



## Truhlsen-Marmor Museum of the Eye

Renowned Ophthalmologists

### Moacyr E. Alvaro, MD (1899-1959)

Moacyr Eyck Alvaro Marquis da Silva da Cunha e Fernandes (1899-1959) was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He is the son of an ophthalmologist. He received his medical degree from the University of Rio de Janeiro in 1922. He trained in Europe before returning to Brazil where he established the ophthalmology department at Paulista School of Medicine. In the U.S., Alvaro was a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology (1939) and the American Ophthalmological Society (1953). In 1940 he founded the Pan American Association of Ophthalmology along with American ophthalmologists, Harry Gradle and Conrad Berens. He served in several capacities within the Pan American Association including President and Executive Director; he was also the long-time editor of the PAAO journal, "Ophthalmologia Ibero-Americana." PAAO named a lecture in his honor.



### Guillermo Picó Santiago, MD (1915-2005)

Guillermo Picó Santiago, MD (1915-2005) was born in Coamo, Puerto Rico. He received his medical degree at the University of Maryland and interned at the Presbyterian Hospital in Puerto Rico, working at the Pavia Clinic and the Health Department in Santurce. His ophthalmology training was at the University of Pennsylvania and then San Luca Hospital in New York. Between 1946 and 1948, Picó worked in the private corneal practice of Ramón Castroviejo. He then became the Director of Ophthalmic Service at the Municipal Hospital in San Juan. In 1952 he was named Professor and head of ophthalmology in the department of surgery. Dr. Picó received funds from the National Institutes of Health in 1964 to establish a basic ophthalmic course. The Guillermo Pico Santiago Basic Ophthalmology Course began in 1967. Today, the eight-week course for first- and second-year residents is co-sponsored by the Pan American Ophthalmology Association and the University of Puerto Rico.



### **Olga M. Ferrer, MD (1918-2007)**

Olga Maria Ferrer was born in Cuba. She is the daughter of an ophthalmologist. Olga did her undergraduate studies at Johns Hopkins University. She completed one year of medical school in the United States before returning to Cuba to finish her studies. Dr. Ferrer received her medical degree from the University of Havana in 1943. A year later she married an American, Alfred Sklar, PhD, and the couple spent the next 20 years splitting their time



between Cuba and the United States. Dr. Ferrer became a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology in 1958 and was offered the position of Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Miami in 1960. In 1961

Dr. Ferrer was granted refugee status from Cuba. After coming to the U.S., Dr. Ferrer's congressman began to petition the U.S. Senate to have her citizenship hearing expedited. Several fascinating letters were entered into the U.S. Congressional Record on her behalf, including one letter from ophthalmologist Edward Norton who wrote, "[The impact of Olga Ferrer leaving Cuba in 1960] was so profound, in view of her known patriotism and anti-Batista background, that Fidel Castro was impelled to dedicate one of his speeches to attacking her for leaving Cuba."

### **Jorge Buxton, MD (1921-1999)**

Jorge Buxton was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He earned his medical degree at the National University of Buenos Aires and interned at the Ramos Mejia Hospital. In 1947 Dr. Buxton came to the United States and took a second internship at St. Clair's Hospital. He then became a resident at the Newark Eye and Ear Infirmary / New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. In 1955 Dr. Buxton became an associate of Drs. Conrad Berens, Britain Payne and Ramón Castroviejo. In 1963 he was named the Surgeon-Director and Director of Corneal Service at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. Dr. Buxton taught ophthalmology at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and the New York Medical College. He was a director of eye banks in New York, New Jersey, Buenos Aires, and Tissue Banks International. In 1975 he helped to establish the Castroviejo Cornea Society to honor his mentor, Ramón Castroviejo. In 2004, the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary established the Jorge N. Buxton, MD Microsurgical Education Center in his memory.

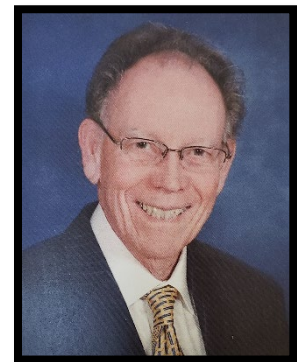
### **Luis E. Uribe, MD (1924-1999)**

Luis Enrique Uribe was born in Ibagüe, Colombia. He received his medical degree from the National University of Colombia, then furthered his studies in Paris, before moving to the United States and joining the practice of Ramón Castroviejo in New York. Dr. Uribe was an attending ophthalmologist at several institutions including St. Vincent's Hospital, New York Medical College, Manhattan Eye and Ear Infirmary, and Beth Israel Medical Center. In 1975 he helped to establish the Castroviejo Cornea Society to honor his mentor, Ramón Castroviejo. Later, Dr. Uribe funded a fellowship for young Colombian ophthalmologists to study in New York and received honor awards from both the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology and the government of Colombia.



### **Caleb Gonzalez, MD (1929-2021)**

Caleb Gonzalez was born in Puerto Rico. He graduated from Intramerican University in 1949 and in 1954 was part of the first graduating class at the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine. Dr. Gonzalez interned at Wayne County Hospital, Michigan in 1954 before joining the U.S. Navy where he served four years in active duty as a flight surgeon and an additional five years in the reserves. In 1952 Dr. Gonzalez was a resident at SUNY Downstate, followed by a fellowship at Bellevue - NYU. In 1964 he became Chair of the pediatric department at the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine. In 1976 Dr. Gonzalez went to Yale University where, at various times, he served as Chief of Ophthalmology at Yale New Haven Hospital and West Haven VA Hospital. He also served as Ophthalmology Resident Program Director. In 1981, he was the first Puerto Rican physician promoted to tenured Professor at the Yale School of Medicine and awarded an Honorary Master of Arts Degree from Yale University. He taught all over the world, including as a permanent faculty of the Guillermo Pico Santiago Basic Ophthalmology Course in Puerto Rico and the Andean ophthalmology course in Medellin, Colombia.



### **Frank M. Polack (1929-2007)**

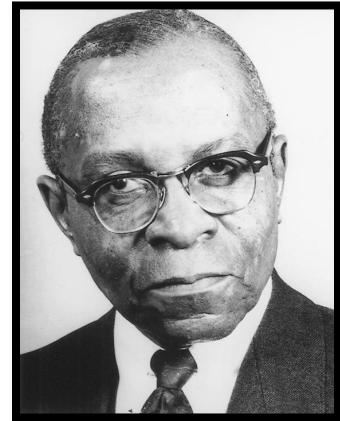
Frank Polack was born in Piura, Peru. He earned his bachelors and medical degrees at San Marcos University in Lima. In 1954 he began his post graduate studies at New York University, taking a residency at Grasslands Hospital. Under the influence of his mentor, Ramón Castroviejo, Polack took an NIH Fellowship in cornea at the Eye Institute of Columbia University in 1960. During that time he published his groundbreaking studies on electron microscopy of the eye. In 1967 he became an associate professor of ophthalmology at the University of Florida, Gainesville. He eventually was named the Chief of cornea and external diseases there. Dr. Polack is known for the design of special forceps for corneal transplants. During his career, Polack helped to establish two societies - the Castroviejo Cornea Society, which he served as the first Executive Secretary-Treasurer, and the American Ophthalmic Microsurgery Study Club. In 1978 he also founded the journal *Cornea*, serving as its Editor-in-Chief until 1991. In 1980 he left the University of Florida to establish a private practice which he continued until 2001. In 2005 he was awarded the World Congress Medal from the World Corneal Congress.

### **David K. McDonogh, MD (1821-1893)**

David Kearney McDonogh was born a slave on a plantation in New Orleans, LA. His owner, John McDonogh, offered his slaves the opportunity to earn their freedom with two stipulations. First, they had to agree to work an extra day a week for a period of 10 to 15 years. Second, once free, they had to agree to emigrate to Liberia, Africa. McDonogh recognized that life in Liberia might be hard, so for a chosen few he offered an additional opportunity - an education. In 1838 David, then 19 years old, was selected to attend Lafayette College in Pennsylvania. Once there, he was forced to take classes and meals separately from other students, but after two years David successfully lobbied John McDonogh to extend his studies as an apprentice to a local physician. After graduation from college, David asked to be sent to medical school, but John McDonogh pulled his sponsorship leaving David to fend for himself. New York ophthalmologist, John Kearney Rodgers championed David's cause and mentored him through his medical studies at the College of Physicians and Surgeons (today's Columbia University Medical School). He also ensured Dr. McDonogh was hired at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary - which Rodgers had co-founded. Eventually Dr. McDonogh opened a private practice in Manhattan and was active in the abolitionist movement. He was the first African American ophthalmologist in the United States and is the only known slave to have gained a professional medical education.

### **W. Yerby Jones, MD (1904-1976)**

W. Yerby Jones was born in Memphis, TN. He moved to Buffalo, NY as a teenager with his family. Dr. Jones was the third African American doctor to graduate from the University at Buffalo School of Medicine in 1924. He completed his graduate work at Cleveland Clinic and Columbia University, and he interned in St. Louis. In 1934, Dr. Jones went back to Buffalo to practice ophthalmology. He became an instructor at the University at Buffalo Medical School in 1946. In 1951 Dr. Jones was named Associate Clinical Professor. Dr. Jones is the first known Black member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, joining in 1943. He was also one of the first African Americans to be admitted to membership in the American College of Surgeons. For more than 30 years, Dr. Jones was Chief of Ophthalmology at the E.J. Meyer Memorial Hospital (formerly the Buffalo City Hospital). He was President of the medical staff, 1964-1972, and retired in 1971. The Erie County Medical Center library was dedicated to his memory in 1979.



### **Chester W. Chinn, MD**

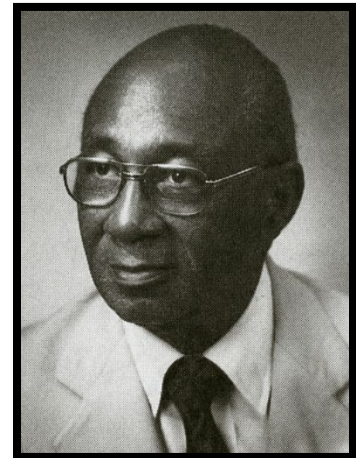
Chester W. Chinn graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1925. He was the first African American to be certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology in 1933. He was also certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology in 1937. Dr. Chinn practiced medicine in Harlem, New York. He was the first chair of the EENT section of the National Medical Association in 1939. In 1946 he became a fellow of both the AAOO and the American College of Surgeons, he is the second known Black member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. In 1946, Dr. Chinn performed a comprehensive eye exam of Sgt. Isaac Woodard, an African American WWII soldier severely beaten as he returned home from duty. Woodard's story, and Dr. Chinn's part (albeit limited), was detailed in the book, "Unexampled Courage: The Blinding of Sgt. Isaac Woodard and the Awakening of President Harry S. Truman and Judge J. Waties Waring" by Richard Gergel (2019).

### **Charles V. Roman, MD (1864-1934)**

Charles Victor Roman was born in Williamsport, PA. His family moved to Ontario, Canada when he was a child. Charles started working at the age of 12. When he was 17 a workplace injury resulted in the amputation of his right leg, after which Charles enrolled in school where he quickly excelled. In 1883 Charles moved to the United States and worked as a teacher. He then enrolled at Meharry Medical College and earned his medical degree in 1890. Dr. Roman opened a private practice, moving with his wife to Dallas, TX. In 1899 and 1904 Dr. Roman took special courses in EENT and then returned to Meharry Medical College, founding the department of ophthalmology and otolaryngology. By 1913 Dr. Roman had taken on the additional role of Director of Health at Fisk University where he was simultaneously a student, earning his master's in history and philosophy. Dr. Roman was a published author and editor of the Journal of the National Medical Association (1909 – 1915). The Roman Barnes Society of Ophthalmology was named in his honor.

### **Howard P. Venable, MD (1913-1998)**

Howard Phillip Venable was born in Ontario, Canada. His family moved to Detroit, MI when he was a child. In 1939 he graduated from Wayne State University Medical School and completed his residency in ophthalmology at the Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis, MO. Dr. Venable became certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology in 1944 and a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology in 1953. Dr. Venable was chair of three departments of ophthalmology including the Homer G. Phillips Hospital, St. Mary's Infirmary, and People's Hospital of Saint Louis. In 1958,



when he joined the faculty of Washington University, St. Louis, MO, where he was the first African American on staff. In 1984 Dr. Venable established the Venable Student Research Fund in Ophthalmology to support resident research projects and encourage Black students to become ophthalmologists. Dr. Venable was a founder of the Roman Barnes Society of Ophthalmology, established in 1968. In 2000, the National Medical Association – Ophthalmology Section established the Rabb-Venable Excellence in Ophthalmology Award for Outstanding Research in his honor.



### **Maurice Rabb, Jr., MD (1932-2005)**

Maurice Rabb Jr. was born in Kentucky. He is the son of a physician and civil rights activist. Rabb was one of the first African Americans to graduate from the University of Louisville, obtaining both his bachelor's degree and medical degree there. After graduation in 1958, Dr. Rabb trained at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn. He then studied ophthalmology at New York University before obtaining a residency at the Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary where he was the first Black chief resident. He then set up a private ophthalmology practice in Chicago. In his notable career, he served as director of the Illinois Eye Bank and Research Laboratory of the University of Illinois Medical School, director of the Fluorescein Angiography Laboratory at the Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago, and as co-director of the Sickle Cell Center at the University of Illinois Medical Center. He was a professor of ophthalmology at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at Mercy Hospital, president of the Mercy Hospital Medical Staff, and medical director of Prevent Blindness America. In 2000, the National Medical Association – Ophthalmology Section established the Rabb-Venable Excellence in Ophthalmology Award for Outstanding Research in his honor.



### **Patricia E. Bath, MD (1942-2019)**

Dr. Bath was a specialist in cornea and cataract surgery. She earned her medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine in 1968. She then established a practice that combined aspects of public health, community medicine, and clinical ophthalmology to offer primary and specialty care to underserved populations. In the 1970s Dr. Bath moved from New York to Los Angeles, during which time she co-founded the American Institute for the Prevention of Blindness. In 1983, she became the first woman chair of an ophthalmology residency program in the United States at UCLA. Near the end of her career, Dr. Bath was a major champion of telemedicine and was inducted into the International Women in Medicine Hall of Fame and in 2022 will be inducted posthumously into the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

