

UC San Diego Shiley Eye Center Physician Honored with Day of Recognition

William Freeman, M.D., to Receive Visionary Award

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After more than 20 years of service to the San Diego community, William R. Freeman, M.D., *professor of ophthalmology at UC San Diego School of Medicine and Director of the UCSD Jacobs Retina Center* adjacent to Shiley Eye Center, is being recognized by The Foundation Fighting Blindness as well as The City of San Diego.

On Wednesday, May 14, 2008, the Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB) will honor Freeman with the Visionary Award at their inaugural San Diego Dining in the Dark. The Visionary Award celebrates extraordinary people and professionals who support efforts to find treatments and cures for vision loss, as well as individuals who have made a profound impact on their community.

Mayor Jerry Sanders of the City of San Diego has proclaimed Wednesday, May 14, 2008 "William R. Freeman, M.D. Day." The day recognizes Freeman's "outstanding professional and personal commitment toward improving the vision of those affected by retinal degenerative diseases."

Since coming to UC San Diego in 1986, Freeman has built a clinical and research enterprise of excellence known world-wide. The new Joan and Irwin Jacobs Retina Center supports a research team dedicated to attacking retinal diseases that cause blindness and vision loss. The center houses projects seeking to find solutions for people of all ages who suffer from retina problems, which include debilitating disorders such as macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, tumors, and infectious and inherited diseases.

Freeman is a prolific researcher and noted clinician and surgeon devoted to thwarting vision-threatening eye diseases. Freeman's research focus has included using gene therapy to restore eyesight; use of artificial retinas; new drug therapies; and improving surgical techniques and technologies that allow a more accurate diagnosis and treatment.

Freeman has published over 425 scientific papers, nearly 300 scientific abstracts, the highly regarded book *Practical Atlas of Retinal Disease and Therapy*, as well as numerous important medical chapters in the field of retina disease. He is listed among *The Best Doctors in America*, and serves on the editorial boards of many prestigious journals, including *Retina*, *Ophthalmology*, and the *Journal of Uveitis and Ocular Inflammation*. Freeman was also selected as the permanent President of the International Society of Ocular Infections.

"Dr. Freeman has long been and will continue to be an important innovator and contributor to the world of retinal diseases. All of us at Shiley Eye Center are proud to be associated with him," said Stuart Brown, M.D., professor and Chair of the UC San Diego Department of Ophthalmology, and director of the Shiley Eye Center.

"It is a great honor to receive this recognition from FFB and from our Mayor," said Freeman. "We at the Jacobs Retina Center have been working hard to advance treatments for patients with retinal disease. This award is a validation of that work. We hope to work closely with FFB, the NIH, and our university colleagues here at UC

San Diego, as well as other institutions in San Diego, and our local biotechnology community to pursue the best treatments for patients with retinal disease. We are utilizing the most advanced basic scientific techniques and clinical trials methodologies to advance these goals. This award will be shared with all of my colleagues here at the Jacobs Retina Center, without whom our progress would not be possible."

About Dining in the Dark

The inaugural San Diego Dining in the Dark event will be held Wednesday, May 14, 2008, at The US Grant, 326 Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101. Wine tasting and silent auction begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner and awards at 7:00 p.m.

Dining in the Dark is a unique sensory awareness experience that takes guests on a journey of tastes, sounds and touch, completely in the dark. Created in Germany, Dining in the Dark is a one-of-a-kind concept that has been enjoyed by many people across Europe and has been creating a buzz in the United States in recent years. Visually impaired servers will guide guests through an unforgettable dining experience that will allow participants to understand the darkness of daily life for those affected by blindness.

Proceeds from this event will benefit more than nine million Americans who are losing their sight to degenerative retinal diseases such as age-related macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa, Usher syndrome, and other similar diseases.

UC San Diego Shiley Eye Center

From basic eye exams to the most advanced diagnostic tests and sophisticated surgery, the physicians and staff at the UC San Diego Shiley Eye Center provide comprehensive eye care at one convenient location. Patients with complex retinal disease seen at the Shiley Eye Center are often managed at the Jacobs Retina Center where new therapies and clinical trials are available.

Built in 1991, the Shiley Eye Center is home to academic and basic research, innovative and unique surgical practices and patient treatment for a wide variety of ophthalmologic concerns. The Division of Community Ophthalmology programs reach out to bring eye testing to the San Diego Head Start Program and Public Schools with the EyeMobile for Children, in an effort to serve members of our community of all ages who face challenges associated with poor, restricted vision. A self-management educational program helps those who are afflicted with Macular Degeneration providing the means to cope with the illness and its side effects so that they can better function within society.

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