

A Reminiscence of Three Wise Men

Chapter Two of the Gospel according to St. Matthew tells the story of the birth of Christ and how three wise men followed His star so that they might worship Him and bring Him gifts. This wonderful story, which is the basis for our festival of Christmas, has given inspiration to mankind for 2,000 years. Its lessons motivate our lives and actions.

In this issue of the *Canadian Journal of Optometry*, our profession honours three wise men who have also followed a star — Optometry. They have, throughout their careers, imparted their gift of knowledge to students of Optometry and members of the profession. Their influence permeates Optometry in Canada.

Of the three, Ted Fisher, second Dean of the College of Ontario and first Director of the School of Optometry, University of Waterloo, has given of his time and talent unstintingly for the longest period. He was my teacher of both theoretical and clinical subjects in Optometry during my undergraduate years; and near the end of my first year, he assumed the Deanship. The entertainment of undergraduates by Ted and Eleanor Fisher in their home provided many of us with our introduction to the family side of the profession. After eight years in a successful and growing practice (post-graduation), I was incensed when the College of Optometry announced that, in order to gain a Doctorate in Optometry, I would require two more years of undergraduate education. I felt strongly, as did the majority of colleagues of the Essex, Kent, Lambton Optometrical Society, that we should be given the degree on the basis of our previous undergraduate work, and our subsequent practical experience. As the Chairman of the Society, I asked Ted to appear at a meeting in Windsor to explain the program and the reasons we should not be given the degree. Like Daniel in the lions' den, he faced a hostile group of his peers and, with quiet, reasoned argument, convinced us that the advances in knowledge in the area of vision science mandated further education if we were to merit the degree Doctor of Optometry. He was so convincing that the majority of the Society enrolled, and completed the degree program over the next few years. Ted taught in the O.D. program and succeeded, for the first time, in bringing to me a true understanding of geometric optics, a gift for which I have been exceedingly grateful.

During the period of optometrical self-study occasioned by the Royal Commission on Health Services in Canada (1960), I had numerous conversations with Ted which assisted in the preparation of the Ontario Association of Optometrists' Brief to the Commission. With the insight gained in this endeavour, I began to think of graduate study. Ted assisted me in examining the pros and cons of such a step. After the die was cast, he further assisted in obtaining fiscal support from the Maybee Fund. Of equal importance was the interest and continuing support he gave, during my graduate studies, through the medium of correspondence, and during personal visits.

Ted Fisher was the Chairman of the Committee that hired me in 1967 as an Associate Professor at the University of Waterloo. He subsequently appointed me the School's first Director of Clinics and gave me relatively free rein to originate and develop the clinical program. Without Ted, I would never have had that gift of opportunity. During our work together, we had many good arguments and occasional differences; but always Ted was, and is, ever a gentleman, patient teacher, friend and colleague. During his leadership, the faculty became a team, and the School progressed to an institution in the first rank.

I met Clair Bobier first as a teacher in continuing education programs held by the College of Optometry of Ontario, and later in the same capacity in the O.D. program. In his courses, he made Physiological Optics come alive as a science fundamental to the practice of Optometry. He was the agent who made Ted Fisher's statement on the burgeoning extent of new knowledge in visual science emerge as a reality. He taught with humour and insight, thereby permitting his students to share his joy in the discovery of knowledge. He gave us the gift of thinking as vision scientists. He succeeded in instilling in a number of us the desire to undertake graduate study and research. He, too, was a counsellor and advisor in my travail of decision-making towards leaving optometric practice to undertake graduate study.

When I returned to Waterloo in 1967, his counsel, collaboration and willingness to share knowledge made my entry into optometrical academia both pleasant and constructive. The necessity of working in close co-operation on many of the political and academic problems which faced the new school deepened our friendship and mutual respect. The development of graduate studies and research has been the star that Clair has followed. He knew intuitively that the profession's continuing growth and development is dependent on its strengths in creating and applying new knowledge of vision science. It is fortunate that he is to continue to involve himself in research activity post-retirement.

In their home, Clair and Lois Bobier have provided generations of optometrists with a social vocal point. Their home reflects their mutual interest in art and intellectual pursuits. Their friendship and hospitality has been enjoyed by their optometrical friends, especially their faculty colleagues. Doris and I have been enriched by their companionship.

When I began to think of graduate study in 1962, I read of Bill Lyle, a past President of C.A.O., leaving a well-established practice to enter graduate school. His action was an inspiring precedent. Though I had not known Bill personally, his activities on behalf of the profession were a matter of record. I first met Bill as a good Samaritan on a bitterly cold night in January, 1963. My car had stalled with a clogged gasline eight miles north of Bloomington, Indiana. In desperation, I phoned Bill, since he was the only contact I knew of in the area. Without a murmur, he came to my rescue and took me to his home where he and Lorena were my gracious hosts for the next three days. Subsequently, Bill introduced me to graduate school, easing my way by his experience and the record of scholarship he had set within the university's graduate program. He established a standard to which all subsequent Canadian students aspired. There is no need to re-iterate Bill's achievements as a teacher, scholar and clinician. His leadership in pharmacology, pathology and more recently, his exemplary activities as Editor of the *Journal of the American Academy of Optometry and Physiological Optics* puts him in a class by himself.

During our mutual attendance at Indiana University, we and our families established an enduring friendship. At that time, Bill and I frequently discussed what we might hope to accomplish were we to be fortunate enough to be associated with the operation of a School of Optometry at a Canadian university. This opportunity did occur at the University of Waterloo, beginning July 1, 1967. Bill has since fulfilled most of the objectives that he had set, plus a few other objectives which we could not have foreseen from a graduate school base. He remains a professional resource of unparalleled knowledge, a continuing gift to his faculty colleagues, his students and the profession. One of Bill's stated wishes was to play a part in building an institution where vision research and graduate study would flourish. His personal contribution in this sphere is but a small part of the gift he has so generously provided in pursuit of the optometric star.

What can we, to whom these three wise men now pass the torch, do to thank them in an enduring way for their gifts, to which they have devoted their lives? Typically, Bill Lyle has already answered this question. He did so when, in 1980, he assumed the task of leading the fund-raising efforts for the Canadian Optometric Education Trust Fund. Our greatest gift to our own Three Wise Men can be to actively support the Trust Fund.

Ted, Clair and Bill shared common objectives in building educational strength for Optometry. They played major roles in setting the goals of the School of Optometry, University of Waterloo. They put equal primacy under graduate study, graduate education, research and optometrical service. Our individual gifts, too, and continuing support of the Trust Fund will demonstrate the profession's deep appreciation for their lives of service to Optometry and to their fellow man. They can be given no greater reward, since the advancement of knowledge and the progress of Optometry has been the bright star they followed with distinction.

M. Emerson Woodruff
former Director, School of Optometry
University of Waterloo



CANADA

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE DU PREMIER MINISTRE

I am pleased to extend my congratulations to Dr. E. J. Fisher, Dr. C. W. Bobier and Dr. W. M. Lyle on the occasion of their retirement from the active faculty of the School of Optometry of the University of Waterloo.

Seldom is there an opportunity to give appropriate recognition to pioneers in any field. This year we are privileged to honour three of the persons whose names are most closely identified with the development of optometry as a profession in Canada.

Good vision is one of our most precious gifts. The years of teaching service of Dr. Lyle, Bobier and Fisher have seen the maturing of optometry's role in the protection, preservation and improvement of eyesight. Countless Canadians who benefit from the care of optometrists are in their debt.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau

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CANADA

MINISTER OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

MINISTRE DE LA
SANTÉ NATIONALE ET DU BIEN-ÊTRE SOCIAL

OTTAWA, K1A 0K9

14 VI 1982

Editor,
Canadian Journal of Optometry,
210 Gladstone Avenue,
Suite 2001,
OTTAWA, Ontario.
K2P 0Y6

Thank you for your letter of May 3, 1982, concerning the imminent retirement of Dr. E.J. Fisher, Dr. C.W. Bobier and Dr. W.M. Lyle from the School of Optometry, University of Waterloo. I am pleased at this opportunity to personally thank Dr. Fisher, Dr. Bobier and Dr. Lyle for the outstanding contribution they have made to the health of Canadians through the field of optometry. They who have devoted a lifetime to the arduous task of teaching are due our highest esteem.

Optometry combines the science of optics with the art of compensating impairment in the precious gift of sight, an intrinsic concern in the total health of Canadians. In particular is the concern for the visually handicapped and the elderly who must utilize the knowledge of ophthalmologists, optometrists, and opticians.

The Department of National Health and Welfare acknowledges and appreciates this role of the optometrists. During the tenure of Drs. Fisher, Bobier and Lyle at the University of Waterloo, our Department, through a substantial contribution from our Health Resources Fund, assisted with the construction of the School of Optometry and the purchasing of its equipment. It was approved in March 1974 and completed by the end of 1979. We are pleased that these funds were well spent, and we hope that the impetus provided by these fine teachers and their colleagues will further benefit Canadians.

I wish Drs. Fisher, Bobier, and Lyle great satisfaction in the coming period of their life, and contentment in the knowledge that their teaching and insight will continue to affect the field of optometry.

Yours truly,

Monique Bégin



The Premier
of Ontario

Parliament Buildings
Queen's Park
Toronto Ontario

1982

On the occasion of your retirement as Professors of the School of Optometry at the University of Waterloo, the people and the Government of Ontario join in honouring Dr. E. J. Fisher, Dr. C. W. Bobier and Dr. W. M. Lyle.

Educators who have dedicated their lives to the integrity, advancement and future of the profession of optometry, the scope of your contribution to the health care field in Canada and the well-being of its people would be difficult to measure.

Through an era of advances in the field of optometry your professional commitment and teaching excellence have fostered within many of the practising optometrists of today the ethics, knowledge and expertise that are fundamentally important to the provision of expert primary vision care services to the Canadian public.

It is with gratitude and respect that I acknowledge your outstanding achievements during your decades of service which represent a total of 103 years, and express to each one of you my warmest good wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement.

William G. Davis

William G. Davis



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June 7, 1982

Dr. E.J. Fisher
Professor of the School of Optometry
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario
N2L 3G1

Dear *Dr. Fisher*

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the occasion of your retirement after a most distinguished career in Canadian optometry. No less than three-quarters of the 2,200 optometrists practising in Canada owe at least some part of their education to you.

During your many years of devoted service to the School of Optometry at the University of Waterloo, you have been directly involved in the evolution of optometry to its present role as an exacting science, offering the highest possible standard of primary vision care services to the Canadian public.

Your lifelong commitment to optometry has had a permanent and profound effect on the overall health care field in Canada.

My best wishes for a happy and prosperous retirement.

Yours very truly,

Larry Crossman
Minister



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June 7, 1982

Dr. C.W. Bobier
Professor of the School of Optometry
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario
N2L 3G1

Dear *Dr. Bobier*

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the occasion of your retirement after a most distinguished career in Canadian optometry. No less than three-quarters of the 2,200 optometrists practising in Canada owe at least some part of their education to you.

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Minister



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June 7, 1982

Dr. W.M. Lyle
Professor of the School of Optometry
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario
N2L 3G1

Dear *Dr. Lyle*

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Yours very truly,

Larry Crossman
Minister