

UAB DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY AND VISUAL SCIENCES

# ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

**JUNE 13, 2025**

**BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS**

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Dear friends and colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 26th Annual Symposium of the UAB Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences. Meeting together each year to share new ideas, renew collaborations, and celebrate our trainees’ accomplishments has become a hallmark of our department’s culture. This year—our first gathering at the beautiful Birmingham Botanical Gardens—we have designed a day that blends discovery with dialogue and, I hope, plenty of inspiration.

Our program features three outstanding invited lecturers whose work exemplifies the breadth and depth of modern ophthalmology:

- Nisha Acharya, M.D., M.S.** – an international leader in uveitis clinical trials and ocular-inflammatory disease analytics;
- Ruth Williams, M.D.** – a visionary glaucoma specialist and past president of the American Academy of Ophthalmology who continues to shape our profession through advocacy and mentorship;
- Yoshihiro Yonekawa, M.D.** – an accomplished surgeon-scientist whose innovations in adult and pediatric retina care are advancing outcomes worldwide.

In addition to these keynote sessions, today’s agenda showcases platform talks and posters from our residents, fellows, and faculty, along with focused panel discussions on retina, uveitis, and glaucoma. Whether you are exploring new treatments, refining surgical techniques, or exploring health-services questions, I encourage you to engage fully—ask questions, build connections, and consider how the insights you hear may might translate back to your own practice.

Finally, I want to recognize the tremendous effort that goes into staging this event. Our planning committee, administrative team, and many volunteers have worked for months to ensure a seamless experience. Most importantly, thank you—our attendees and presenters—for sharing your time, expertise, and enthusiasm for vision science. Your commitment is what propels our field forward and, ultimately, improves the lives of our patients.

I look forward to a stimulating day of learning and collegiality with each of you.

Sincerely,



**Krupa Patel M.D**  
Residency Program Director  
Max and Lorayne Cooper Professor of Ophthalmology Residency Training  
Associate Professor of Ophthalmology

Symposium Faculty Speakers

UAB Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences	Alabama Ophthalmology Associates	Retina Specialists of Alabama	Retina Consultants of Alabama
Brian Samuels, M.D., Ph.D.	Kristin Bains, M.D.	Matthew West, M.D.	Jason Crosson, M.D. John Mason, III, M.D. Russell Read, M.D., Ph.D. Benjamin Roberts, M.D.

UAB Ophthalmology Residents

Fourth Year	Third Year	Second Year	First Year
Poojitha Balakrishnan, M.D., Ph.D., MPH	Udit Bhavsar, M.D.	Mark Johnson, M.D.	Sophia Bertot, M.D.
Caroline Besley, M.D.	Morghan Jameson, M.D.	Ngozi Ogburu-Ogbonnaya, M.D.	Lee Bowman, M.D.
Veena Danthuluri, M.D.	Mary Moses, M.D.	Kaval Patel, M.D.	Savannah Cottom, M.D.
Malcolm Kates, M.D.	William Poore, M.D.	Katharine Weintraub, MD	Deepika Kubsad, M.D.
Scott McClure, M.D.	John Stoffer, M.D.	Alicia Woock, M.D., Ph.D.	Alex Parks, M.D.

Featured Lecturers

Charles J. Burnham, M.D., Endowed Distinguished Lectureship in Ophthalmology	UAB Ophthalmology Alumni Association Sponsored Lecturer	Helen Keller Lecturer
Nisha Acharya, M.D., M.S.	Ruth Williams, M.D.	Yoshihiro Yonekawa, M.D.
University of California San Francisco	Wheaton Eye Clinic	Wills Eye Hospital

Learning Objectives

- Upon completion of the UAB Ophthalmology Annual Symposium, the participants will be able to:
- Recognize the psychological and procedural complexities of cataract surgery, including outcome definitions, stress management strategies, and the role of perfectionism.
  - Understand career trajectories in ophthalmology, including factors affecting longevity, supportive practice structures, and continued surgical education beyond residency.
  - Review current legal and organizational guidelines for evaluating clinical and surgical competency, and examine the evidence linking competency assessments to outcomes.
  - Analyze the parallels between intraocular pressure and systemic blood pressure management in glaucoma, including the impact of low diastolic pressure and practical treatment strategies for progression despite target IOP.
  - Apply evidence-based techniques for diagnosing and managing pediatric retinal disorders, including foundational surgical principles and approaches for retinal detachment.
  - Interpret the latest guidelines and clinical trial data related to uveitis management, including juvenile idiopathic arthritis-associated uveitis, herpes zoster ophthalmicus, and uveitic macular edema.

# Symposium Schedule

## Morning Session

7:00 A.M.	Continental Breakfast - Exhibits Open
7:55 A.M.	Welcome Krupa Patel, M.D
8:00 A.M.	The Future of Ophthalmology Brian Samuels, M.D., Ph.D.
8:15 A.M.	UAB Ophthalmology Alumni Association Sponsored Lecture I: The Hidden Costs of Perfectionism and Cataract Surgery and Continuing Medical Education: Refining skills post-residency Ruth Williams, M.D.
8:35 A.M.	Quality Improvement: OKAP Didactic Curriculum Caroline Besley, M.D.
8:55 A.M.	UAB Ophthalmology Alumni Association Sponsored Lecture II: Career Longevity: Extending the Arc Ruth Williams, M.D.
9:15 A.M.	Difficult Cases Round Table Ruth Williams, M.D.   Brian Samuels, M.D., Ph.D.   Kristin Bains, M.D.
9:55 A.M.	Break and Exhibits
10:20 A.M.	UAB Ophthalmology Alumni Association Sponsored Lecture III: The Ups and Downs of Glaucoma and Systemic Blood Pressure Ruth Williams, M.D.
10:40 A.M.	Comparison of Glaucoma Diagnosis by Telemedicine, In-Person Ophthalmologist and Optometrist Poojitha Balakrishnan, M.D., Ph.D., MPH
11:00 A.M.	Charles J. Burnham, M.D., Endowed Distinguished Lecture I: Update on juvenile idiopathic arthritis-associated uveitis Nisha Acharya, M.D., M.S.
11:20 A.M.	Mucor Mortality Rates Veena Danthuluri, M.D.
11:40 A.M.	Charles J. Burnham, M.D., Endowed Distinguished Lecture II: Update on herpes zoster ophthalmicus Nisha Acharya, M.D., M.S.
12:00 P.M.	Uveitis Round Table Nisha Acharya, M.D., M.S.   Russell Read, M.D., Ph.D.   Matthew West, M.D.
12:40 P.M.	Lunch

## Afternoon Session

1:20 P.M.	Charles J. Burnham, M.D., Endowed Distinguished Lecture III: Uveitic Macular Edema Nisha Acharya, M.D., M.S.
1:40 P.M.	Helen Keller Lecture I: Tips for examining the retina in kids Yoshihiro Yonekawa, M.D.
2:00 P.M.	Detecting a Specific Cause of Central Retinal Artery Occlusion Malcolm Kates, M.D.
2:20 P.M.	Helen Keller Lecture II: 20 lessons from the Primary Retinal Detachment Outcomes Study Yoshihiro Yonekawa, M.D.
2:40P.M.	Break and Exhibits
3:05 P.M.	Comparison of Dexamethasone and Fluocinolone Intravitreal Implants for Diabetic Macular Edema Scott McClure, M.D.
3:25 P.M.	Helen Keller Lecture III: Pearls for pediatric retina surgery Yoshihiro Yonekawa, M.D.
3:45 P.M.	Retina Round Table Yoshihiro Yonekawa, M.D.   Benjamin Roberts, M.D.   Jason Crosson, M.D.   John Mason, III, M.D.
4:30 P.M.	Closing Remarks and Presentation of Resident Awards Krupa Patel, M.D. & Rob Tauscher, M.D.

## PGY-2 Poster Presentations

'Twas the Night Before Christmas Mark Johnson, M.D.,   Sponsors: Cary Baxter, M.D. & Harshvardhan Chawla, M.D.
The Day Her Vision Vanished: A medical mystery Ngozi Ogburu-Ogbonnaya, M.D.,   Sponsors: Nathan Fischer, M.D. & Connor Dugan, M.D.
Where Has the Color Gone? Kaval Patel, M.D.   Sponsors: Connor Dugan, M.D., Lanning Kline, M.D. Michael Vaphiades, O.D.
Don't You (Forget About Me) Katharine Weintraub, M.D.   Sponsors: Nathan Fischer, M.D. & Russell Read, M.D., Ph.D.
A Serious Note Alicia Woock, M.D., Ph.D.   Sponsors: Cary Baxter, M.D. & Russell Read, M.D., Ph.D.



# Featured Lecturers

## UAB Ophthalmology Alumni Association Sponsored Lecturer



**Ruth Williams, M.D.**  
Elizabeth C. Proctor Distinguished Professor  
Glaucoma Specialist, Wheaton Eye Clinic  
Chief Medical Editor, *EyeNet Magazine*  
Wheaton, IL

Dr. Ruth Williams has been a leading voice in ophthalmology for over 30 years, known for her integrity, optimism, and forward-thinking leadership. A glaucoma consultant and partner at Wheaton Eye Clinic, she previously served as president and CEO for nine years, guiding the clinic through significant growth and helping establish it as one of the Midwest’s premier ophthalmology groups. The practice now spans six full-service locations and includes an ambulatory surgery center, staffed by 36 ophthalmologists and 14 optometrists.

Dr. Williams served as president of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) in 2012, with prior roles including Trustee-at-Large and Secretary for Member Services. During her tenure, she championed young ophthalmologist engagement, launching programs and awards such as the EyeWiki, Advocacy Award, and EnergyEyes Award—many of which have since been adopted internationally.

Currently, she is the Chief Medical Editor of *EyeNet Magazine*, where her insightful monthly columns are widely read. She is also Vice-Chair of the Glaucoma Research Foundation and has held leadership roles within the AMA. In January 2025, she will begin serving as Chair of the AAO Foundation Advisory Board. Dr. Williams earned her medical degree from Rush Medical College and completed her glaucoma fellowship at UCSF and Shaffer Associates.



**Charles J. Burnham, M.D., Endowed Distinguished Lectureship in Ophthalmology**

**Nisha Acharya, M.D., M.S.**  
Elizabeth C. Proctor Distinguished Professor  
Director, Uveitis and Ocular Inflammatory Disease Service  
Vice Chair, Faculty Development and Mentorship  
Departments of Ophthalmology, Epidemiology and Biostatistics  
Associate Director, F.I. Proctor Foundation  
University of California, San Francisco

Dr. Nisha Acharya is the Elizabeth C. Proctor Distinguished Professor of Ophthalmology, Epidemiology & Biostatistics at the University of California San Francisco and Director of the Uveitis and Ocular Inflammatory Disease Service at the F.I. Proctor Foundation. She is also the Associate Director of the Proctor Foundation and Vice Chair for Faculty Development and Mentorship in the Department of Ophthalmology. Dr. Acharya obtained her undergraduate and master’s degrees at Stanford University, followed by medical school at UCSF. She was an intern at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and completed her ophthalmology residency at Harvard at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. She returned to UCSF for fellowship. Dr. Acharya is a clinician-scientist with a clinical focus on uveitis and ocular inflammatory diseases. She has an NIH-funded research program that focuses on the design and implementation of international clinical trials and data analytics research on ocular inflammatory diseases. She is a past president of the American Uveitis Society and has received a Senior Achievement Award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology. She has also been recognized for her mentorship of medical students with a UCSF Dean’s Mentor Award.



**Helen Keller Lecturer**

**Yoshihiro Yonekawa, M.D.**  
Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University  
Visiting Professor, Kyorin University Faculty of Medicine, Tokyo  
Retina Specialist, Wills Eye Hospital  
Philadelphia, PA

Dr. Yoshihiro Yonekawa is a highly accomplished adult and pediatric retina specialist. He earned his MD with honors from Weill Cornell Medical College and completed his ophthalmology residency at Harvard Medical School, where he was recognized with numerous awards for clinical and research excellence. He went on to complete a prestigious fellowship in adult and pediatric retina surgery at Associated Retinal Consultants/William Beaumont Hospital, earning national accolades from the Heed Ophthalmic Foundation, the Ronald G. Michels Foundation, and the Retina Society.

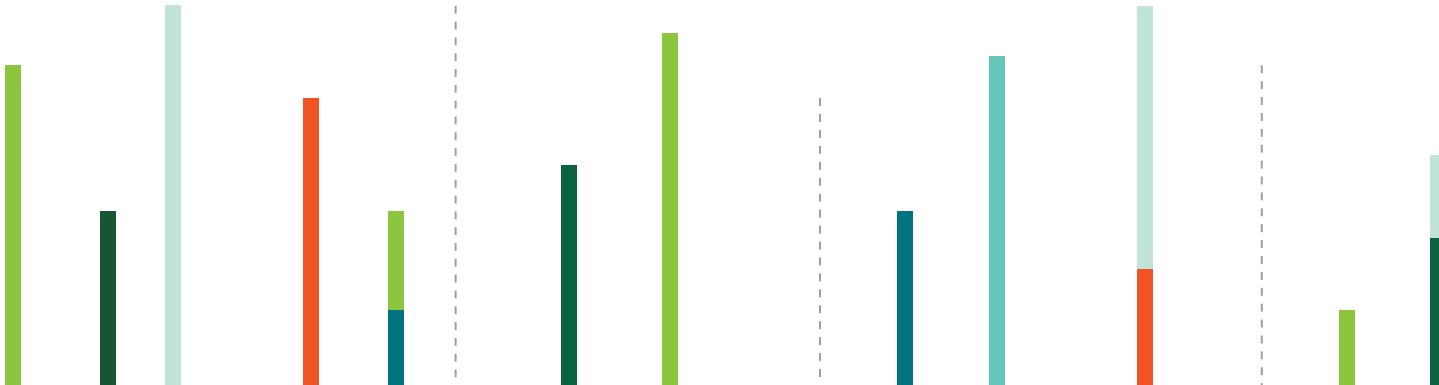
Dr. Yonekawa previously served as Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School and Director of Pediatric Retina Surgery at Boston Children’s Hospital. He is now a member of the Retina Service at Wills Eye Hospital and an Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at Thomas Jefferson University. He also holds a visiting faculty appointment at Kyorin University in Tokyo.

Deeply involved in professional societies, Dr. Yonekawa is president-elect of the Vit Buckle Society and an incoming board member of the American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS). He is a frequent honoree, receiving the AAO Achievement Award, ASRS Presidential Honor Award, and recognition on *The Ophthalmologist* Power List of Rising Stars.

A prolific academic contributor, Dr. Yonekawa has authored over 400 peer-reviewed papers, editorials, and textbook chapters. He holds editorial roles with *RETINA*, *JVRD*, *OSLI Retina*, and several other journals, and currently serves as Editor in Chief of *Retina Roundup*.

## CME Accreditation Statement

The University of Alabama Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The University of Alabama Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine designates this Live Activity for a maximum of 7 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. The University of Alabama Heersink School of Medicine is an equal opportunity institution.



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