

The Johnny Justice, Jr. Award

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In 1988, anticipating the society's 20th Anniversary the following year, the Board of Directors approved a proposal to create a special award that would honor the principle creator of the Ophthalmic Photographers' Society, Mr. Johnny Justice, Jr.

In the Autumn of 1969, during the days of infancy of ocular fluorescence photography, Johnny was the Director of the Ophthalmic Photography Section of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, where he became renowned for his superior camera work in fundus photography, fluorescein angiography and slit-lamp biomicrography. This expertise lent invaluable technical support to the genius of such pioneers as Drs. Ed Norton, Donald Gass and others seeking to unravel the mysteries of the retinal circulation and its impact and influence upon retinal diseases itself.

His close association and collaboration with these researchers ignited Johnny's interest in angiopathy which propelled him into yet another unique area of expertise, the ability to evaluate and interpret the findings demonstrated on the angiogram. The effect of these combined factors was to produce, in one individual, a bridge between the physician and the paraprofessional performing the procedure. This bridge was destined to become a catalyst in the rapid development of the profession of ophthalmic photography itself.

It seems like just yesterday that Johnny, electric with energy and enthusiasm for his work, met other photographers at the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology that was held in Chicago in 1969. His intense interest in fluorescein angiography, combined with his

appreciation of the value of organized scientific societies which could serve as a forum for the dissemination of education and information, moved him to ask the rhetorical question of each person, "what do you think of a society of eye photographers?" This question was met with great enthusiasm, so an informal gathering was held and the society was born.



An illustration of Johnny Justice, Jr. with a patient using a Fundus Camera.

It was inevitable that Johnny, because of his interest, energy and professional stature within the ophthalmologic community was to become THE primary moving force behind the germination and rapid growth of the Ophthalmic Photographer's Society during its first year of infancy. He was elected Secretary and, hard upon his return home, embarked on an incredible campaign of correspondence all over the world, to introduce the society and solicit interest and member-

ship. Within a year's time ... twelve very short months ... the society had a membership of (52) people and held its First Annual Meeting at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas, all a result of Johnny's single-handed, draconian efforts.

Two years later, Dr. Koichi Shimizu, General Chairman of the First International Symposium on Fluorescein Angiography, held in Tokyo in February, 1972, invited Johnny to remain at the podium after he finished his presentation on Techniques of Fundus Photography to say a few words about our new society. In this unprecedented move

Update: Since 1988 when the Johnny Justice Award was founded, organizers have been actively pursuing the necessary funding to fully establish the scholarship. This coming year, a formal committee will be finalizing the financial status of the Award to implement a formal program with specific guidelines an application process and a time schedule. Please watch the OPS newsletter and the next JOP for updated information.

of giving extra time during the regular program at an international meeting to a member of an ancillary profession, Dr. Shimizu demonstrated the great esteem with which he and other members of the international ophthalmologic community held Johnny Justice, Jr. and to the importance of the Ophthalmic Photographers' Society within their own profession.

For the next few years, Johnny's influence and involvement were the core of the organization's progress and growth. His popularity within the ranks of the society is clearly evidenced by the fact that he is the only person twice elected, on two separate occasions, rather than in succession, to the Office of President. Clearly, all of us who are engaged in the profession of ophthalmic photography owe a great deal to this energetic and far-sighted man.

Thus, in 1988, the Johnny Justice Jr. Scholarship Award, was created to honor the Founding Father of the Ophthalmic Photographer's Society. This award will be granted to eligible members of the society who otherwise would not be able to attend OPS training courses or meetings, and receive the benefits of these activities to learn the craft and upgrade their work. How exquisitely appropriate! Out of his own effort and desire, Johnny created a professional organization that will represent our craft for many years to come,

and which will remain at the core of the education and training of new personnel to the field.

In its wisdom, the Board of Directors found the only perfect way to propagate, continuously, Johnny's desire to help advance the quality of ophthalmic photography itself.

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Author's note:

I am privileged to write this piece for a beloved friend and colleague. Johnny and I, and a multitude of others close to us traveled life's path together for these twenty and some odd years. From the very beginning, I was privy to all the incredible work performed by this man and knew his frustrations, agonies and gratification that he encountered during the first several years of this society's growth. Even now, twenty-three years later as I write, I relived those same frustrations and pain that I felt for Johnny, who single-handedly pushed this society from an abstract concept to reality. I, for one, have gained enormous benefit and gratification from the Ophthalmic Photographers' Society and, if I had to select only one person to thank for it all, it could only be Mr. Johnny Justice, Jr.

A heart-felt thanks, Johnny, for enhancing and enriching my life.