonprofit groups that provide medication access to seniors and playgrounds for children with disabilities.

Rising Star Award

OWL's Rising Star Award honors an individual who is an emerging leader in the ophthalmic space. These award finalists are in their early or mid-careers and demonstrate high potential for making an impact in ophthalmology.



Kate Fehlhaber, PhD

KATE FEHLHABER

began her career at Johnson & Johnson Vision and is now Global Project Director for The Fundingsland Group,

an independent medical education company, where she creates compelling, compliant, and effective peer-to-peer education driven by large-scale clinician surveys to address gaps in clinical knowledge, opinions, and practice patterns. Dr. Fehlhaber received her PhD in Neuroscience from UCLA in 2017, where she studied the molecular mechanisms of the first synapse of sight and founded Knowing Neurons, a creative education website dedicated to making neuroscience more accessible to the general public. It won the 2016 Next Generation Award from the Society for Neuroscience, has been featured in Forbes magazine, and is currently listed as #3 on Feedspot's Top 90 Neuroscience Blogs.

Dr. Fehlhaber was selected as a 2020 OWL Fellow and is currently serving on the Membership Impact Committee. She spearheaded the 2019 OWL Survey and hosted a webinar to examine the results. At TFG, she is leading a commitment to diversity and inclusion in ophthalmic education. Her nominator calls her "brilliant and hard-working" and suggests she is "one to watch" in ophthalmology.

NISHANT MALLER is Senior Brand Manager for surgical retina at Alcon, where he began his ophthalmic career as a marketing intern 9 years ago. Since then, "Nishant has made a gigantic splash as a rising professional in our space," said a nominator. His experience in ophthalmology spans across cataract, refractive, glaucoma and surgical retina.



Nishant Maller, MBA

Mr. Maller has received multiple awards in the healthcare market, and has also taken key leadership positions in employee resource groups within Alcon. For example, he serves as one of the co-chairs for OPEN (Open Professional Employee Network), Alcon's LGBTQ+ focused employee resource group. Having grown up and worked in different countries with different cultures, and not fitting many stereotypes, advancing diversity is an important value for Mr. Maller.



Alanna Nattis, DO

ALANNA NATTIS is a cornea, cataract and refractive surgeon, as well as the Director of Clinical Research at SightMD, and an associate professor in ophthalmology and surgery at NYIT-College of Osteopathic Medicine. During residency and her fellowship with world-renowned eye surgeons Eric Donnenfeld and Henry Perry, Dr. Nattis published over 15 articles in peer-reviewed journals, wrote 2 textbook chapters, and has co-authored a landmark ophthalmology textbook designed to help guide and teach surgical techniques to residents and fellows – with the second edition coming out in 2021.

Her nominator says: "As a strong, smart female in ophthalmology, Dr. Nattis has pioneered the way to show us what 'good' looks like. Not only has she spent the last few years rising in the ranks and becoming a national name, but she has done so while mentoring and educating those around her. She has been involved in several research projects, including industry-sponsored studies and investigator-initiated trials, and has stepped ahead of her timetables to show that she is a capable leader. Have you ever seen someone who is still rising ensure that they lift up those around them? Alanna is that person!"



Eyes on Inclusion

Four LGBTQ+ members of the eyecare community discuss what it means to be Out in Eyecare.



Heather Attra
(She/her/hers) SVP, Head of Global Quality, Alcon



Amanda Lee, OD
(She/her/hers) VP, Professional Development, Vision Source



Peter MacIntosh, MD
(He/him/his) Director Ophthalmology Residency Program, Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, University of Illinois, Chicago



Scott Walter, MD, MSc.
(He/him/his) Partner, Retina Consultants, PC

Image: AdobeStock/Azurita

John Raney

On June 18th, 2021, OWL & Alcon hosted the 'Eyes on Inclusion' webinar, wherein four panelists discussed what it means to be Out in Eyecare:

What makes you proud to be part of the LGBTQ+ community?

Peter MacIntosh, MD: I'm proud to be part of this time in history, where there's so much support and understanding for the community, and where coming out is becoming an easier process.

Amanda Lee, OD: I admire how far we've progressed since I came out, and all the people brave enough to be out before our time. →

→ **Scott Walter, MD, MSc.:** I'm proud of my husband and the life we've built together, and that I have this chance to be my genuine self in a visible, public platform like ophthalmology.

Heather Attra: I'm proud of the perseverance and sacrifice of those who have fought and still fight for our rights. LGBTQ+ people are a part of every culture, every race and every society; because of that, we are accepted today more than ever. We still have a long way to go to eliminate the prejudice and discrimination that persists, however, we have seen great progress.

Are you out at work?

What prompted you to come out?

Attra: I came out recently. In 2020, we started a campaign to ramp up our efforts around D&I here at Alcon, and it felt disingenuous to ask others what they would commit to do to drive inclusion if I was too afraid to be my full authentic self at work. Now that I am out, I only wish I had been brave enough to do it sooner.

Has being your authentic self affected your interactions with your patients?

Walter: It's not always immediately relevant, but it can be valuable. You encounter older patients who are themselves in the closet and you might be the first doctor they had who identified as LGBTQ+.

MacIntosh: It allows you to build much deeper relationships with patients, colleagues, and friends. You find new topics to connect with people over.

Lee: I advise anyone listening to be their authentic self. It shows your patients that you're real, and it takes the weight off you.

How much of your personal life do you choose to keep private and why?

MacIntosh: I don't keep anything decidedly private. I think as a program director, it's important to be open to make trainees feel comfortable.

Attra: I only came out at work a year ago and I now choose to be fully open about my personal life. I am still working on breaking old habits like using ambiguous wording or not talking about my wife. Protecting myself has been so ingrained, for so long, it will take a little time. So many people have been so supportive, and I find being open has allowed me to truly connect in more meaningful ways with my coworkers and associates.

Any examples where you helped change someone's view?

Lee: I had a patient who admitted to being suicidal, and in the same breath said he thought he might be gay. I stopped the exam, and told him that I was gay, and that I was there for him. I grew from that experience, and when I last saw him, he was in a healthy relationship with his partner and planning to be married. Being open and not afraid to be who you are can be profound in many ways.

What causes a fear of coming out?

Walter: We're afraid because we're uncertain how others will respond. Unlike other minorities, members of the LGBTQ+ community have agency as to when to come out, which creates anxiety about when to come out, and how it will go. The fear of coming out is valid, but probably exaggerated in most cases; the more you do it, the easier it gets.

Do you feel like there have been any negative repercussions from coming out?

MacIntosh: I had a very religious friend who initially said he didn't agree with it, but he didn't cut me out of his life over it, and a couple of years later he said he had reconsidered that statement and apologized.

Attra: When I first came out to my parents, it went badly. Having the people who are supposed to love you unconditionally embarrassed by who you are leaves a lingering impact. The good news is we now have a healthy and supportive relationship, so it's important to leave the door open for people to grow.

Do you think it has been important for your job defining yourself openly as a LGBTQ+ person?

Attra: Before I came out, I would have said no; but now that I am open, I know it is very important. I am so much more fulfilled being open. I was compartmentalizing and sacrificing a part of myself and it was taking a toll on me and my relationships at work. I now realize I deserve to get to be my authentic self and I won't go back in the closet. I have also gotten quite a few notes from others letting me know how important it was for them to see the support I have received and has given them the courage to be themselves.

What advice would you give to allies for helping diversity and inclusion?

Walter: Don't be afraid to broaden your circles and include those different from you. Ophthalmology is more diverse than it used to be and there are lots of opportunities to align yourself with your colleagues. You may be surprised by how much you have in common with people you initially perceived as "different."

MacIntosh: Allies should just get to know us. They should lose their preconceived notions of what it is to be LGBTQ+ and learn what it actually is by talking to their colleagues.

Lee: It's critical to create a safe space for people who want to come out. The more diverse our entities become, the stronger they become. So you'll find that it enriches your community and work culture.

Is there one thing that your organization has done to make you feel more comfortable being your authentic self at work?

Attra: As I mentioned earlier, last year we accelerated our conversations at Alcon surrounding diversity and inclusion. These discussions let me see that I had quite a few allies among the leadership. There has been an increase in visible acts of support, whether it's raising the Pride Flag on campus, or the activities surrounding Pride Month, and that's important in showing we have an environment where people are safe to be who they are.

Any advice for LGBTQ+ people just entering your field?

Attra: I'd recommend you do your research into the company's policies, values, and behaviors. Make sure you find a place that you feel is going to be welcoming, so you don't feel the need to hide a part of who you are.

MacIntosh: Being out at work is a personal decision. You shouldn't feel pressure to say anything about your personal life if you don't want to. While there are many laws to protect us, once you are out things may change in terms of your professional relationships, for the better or for the worse. ●

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