

## Guest Column

*Dear Lee . . .  
Colleagues, Friends  
(and Daughters)  
Remember the  
Professional and  
Personal  
Contributions of a  
Renaissance Man*

**Mary Lee Hoganson**

Homewood, Illinois

In 1970, when I was taking a graduate course in Career Development, I had an assignment to interview an individual whose career was “mature.” I chose to interview my father. In the process of that interview, we talked about what Dad’s work had meant to him. He stated that he believed that immortality lay in having one’s name live on in the contributions of his work. If that is the case, Dad did indeed establish his immortality through his professional legacy.

On the occasion of his 75th birthday, my sister Betsy and I held a surprise party for him in Iowa City. The party was attended primarily by former colleagues from the University of Iowa Department of Ophthalmology, ophthalmologists he had trained, and others who had been eyewitnesses to his many professional accomplishments. Many spoke or shared in writing their view of Lee’s accomplishments.

The day after the party, Dad said to me, “I feel like I have had the opportunity to witness to what I never thought would be said of my work until after my death.” Later on his 80th and 90th birthdays, more “living memorials” were added. Still more can be found in the forewords and attributions of the many publications to which Lee contributed. What follows is a compilation of many professional and personal tributes. These include remarks and letters honoring Dad’s 75th and 90th birthdays, an official celebration by the Iowa Eye Association honoring Dad and his close collaborator, Ken Hansen, testimonies offered specifically for this journal, and daughters’ memories.

I learned a lot about my father in the process of reading and sorting several hundred letters written to him by colleagues. Even though I lived with Lee Allen for many years and shared many intimate conversations over 50 years of my adulthood, I am once again struck by the range of Dad’s talents, skills, and contributions.

In no way are these testimonials comprehensive, as many more may be found in forewords to professional publications and texts that recognize Dad’s unique contributions in resounding praise. However, even if you were to read all of these and more, there would be several aspects of Lee Allen’s career that would be missing and to which none of these remarks speak. These are what I learned as a child as I sat on a bench outside his tiny lab at the University of Iowa, waiting for one of our evening walks home together. Dad’s patients literally came from all over the world to have him transform their lives because, at that time at least, he was unique in the meticulous care he took with his patients. Many, many had already had multiple

unsuccessful or painful prostheses fashioned for them. Dad took on every one of these cases with a determination to create a perfect eye, even if that meant designing a unique way to support a drooping eyelid or an entire facial prosthesis. These cases sent him back to the “drawing board” to design improved surgical techniques and implants. What I will remember most are the patients who entered Dad’s lab with heads down, hiding a part of their faces, and the look on their faces when Dad handed them the small hand mirror to view their transformation from “deformed” to “whole”.

As I compiled these remarks, I wondered how many individuals, from any walk of life, would find so many “cheerleaders” in the latter years of a career; but, without a doubt, most impressive was the warmth and affection expressed by colleagues. There are many, many in the medical field who might be similarly recognized for their professional contributions, but I wonder how often the salutations for those testimonials would express such fondness and end with the word “love”.

#### SEPTEMBER 1985, THE OCCASION OF LEE’S 75TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

*Olivia Neiderecker, Ocularist, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was asked to speak, representing the ocularists trained by Lee . . .* Lee has been a father to all of his students, young and old. His guidance and inspiration have helped us through many types of ophthalmologic problems. Lee has propelled us to heights, far beyond our own expectations.

To dwell on the many ways Lee has helped his students is insufficient; and it neglects the one important message of this great man. We must not forget the help thousands of patients have received and will receive through Lee’s greatest contribution, which is his unique way of expressing his love to mankind. We, his students, are merely messengers of that love as we practice Lee’s craft.

We help build self-image. Our mission is to restore a measure of happiness to the lives of people who, in addition to suffering the overwhelming physical trauma of loss of an eye, must rebuild their own self-worth. For Lee’s “disciples” are in the midst of an inexpressible loss. Our patients must deal with that impact while benefiting from Lee Allen’s principles, a

privilege and an honor. Lee has provided many (students) with the ability to restore the basic human right to self-respect, which is a necessary ingredient of human happiness. If love is a desire to make others happy, then Lee’s students express his love for mankind by helping to rebuild self-image at a time when our patients need it most.

As students of the “Lee Allen School of Human Betterment”, our principal benefit is that we have the privilege of witnessing the restoration of self-worth and dignity that would not have been possible without Lee. The gratitude and resurrection of the human spirit we see in our work is one of the most satisfying feelings possible in life. This self-actualization that we experience is the paramount gift for which Lee’s students must express their gratitude. Let us . . . acknowledge that, because of Lee’s contributions, many people in this world have a feeling of the human dignity only he has made possible.

*From Gus Bethke, the pioneering Medical Illustrator, whose position Lee eventually took at the University of Iowa Hospitals*

Think of it, you’ve had over 50 successful and good years and accomplished so much in the field of medical science. All the while you were doing something you loved to do. You were and are a very fortunate man.

Do you remember that day many years ago, Eddie, in a beautiful park in Toronto? We were talking about our work as artists – medical artists – and how lucky we were and how good we felt about it. I have always carried that thought with me and how good it was to have shared that thought with you all these years. I know that your work has inspired and helped many people. I know because I was one of them, and I have been ever grateful.

*Martin P. Koke, M.D., Ophthalmologist, San Diego, California*

You’re the only true genius that I have known. The art work you did for my inconsequential papers was deeply appreciated. I know you did so much for so many, but I remember the devotion and care you gave to my work, including the Mechanism of Accommodation, Medullated Corneal Nerves, Erythema Exudativum Multiforme.

*P.J. Leinfelder, M.D. Retired Professor, University of Iowa Department of Ophthalmology*

Without a doubt the most memorable time from my point of view were the years from 1938-41 when Lee and I were involved in making the stereo drawings of the brain. Your execution of those drawings from my description baffled me then and continues to do so now. Near this same time you were also creating the gonio-prism. I remember that we tried it out in my office, maybe for the first time.

One must not neglect the superb quality you developed in doing fundus paintings. They were most accurate representations. These were followed by your magnificent photography of the eye and fundus. As I write, I think of lots of very important contributions, but the most important I believe is your continued devotion to the concept that there can be a perfect prosthesis. Your contributions to the surgical technique and to the making and fitting of the prosthesis have given you international fame.

*Tom Van Cader, Carl Zeiss, Inc. West Germany*

Your many contributions to Carl Zeiss in the progressive developments of the Zeiss fundus camera are only a small part of your distinguished career in ophthalmology. Many people and I felt the touch of your hand personally, as you guided us through some difficult ophthalmic task. Countless more have benefited from your publications and presentations and through the dissemination of your teachings to others. Sincere thanks from Carl Zeiss, Inc., for all your support to us as an ophthalmic instrument manufacturer.

*Johnny Justice, Jr., Ophthalmic Photographer and Angiographer*

Shortly after I joined the staff at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in 1963, I kept hearing the name Lee Allen in reference to quality in ophthalmic photography. I kept saying to myself, "Who the hell is Lee Allen?"

I found that, in addition to being the only recognized and published expert in fundus photography and one of the truly outstanding medical artists, he also was the only expert in slit-lamp. In fact, most ophthalmologists believed that Lee was actually an ophthalmologist.

I remember that Lee once said to me over a



**FIGURE 1** Rare photo of Lee Allen at his University of Iowa (prosthetic) lab – with Dr. Altoushi Sawada, Head of Miqazaki Medical College, Japan.

Chinese lunch in Tokyo that I was not a complete ophthalmic photographer. (He said) You are not a complete ophthalmic photographer because you do not take slit-lamp photos of the anterior segment. Immediately upon my return from Japan, I ordered a photo-slit lamp. The following year, I gave the first photo-slit lamp presentation at the annual Ophthalmic Photographers' Society meeting. After the presentation, Lee came up to me and said, "Johnny, now you are a complete ophthalmic photographer." He did not say it begrudgingly; he said it as if he was partially responsible for this advancement in my career, and he was absolutely right as usual. Suffice it to say, Lee made my year by approving my slit-lamp technique. From the outset of my career, Lee Allen was and is still my hero.

*Richard L Anderson, M.D., Professor of Ophthalmology and Director of Oculoplastics, Orbital and Oncology Services, University of Utah Medical Center*

I wanted to write and tell you how much you have meant to me as a friend and teacher. Dealing with the anophthalmic patients and their problems is one of the most difficult things that we do as oculoplastic surgeons. I feel that I have not only benefited greatly from your excellence as an ocularist in helping manage my patients, but also from your teachings. Much of my philosophy on the management of these problems has been taken from your teachings. You have made a science out of an area that is extremely important to a number of patients. Because of your impact on the field of eye-fitting and ocularists' work, your

name will always be remembered as the person who has done more for this field than any other.

*C.W. (Bill) Cox, Ocularist, Eye Foundation Hospital, Birmingham, Alabama*

I will always be grateful for what you taught me, and I often wonder where I would be today if I had not met a wonderful generous man like you who was willing to share his expertise with a beginner. You were a great help and an inspiration to me when I first started in ophthalmology. Very few days go by when I do not think of you when I am doing something you taught me.

*John Kelly, Ocularist, Philadelphia*

We first met over 25 years ago at our annual meeting of A.S.O. Since then, although we have had a continuing debate, we have become real friends. All of us, your fellow ocularists, have learned a great deal from you, and we are grateful to you for the valued contributions to our profession. Thank you, Lee, for the many times you have supported me as we worked together on the not always popular efforts toward improved education and certification of ocularists.

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS WERE COLLECTED JUNE 1990 WHEN LEE WAS HONORED BY THE IOWA EYE ASSOCIATION

*William M. Bourne, M.D., Professor of Ophthalmology, Mayo Clinic*

I remember the many ways that you contributed to the ophthalmology program at Iowa, from designing photographic techniques and orbital implants to explaining congenital glaucoma. I remember especially a custom-made mold for corneal trephination dishes.

*W.L.M. Alward, Professor of Ophthalmology, Director of Glaucoma Service, University of Iowa Department of Ophthalmology: (Author of Atlas Of Gonioscopy, using Lee's drawings)*

When I arrived at the University of Iowa, one of my most delightful discoveries was the series of slides showing your gonioscopic artwork. I continue to be awed by the beauty and accuracy of your portrayal of the trabecular meshwork and its neighbors. While you will be honored mostly for your outstanding work in the field of ocular prosthetics, I feel that your contri-

butions to glaucoma through your description of the embryology of the angle, your four mirror lens, and your spectacular artwork are far more significant.

*Clifford Hendricks, M.D., Private Practice, Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

Every time I use my gonioscopy, I think of you. Everyone I show it to would love to have one, but of course they are no longer available. My son is finishing his ophthalmology training at Tulane this year and was working in the office a bit during the summer. Once he used it, I think he was spoiled for the other things he had seen. I remember the wonderful chalk work that you would do for the Christmas parties (for the Eye Department), and the time you won the gold medal for ophthalmology for your posters.

*Frederick Blodi, M.D., Retired Department Head, University of Iowa, Department of Ophthalmology*

Having had the chance and good fortune to work with you for so many years was one of the great benefits of coming to Iowa. You have always been an inspiration and an inspiring collaborator. You have enriched our department.

*Sohan Singh Hayreh, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Ophthalmology, University of Iowa, Department of Ophthalmology*

I remember our first meeting very vividly: it was in Albi, France, at the first International Symposium on Fluorescein Angiography in June 1969, when I was working at the Institute of Ophthalmology and Moorfields Eye Hospital, London. Since I had been actively involved with fluorescein fundus angiography since 1964, I was already very familiar with your contributions to the technical aspects of fluorescein angiography. Of course, I admire you as a respected medical artist. I have been a beneficiary of this particular talent when you made a number of drawings to illustrate some of my papers. I hope you will be pleased to hear that some of those drawings, particularly the ones of the choroid and choriocapillaris, continue to be reproduced in the various books on the subject. That is eloquent testimony to the superb quality of the artwork.

I salute you as a fellow pioneer in the field of fluorescein angiography. Your stereoseparator and your early work on the various types of filters used in

angiography are only two examples of your important contribution in the field. The young ophthalmologists of today have little idea how much painstaking research went into the equipment they use daily and take for granted.

I need hardly mention your contribution in the important field of ocular prosthetics, as that is perhaps where you are best known and most highly recognized. We should not forget, though, that by training others to carry on this work you have made yet another contribution to the happiness of patients whom you may never meet.

*Kenneth Swan, M.D. Professor of Ophthalmology, Oregon Health Sciences University*

It is attribute to our old chief, Dr. O'Brien, that he had the foresight to bring a talented person like you into the department. You certainly made "a difference" in nearly all phases of the departmental mission: teaching, patient records, research and developing new technologies; e.g., the mirror gonioscope. I have vivid and pleasant memories of the "moments of discovery" that we shared, such as the first successful color photographs of fluorescein entering the anterior chamber after intravenous injection back in 1939. In the years that followed, there were many occasions when I wished you were a member of our Oregon faculty, but I had to be satisfied with using reproductions of your beautiful art and technology in our programs!

*Ambrose Updegraff, M.D., Ophthalmologist in Private Practice, St. Petersburg, Florida*

Often when I view an exotic, unusual, and especially beautiful anterior chamber angle I think of you, your teaching, and wish I could share the view with you again. You are indeed a wonderful teacher, and your beautiful medical illustrations and art certainly contributed and highlighted all of our understanding of some of the more complicated views and anatomical relationships.

*Howard Webster, Eye-Fitter and Colleague At University of Iowa Department of Ophthalmology*

I always felt very fortunate to have been associated with you in the Department of Ophthalmology. I feel that whatever I was able to accomplish there was directly related to your kind and patient guidance.

We share many memories of those years, most of

which are quite pleasant. However, there were some stressful moments. Let me recall times when there would be a deadline to meet for finishing an exhibit. With overtime and some anxiety we always got the exhibit finished and set up on time. How sweet it was to savor the feeling of triumph in this accomplishment.

In my memory of those days are the paintings that you did of the chamber angles of the eye. I'm sure I didn't always understand their significance for medical science, but to me they were works of art and appreciated as such.

*Rev. Collins W. Swords, Jr., M.D., Ophthalmologist in Private Practice, Hollywood, Florida*

Throughout many years of practicing ophthalmology I have felt especially well-schooled in the matter of ocular prosthetics. This is an area where, for the most part, the patients have already suffered some sort of tragedy. It behooves all of us to use our abilities to minimize the loss of a functioning eye and what that has to mean to the patient. We cannot create an iota of vision; God has kept that creative capability within His own authority. We can only try to preserve the vision that God established. All too often we are unequal even to that task. If I did not know such things when I started to practice ophthalmology in 1954, I surely do now. When we have our worst failures, being unable to effectively inhibit visual loss, we must do all we can to help the suffering patient cosmetically, and then such activity becomes of paramount importance.

Almost all I know about ocular prosthetics I learned from you. I am grateful to you, and so are my patients who have ocular prosthesis, for your knowledge and wisdom that accrued to their benefit. I thank you for your substantial contributions. I have not forgotten all the other areas in which you stimulated my thinking, such as in gonioscopy. You have set standards by which we ophthalmologists will judge all such work. Your work stands out as one that will always be. Your hallmarks of skill, ingenuity, care, and excellence will forever be with, and in, those of us you instructed.

*Bill Scott, M.D., Professor of Ophthalmology, University of Iowa Department of Ophthalmology*

I wish to thank you for all the work and all the teaching that you have provided, not only to me, but to all



**FIGURE 2** Lee Allen at the 1995 Grant Wood exhibit with contemporaries who worked with Grant Wood including from left; Park Rivera (Park Rinard) Grant Wood's personal secretary, William Bunn, Lee Allen, and Thealtus Alberts.

of our residents for so many years. Through your expertise and keenness of eye you've added a great deal to the field of ophthalmology. I realize this more and more that people are constantly bringing up the name of Lee Allen as I travel around the country. Your innovations and teaching will live forever.

*Jeffrey A. Nerad, M.D., Professor of Oculoplastics and Orbit, University Of Iowa, Department of Ophthalmology*

Your contributions to art, medical illustration, ophthalmic photography, and ophthalmic socket surgery, ocular prosthetics, and teaching are unsurpassed by any individual. Reminders of your 39 years in the University Eye Department are present in every hallway. Your fundus camera innovations, bronze plaques which hang on the walls, and socket implants that we use on our patients are present reminders of your many successes.

I am grateful for the time you have given answering my questions, hearing my thoughts, and teaching me. I hope I can do as much for my students as you have done for me. You have many admirers and many friends. I am happy to be both!

#### COMMENTS COMMEMORATING LEE'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

*Thomas A. Weingeist, Ph.D., M.D., (Then) Department Head, University Of Iowa Department Of Ophthalmology*

During your long career you have been a tireless stu-

dent and teacher. Your keen powers of observation and artistic skills have been admired and appreciated by five departmental chairmen whom you have worked closely with, countless university faculty members, and scores of residents and fellows spanning more than five decades.

Lee, we are indebted to you for the fundamental contributions you have made to ophthalmic photography and prosthetics, and the worldwide recognition that you have brought to the department through your medical illustrations and art. An impressive list of devices is associated with your name: the Allen dot, the Allen stereo-separator, the Allen-Burian and the Allen-Braley diagnostic contact lenses, and the Allen Iowa Implant, etc.

It comes as no surprise to me that all these messages are filled with love and admiration for you and all you have accomplished in art, photography, ocular prosthetics, instrument design, orbital implants and countless other contributions to ophthalmology and our lives. *The Hole in My Vision: An Artist's View of His Own Macular Degeneration*, is only one of many seminal contributions you have made during your lengthy and productive career. Whatever you did, it seems every creation was made with the same determination, attention to detail, and thoughtfulness.

*Melvin L. Rubin, M.D., Eminent Scholar Emeritus, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Florida*

In 1958 you and I began a project to develop a way to incorporate the slit into slit lamp stereo photographs, which were then lacking in pictures being made via Dave Donaldson's anterior segment camera. The color films available at the time were either not fast enough or too grainy to help much. It was your effort in designing and incorporating a flash into the slit optics that eventually solved the problem. Those late 50s were a glorious time for me growing up (as a resident) at Iowa with you as resident-creative genius.

I always marveled at your ingenuity, knowledge of optics, mechanics, as well as artistry, which yielded such elegant designs that led to the development of so many practical clinical and laboratory instruments. I was there and watched as you created the self-retaining Burian-Allen gonioscope and the Allen-Braley fundus lens. (For decades I used them both daily in my own clinical practices as an educator. Your Iowa Implant is still being used all over.) To me, however,

your greatest educational contributions resided in your ability to observe and record basic clinical conditions, which resulted in your magnificent clinical drawings. In my opinion these have never been surpassed by anyone.

*Gunter K. Von Noorden, M.D., Retired Professor of Ophthalmology, Baylor College of Medicine*

I am thinking back to my own Iowa days and the great privilege it was to have been associated with you. Your scientific curiosity, coupled with a unique artistic talent, has made an everlasting impression on me and enabled you to make permanent contributions to ophthalmology. I recall the fun we had doing the exhibit on the chamber angle in mesodermal disease, going to Miami together for the AMA exhibit, and receiving the Hectoen Gold Medal. Or our other project, to develop fixation photography. During those days I rarely missed the chance to stop by your crowded and always busy lab for a chat or to air some crazy new idea with you.

*Lawrence Tychsen, M.D., Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences and Pediatrics, St. Louis Children's Hospital at Washington University Medical Center*

Your ERG contact lens design is the one I have used for years here at Children's Hospital for pediatric electrophysiology and your gonioscopy lens is part of our surgical tray. Your wonderful illustrations were of tremendous benefit to me as a resident. I'm a visual learner; only by seeing things in 3D conceptualization could I really grasp them in their full glory. You are truly a man who discerned his unique vocation and pursued it with passion and generosity. You have helped me and countless other ophthalmologists save or restore sight to thousands upon thousands of patients and reassure scores of worried families.

*Matthew D. Davis, M.D., Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin Medical School*

Of your many contributions to ophthalmology, surely the most important in my view was your 1960 paper in the American Journal of Ophthalmology on stereoscopic fundus photography. Given its importance in facilitating documentation of retinal status in multicenter clinical trials, this contribution ranks, I believe, with binocular indirect ophthalmoscopy,

photocoagulation, and the Goldmann 3-mirror lens in its importance to retinal specialists and our patients.

*Robert Whinery, M.D. Retired, Palm Desert California, formerly in private practice, Iowa City*

I began my ophthalmology residency in 1958. I knew then, and I know even better now, that you knew more about the chamber angle than anyone (including Burian and Braley). Your prototype model of the anterior chamber angle with its anomalies was a classic. It certainly helped me with gonioscopy. I also know that lots of instruments with various peoples' name on them were totally your doing. However, I must admit my fondest memories of Lee Allen related to the fabulous drawings you made each year for the old clinic Christmas parties.

*R. Joseph Hofmann, M.D., Davenport (Iowa) Medical and Surgical Eye Group*

I came to know, respect, and admire your work in prosthetics (when) I sent many post-enucleation patients from Davenport to your service in the Ophthalmology Department. An enucleated orbit is an unsightly entity, and these people were indeed made cripples by my surgery. I could feel it and they could feel it. I would take time, both before and after the surgery, to explain how your expertise would make them feel whole again.

Well, you did, Lee, and what a wonderful feeling it must be to know your hands made this world a little better place to live in for these unfortunates. I saw gratefulness in their faces when they returned to me time after time. I want you to once again know how much your skill and kindness added to the quality of life for all these people touched by you.

AS THIS COLLECTION OF MEMORIALS DEVELOPED, SEVERAL OTHER COLLEAGUES OFFERED COMMENTS FOR THIS JOURNAL AND ARE INCLUDED HERE

*Bruce E. Spivey, M.D., M.Ed., M.S., Ophthalmologist*

I first met Lee Allen in late 1955 when I began to work in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Iowa as a medical student. I had contact with Lee throughout the rest of his life. Lee, who had

just a few hours remaining to graduate from the University of Iowa, never graduated. He didn't feel a need to do that; by observing him over 50 years, I would agree. Lee had an open mind, an unbelievable capacity of observation and was honest to the core. He basically created a scientific basis in a variety of ophthalmic-related disciplines. When I met him, he was an ophthalmic photographer where he created stereo photography and chamber angle photography, and he refined the techniques of ophthalmic photography to a superior level. Just before I met Lee, he had done in-depth evaluation and drawings of chamber angles, in particular the congenital anomalies seen in chamber angles. He worked with Al Braley and Herman Burian.

Over a period of time he was also interested in ocular-buried implants; they were important to the ocular movements when fitting prostheses. He developed the Allen implant with Dr. James Allen (with whom he spent a brief time in New Orleans after Dr. Allen became the Chief at Tulane, but Lee returned quickly to Iowa City). Subsequently, Lee, having never done surgery, understood the issue and needs for appropriate closure over a buried implant and the need for ocular motility, so he developed the Iowa Implant. In this he worked with Dr. Ed Ferguson and later with me. For a considerable period of time, the Iowa implant was the standard in many ophthalmic practices.

Again working with Herman Burian and Al Braley, Lee developed the basis for both an ERG lens and a lens that would allow examination of the chamber scope. This lens was again the standard in many practices for several decades.

It was when Lee began to focus his efforts as an ocularist that most of you became aware of him. I can't fully describe his impact on this discipline, but I can say as someone who did most all of the enucleations over a period of time in the Department of Ophthalmology at Iowa that Lee was a superb clinician and dedicated practitioner. People came from all over the United States to be cared for by the master.

The brief description of Lee's impact on Ophthalmology and the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Iowa does not give Lee's intellect and focus adequate justice. As I stated above, Lee did not allow his mind to be cluttered with what was, but rather with what could be

and what was really happening, not the dogma of tradition. He was open, comfortable challenging authority and convention, and he desperately sought what he could ascertain as the truth. He frequently disagreed with the professors, but his status was such as a professional equal in any discourse that he was never disparaged or seen as anything other than a complete coequal. He applied his uncompromising commitment with highest quality/newest thought to everything he did.

When he reverted to painting in his later years, he created a painting called "The Window 57 Years Later," which is a painting of "American Gothic" by Grant Wood, with whom Lee worked. I have that painting and it is the treasure in my office. It shows the home in Eldon, Iowa, that provided the backdrop of a window for the "American Gothic" painting. His painting has two figures: One is Nan Wood, the sister of Grant Wood, and the second, a Cedar Rapids dentist, Byron McKeeby, whose grandson was in my class in Franklin High School in Cedar Rapids. Lee was a spectacular artist and worked in the style of Grant Wood and Marvin Cone.

In my judgment, Lee Allen was a role model, a mentor, a colleague, and the most original thinker/conceptualist in the Department of Ophthalmology, University of Iowa, over a 40-year period.

#### *Francois Durette, Ocularist., Montreal, Canada*

I consider myself lucky to have known Lee. It was always an easy communication with Lee. I never felt like I was disturbing him. He did have strong ideas about fitting techniques, and he was always a model for me. We had some fine discussions and friendship.

I met Lee early when I started in ocularistry, I was allowed in Lee's lab in the days when John Hadlock and Dan Yeager were still in training. These were stimulating times, but I must say it did not stop there. I managed to make my new practice a success, and after a few years working with the various implants used, I started dreaming about what I would do to improve each of these implants. When I told Lee about a possible modification to the Allen implant, he acknowledged the ideas and told me that he had made a modification to the Iowa in the Universal implant. I liked the ideas as well and asked permission to make these for Canada. When I had a few extra ones avail-

able, I sent these to Lee for his critiques. He replied, “You passed with flying colors.” That is how I became the world’s exclusive manufacturer of the Universal implant; the actual spark that brought the birth of Oculo-Plastik. I still do miss Lee.

*Maureen Maloney-Schou, Ocularist, President, American Society of Ocularists, Portland, Oregon*

Lee Allen was the President of the ASO in 1970 and was listed as a founding member of our Society, all volunteer positions. Although my personal experience was extremely limited, Lee’s legacies of contributions to the field are quite numerous as well as legendary. His pioneering methods of wax pattern modifications are still in wide use today, and they are part of the extensive curriculum being offered by the Education Program of the American Society of Ocularists.

One can see Lee’s imprint and contributions to the field of ocularistry throughout many of the courses offered by the ASO. Many of Lee’s former apprentices are very active in the Society. His legacy continues to live on through their participation.

*John Hadlock, Ocularist, Mesa, Arizona*

After spending two and one half years as an apprentice with Lee Allen, I began to realize how much my life would change because of his influence. Not only was I further developing my artistic skills, but also I could see how much of a service this new profession would be to those in need.

I found myself wanting to inculcate into my life all the wonderful traits that I saw in Lee. By watching and being aware of Lee and how he worked, I picked up on his thoughtful, passionate, and empathetic nature. It was fun to try to match his artistic talent—definitely a huge challenge! It was my privilege every day to pick his brain for more knowledge about anatomy, surgery, ocularistry, art, photography, and many other subjects. Lee had abundant knowledge in many fields and put it to good use.

Lee often picked up little techniques and tips from his students and coworkers. Not only was Lee a good student, but also he was a very patient man with me as I learned one technique after another from him. I found Lee to be a very good teacher.

When running into difficult situations during a fitting or coloring, I watched as Lee figured out how to work through the problems—always persistent,



**FIGURE 3** Lee Allen and his two daughters Betty (left) and Mary Lee on Fathers Day, 2005.

never giving up. Lee was an innovator.

A reputation Lee had of being a “banty rooster” came to the forefront when someone needed to be brought down a peg. Nevertheless, and more importantly, it was obvious that Lee cared—about his patients and all those with whom he worked.

He dearly wanted to pass along his skills, techniques, and processes because he saw the need and knew what could be done with proper training. Lee desired the very best for his students and took an interest in their success. Lee had a very good heart!

Indeed, my association with Lee Allen has added greatly to my direction in life, and it has provided a great and satisfying profession and a strong example of integrity. Lee was a great man and mentor. He will always be remembered.

*Elsie Joy, Ocularist, Tulsa, Oklahoma*

I was working as an ophthalmic assistant in the Eye Department at the University of Iowa when I met Lee in the early 1970s. He was a moody, outspoken man whom I would run into in the halls, and I came to enjoy him because he was such a real person and a witty character. I was totally in awe of all of the artwork I watched him do, but I had no idea of the scope of his talents and works because he never boasted about anything. I had to “discover” what he had done in later years.

Lee was an idealist and a perfectionist whose talents increased the quality of life for many people in many ways. I was one of those people. I was able to join the staff of Iowa Eye Prosthetics when Lee left the

university hospitals and set up a training program. After creating much of the paperwork to run the clinic and helping with decorating and setup, I was very bored with the secretarial work. I wanted to learn to make eyes and was thrilled to get in line to be an apprentice. Lee was a natural teacher and available for any discussion or explanation I wanted from him. Also, the friendly bantering back and forth between Dave (Bulgarelli) and Lee about procedures and methods in ophthalmology was invaluable. We all would line our patients up against the walls in certain areas of the clinic so that we looked at them in incandescent as well as fluorescent lighting. Then we all judged each other's eyes and made suggestions.

Lee became my friend. We had fun with words, and we would be delighted when we discovered a "new" one or made one up that should have been in the English language. We had a sort of kinship with each other. He often took my part and helped me when I needed it most. Even though he was infinitely more talented than I was, I never felt beneath him. At parties he would always come and get me for one slow dance. I believe Lee possessed an unusual combination of being equally brilliant in both artistic and scientific abilities. Add to that, honesty, integrity, forthrightness, a tireless work ethic, and above all, humility, and you have one very special human being, Lee Allen. I feel very blessed to have been his student and his friend.

*Steven Young, Ocularist, Oakland, California*

I first met Lee Allen at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics on an interim break from the college I was attending. My educational goal was that of becoming a medical doctor. I had visited nephrology, general surgery, and finally ophthalmology. I had an interest in ophthalmology as my father was a wearer of a scleral cover shell prosthesis as a result of a screwdriver accident. During my visit I helped with a poster campaign for the Lions Eye Foundation. The project seemed to draw an interest from those at the Eye Department, including Lee Allen, Ray Rarey, and Dr. Fred Blodi (Department Head). An opportunity to be trained as an ocularist became available to me. Little did I know this would allow me to be mentored by one of the finest individuals I would ever meet.

When in Lee's presence you could benefit in so

many directions. Lee had a profound understanding of all things mechanical and medical (whether it was practical, theoretical, or abstract). I remember one day we had a discussion on the direction water would take when it came out of a faucet. Was it controlled by volume (amount of water released when the handle opened the valve), the shape of the faucet, or the aerator screen at the head? At the completion of the discussion you had an understanding of hydraulics, volume displacement, compression forces of water, and gravity. Looking back, who cared what direction the flow of water took out of a faucet, but at the same time, knowledge was passed on in engineering and physics. This information could be used the rest of your life.

Lee had the ability to explain things on a level that all could understand. He was comfortable relating to those of knowledge and those less fortunate. While at Iowa I was blessed, as Lee was the one who primarily trained me. I would come in on weekends and assist Lee with his private patients. As a teacher, he was gracious. His standards were high, and he expected nothing less of his students. He felt pride as each student mastered each step in becoming a competent ocularist. Susan Day, M. D. (past president of the Academy of Ophthalmology), said it best, "Each student you feel pride in as if they were your own child. We are the fortunate ones who are gifted with the opportunity to shape, educate, and influence the student. This allows them to become all they want to be, not necessarily all they can become." Lee, I feel, was of the same mind.

Close to the end of my training, the iris color came out dark on one of my patients, and I let it go. This bothered me, and I asked Lee if I could bring the patient back and fix it. Lee said to me, "Now you are ready to go out on your own, your training is at a level we expect. Pride in your work, knowledge, ability, and care for the patient is the last step."

Michael Hughes (editor of the *Journal of Ophthalmic Prosthetics*) asked that I help write Lee's life history. I never knew what a great man he was, and I had no idea of all his many varied life's accomplishments. Lee was Lee. He would never brag, show off, self-inflate, or take credit for another's contributions. Lee is one of the finest men I ever had the privilege of knowing.

Thank you, Lee.

## IT SEEMED MOST FITTING THAT MY SISTER, BETSY AND I SHOULD HAVE THE LAST WORDS. AND SO WE WILL

*For Dad With Love And Admiration  
(Written by Mary Lee for Lee's 75th Birthday Celebration)*

I always hated it when people asked me what my father did for a living: There was no easy answer. "He makes artificial eyes" usually drew a revolted expression in response. "Don't you know? He's the father of the gonioprism and the Allen implant?" was no more successful. "He's a medical artist" always seemed too mundane. "My Dad is known in some parts of the world for the piece of glass he placed in front of the lens of a Zeiss camera" was far too obscure. I finally settled on telling most casual acquaintances merely that he was involved in medical research or worked in the Eye Department – in a vague sort of way. It was far too involved to explain the many facets of what he really did.

We always knew, Dad, that you were really special! You always let us share and take great pride in the important work you were doing. One of my earliest memories is the smell of oil paints when I must have been only a toddler and hovered around you as you worked on a medical art exhibit. I remember with great fondness meeting you at the hospital many evenings, talking as we walked home together. And it is only now, when I am grown and a working mother with my own family, that I realize what it meant for you, who worked 7 days a week, 50 nights a year, to get up from the dinner table almost every summer night for a game of croquet or badminton with your daughters. Those are treasured memories.

Not only were you talented, but also you always seemed to be able to do what the other fathers couldn't. There was the time when you stayed up half the night making taffy apples for me to take to school. Of course it took half the night because they had to be *PERFECT*. One of the proudest moments of my childhood was when you painted authentic designs on the circus wagons filled with stuffed animals that were pulled by first graders at the school fair. You fashioned numerous sets of wings for bees and angels for school plays and ballet recitals. Through it all you did everything the "right" way. If you taught us anything, it was that "Anything worth doing is worth

doing well."

You gave me words to live by. I remember once we were discussing the concept of immortality and you told me that you believed that the only immortality a man would have was in contributing to the world in significant ways so that his name lived after him. Another time, when I asked you what you would change about your life if you had it to live over you said, "Nothing, I've always done just what I wanted to do." I've never forgotten those conversations and they have influenced the choices I've made in my own life.

You have been a wonderful role model, one which I've tried to emulate. You taught me that it is important to try to use my talents fully and essential to approach my work in a way that allows me to look back on it later with pride. You helped us to grow and be independent. Your girls have idolized you no less than your patients and those you've taught. I'd like to think I'm like you in some ways. In fact, I know I am; I've been working on this party since April and I put off writing this piece until the very last moment!

*My Sister, Betsy, eulogized Dad at his Memorial Celebration on September 16, 2006*

My childhood memories are bits and pieces of our life in our home in Iowa City, one which Dad designed and had built just before I was born in 1955. As with many of the artists of his time, his creativity spilled over into his home. He designed the "built-in" bookcases and made the light fixtures and some of the furniture by hand. The dining room table that he built in the 1930s is still in perfect condition. It is tightly strung with the original hemp seats and backs, and is being used in my sister Mary Lee's cottage.

He was always the visionary, and during the Cold War era, Dad saw fit to build a bomb shelter in our backyard. There was no "plastic and duct tape" in Dad's survival plans! Our bomb shelter was not just a hole in the ground; Dad designed it with decontamination shower, air filtration system, intercoms and every modern device available at the time. While thankfully, it never had to be used for its designed purpose, we were pretty sure that we were one of the only families in Iowa City, much less in Iowa, with a bomb shelter in their backyard. Then again, we were the only family that had "artificial eyes" boiling on the stove during dinner, so nothing seemed too extreme

to us. Dad would bring his impression molds home and cook them on the stove in Mom's pressure cooker so he could work on the eyes at home after dinner. We couldn't wait to have dinner guests so one of us could yell out during the main course, "Dad, your eyes are boiling over!" much to the shock of our guests!

When I think of all the things my father accomplished in his life, it seems unbelievable that we still have great memories of his spending time with us at home. Every day in the warm weather Dad came home and worked in his carefully appointed flower and vegetable gardens. Each bush was neatly trimmed, and there was never a weed in sight. In the colder months I remember Sunday afternoons making popcorn balls, pulling homemade taffy, and then sitting down to endless competitions of Candy Land, Sorry, Clue, and other board games. We learned that winning and losing with grace were most important character traits, and cheating would never be tolerated under any circumstances. These are lessons we have carried into our adult lives. Dad's love of playing games continued with his grandchildren; every family gathering held an opportunity to play cards with Grandpa, learning the same lessons we learned from him years before. Even in his 90s, Dad would join in on a Trivial Pursuit team, and we would fight over who got him on their team because he would know all the history and art answers.

Dad was as talented at the sewing machine and in the kitchen as he was at his work. He sewed the best and most clever costumes for school plays and Halloween. Whatever the holiday, we had the most creatively carved pumpkins, the most beautiful Easter eggs, decorated with landscapes no less, and the most elegant angel wings. The Christmas tree was a sight to behold with carefully appointed lights, evenly spaced decorations, and please don't dare to place more than one piece of tinsel on the tree at a time! The holiday turkey was a gourmet feast prepared by Dad. His Key Lime and Chocolate Meringue pies are family legends! No one will ever make a better pie crust. And ever the inventor, he modified store-bought pie tins to improve the quality of his pie baking.

Bedtime stories in our house were read by cozy fires in the fireplace; not Dr. Seuss or the Care Bears, but complete novels from *The Wind in the Willows* to *Moby Dick*. He read them over and over to three gen-

erations of daughters born over the course of 18 years. You would think he would be exhausted after all this evening activity, but most nights, Dad still would sit down and work on some project he was doing, inventing some new instrument, carving a commemorative bust of someone, or doing illustrations for an upcoming AMA meeting.

Dad lived for summer vacation! Dr. Jack Whye from the Eye Department introduced our family to the north shore of Lake Superior. My first vacation memories are of catching tadpoles while watching Dad paint landscapes on the lake shore. Later, when Dad decided to show us the nation, he spent months carefully planning our trips with the help of AAA! We would cover 500 miles per day, taking in every historical sight on the way. Dad never lost the wanderlust, expanding his vacations to Europe, Asia, and many other areas of the world (often scheduled to coincide with international lectures he was invited to give). Needless to say, we have enough stereoscopic vacation slides to start our own travel lecture series.

Dad was a great storyteller, although you needed to have plenty of spare time to listen if you asked to hear one. The things he had seen and done in his life seemed to come right out of the pages of history. He was humble about his accomplishments. I did not even realize all he had done in his life until I was an adult. He was not interested in being a millionaire; he simply wanted to make the world a better and more beautiful place through his art and his work. In the end Dad taught us many powerful lessons about how to live life. He taught us never to give less than our best to any project, to always persevere no matter how bad things got, to be considerate of others before ourselves, to be humble and unassuming in our accomplishments, to be generous with our time and our lives, to always have a curious nature (questioning even what seemed to be set in stone), and that time spent with family is irreplaceable. With any luck the generations of great-grandchildren to come will be people who live up to his truly good name!

#### CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Mary Lee Hoganson  
1345 Evergreen Road  
Homewood, Illinois 60430-3410  
Email: MaryLeeRuss@aol.com