

# InSight

2 Dr. Zhang Named to Miller Chair 7 Cell by Cell: AMD Genetic Research 10 Timeless Elegance Gala

## The Learning Tree

**Dr. Sadda Cultivates a Global Reputation in Retina Science through Research, Patient Care, and Mentoring Fellows**



Srinivas Sadda, MD, FARVO

**Srinivas Sadda, MD, FARVO**, compares his research and the team he leads to a tree and branches. “If you are doing good research,” Dr. Sadda observes, “it’s like a tree, where each discovery and insight generates many more questions and areas for investigation. And each of these questions and areas of study becomes a branch of the research tree.”

Over his career, Dr. Sadda, Director of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Imaging Research at Doheny Eye Institute and Professor of Ophthalmology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, feels fortunate to have recruited around 200 very talented fellows from all over the world to work with him at Doheny Eye Institute. One of the most satisfying parts of his job is to see the fellows he trains succeed. Dr. Sadda explains, “Fellows arrive to learn about the entire tree of retina knowledge, but my hope is that every fellow departs as an emerging expert in one branch of retina science that really excites them.”

Dr. Sadda is an internationally renowned retina specialist. His major research interests include retinal image analysis, advanced retinal imaging technologies, and clinical trial design. He has authored more

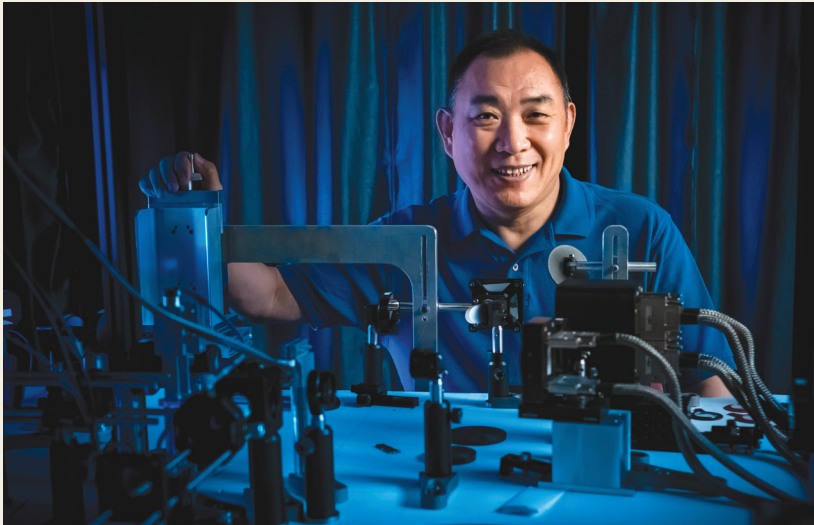
than 850 peer-reviewed publications and 20 book chapters, as well as given over 600 presentations worldwide. As editor-in-chief of the 7th Edition of *Ryan’s Retina*, the definitive medical reference work on the subject, he carries forward the publication originated by Doheny’s legendary leader, Stephen J. Ryan, MD.

He also values providing clinical care to his patients who are seen at Doheny Eye Center UCLA. “It’s impactful work,” Dr. Sadda says, “because we have treatments that work reasonably well—and it’s very satisfying since preserving or restoring eyesight makes a huge difference in a patient’s life.” But he also values how clinical work informs his research. “In the clinic,” he observes, “one recognizes where the gaps in knowledge are, where problems in care can arise, where the opportunities are, and where we need to focus our attention to achieve better patient outcomes.”

His position as Director of Artificial Intelligence and Imaging Research has expanded his scientific reputation. In a typically understated manner, Dr. Sadda relates AI to medicine: “I am a retina specialist—I care for patients with retinal problems. AI is simply a tool—it’s not my main focus. It’s a tool that is necessary to use today, both as a clinician and a researcher, because it is very advantageous in gaining insights into different conditions.”

His appreciation of the power and importance of AI as a tool to accelerate research or clinical progress springs from his decades of experience in the data-intensive field of ophthalmic image reading. Working in this aspect of vision science, he recognized the enormous volume of data that retina images and libraries of those

(continued on page 4)



Yuhua Zhang, PhD, at Adaptive Optics Retina Imaging Station in Doheny's Laser Lab

## Dr. Yuhua Zhang Named to Miller Chair

### Recognition Salutes International Leadership and Contributions to Advanced Retinal Imaging

**Doheny Eye Institute** has named Yuhua Zhang, PhD, as the inaugural Carolyn and Chuck Miller Endowed Chair for Vision Research. This prestigious appointment recognizes Dr. Zhang's leadership and contributions to vision science, and will support his ongoing research.

Dr. Zhang, a Principal Investigator at Doheny Eye Institute and Professor of Ophthalmology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, is internationally recognized for studying the living eye with unprecedented image resolution. His achievements in adaptive optics make it possible to see the approximately 126 million photoreceptors, ganglion cells, and individual blood cells flowing through the vessels of the retina. This has advanced the understanding of diseases such as age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy, as well as the impacts of hypertension.

Additionally, Dr. Zhang's adaptive optics retina imaging station achieves the level of image resolution required for the emerging science of oculomics. This field uses the eye as a window into the health of the whole body, and holds the promise of early, non-invasive disease detection leading to better healthcare outcomes.

"I am honored to receive the Carolyn and Chuck Miller Endowed Chair for Vision Research," said Dr. Zhang. "This position will further support the innovative technologies my lab is developing, which will help drive forward our understanding of the human eye and the diseases that lead to vision loss."

His research is supported by the National Institutes of Health, Research to Prevent Blindness, and other major funders, and has been published widely in leading scientific journals. "Dr. Zhang's pioneering work contributes to our understanding of the biological mechanisms that lead to vision loss and can also lead to future therapies," said Deborah Ferrington, PhD, Chief Scientific Officer at Doheny. "His impressive contributions to vision science make Dr. Zhang greatly deserving of the Carolyn and Chuck Miller Endowed Chair."



### CAROLYN AND CHUCK MILLER CHAIR FOR VISION RESEARCH

The Carolyn and Chuck Miller Endowed Chair for Vision Research was established through Carolyn Miller's generosity. The endowing of this chair perpetually strengthens and supports Doheny Eye Institute's research into the future.

Chuck Miller served as the chairman and chief executive officer of Avery Dennison for over two decades. His vision of a corporate campus helped guide the original design of the complex that Doheny now calls home. He strongly believed in investing in research to spur innovation. This philosophy was rewarded—during his tenure, the firm expanded from a regional label maker to a worldwide leader in pressure-sensitive materials and widely used office products. As a community leader, Miller served on many boards that guided key philanthropic, academic, and cultural institutions.

Later in life, Miller developed dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD). "In Chuck's case," Carolyn Miller said, "it was especially sad since AMD robbed him of his greatest joy—watching sports. Chuck believed in the impact of research. My hope is that future discoveries made in his memory will eventually help spare others from this disease."

---

**“This issue of *InSight* covers... positive changes regarding our team that will keep Doheny positioned for leadership in transforming the landscape of vision science.”**

**— Marissa Goldberg, CEO**

---

**DEAR FRIENDS**

**“Change is the only constant”** is a quotation attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus (circa 500 BC). His perspective was that through acceptance, adaptation, resilience, and transformation, we can successfully meet the demands of the ever-changing world around us.

At Doheny Eye Institute, the level of change and growth in vision science we have witnessed, shaped, and led is beyond the imagination of Carrie Estelle Doheny and our founders nearly 80 years ago. Diseases and conditions that inevitably led to blindness in 1947 can now be successfully treated and remediated, enabling people to continue leading full, independent lives. Looking forward, our researchers and clinicians are engaging both the challenges of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic retinopathy on multiple fronts, and seeking to prevent blindness for millions afflicted with these conditions.

This issue of *InSight* covers the following positive changes regarding our team that will keep Doheny positioned for leadership in transforming the landscape of vision science:

- Our principal AMD investigators are currently collaborating by applying knowledge and utilizing technology that didn't exist three decades ago.
- In breaking news, our diabetic retinopathy principal investigators recently published new findings showing how this disease begins before symptoms are detectable.
- In administrative leadership, I am happy to welcome our new Chief Financial Officer, Kashif Khan, and our new Chief Development Officer, Alicia Cleaver. They are uniquely qualified to embrace the opportunities that future change may present.

Finally, it is my honor and pleasure to announce that Yuhua Zhang, PhD, Principal Investigator at Doheny Eye Institute and Professor of Ophthalmology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, has been appointed as the inaugural holder of the Carolyn and Chuck Miller Endowed Chair for Vision Research by the Doheny Eye Institute Board of Directors. This prestigious appointment recognizes Dr. Zhang's international leadership in advanced retinal imaging technologies and his transformative contributions to vision science.

The appointment will also support Dr. Zhang's ongoing research at Doheny and serve as a fitting honor in memory of Chuck Miller, who not only championed innovation and technology, transforming Avery Dennison from a regional brand to a global leader, but also lived with AMD. We are deeply grateful to Carolyn Miller for her transformational gift which established the eighth endowed chair at Doheny Eye Institute.



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

**Marissa Goldberg**  
Chief Executive Officer

images contain. He also understood that AI is a particularly strong tool when large volumes of data need to be analyzed, compared, and interpreted.

In 2003, Dr. Sadda launched the Doheny Image Reading Center (DIRC), which has served as the centralized reading center for a large number of clinical trials spanning the treatment of a variety of ophthalmic diseases. Key to DIRC's mission, he established rigorous quality standards to provide consistent high-quality ophthalmic image interpretations to his clinical and research clients. Under his leadership, DIRC developed a reputation for consistent quality in image reading, as well as processes for continuous improvement. This means that clinicians and researchers utilizing DIRC for a clinical trial receive the highest data analysis consistency. In other words, when comparing large datasets, doctors

train post-doctoral research fellows, ophthalmology residents, students, and volunteers from around the globe. These talented researchers undergo rigorous training and certification in image reading and grading procedures, and in turn, often apply this expertise to support DIRRL studies and research. These researchers then go on to become further branches of the global retina research tree.

A renaissance man, Dr. Sadda combines many talents that help him interact in a cross-disciplinary fashion, which strengthens his work. "I am a retina scientist, not an engineer, but my experience has given me the fluency to work with the engineers. I can ask the right questions and offer perspectives which will be valuable in developing engineering solutions; it is a very stimulating aspect of my work."

**"Doheny is an international brand. We are global, we do global ophthalmology, and we have a global reputation which has attracted fellows from all six continents. It's in the spirit of the place. Obviously we care for patients in our local community, but we are an internationally-facing institution that has a responsibility for curing blindness across the globe."**

**— Dr. Srinivas Sadda**



and scientists utilizing DIRC will know that they are always comparing "apples to apples," which is essential in properly evaluating the outcome of a clinical trial.

In 2014, recognizing the need for an experimental or exploratory imaging environment to expand the field's capabilities, Dr. Sadda launched the Doheny Image Reading and Research Lab (DIRRL). Its mission: to advance the field of ophthalmic imaging research and increase the value and utility of ophthalmic image interpretation in both research and clinical applications. This is the lab that he leads today.

While DIRC focuses on long-established imaging standards to render consistent reading and data analytics for research or clinical trials, DIRRL is more exploratory and works with new image reading technologies and approaches. The work at DIRRL prototypes new disease biomarkers, often from emerging image technologies, and strives to develop the most consistent approach to analyze and interpret the data. Dr. Sadda describes the lab this way: "It's a research engine testing new imaging technology and then trying to discover what a new approach might reveal about a vision-impacting disease."

Introducing AI to image reading accelerates the analysis process. Because of its efficiency, AI helps researchers gain insights at a faster pace. However, Dr. Sadda points out that "AI only gets smart by reading and learning from images that humans have already read and analyzed." So, the vast library of previously read images in the DIRC library is a Doheny strength, and an important resource for the development and training of AI tools that assist researchers.

Under Dr. Sadda's leadership, DIRRL continues Doheny's strong educational mission as the lab

With two physicians as parents, as a child he knew that he wanted to work in science. He didn't choose medicine as a profession until college, but early on, the study of what is described as "the senses" captured his imagination—smell, taste, sound, and vision—"It's what connects us to the world around us," Dr. Sadda says. Ophthalmology eventually got his attention and led to his career in vision research.

With a naturally warm and engaging manner, it is easy to understand why he is so effective as a teacher, facilitator, and consensus builder. Watching him lead a Ryan Initiative for Macular Research (RIMR) task group is to witness someone who enjoys people and the exchange of ideas. Dr. Sadda describes his approach as follows: "I am a collaborative person. I'm good at bringing people together. A defining aspect of my career is to be collaborative rather than competitive."

Summarizing his work, Dr. Sadda explains, "I very much believe in what Dr. Stephen J. Ryan advocated—if you want to solve big problems, you need big science—you need teams of people committed to and working toward a big goal." At DIRRL, Dr. Sadda and the research team continue to advance Dr. Ryan's vision.

*As this InSight goes to press, it has been announced that Dr. Sadda will join Duke University School of Medicine as Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology, effective November 10, 2026. Ranked among the nation's leading ophthalmology programs, Duke Health noted Dr. Sadda's many accomplishments at Doheny as key factors in his selection. As he embarks on this exciting new chapter, we proudly congratulate and wish him every success as he joins the many members of the Doheny tradition who have gone on to assume leadership roles in ophthalmology around the world.*

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

**SriniVas Satta, MD, FARVO**

**SENIOR TEAM**

**Kirstie Baker, BS**  
Senior Research Coordinator

**Giulia Corradetti, MD**  
Doheny Clinician-Scientist

**Kenneth Marion, MS, MBA**  
Director

**Muneswar Gupta Nittala, Mphil**  
Senior Research Associate

**Swetha Bindu Velaga, Bopt**  
Research Associate

**RESEARCH FELLOWS**

**Rouzbeh Abbasgholizadeh, MD, FEBO**  
Biruni University Hospital, Turkey

**Jianfeng Huang, MD**  
Beijing Hospital, China

**Federico Sivilotti, MD**  
Luigi Sacco Hospital,  
University of Milan, Italy

**Shinichiro Chujo, MD**  
Mie University Graduate School  
of Medicine, Japan

**Seungmin Lee, MD, PhD**  
Pusan National University School  
of Medicine, Korea

**Ceren Soyulu, MD**  
Istanbul University, Turkey

**Paolo Forte, MD**  
IRCCS San Martino Hospital, Genoa, Italy

**Alberto Quarta, MD**  
SS. Annunziata Hospital, Italy

**RECENT FORMER RESEARCH FELLOWS**

**Mai Brakat Alhelaly, MBChB, MSc, FICO**  
Tanta University, Egypt

**Cherie (Yu-Chien) Chung, MD**  
Fu Jen Catholic University Hospital, Taiwan

**Aditya Verma, MD**  
University of Louisville

**Louay Almidani, MBBS, MD, MSc**  
University of Oxford, England

**Ye He, MD, PhD**  
Tianjin Medical University, China

**STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS**

**Grady Collier, MD candidate**  
Campbell University School of Osteopathic  
Medicine—medical student

**Haras Mhmud, MD, MPH**  
Erasmus Medical Center & Radboud  
University Medical Center, Netherlands

**Erica Sung, MD candidate**  
UCLA—medical student

**Javier Gutierrez, MD candidate**  
Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School  
of Medicine—medical student

**Jihye Park, MD candidate**  
UCSD—medical student

**Daniel Wanderer, MD candidate**  
UCSD—medical student

**Christopher Le, MD candidate**  
University of Colorado School of  
Medicine—medical student

**Riad Sankari, MD candidate**  
University of Toronto—medical student

**Brooke Yasuda, MD candidate**  
University of Hawai'i at Mā noa,  
John A. Burns School of  
Medicine—medical student

**Erik Souverei, MD**  
UCLA—resident

**THE LEARNING TREE**

Since 2014, 134 fellows/students/residents have worked with Dr. Satta in the Doheny Image Reading Research Lab (DIRRL), not including current staff, generating 766 DIRRL publications of which 430 were 1st author publications, and 336 were contributing author publications.



Presenters at the 4th Annual Doheny-UCLA International Retina Symposium



Mark Johnson, MD

# 4th Annual Doheny-UCLA International Retina Symposium

On Saturday, January 31, Doheny Eye Institute hosted the 4th Annual Doheny-UCLA International Retina Symposium in the on-campus conference center. CME Course Directors Michael Ip, MD, and Giulia Corradetti, MD, welcomed 117 attendees for a day of scientific presentations and collaborative learning. The keynote presentation on “The Mechanisms and Morphologies of the Vitelliform Maculopathies” was delivered by world-renowned retina expert Mark Johnson, MD, Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the Kellogg Eye Center, University of Michigan. International keynote speaker Sobha Sivaprasad, MD, FRCOphth, Professor in Retinal Clinical Research at University College London and Director of Moorfields Eye Hospital Clinical Research Facility, discussed “Steps to Demystify Retinal Non-Perfusion.” During the Symposium, 18 presentations and two panel discussions provided important information on the most recent updates and advancements in clinical care and research related to retinal disease to enhance both patient care and professional growth.



Sobha Sivaprasad, MD FRCOphth



Michael Ip, MD



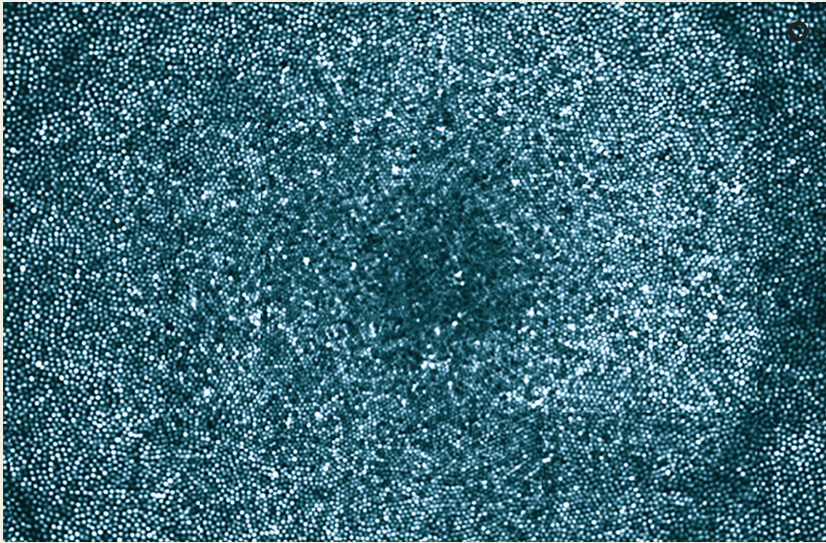
L-R: Irena Tsui, MD; Bobeck Modjtahedi, MD, MBA; Ava Barzelay-Wellman, MD, PhD



Giulia Corradetti, MD



David Sarraf, MD



Individual light sensitive cone photoreceptors in the retina Photo by: Yuhua Zhang, PhD

## Cell by Cell

### Advancing Genetic Knowledge and High-Resolution Imaging Accelerates our Understanding of AMD

In the 1990s through the early 2000s, medical science and vision research in particular experienced three transformational revolutions.

The Human Genome Project (HGP) generated the first sequence of the human DNA blueprint. This greatly accelerated the study of human biology by providing an understanding of how DNA programs human physiology, along with identifying potential triggers to diseases and cancers, as well as ways to target treatments at the cellular level.

The second monumental breakthrough was the discovery that mature cells can be converted back to an embryonic-like stem cell via the introduction of specific genes. These cells, known as induced-pluripotent stem cells, have been heavily utilized for disease modeling, drug discovery, and regenerative medicine.

Finally, the invention of optical coherence tomography (OCT) by a Doheny alumnus, Dr. David Huang, MD, PhD, and his colleagues introduced a noninvasive method of imaging the living eye. OCT allowed vision scientists in the lab and ophthalmologists in the clinic to examine the cellular layers in the eye and to precisely measure its important structures. This instrument was pivotal in significantly advancing the research, diagnosis, and treatment of eye conditions.

**“With advancing technology, we know more and more about AMD, and realize how much more complex a disease it is, than we thought it was just two decades ago.”**

**—Deborah A. Ferrington, PhD**

At Doheny Eye Institute, Deborah A. Ferrington, PhD, Sreekumar P. Gangadharan, PhD, and Yuhua Zhang, PhD, are benefiting from the doors these revolutions have opened as they collaborate in their studies of age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

One area of Dr. Ferrington’s current research considers the effects of a genetic mutation in the Complement Factor H gene (CFH) on the onset of dry AMD, a condition that, to date, has limited treatments.

CFH plays a role in the regulation of the immune system by acting as a brake and reducing the response. An overactive CFH—too much braking—may result in an increased susceptibility to microbial infections, whereas an underactive CFH allows immune cells to attack healthy host cells, which may result in autoimmune diseases. Therefore, mutations in the CFH gene often result in pathologies or disease. In 2005, several independent research groups identified a CFH mutation present in almost one-third of people of European descent as a risk factor for AMD. This mutation makes CFH a less effective brake and results in retinal cell damage caused by an overactive immune system.



L-R: Dr. Gangadharan, Dr. Ferrington, Dr. Zhang

Since the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE) layer of the eye has been identified as a location where AMD takes hold, Dr. Ferrington’s lab utilizes RPE cells generated from induced pluripotent stem cells to study why individuals with the CFH mutation are more susceptible to AMD. One of the lab’s major findings is that mitochondria, which perform multiple critical functions in addition to generating energy, in almost all cells, is less effective in RPE containing the CFH mutation. These results point to treatments that boost mitochondrial function as a potential therapy.

**Dr. Gangadharan’s research focuses on the molecular mechanism of RPE degeneration** as an essential first step in identifying therapeutic targets to prevent retinal fibrosis, a complication of wet AMD.

Wet AMD, the less common form of the disease, results from the long-term uncontrolled growth of additional neovascular membranes, or blood vessels, into the retina. Dr. Gangadharan is studying the development of fibrosis that appears

(continued on page 8)

due to the formation of scar tissue under the retina. While 60% of patients respond positively to anti-VEGF treatments, fibrosis, which ultimately destroys vision, develops in 40%–50% of patients within 10 years after starting treatments.

**“...different labs focus on the different cells associated with the form of AMD they are studying...”**

**— Sreekumar P. Gangadharan, PhD**

Dr. Gangadharan’s studies are currently examining whether dysfunction in the mitochondria, similarly to the CFH mutation, is triggering fibrosis and if treatment with the naturally occurring peptides produced in the mitochondria might attenuate this condition.

**Dr. Zhang’s work in imaging is internationally recognized** because his breakthroughs have transcended the still images achieved with OCT in the 1990s, and have made it possible to study the living eye in action with unprecedented image resolution. His achievements in adaptive optics allow scientists and doctors to see the approximately 126 million photoreceptors, ganglion cells, and even individual blood cells flowing through the blood vessels of the retina.

Some of Dr. Zhang’s latest observations in the living eye are consistent with RPE findings identified by the Ferrington and Gangadharan labs. For example, certain photons—signals—have been observed in the retina that likely indicate mitochondrial failures in the RPE of AMD patients. Ongoing collaboration with Dr. Ferrington and Dr. Gangadharan is helping to confirm and refine these findings.

**Ultimately, the genetic knowledge gained in the last two decades** has led to an understanding that the condition we call AMD may actually arise from several discrete, but distinct, conditions. Dr. Ferrington explains, “Researchers are exploring at least five to six discrete genetic pathways leading to what we define clinically as AMD. We need to understand these differences at a precise cellular level if we are to hit the right mark for treatment. Because of research at the genetic and cellular level, we’re breaking new ground—and we’re moving toward the future.”

## DOHENY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (CFO)



Kashif Khan

## Kashif Khan Joins Doheny as CFO

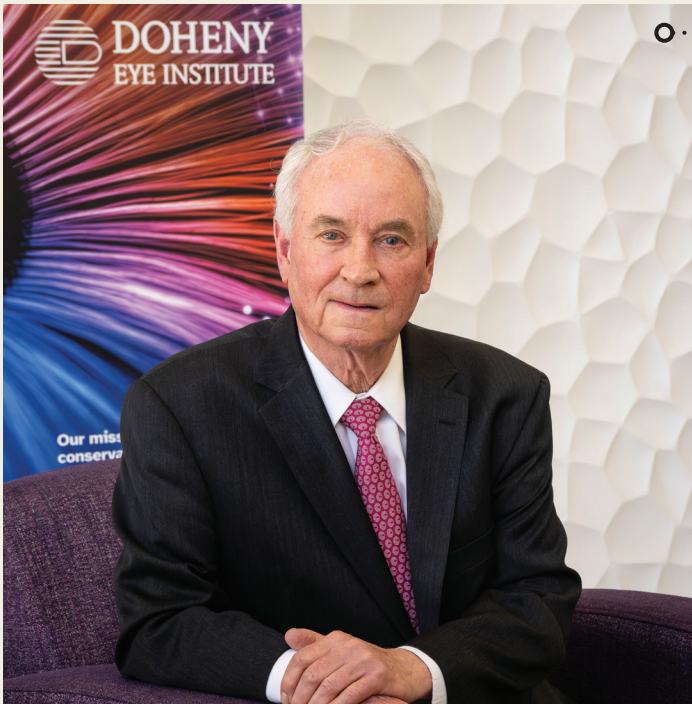
### Brings Broad Experience in Tech, Medicine, and Nonprofits

**In November**, Kashif Khan joined the Doheny Eye Institute as its new Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Reporting to Doheny’s CEO Marissa Goldberg, he assumes an expanded role that spans both strategic leadership and operational aspects of the Institute’s finance function, including oversight of the Doheny Image Reading Center (DIRC).

Kashif Khan is uniquely qualified for this new dynamic role, bringing over two decades of executive experience in both the profit and nonprofit sectors spanning healthcare, financial services, pharmaceutical, and technology-driven enterprises. Having worked with both regionally established and nationally recognized organizations across both coasts including the YMCA, Covenant House, the Weingart Center, and Ability First, he has led complex organizational transformations, including large-scale system integrations and modernization, financial restructurings, and compliance enhancements within federally and state-funded environments. By integrating financial and technology strategies, he has enabled organizations to align data, systems, and performance outcomes with their long-term strategic objectives.

In accepting this new position Kashif stated, “Doheny is at an inflection point. It has a strong reputation, a deep academic affiliation with UCLA, and a robust research platform. At the same time, the funding environment is becoming more complex, and there is an opportunity to align financial strategy more closely with research priorities, enhancing decision-making at both the executive and program level.”

Kashif also brings an innovative, entrepreneurial, and competitive mindset to his financial leadership and advocacy for Doheny’s research mission. While studying computer science and accounting at Rutgers University, he founded Globaltek, an international information technology services firm that grew to approximately \$125 million in revenue within a decade before he transitioned his focus to the nonprofit sector. He was also a nationally ranked competitor and member of the United States Taekwondo Team, and continues to pursue his interest in motorsports as a graduate of the Skip Barber Racing School.



John Affeldt, MD

## Alumnus John Affeldt Honored

**John Affeldt, MD**, this year's 2026 Distinguished Alumnus, was recognized at the annual Doheny Alumni Dinner held in March at the Valley Hunt Club in Pasadena. Professional Alumni Association President John Irvine, MD, stated, "John has distinguished himself in a variety of ways—as a teacher and mentor to residents, as a clinician in patient care as well as in clinical trials, as an alumni association board member, and as a historian."

Dr. Affeldt began medical school at the University of Southern California (USC) in 1973, the same year the first free-standing home for the Doheny Eye Foundation broke ground. As Dr. Affeldt likes to say, "My career in ophthalmology literally struck me in the face." A bungee cord injury to his left eye that required two weeks of hospital care became the first step on his path to becoming an ophthalmologist.

A three-time Teacher of the Year—first at Doheny Eye Institute/USC, and twice at Loma Linda University Eye Institute, where he has been on the faculty since 2010—Dr. Affeldt's early role models were Doheny's Donald Minckler, MD, MS, and Ronald E. Smith, MD, who he worked with during his first exploration of a specialization in ophthalmology. He said, "My passion for teaching provides a strong sense of purpose and fulfills a desire to make a difference. I enjoy helping people grow and succeed." At the Annual CME Conference preceding the alumni dinner, his teaching success was evident from the warm greetings offered to him by past and current students and residents.

Following his residency at Doheny Eye Institute, Dr. Affeldt accepted a clinical fellowship in cornea and external eye disease at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami. Today, he is an Associate Professor and Director of the Dry Eye Center at the Loma Linda University Eye Institute. Additionally, as an avocational medical historian, he is also a co-author of *Ophthalmology at LA County General Hospital: 1885-2006*, and continues to impact the field with his engaging, rigorous approach.

### DOHENY DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

#### **A Doheny Tradition: HONORING ALUMNI EXCELLENCE**

In 1988, the Doheny Professional Alumni Association (PAA) began recognizing alumni who have made significant contributions to the residency and fellowship training programs, to the institute, to the community, and to the advancement of the field of ophthalmology. During Dr. Ronald Smith's tenure as Chair of the University of Southern California's Department of Ophthalmology, which preceded his esteemed tenure as Doheny's Medical Director, distinguished alumni were recognized at a dinner that also honored graduating residents and fellows.

Today, this tradition continues at an annual event to celebrate the alumni of Doheny Eye Institute, our friends and supporters, and one extraordinary individual in particular. Each year, another distinguished alumna or alumnus is chosen from nominees submitted by the alumni membership, with the final selection made by a vote of the PAA Board of Directors.

To date, 38 alumni selectees have been recognized with this unique distinction.



**DOHENY  
EYE INSTITUTE**



## Timeless Elegance Gala

### Luminares Gather to Offer Gratitude and Raise Funds for Vision Research

On Friday, March 13, 270 Luminares and guests gathered at the Langham Huntington in Pasadena to celebrate and support the vision-saving research of Doheny Eye Institute.

This year's theme, Timeless Elegance, conveyed a sense of ageless beauty, refined grace, and the enduring generosity of spirit the institute embodies. The event also saluted the efforts of the Lamp Society, composed of Luminares members who have supported Doheny through their dedicated membership for 25 years or more.

After enjoying time circulating through the vendor boutique, guests were welcomed by Luminares President Jinny Dalbeck and Benefit Co-chairs Jennifer Cooper and Peggy Schmid. Doheny Eye Institute CEO Marissa Goldberg offered opening remarks and expressed thanks to the Luminares for their continued support, while Doheny's Dr. Benjamin Bert offered a toast. Following lunch, all eyes turned to the runway for a fashion show featuring stunning designs from the Robert Ellis Boutique of Studio City.

The event culminated with Mary Catherine Cooper receiving the 2026 Vision Award. Having joined the Luminares in 2000, Mary has served on the Luminares Board for most of her years of membership. As the Luminares' public relations guru, she has created an irreplaceable photographic history of the organization and gladly took on the role of "Cheerleader-in-Chief" for Doheny.

Founded in 1974, The Luminares have focused on two goals: to elevate community awareness about the need for ongoing vision research, and to support the Institute's work to find cures and treatments for eye disease. Their countless volunteer hours and the dedicated support of hundreds of Luminares have contributed to the success of their annual fundraising efforts.

Another smashing success, this year's celebration raised over \$292,500 to support vision research at Doheny Eye Institute.



Luminares Benefit Committee



Lamp Society Members and Legacy Family Representatives



Center: Mary Catherine Cooper, 2026 Vision Award Honoree Back Row L-R: Jinny Dalbeck, CEO Marissa Goldberg, Dr. Ferrington, Dr. Bert

DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS



L-R: Benefit Co-Chairs Jennifer Cooper and Peggy Schmid



Benjamin Bert, MD, FACS, offers a toast



Alicia Cleaver

## Doheny Welcomes Alicia Cleaver as CDO

### Dedicated Development Leader Brings Expertise in Academic and Medical Fundraising

In March, Doheny Eye Institute welcomed Alicia Cleaver as its new Chief Development Officer (CDO). Leading, motivating, and mentoring the development team, as well as communicating philanthropic impact to present and future donors, is her goal as she works to build meaningful relationships that lead to increased support for the institute’s research. She reports directly to Doheny CEO Marissa Goldberg.

Alicia Cleaver brings two decades of development experience in the fields of higher education and medical fundraising. She began at her alma mater, the University of Michigan, where she was introduced to the profession through the University’s pilot program to train undergraduate students in advancement and development. Since then, she has met continuously expanding responsibilities and facilitated numerous accomplishments at Lehigh University, Johns Hopkins Medicine, and Phoenix Children’s Hospital Foundation. Most recently at Occidental College, where she served as Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement, she led a team of 10 frontline fundraisers and raised over \$14 million during her tenure.

Philanthropy is in Alicia’s DNA. “Philanthropy is not just about giving; it’s also about receiving,” Alicia explained. “When you make a choice to help someone else or an organization you care about, you become a higher version of yourself.”

For Alicia, supporting Doheny’s mission is also very personal. “My late grandfather had AMD, and when he started to lose his vision, it broke him,” she said. “Too often, normal vision is taken for granted. However, with Doheny’s doctors and scientists at the forefront of vision research, diseases that once meant blindness can now be treated and others slowed. It is a worthy institution and mission.”

# Doheny News In Brief



Above center: Deborah A. Ferrington, PhD

## Dr. Ferrington Addresses Women in Pharma Workshop

Deborah A. Ferrington, PhD, Chief Scientific Officer at Doheny Eye Institute, was a featured panelist at the ISPE Greater Los Angeles Area Chapter Women in Pharma gathering held in honor of International Women's Day 2026.

The event, "Asking for What You Want: A Curated Conversation & Connection Experience," was held Wednesday, March 11 at Takeda Pharmaceuticals in Thousand Oaks. The program included a candid fireside chat with executive leaders, as well as an interactive workshop focused on mentorship, leadership, career growth, and building confidence in self-advocacy. Dr. Ferrington's participation reflects

Doheny's continued commitment to advancing science while supporting the professional development of women across the life sciences.

## Dr. Srinivas Sadda Answers Retina Questions at Doheny's "Ask the Doctor"

On April 20, 2026, Doheny opened its doors for a community event titled "Ask the Doctor: A Conversation with Dr. Srinivas Sadda." With over 75 guests in attendance, Srinivas Sadda, MD, FARVO, a world-renowned retina specialist, explained the latest advances in treating age-related macular degeneration, including how artificial intelligence is transforming diagnosis, monitoring, and intervention. The event allowed guests to hear directly from Dr. Sadda, and ask him questions about this rapidly evolving field.

Dr. Sadda is the Director of Artificial Intelligence and Imaging Research at Doheny and Professor of Ophthalmology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. He holds the A. Ray Irvine Jr., MD, Endowed Chair in Clinical Ophthalmology. Dr. Sadda's research focuses on retinal image analysis, advanced imaging technologies, and clinical trial innovation, and his work is supported by multiple National Institutes of Health grants.



Srinivas Sadda, MD, FARVO

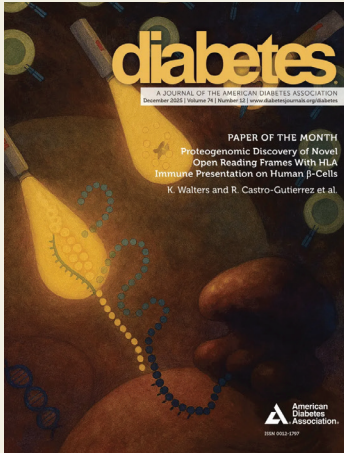


Victoria Tseng, MD, PhD

## Victoria Tseng, MD, PhD, Honored by American Glaucoma Society

Dr. Victoria Tseng received the American Glaucoma Society Mid-Career Physician Scientist Award in March 2026. The award provides research funding for mid-career investigators to initiate new research or continue ongoing research.

Dr. Tseng's research project, "Impact of External Stressors on Glaucoma Disease Trajectory: A Population-Based Investigation," will use data from the California Health Interview Survey and the California Medicare Database to establish a measure of cumulative stressor burden and assess its impact on the prevalence of glaucoma and incidence of glaucoma surgery.



## Doheny Researchers Publish New Findings on How Diabetic Eye Disease Begins

In December 2025, a team of Doheny Eye Institute researchers—Mahesh Agarwal, PhD; Sathishkumar Chandrakumar, PhD; Irene Santiago Tierno, MS; Emma M. Lessieur, MD, PhD; and Kaustabh Ghosh, PhD—published significant new findings in *Diabetes* that shed light on how diabetic eye disease begins.

The study examined lysyl oxidase (LOX), an enzyme the body normally uses to strengthen tissues. In diabetes, LOX is produced in excess, and the researchers found that this surplus can “supercharge” neutrophils, a type of white blood cell. Instead of functioning normally, these cells become unusually aggressive because LOX alters actin, the protein that helps cells move. When these overactive neutrophils reach the retina, they can damage the delicate lining of the eye’s small blood vessels, triggering the early stages of diabetic retinopathy. Current treatments address only later phases of the disease and

cannot reverse existing damage. However, understanding these early mechanisms is an important step toward identifying and applying better practices to protect vision.

## Dr. Corradetti Selected to ARVO Women’s Leadership Development Program

In December 2025, Giulia Corradetti, MD, was selected to the 2026–2027 Association for Vision Research and Ophthalmology (ARVO) Women’s Leadership Development Program. This program is a highly interactive, year-long experience designed to strengthen leadership skills and expand opportunities for professional growth within ARVO and the field of ophthalmology.

Established in 2016, the program accepts only a small cohort of early- to mid-career female scientists each year, along with their mentors, making this a meaningful and competitive honor. Dr. Corradetti’s selection reflects her rising impact in vision science and gives her access to advanced leadership training, national networking, and mentorship that will further elevate her work.



Giulia Corradetti, MD



## Doheny Researchers Contribute to International Study on AMD-Related Scarring

In November 2025, a new study that included Doheny co-authors Srinivas Sadda, MD, FARVO; Ram Kannan, PhD, FARVO; and Parameswaran G Sreekumar, PhD, was published in *Aging Cell*. This new study identifies how deficiency of the 2-oxoglutarate carrier (Slc25a11) drives harmful changes in retinal pigment epithelial cells, accelerating subretinal fibrosis in neovascular age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

These findings help explain why some patients continue to lose vision despite current therapies. By revealing a key molecular pathway, this research highlights potential targets for future treatments. An international endeavor, other authors of this publication included researchers at UCLA Stein Eye Institute, Shanghai Eye Disease Prevention and Treatment Center, and Eye & ENT Hospital of Fudan University, Shanghai, China.

## Mary Catherine Cooper, Luminaires 2026 Vision Award Honoree, Lives with Gratitude for Her Doctors at Doheny Eye Center UCLA



Mary Catherine Cooper

**“Doheny is an amazing place, and Dr. Sadda is brilliant — he takes his time, listens well, and is reassuring and caring. I feel honored to be his patient.”**

**— Mary Catherine Cooper**

**Mary Cooper**, this year’s Luminaires Vision Award Honoree (see page 10 story), Lamp Society member, longtime Luminaires publicity chair, and board member, explains, “I am blessed with a disposition where I am continuously appreciative and happy. It doesn’t mean that life doesn’t hold challenges or difficulties—I am simply fortunate to meet them with the right spirit.”

A Luminaires member since 2000, for two decades Mary has documented the Doheny support group’s events with camera in hand, organized its visual history in photo albums, and written up press releases as well as articles for their newsletter. Mary was so enthusiastic in her work that her nickname became “Doheny’s Cheerleader-in-Chief.”

A storyteller at heart, Mary’s Luminaires duties came naturally. In seventh grade, she discovered her love of writing as she began interviewing fellow students and reporting about campus life for her Arcadia middle school newspaper. Her passion for writing continued to grow throughout high school and her years at Occidental College. As a mother, editing and contributing to PTA newsletters became a priority, and eventually Mary’s byline appeared regularly on *San Marino Tribune* features. Thus, by the time she was asked to join the Luminaires, she was already a veteran communicator.

Mary grew up with an appreciation for her eyesight because her mother feared going blind. Born in the late 19th century, her mother had astigmatism, which at the time was thought to be a precursor to blindness. An impression was made. In the early 1980s, Mary’s local

ophthalmologist detected a mole on her retina and, out of a sense of caution, called Doheny Eye Institute and personally arranged for her to be seen by Dr. Peter Liggett, a fellow under Stephen J. Ryan, MD. Fortunately, there was no immediate concern, but it was a condition to be monitored.

This began her long relationship with Doheny. Dr. Ronald Smith, then Chairman of the Ophthalmology Department, saw her through the course of follow-up examinations. When cataracts were detected, Dr. Benjamin Bert performed the surgery.

Later, Dr. Vikas Chopra performed a laser procedure that Mary described as “miraculous and immediate.” Today, as an age-related macular degeneration (AMD) patient, she sees Dr. Srinivas Sadda and his fellows for regular anti-VEGF treatments. “Doheny is an amazing place,” Mary said, “and Dr. Sadda is brilliant—he takes his time, listens well, and is reassuring and caring. I feel honored to be his patient.”

Since 1997, Mary Cooper has supported Doheny Eye Institute through regular and consistent donations. In appreciation for her care, she offers her time, talent, and leadership, as well as her blessed disposition.



Srinivas Sadda, MD, FARVO

## DOHENY EYE INSTITUTE — AFFILIATED CLINICIANS AND SCIENTISTS

### Cataract and Refractive Surgery

Kenneth Lu, MD

### Comprehensive

Monica Khitri, MD  
Vivian Qin, MD

### Cornea and Uveitis

Benjamin Bert, MD, FACS  
Judy Chen, MD  
Ali Mahdavi Fard, MD  
John Irvine, MD  
(Emeritus)  
Victoria Yom, MD

### Glaucoma

Judy Chen, MD  
Vikas Chopra, MD  
Brian Francis, MD, MS  
Nariman Nassiri, MD, MPH  
Christine Nguyen, MD  
Vivian Qin, MD

### Neuro-Ophthalmology

Jane Chan, MD  
Alexander Fein, MD  
Michael Gilhooley, MD, PhD,  
FRCOphth  
Peter Quiros, MD  
Alfredo Sadun, MD, PhD  
(Vice Chair)

### Optometric Services

Peter Tien, OD

### Orbital and Ophthalmic Plastic Surgery

Justin Karlin, MD, MS  
Daniel Rootman, MD, MS

### Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus

Mona Fayad, MD  
Monica Khitri, MD  
Irena Tsui, MD  
Federico Velez, MD

### Retina

Giulia Corradetti, MD  
Gad Heilweil, MD  
Michael Ip, MD  
Phillip Le, MD, PhD  
SriniVas Sadda, MD, FARVO  
Irena Tsui, MD

### Researchers

Steven Barnes, PhD  
Vikas Chopra, MD  
Giulia Corradetti, MD  
Deborah A. Ferrington, PhD  
Sreekumar P. Gangadharan, PhD  
Kaustabh Ghosh, PhD  
Zhihong (Jewel) Hu, PhD  
Michael Ip, MD  
Ram Kannan, PhD  
Phillip Le, MD, PhD  
Emma Lessieur, MD, PhD  
SriniVas Sadda, MD, FARVO  
Alfredo Sadun, MD, PhD  
Peng Shang, PhD  
Deming Sun, MD  
(Emeritus)  
Yuhua Zhang, PhD

## DOHENY EYE INSTITUTE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

Charles T. Foscue  
*Chairman*  
Marissa Goldberg  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
Deborah A. Ferrington, PhD  
*Chief Scientific Officer*  
Kashif Khan  
*Chief Financial Officer*  
Ruthie Baudoin  
*Secretary of the Board*

### Directors

John R. Cleator  
Kathleen M. Duncan  
Steven E. Feldon, MD, MBA  
Geoffrey H. Gee  
James H. Gipson  
Ronald L. Olson  
Stephen A. Ralph  
Mark A. Samuels  
Eric L. Small  
Robert A. Smith, III

### Life Members

Hon. George L. Argyros  
Gavin S. Herbert  
Diane J. Rinker

### Honorary Director

Jennifer Cooper  
The Luminaires Founder Chapter

### UCLA Stein Eye Institute Observer

Anne L. Coleman, MD, PhD

### Doheny InSight

Alicia Cleaver  
*Chief Development Officer*  
Sharon Takeyama  
*Editorial Advisor*  
Bill Youngblood  
*Editor in Chief, Writer,  
& Creative Director*  
Lisa Haviland  
*Medical Editor*  
Lea Frechette  
*Graphic Designer*

## DOHENY EYE CENTER UCLA LOCATIONS

### PASADENA

Doheny Eye Institute  
150 N. Orange Grove Blvd.  
Suites 1200, 1300, 1400  
Pasadena, CA 91103  
(626) 817-4747

### ARCADIA

622 W. Duarte Road  
Suite 101  
Arcadia, CA 91007  
(626) 254-9010

### ORANGE COUNTY

Orange Coast Memorial  
Patient Care Pavilion  
18111 Brookhurst Street  
Suite 640  
Fountain Valley, CA 92708  
(714) 963-1444

## DOHENY EYE INSTITUTE

### DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

150 N. Orange Grove Boulevard  
Pasadena, CA 91103  
(323) 342-7101  
development@doheny.org  
doheny.org



Affiliated with  Stein Eye Institute



**Doheny Eye Institute**  
Development & Communications  
150 N. Orange Grove Blvd.  
Pasadena, CA 91103  
[doheny.org](http://doheny.org)

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
ANAHEIM, CA  
PERMIT NO. 288

# TEAMWORK MATTERS

## Advancing Sight-Saving Discoveries

Breakthroughs happen when teams work together. Our scientists collaborate to uncover the causes of blindness, develop new therapies, and harness artificial intelligence to transform how eye disease is diagnosed and treated.

At Doheny Eye Institute, teamwork powers innovation. Together, let's turn bold discoveries into life-changing treatments.



Discover how you can support sight-saving research.  
Visit [Doheny.org](http://Doheny.org).

**Improving Vision. Restoring Sight. Changing Lives.**



**DOHENY  
EYE INSTITUTE**

Affiliated with **UCLA** Stein Eye Institute