

## Newly Named Shiley Eye Institute Projects Bigger, Bolder Vision

February 11, 2015 | Scott LaFee

**R**eflecting its emergence as a regional hub for unparalleled clinical care, research, education and community service, the UC San Diego Shiley Eye Center has been renamed the UC San Diego Donald P. and Darlene V. Shiley Eye Institute, encompassing the Shiley Eye Center, the Anne F. and Abraham Ratner Children's Eye Center, the Hamilton Glaucoma Center and the Joan and Irwin Jacobs Retina Center.



The Shiley Eye Center has been renamed the UC San Diego Donald P. and Darlene V. Shiley Eye Institute.

"The new name more accurately captures the fullness of the work being done at Shiley," said Pradeep Khosla, chancellor of the University of California, San Diego. "The Institute and Department of Ophthalmology, working hand-in-hand with the School of Medicine and other programs across campus, will leverage every possible tool and expertise, from genetics, bioengineering and pharmacy to pathology, neurosciences and stem cell research, to improve

the treatment of eye diseases, find new cures and hasten the day when blindness is entirely preventable."

Robert N. Weinreb, MD, chair and Distinguished Professor of Ophthalmology and director of the Shiley Eye Institute, said the institute's emphasis would remain focused upon achieving excellence – in the clinic and in the laboratory. "The department will continue to partner with groups in San Diego and throughout the world to translate research into better vision. We also will

continue to nurture and grow our programs for community outreach and continuing medical education for physicians.”

The Shiley Eye Institute, part of UC San Diego Health System, employs 227 faculty and staff. In 2014, there were 106,470 patient visits and 4,862 surgeries. The Shiley Eye Mobile conducted 12,238 vision screenings, 2,011 eye exams, dispensed 1,288 pairs of free glasses and referred numerous children for more serious follow up care.

“It was always very clear that my late husband had a special place in his heart for the Shiley Eye Center,” said Darlene Shiley, a staunch supporter of the center since it was founded in 1991. “I will never forget how moved he was by (former director and department chair) Dr. Stuart Brown's description of the work being done and the work that still needed to be addressed. And now, decades later, Dr. Robert Weinreb is focused on patient-centric care excellence and leading the Shiley into new areas of eye research and treatment. Successful past, bright future – how lucky we all are to have such dedicated physicians, researchers, staff and eager volunteers.”

Doctors and researchers at Shiley have made measurable progress in addressing some of the primary diseases of vision, such as macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, corneal and retinal disorders and cataracts. Patients range in age from 1 day to 105 years old.

Shiley physician-scientists are actively involved in diverse research and scholarship, from defining all of the cell types and synaptic connections that link the eyes to the brain, part of President Obama's BRAIN Initiative, developing biosensors and an artificial retina, even exploring the possibilities of whole eye transplants. In 2013, Shiley Eye Center was ranked fourth in the nation in funding to departments of ophthalmology from the National Institutes of Health. Last year, the Department of Ophthalmology was awarded a prestigious K12 grant from the NIH to train clinician scientists, one of just a few such grants in the country. In 2014, Shiley researchers published 205 peer-reviewed studies and conducted 29 clinical trials.

The Institute will include the new Richard C. Atkinson Laboratory for Regenerative Ophthalmology, created last year with an anonymous \$6.5 million gift from a grateful patient. The new lab will investigate cell replacement therapies, tissue engineering and other biomedical advances to reverse vision loss and blindness. Researchers will explore novel stem cell approaches and work closely with the Sanford Clinical Stem Cell Center at UC San Diego Health System, which was established in 2013.

A new Vision Research Center is in the early stages of planning along with the creation of a framework to fund the project. The Center is envisioned to accelerate the translation of new research into treatments for patient with blinding ophthalmic diseases.

“The center is intended to help bridge the gap between laboratory and clinic by bringing together brilliant minds and diverse talents in a shared facility,” said Weinreb. “This integrated approach will

speed the transformation of discoveries into clinical applications that can be tested through clinical trials.”

The new Shiley Eye Institute embraces the larger mission of UC San Diego, its schools and programs and the UC San Diego Health System, said David Brenner, MD, vice chancellor of health sciences and dean of the School of Medicine. “Our goal is unprecedented collaboration across all disciplines, moving basic science to real-world applications as quickly and as effectively as possible and doing so in a way that truly improves patient care and lives. I think people will see that vision come to life in the Institute.”

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