

# InSight



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## Dr. Lessieur Joins Doheny as a Principal Investigator

### Continues Research on Diabetic Retinopathy



Emma Lessieur, MD, PhD

**Emma Lessieur, MD, PhD**, has been named a Principal Investigator at Doheny Eye Institute, where she will continue her critical research on diabetic retinopathy. She will also join the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology Faculty as an Assistant Professor-in-Residence.

“Dr. Lessieur is pursuing compelling research that will complement Doheny Eye Institute’s work on diabetic retinopathy,” said Deborah Ferrington, PhD, Chief Scientific Officer of the Institute. “We

look forward to Dr. Lessieur strengthening Doheny’s efforts to understand and respond to this disease.”

Dr. Lessieur earned her medical degree from the Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas in Mexico and completed her PhD in molecular medicine at Case Western Reserve University. Her research spans the exploration of retinal genetics and photoreceptor function in zebrafish models. Most recently, she completed postdoctoral training in the laboratory of Dr. Timothy Kern, a world-renowned expert in diabetic retinopathy at the UCI Center for Translational Vision Research.

“We believe that by conducting progressive research and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration at Doheny Eye Institute, we will advance our understanding of the cellular and molecular mechanism(s) that lead to the early stages of diabetic retinopathy. Our work aspires to translate scientific discoveries into tangible unconventional therapies to prevent the development of the disease. It is our hope that our scientific findings will ultimately reduce the global burden of visual impairment and blindness due to diabetic retinopathy,” said Dr. Lessieur.

Dr. Lessieur’s work is supported by a prestigious K99/R00 MOSAIC Career Transition Award from the National Eye Institute.

## Thank You!

The supporters and donors of Doheny Eye Institute are key to our success.

Each and every individual who contributes to our mission is part of a larger team supporting our world-class principal investigators, clinicians, research scientists, clinical and research fellows, interns, and administrators.

Each and every act of generosity contributes to and sustains our long history of innovation and success in the conservation, improvement, and restoration of human eyesight.

For this reason, we dedicate every fall issue of *InSight* to those who have donated gifts to our endeavor during the prior fiscal year. Inside, beginning on page 17, we gratefully honor the generous individuals of this unique team who have made commitments to support vision science, research, and health.

To all of our contributors we say, “Thank you!”

(more about Dr. Lessieur on page 4)

# Doheny's Vision Research Matters

*Vision-changing scientific breakthroughs by Doheny Eye Institute's researchers, past and present, have transformed the lives of thousands of patients. As a result of its ambitious research program, Doheny Eye Institute holds scores of patents for its eye care and vision research innovations. The following is merely an abbreviated list of Doheny's accomplishments in the areas of imaging and image analysis, discovering the cause of diseases, and developing treatments for diseases:*

## **Imaging and Image Analysis**

**Developed** a new computer algorithm powered by artificial intelligence to analyze retinal images for the diagnosis and management of macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy

**First used** a commercial prototype of an adaptive optics scanning laser ophthalmoscope to image individual photoreceptors, the light sensing cells in the retina

**Discovered** that changes to the optic nerve mirror the changes to the brain that occur in Alzheimer's disease

**Engineered and built** a state-of-the-art ophthalmic imager that can track the movement of red blood cells in retinal vessels

## **Discovering the Cause of Diseases**

**Identified** the retinoblastoma gene responsible for the leading cause of ocular cancer in children

**Proved** that toxic, nutritional, and metabolic optic nerve disease is related to injuries to the mitochondria of nerve cells

**Characterized** the largest pedigree of patients with Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy

## **Developing Treatments for Diseases**

**Implanted the first** successful retinal prosthesis in humans

**Developed** a widely used aqueous tube shunt for glaucoma patients

**Designed and implanted the first** intraocular radiation delivery device to be used in a human

**Developed an innovative** head-mounted display (HMD) device specifically designed for visual field testing

**Became the first** West Coast provider of the scleral treatment device PROSE (Prosthetic Replacement of the Ocular Surface Ecosystem)



**DOHENY**  
**EYE INSTITUTE**

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**“... I wish to recognize all who have supported the work of Doheny Eye Institute by expressing my deepest appreciation and thanks.”**

**— Marissa Goldberg, CEO**

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**DEAR FRIENDS**

**Even in California**, the change of seasons becomes clear by late October. Usually, an early morning chill makes us grab for an extra layer. By noontime, the sun warms; by late afternoon, coolness returns. Autumn has arrived. With these subtle changes, our anticipation of the holidays grows. On Thanksgiving Day, families and friends gather to celebrate and appreciate the gifts each of us enjoys. It is in this spirit that each Fall issue of *InSight* names our many generous donors.

Doheny Eye Institute was born of generosity. Carrie Estelle Doheny began the work we do today by confronting her sudden blindness. Instead of retreating, she responded with the great generosity that established our mission “to further the conservation, improvement, and restoration of human eyesight.” Her remarkable impact on both vision research and treatment is evident through our long list of breakthroughs and accomplishments, as well as the work of our alumni, who have led cutting-edge research worldwide. As a direct result, the sight of countless people across the globe has been preserved or restored.

This Fall issue of *InSight* confirms that our vital mission continues to thrive and move forward through new generations of researchers and accomplishments for which we are grateful. We recently welcomed our newest Principal Investigator, Emma Lessieur, MD, PhD, who will strengthen our research in diabetic retinopathy. In June, we celebrated the opening of the Doheny Eye Center UCLA, Pasadena clinic on the Doheny campus, which brings our researchers and clinicians together under one roof. Exploring international collaboration, Dr. Srinivas Satta hosted the Doheny Eye Institute Roche Preceptorship Meeting, gathering our researchers and a visiting group of leading Chinese ophthalmologists. And our Distinguished Lecture Series has reached full stride, facilitating in-depth research discussions and enlivening the intellectual environment on our campus.

The gift of sight is unique and often becomes more appreciated when, in the face of possible loss, it is spared or restored. From the stories some of you have shared with me, have expressed to our staff, or conveyed in the comments accompanying your donations, I know that each of you has responded with acts of gratitude that echo Mrs. Doheny’s generous spirit. As the change of seasons signals the approaching holidays, I wish to recognize all who have supported the work of Doheny Eye Institute by expressing my deepest appreciation and thanks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Goldberg'.

**Marissa Goldberg**  
Chief Executive Officer



Emma Lessieur with her late father, Juan Mario Lessieur Velasco, 2002

## In Her Father's Footsteps

### How Dr. Lessieur Found Her Career Path

**With a twinkle in her eye**, Emma Lessieur, MD, PhD said, “I was the world’s youngest ophthalmic assistant,” as she described childhood house calls with her father.

Growing up in El Mante, Tamaulipas, on Mexico’s east coast, Doheny’s newest Principal Investigator enjoyed going on visits to remote rural areas to see patients with her father, Dr. Juan Mario Lessieur Velasco, an ophthalmologist. Living in one of the largest sugar growing regions in the hemisphere, most of his patients worked raising, harvesting, or processing cane sugar. Due to extensive exposure to sugar, many of these patients’ declining vision revealed long-undiagnosed diabetic retinopathy.

Following in her father’s footsteps, Dr. Lessieur earned her medical degree from the Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas in 2002. Her father’s unexpected passing a year later created a need to help support her family. So, she took a position as a clinical research fellow at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. There she found herself working with retinal specialists in the study of diabetic retinopathy. Ambitious and hard working, Dr. Lessieur also simultaneously learned English and validated her Mexican medical degree. Within a few years she found herself completing her PhD in Molecular Medicine at Case Western Reserve University, and her research career began in earnest.

Dr. Lessieur strongly values family. In it she finds a well-spring of inspiration, pride, and strength. And her father’s memory has continued to inspire her journey. Her recent decision to continue her diabetic retinopathy research at Doheny, while being competitively sought by several institutions, is an accomplishment which would bring a twinkle to any father’s eye.

## Quick Takes Q&A

### Dr. Lessieur Shares Some Fun Insights

#### **When and how did you first realize that you really liked science?**

The first time I saw a centrifuge in person opened my eyes — it was very simple — seeing how the G-forces of the centrifuge could separate blood into its different components fascinated me.

#### **Favorite color and why?**

Orange. It’s fun.

#### **Describe an activity you enjoy with your family.**

Doing puzzles! We spend weeks working together to complete one. Each one of us has a role: I form the frame, my oldest kid sorts pieces by shape, my middle one sorts by color, my little one helps the other two, and my husband is in charge of the difficult pieces.

#### **Favorite pets?**

Dogs — growing up in Mexico I was around several dogs all the time, but here in the USA I can only handle one! We recently adopted a young puppy that was born in Tecaté, Mexico. His American name was Muffin, but we renamed him *Churro* after the Mexican pastry.

#### **Life lessons learned?**

Throughout life, family is the most important thing — it drives us and is the strongest resource that we have.

#### **Coffee or tea?**

100% coffee!

#### **Is cooking chemistry? What’s your favorite meal?**

Oh, yes! Cooking is full of chemistry *and* fun — *Chiles en Nogada* (a traditional Mexican dish).

#### **California has everything — what do you prefer?**

The city! I love mother nature, but I can spend the whole day walking around cities, admiring the older buildings, taking photos of old advertisements, or spending the entire day in a museum!

#### **Favorite musical artist or band?**

The Beach Boys, definitely.

#### **Your all-time favorite movie?**

*Pretty Woman*, the modern Cinderella story. I love at the end when she says, “I’m going back to school!”

#### **The best time of day?**

Arriving home and seeing my family after being gone all day.

#### **Hobby or diversion?**

Science is my hobby!

#### **Mini vacation?**

Going to Tijuana! We all enjoy it a lot, so we go frequently.

#### **When or where are you happiest?**

I am the happiest whenever or wherever I am with my whole family.

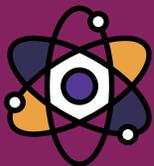
## OUR EMERGING SCIENTISTS

## What is an Emerging Scientist?

An "emerging scientist" describes a scientific researcher early in their career. The precise definition may vary depending on context, but it often refers to those who have recently completed graduate studies, are in a postdoctoral program, or are in an early tenure-track position at an academic institution. It may also refer to advanced undergraduate students participating as interns in specialized research programs. Generally, the term can be used to describe a working scientist within 10 years of the completion of their PhD.

Doheny Eye Institute is deeply committed to supporting the emerging scientists on our team because they represent the future of vision science. It is a way for our current research and clinical trailblazers to "pay forward" the invaluable assistance and guidance they received early in their own careers. Every emerging scientist stands on the shoulders of successful scientists that went before them.

Doheny's emerging scientists are the future and hope of vision research.



## Dr. Yuhua Zhang Welcomes Matt Ellis to Research Team



L-R: Yuhua Zhang, PhD, and Matt Ellis

**Matthew "Matt" Ellis** has joined the Zhang Lab headed by Principal Investigator Yuhua Zhang, PhD. Ellis' resume includes advanced studies in neuroscience at the University of Southern California between 2014 and 2016, and he holds a master's and bachelor's degree in bioengineering and applied physics, respectively. He brings a technical background in retinal neurobiology, image analysis, software engineering, large medical dataset analysis, and medical machine learning.

The focus of Dr. Zhang's work has been to engineer and build a state-of-the-art ophthalmic imager with a resolution so sharp that it can reveal the smallest light sensitive cells and track the movement of red blood cells inside retinal vessels. While the impact of this technology is nascent, it has already catalyzed the field of oculomics, which holds the potential to accelerate a whole range of non-invasive systemic health diagnoses. Ellis will focus on assisting Dr. Zhang in moving this imaging capability from the lab to the clinic and, ultimately, to the broader marketplace.

"I see Matt as a potential technology translator," Dr. Zhang said, "and I appreciate the high level of motivation he brings to achieving our goals."

## Caltech Summer Intern—Ferrington Lab



L-R: Bella Kedikian and Deborah Ferrington, PhD

**Over the summer, Isabella "Bella" Kedikian**, a Caltech undergrad majoring in biochemistry, interned in the lab of Dr. Deborah Ferrington, Doheny's Chief Scientific Officer. A member of Caltech's Student Undergraduate Research Faculty program (SURF), this was her second year in the program, but her first year working at Doheny. Chemistry was Bella's original major, however two biology classes taken last year made such an impression that she changed her concentration to biochemistry. Now planning to attend medical school she applied for the Doheny internship, as soon as it posted on the SURF website, to gain experience in medical research.

Bella assisted in Dr. Ferrington's investigation of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), and the role oxidative stressors and inflammation in retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) play in its progression. During her internship she cultured cells, then treated them with AMD stressors before collecting samples for testing and evaluation. Dr. Ferrington, a long-time supporter of undergraduate interns said, "Not only was Bella a meticulous worker, but every day she brought curiosity, energy, and enthusiasm to the lab."



L-R: Fellows Danielle Gauthier, Maryam Golmohammadi, MD, with Alfredo Sadun, MD, PhD

## Paying it Forward: A Conversation on Research Fellowships

For decades Doheny Research Fellows have carried our mission to *further the conservation, improvement, and restoration of human eyesight* around the globe. Each year, a select group of emerging scientists is selected to work beside our Principal Investigators to refine their skills, build a foundation for their life's work, and spread the advancement of vision science.

### Describe a research fellow's responsibilities.

**Danielle Gauthier (D.G.):** Typically, a research fellow comes up with testable hypotheses for an observed condition. Each fellow works on multiple projects in the lab and will also have a specific research project that they are personally working on. Monday through Friday, we go into the lab to do experiments. We're like a histopathology lab, so that involves getting postmortem tissue and staining it. From there, we observe the results. Currently, we have a couple projects in the works.

**Maryam Golmohammadi (M.G.):** Our routine consists of two parts. We have responsibilities in the lab and in the clinic. Every Tuesday, we attend the clinics with the doctors and clinical fellows. As a research fellow, first we build relationships with the patients, get their medical

history, and then we share this with Dr. Sadun. From a lab aspect, we learn how to use the information for basic science research.

**Dr. Alfredo Sadun (A.S.):** To expand on their remarks, basically research fellows are scientists and therefore use the scientific method: This means step one—*observe*—both with the patients and in the lab. Step two—*try to understand an observation through a hypothesis*. But the key isn't just saying, "I bet what I am observing is because of this or that," but to formulate a hypothesis in such tight terms that we can test it. The third step—*to create an experiment which accurately tests the hypothesis*. And the fourth step—*to record the data in a statistically coherent way that results in a supportable conclusion*. Often, the conclusion may be that we didn't do that right; let's do a better test.

**In such a case, the hypothesis wasn't specific enough or the test methodology was inexact?**

**A.S.:** Exactly right.

**So several factors have to be balanced?**

**A.S.:** Yes, and be juggled until they fit just right. I think that is the biggest mistake that exists in most scientific endeavors. Some scientists chase down a poorly conceived hypothesis, or they do a poorly thought-out experiment that doesn't quite answer a hypothesis, but then claim that it does. Learning how to develop and properly test a well-conceived hypothesis is the critical lesson for every fellow to learn.

**So a research fellow both sees patients and performs scientific investigations?**

**A.S.:** Yes, a research fellow is responsible for two things; the first is in the lab, where they are cutting sections, staining slides, accumulating data, writing papers. The second is to gather clinical data. Many years ago, however, I found that if I throw in a third responsibility, it makes a fellowship better—that is what I call developing clinical hypothesis testing—to directly experience the patients. If they know how the information was actually collected, it'll give them a much better understanding of how to look at the data.

**How does clinical hypothesis testing impact your fellowship?**

**D.G.:** A common question we get asked is "What's the current research?" or "Are there any clinical trials being done?" With our lab being at the forefront of Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy (LHON) research, we must have the most up-to-date answers and speak to patients in layman's

OUR EMERGING SCIENTISTS



Maryam Golmohammadi, MD

terms about what’s going on with research... so, the clinical experience helps us communicate our research to patients in a very understandable way.

**A.S.:** Also, imagine that we have to tell a patient there’s nothing to offer, which happens way too often, and how much more this motivates our research fellows to go back to the lab and try harder, so that next



Danielle Gauthier

year there will be a better answer. Another point: My job is not only to give them knowledge and training in the scientific method, but also to share a culture and a philosophy of how to do things that will be useful for them for the rest of their lives. That’s my extra job. Their extra job is that they help me with service—they spend extra time with the patients when I’m rushed, they help me find references on papers, they create drafts of chapters and manuscripts, and that takes a lot of burden off of my shoulders. Fellowships work both ways.

**Does balancing scientific research with medical care strengthen your fellowship experience?**

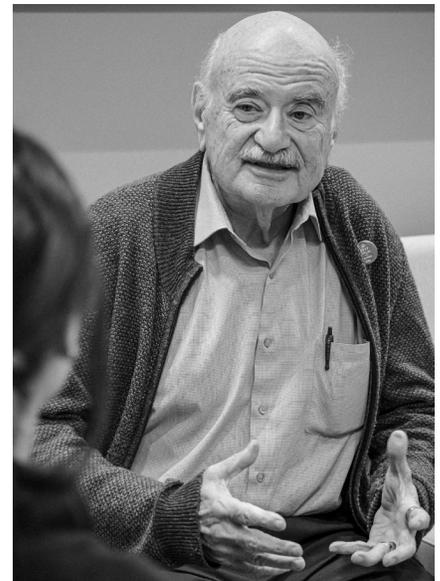
**D.G.:** Whether it’s in the clinic or in the lab, one aspect or the other will take a little bit more time. But for me, being able to go to clinic and at the same time do lab research has helped my understanding of LHON. For example, when learning the percentages of patients who will experience a certain symptom and then combining it with observations gained from actual patients in the clinic—that increases my understanding when I look at a slide under the microscope. So, whenever we’re told patients with this disease experience a certain symptom, I always want to know, “*Why is that?*” and “*What does it mean?*” For me, the experience in the clinic brings understanding to the lab.

**M.G.:** Yes it does—I came here because I wanted to work under the supervision of Dr. Sadun, who is the father of LHON research, and to become the best clinician scientist in the future. It’s important for me to develop a strong background in basic science *and* to be skilled at patient care—learning this is why I came to Doheny.

**How do you value the role of being a Doheny Fellow as you move ahead in your career?**

**D.G.:** By being at Doheny, I’ve gotten to meet a lot of past fellows and they all have been willing to take time to mentor us—it has been very helpful. In the future, I would love to do the same for younger fellows.

**M.G.:** Well, LHON is such a rare disease that a lot of doctors do not know about it. As a Doheny fellow, I have been able to introduce this disease to other doctors and teach what I have learned from Dr. Sadun.



Alfredo Sadun, MD, PhD

It’s kind of exciting to introduce new knowledge to other doctors.

**A.S.:** And this is just the beginning—when they graduate from the fellowship, they will be part of the bigger family of Doheny fellows. Ten years from now, I’ll be introducing even younger fellows to Danielle and Maryam, and they will be shepherding them in their careers. You can hear it in their voices—it’s a cliché, but it’s a very true cliché—as a fellow, their job is not to pay it back, it’s to pay it forward, and they understand that already.

# Pre-ARVO AWARDS

Every year before the annual meeting of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), Doheny Principal Investigators take time to review the posters or presentations of our emerging scientists in an effort to mentor and assist them before they appear at the conference.

This year Deborah Ferrington, PhD, Deming Sun, MD, Jewel Hu, PhD, and Giulia Corradetti, MD, reviewed the posters of eligible trainees, fellows, and other lab personnel and awarded the following researchers. In addition to a certificate of recognition, each winner also received a \$500 ARVO Travel Award provided by the Doheny Professional Alumni Association.

**Mahesh Agarwal, PhD**— Postdoctoral Fellow, Ghosh Lab: “Lysyl oxidase-dependent bone marrow stiffening promotes neutrophil activation and cytotoxicity towards retinal endothelial cells in diabetes”

**Yu-Chien Chung, MD**— Research Fellow, DIRRL: “OCT (Optical Coherence Tomography) Risk Factors for Progression to Late-Stage Age-Related Macular Degeneration in the Amish Eye Study”

**Hyunduck Kwak, MD**— Research Fellow, DIRRL: “Comparison of Multilayer Segmentation Thickness Results Between Two OCT Devices Using a Common Automated Algorithm”

**Ceren SoyLu, MD**— Research Fellow, DIRRL (Doheny Image Reading and Research Lab): “Real-World Analysis of Anatomical and Functional Outcomes in Eyes with Neovascular Age-Related Macular Degeneration Switched from Brolicizumab to Faricimab: A TRUCKEE Study Analysis”

## ASSOCIATION FOR VISION RESEARCH AND OPHTHALMOLOGY (ARVO)



Yuhua Zhang, PhD, and Giulia Corradetti, MD

## Dr. Zhang and Dr. Corradetti Host Doheny-UCLA ARVO Breakfast Forum

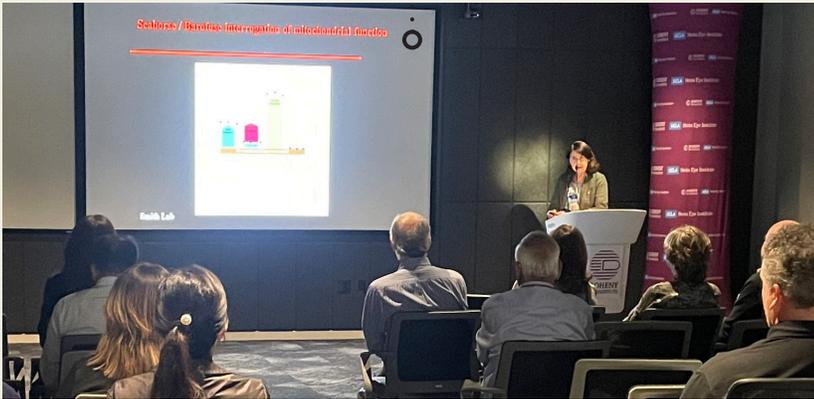
### Oculomics: Accelerating Discovery of Systemic Disease Mechanisms

At this year’s annual meeting of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), held in Salt Lake City this past May, the Doheny-UCLA Breakfast Forum engaged attendees with a presentation on the emerging science of oculomics. Hosted by Doheny’s world-renowned Principal Investigator in the field, Yuhua Zhang, PhD, with a discussion moderated by Doheny Scientist and Clinician Giulia Corradetti, MD, the Forum attracted nearly 80 ophthalmologists seeking information on the latest developments in this important field. Oculomics is a rapidly emerging area of study that uses eye images and data to detect and diagnose systemic diseases non-invasively.

At Dr. Zhang’s invitation, three of the top researchers in the field—Amani A. Fawzi, MD, the Cyrus Tang and Lee Jampol Professor of Ophthalmology at Northwestern University; Yali Jia, PhD, the Jennie P. Weeks Professor of Ophthalmology and Professor of Biomedical Engineering at the School of Medicine, Oregon Health and Science University; and Jianhua Wang, MD, PhD, Professor of Ophthalmology and Scientific Co-Director of the Experimental Imaging Laboratory at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami—presented their latest findings, based on boosting the pace of the observable systemic disease mechanisms revealed in the retina through the latest advancements in imaging technology.

Dr. Zhang pointed out that since the retina is an observable extension of the brain that contains an extensive vascular structure, increasing breakthroughs in imaging technology and artificial intelligence (AI) tools increase the possibility of making more precise, systemic health diagnoses through this high-resolution imaging technology.

## DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES (DLS)



Distinguished Lecturer, Lois Smith, MD, PhD

## Distinguished Lecture Series: A Unique Intellectual Opportunity

### Brings Ophthalmic Leaders to Doheny's Campus

“The importance of the Distinguished Lecture Series (DLS) at Doheny Eye Institute can't be emphasized enough,” says Kaustabh Ghosh, PhD, who served as its inaugural Program Chair from 2022 to 2025. Modeled on similar programs at major universities, DLS brings four to six world-renowned experts in ophthalmology and vision science to the Doheny Eye Institute campus each year for day-long visits. The centerpiece of the visit is a presentation by the Distinguished Lecturer that is open to all Doheny scientists, clinicians, trainees, and staff. Throughout the day, the Lecturer meets and exchanges research and clinical ideas with Doheny's Principal Investigators. Trainees and emerging scientists are also given the opportunity for discussion and mentorship with the Lecturer at a private luncheon following the presentation. Each visit also provides a unique opportunity to showcase Doheny's new campus and introduce its expanded research capabilities to these visiting experts.

“My hope in initiating the Distinguished Lecture Series,” said Marissa Goldberg, Doheny CEO, “was to enhance the intellectual environment of our institute, create potential collaborative opportunities for our researchers and clinicians, encourage broader learning, and to knit the Doheny and Stein Eye Institute teams together.” To develop DLS, Ms. Goldberg sought input from both the Doheny and Stein teams. She appointed Dr. Ghosh to be the initial chair of the program committee that is tasked with selecting the guest lecturers based on nominations solicited from the Doheny faculty. Currently, Deborah Ferrington, PhD, Chief Scientific Officer at Doheny, serves as Program Chair of the committee composed of faculty from both Doheny (Steven Barnes, PhD and Yuhua Zhang, PhD) and Stein Eye Institutes (Roxana Radu, MD). Yolanda Mercado serves as the administrative coordinator.

Five Distinguished Lecturers have been invited for the 2025–2026 series: Mabelle Pardue, PhD, Acting Professor of Ophthalmology, Emory University; Connie Cepko, PhD, Professor of Genetics and Neuroscience, Harvard Medical School; David Gamm, MD, PhD, Director, McPherson Eye Research Institute, University of Wisconsin—Madison; Aaron Lee, MD, MSCI, Head of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, Washington University in St. Louis; and Vladimir Kefalov, PhD, Professor of Ophthalmology, University of California, Irvine.

## Previous Distinguished Lecturers

### 2022–2023

#### David Huang, MD, PhD

Professor of Ophthalmology  
and Biomedical Engineering  
Oregon Health & Science University  
School of Medicine

#### Maria Grant, MD, FARVO

Professor of Ophthalmology  
University of Alabama, Birmingham

#### Michael Fautsch, PhD

Professor of Ophthalmology  
Mayo Clinic

#### Maya Koronyo-Hamaoui, PhD

Professor of Neurosurgery  
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

### 2023 – 2024

#### Valerio Carelli, MD, PhD

Chief of the Laboratory of Neurogenetics  
University of Bologna School of Medicine

#### Maureen Neitz, PhD

Professor of Ophthalmology  
University of Washington

#### Lois Smith, MD, PhD

Professor of Ophthalmology  
Harvard Medical School

#### Christine Curcio, PhD

Professor of Ophthalmology  
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

### 2024 – 2025

#### David Williams, PhD

Professor of Medical Optics  
University of Rochester

#### Rajendra Apte, MD, PhD

Professor of Ophthalmology  
and Visual Sciences  
Washington University in St. Louis

#### Robert Mullins, MS, PhD

Professor of Ophthalmology and  
Visual Sciences  
University of Iowa

#### Julia Busik, PhD, FARVO

Professor of Ophthalmology and  
Visual Sciences  
University of Oklahoma



Participants in the Doheny Eye Institute Roche Preceptorship Meeting

## Doheny Hosts Vision Scientists from China

### Exploring International Collaboration

On July 29, 2025, Doheny hosted the Doheny Eye Institute Roche Preceptorship Meeting. The gathering was intended to foster collaboration and strengthen the professional relationships between Doheny and the institutions represented by a delegation of Chinese ophthalmologists visiting the Los Angeles area to attend the 43rd Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Society of Retina Specialists, held in Long Beach. The delegation, led by Dr. Bojun Zhao of the Shandong Provincial Hospital, also engaged in scientific discussions, exchanged insights on clinical practices, and explored opportunities for future collaboration.

During the bilingual meeting, presentations were made in both English and Mandarin. Twenty-one doctors and researchers participated in the exchange. The Doheny delegation, led by Srinivas Satta, MD, also included Deming Sun, MD; Yuhua Zhang, PhD; Deborah Ferrington, PhD; Peng Shang, PhD; Jewel Hu, PhD; Cherie Chung, PhD; and Giulia Corradetti, MD. Doheny participants presented detailed current areas of scientific investigation or emerging medical techniques during the afternoon session, held in the Institute's board room.

In summing up the meeting, Dr. Satta said, "It was a great meeting to be able to introduce the visiting scientists to the capabilities and progress being made at Doheny. There were excellent discussions and engagement. Collaborations can arise only when each side knows what the other is working on, and thereby is capable of contributing to future research projects. During the discussions, we were able to formulate ideas for potential impactful collaborative activities."



Bojun Zhao, PhD, MD, and Srinivas Satta, MD



Srinivas Satta, MD, welcomes participants



Jian Ma, PhD, MD, makes presentation



Yuhua Zhang, PhD, engaged in discussion



Symposium Speakers

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME)

## CME – 7th Annual Doheny-UCLA Glaucoma Symposium

On September 27, 2025, the 7th Annual Doheny-UCLA Glaucoma Symposium was held in the conference center at Doheny Eye Institute. Led by Course Co-Directors Vikas Chopra, MD, and Brian Francis MD, MS, 11 speakers addressed the gathering of close to 100 ophthalmologists, related specialists, and medical students, covering the latest scientific observations, surgical techniques, and other therapeutics for glaucoma diagnosis and treatment. Headlining the event was the Donald Minckler Doheny Glaucoma Lecturer Philip Chen, MD, Professor and Grace E. Hill Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology University of Washington Medical Center, and Chief of Ophthalmology at the University of Washington Medical Eye Institute. For the first time at Doheny, wet labs conducted with our industry partners allowed all participants to obtain hands-on experience with the latest surgical glaucoma instruments.



Top L-R: Philip Chen, MD; participant getting hands-on experience; Brian Francis, MD, MS  
Bottom: Vikas Chopra, MD, during Q&A with Judy Chen, MD

### Why Do You Come to Doheny's CME?

“The main reason I attend Doheny’s CME is to keep up with the current trends without traveling to national meetings. Also, I enjoy seeing colleagues...”

—Ray T. Oyakawa, MD, MBA  
Torrance, CA

“I make the trip from the Napa Valley a couple times a year to attend Doheny’s CME courses because they check every box: great speakers, engaging topics, a beautiful location, and excellent value. The program offers the perfect blend of professional development and a fresh perspective.”

—Delmer Fjarli, MD  
Napa Valley, CA

“...my primary reason for attending Doheny’s CME is to keep abreast of current evaluation and treatment trends. The speakers are carefully selected and are leaders in their areas of expertise. I also immensely enjoy seeing my old friends and colleagues.”

—Mal Anders, MD  
Duarte, CA





Warren Stout, MD

## Acknowledging the Foundation of His Success

### Dr. Warren Stout Grateful for Formative Doheny Support

**Doheny Alumni member and donor Warren Stout, MD**, was the last person to enjoy dinner with world famous primatologist and revered conservationist Dr. Jane Goodall before she died in her sleep later on the evening of October 1, 2025. Referred to him as a patient two decades earlier, Goodall had initiated the friendship that often saw the two getting together for a meal when her globetrotting schedule would bring her through Southern California. When *InSight* sat down with Dr. Stout for this story, very shortly after Dr. Goodall passed, memories of that evening and their friendship were still fresh, framing the conversation about being a supportive Doheny Eye Institute alumni member.

“I am a people person,” said Dr. Stout. That self-awareness, gained as an undergraduate student, steered him toward caring for people rather than working in the research lab. The innovations of ophthalmology also attracted him. “Ophthalmology saw the first use of micro-surgery, lasers, anti-virals—so many breakthroughs—it intrigued me,” he said, “And, on a day-to-day basis, ophthalmologists help the blind and let them see again, which is a miracle.”

Selecting Doheny for his residency made sense. “There are a lot of programs in the country, but Doheny had stellar people,” said Dr. Stout. “When I arrived it was led by Steve Ryan, Ron Smith, Steve Feldon, Alfredo Sadun, and others—absolute pillars in our field.” Dr. Stout worked with Peter J. McDonnell, MD, now the Director of the Wilmer Eye Institute, and David Huang, MD, who developed optical coherence tomography, in the 1990s when Doheny launched the Laser Refractive Center, which helped pioneer laser vision corrective surgery (LASIK).

**“I value my Doheny friends and colleagues and support them because they do such amazing research... they deserve all our support.”**

**— Dr. Warren Stout**

Dr. Stout still teaches; however, his reputation has been derived through his oculoplastic practice. “This engages both my passion for medicine,” said Stout, “and my creativity, since plastics requires a fine-tuned sensitivity to aesthetics.” This career path began with his fellowship training at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. “I owe that final step in my training to everyone who believed in me at Doheny,” said Stout. “Bascom only opens one oculofacial plastic fellowship every two years and since it is the number one program, it is very competitive. When I applied, Steve Ryan picked up the phone and made a personal call to Ed Norton, the director to put in a good word for me... I will always be grateful.”

As the interview concludes, Jane Goodall returns to his mind. “You know, Jane never went to college,” he offered. “She went straight to PhD studies at Cambridge University. This was in part, because of her groundbreaking, original primate research under paleo-anthropologist and archeologist Dr. Louis Leakey, with whom she began as a secretary. But her research and her career were accomplished because Leakey took time to understand Jane; he then believed in her, and throughout he supported her. Ultimately, Leakey took her to Cambridge and personally advocated for her direct admission to the PhD program.” The rest is history.

These closing remarks distilled Dr. Stout’s perspective on the combined power of belief, commitment, and support, reflected in both his own and Dr. Goodall’s professional paths.

## DOHENY PATIENT STORY

## The Gift of Sight

**Every gift to Doheny Eye Institute matters** because every generous donation supports our mission to conserve, improve, and restore human eyesight. There are many ways you can support our vision research which touches countless lives.

**Create your legacy** at Doheny Eye Institute today. Here are ways to give:

**IRA Charitable Rollover** donors aged 70 1/2 or older can transfer up to \$108,000 per year tax-free from their IRA to a qualifying charity.

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*To learn more about charitable gifts, call Heidi Simpson-Sandoval in Planned Giving, Development & Communications at 323-342-7104.*



Dana Roth

## Saluting A Family Tradition

### Dana Roth, Second Generation Doheny Patient

**For Dana Roth, a retired science librarian at Caltech**, receiving vision care at Doheny has become a family tradition. In the early 1990s, when Dana's mother was first referred by her ophthalmologist to Doheny cornea specialist John Irvine, MD, for specialized treatment, Dana accompanied her. When his late wife Eileen needed care, they again called Dr. Irvine. Then, when Dana noted that he needed increasingly stronger reading glasses every few months, a real challenge for one whose profession requires intensive reading, he also contacted Dr. Irvine, who successfully performed cataract surgery. Dana continued his annual examinations with Dr. Irvine until he retired from practice a few years ago. "It is not unusual," said Dr. Irvine, "for us to see multiple patients or multiple generations of patients all in the same family."

Even though he is retired, when Dana Roth walks across the Caltech campus, he is likely to be recognized and greeted. "He seems to know everyone," said his daughter Nancy Roth-Rappard. This is because he has supported many hundreds of chemistry faculty members and graduate students with their research during his half-century as a science librarian. "That is the fun of it," Roth said, "I really get to understand all of the research going on in the division while providing them with needed support."

Dana Roth earned a Master's in Chemistry at Caltech in 1964, but soon realized that his interest was not intense enough to sustain a successful scientific career. So at the encouragement of his wife, who worked as a librarian at the nearby San Marino Public Library, he completed a Master's in Library Science degree at UCLA. His decision proved wise and the honors he has received reflect his success. In 2008, Roth was inducted into Special Libraries Hall of Fame. The following year, the Wiggins-Roth Award was named in honor of him and fellow chemistry librarian Gary Wiggins of Indiana University. In 2009, Dana received Caltech's Thomas W. Schmidt Prize, given annually to those whose work embodies the values and spirit of the institute.

Recently, Nancy accompanied him to see Doheny's Dr. Victoria Yom, who utilized a laser procedure to clear up some minor cloudiness. "I went along with dad to his Doheny appointments," Nancy said, "and immediately saw the difference that this quick procedure made. He's seeing so much better. And the quality of patient care was better than I had ever imagined. They paid special attention to my dad — and then I noticed that they treated everyone the same way. It was extraordinary."

# Doheny News In Brief



Alfredo A. Sadun, MD, PhD

## Dr. Alfredo Sadun Presents the Daniel M. Jacobson Lecture at NANOS

In recognition of professional accomplishments achieved over his lifetime, Doheny Neuro-Ophthalmologist Alfredo A. Sadun, MD, PhD, was invited to give the Daniel M. Jacobson Lecture at the 51st annual meeting of the North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society (NANOS) in Tucson, Arizona. The Jacobson Lecture honors the memory and legacy of Daniel M. Jacobson, MD, an outstanding teacher and brilliant clinician whose astute clinical observations greatly influenced the practice of neuro-ophthalmology.

In his lecture titled, "From Castro to Quantum Mechanics: A Tunnel of Love," Dr. Sadun connected the dots over his career through a lively and engaging narrative. Framed by an opening story of how, in the 1990s, the United Nations and the U.S. State Department urgently requested he

investigate what appeared to be a rapidly spreading virus causing blindness in Cuba, Dr. Sadun walked listeners through the fascinating waypoints and intersections during his scientific career.

## Dr. Vikas Chopra Named to National Leadership Positions in Eye Health

Vikas Chopra, MD, a nationally recognized glaucoma specialist at Doheny Eye Institute, has been selected for leadership roles at two vision organizations.

Dr. Chopra has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the American Board of Ophthalmology—the organization that oversees certification for ophthalmologists. In this role, he'll help shape the future of eye care by helping to design and oversee the rigorous exams that ophthalmologists must pass to prove their expertise. He'll also guide efforts to improve how doctors deliver safe, high-quality care.

Additionally, Dr. Chopra has been named Chair of the Glaucoma Panel for the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Technology Assessment Committee. In this role, he'll work with fellow experts to evaluate the scientific evidence supporting new and existing eye care technologies, and confirm their safety and benefit to patient care.



Vikas Chopra, MD

## Dr. Corradetti Joins UCLA Department of Ophthalmology Retina Faculty

On November 1, Giulia Corradetti, MD, a Doheny Eye Institute Scientist, joined the faculty of the UCLA Department of Ophthalmology as a Health Sciences Clinical Instructor providing retina care at Doheny Eye Center UCLA, Pasadena. As a Doheny-UCLA clinician-scientist, her time will be divided between treating patients and performing research.

When Dr. Corradetti is not seeing patients, her research at Doheny is focused on early imaging biomarkers in atrophic age-related macular degeneration, advanced retina imaging technology and analysis, and AI/machine learning/big data and precision health.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Corradetti, contact Doheny Eye Center UCLA, Pasadena at (626) 817-4747.



Giulia Corradetti, MD



Srinivas Sadda, MD, FARVO

## Dr. Srinivas Sadda Presents at 2025 Clinical Trials at the Summit

Doheny’s Srinivas Sadda MD, FARVO, made a presentation at Clinical Trials at the Summit (CTS) in June. He discussed the challenges of using the ellipsoid zone of the retina as an accurate marker for photoreceptor loss compared with other markers, such as the outer nuclear layer.

His lecture pointed out the need for consistent integrity and rigor in using the ellipsoid zone as a marker in clinical trials. In his presentation, Dr. Sadda explained that clarification of the correct markers to evaluate, along with how complicating disease features such as drusen may distort results. He stressed the importance of developing consistent, agreed-upon terminology in developing accurate trial endpoint metrics to properly reflect the efficaciousness of therapies for age-related macular

degeneration (AMD) and other diseases.

CTS is an annual conference focused on advancing vitreoretinal care through clinical research. It brings together leading retina specialists, industry executives, investors, and other interested parties involved in developing new ophthalmic drugs and treatments.

## Welcome Doheny’s 2025-2026 Clinical Fellows

In July, Doheny Eye Institute welcomed six incoming 2025-2026 clinical fellows who will complete their training in the Doheny Eye Center UCLA clinics. Then, their advanced training will see them working alongside Doheny’s nationally recognized clinician-scientists. Additionally, the fellows will also help mentor the residents in general ophthalmology. The primary focus of the program is to advance the fellows’ medical knowledge in their chosen sub-specialties, as well as provide high-quality patient care at Doheny Eye Center-UCLA clinics. The fellows are pictured in the grid, from L-R in both rows, in the following order:



- Saghar Bagheri, MD, PhD — Medical Retina
- Kim Firn, MD, MS — Neuro-Ophthalmology/Neurology
- Alexander Haueisen, MD — Glaucoma
- Ketaki Panse, MD — Medical Retina
- Tatiana Rosenblatt, MD — Oculoplastics and Reconstructive Surgery
- Hyelin You, MD — Cornea and External Diseases

With the expertise gained here at Doheny, these fellows will help shape the next generation of eye care.



Kaustabh Ghosh, PhD

## Kaustabh Ghosh, PhD, Awarded R01 Grant from the National Eye Institute

Kaustabh Ghosh, PhD, a Principal Investigator at Doheny Eye Institute and an Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, has been awarded a three-year federal R01 grant from the National Eye Institute (NEI).

His project, “Mechanobiology of Retinal Vascular Inflammation and Degeneration in Diabetes,” will advance understanding of the cellular and biomechanical mechanisms that drive diabetic retinopathy. Vascular stiffening caused by diabetes, a long-term focus of his research, may occur years before the manifestation of clinical symptoms. Ghosh’s research may also lead to the development of new strategies for earlier detection and treatment. The award provides over \$1.5 million to support projects over a three-year funding period.

R01 federal grants are one of the essential funding sources for basic science research, which fuels discoveries that lead to new treatments and cures. This award underscores Doheny’s long-standing leadership in vision research.

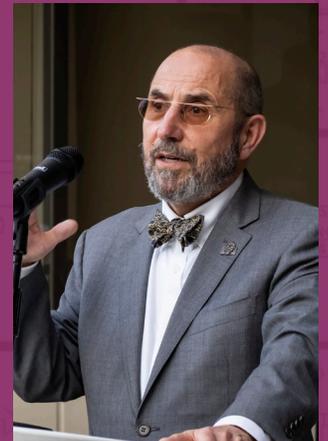


Angel Padilla, Clinic Administrator gives guided tour

Doheny Eye Center **UCLA**

# New Home, Same Vision: A Celebration of Doheny Eye Center UCLA, Pasadena

June 11, 2025



Bartly Mondino, MD and Alfredo A. Sadun, MD, PhD

**A celebratory spirit filled the air** as 155 guests gathered on June 11 at the “New Home, Same Vision: A Celebration of Doheny Eye Center UCLA” event on the Doheny Eye Institute campus in Pasadena. As guests arrived, they enjoyed the opportunity to take guided tours of the state-of-the-art clinic.

Marissa Goldberg, Doheny Eye Institute CEO; Tom Foscue, Chair of the Doheny Eye Institute Board of Directors; Anne Coleman, MD, PhD, Director, UCLA Stein Eye Institute, and Chair and Executive Medical Director, UCLA Department of Ophthalmology; and Joaquín Madrenas, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine and Vice Dean for Faculty, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, pictured left to right above, greeted guests with remarks, thanks, and toasts.

The occasion was capped by cutting a cake specially decorated to celebrate the event.

# Thank you!

We extend our sincere appreciation to the supporters and friends whose contributions help advance our mission. In recognition of gifts made between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, Doheny Eye Institute proudly acknowledges the following donors:

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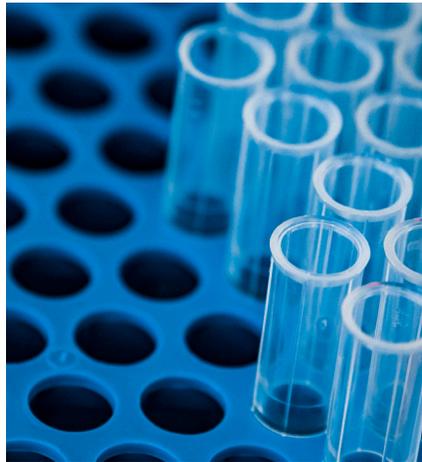
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