



# Early Meeting Leads to Distinguished Career



Dr. Harry Flynn  
Dr. Lee Anderson and  
Dr. John Clarkson at  
Bascom Palmer in 1981.

Harry W. Flynn, Jr., M.D., made an important connection during his residency training at the University of Virginia Hospital in 1975. He struck up a conversation with Bascom Palmer founder, Edward W. D. Norton, M.D., who had come to the university as a visiting professor. Though their conversation at the time focused on their shared Irish heritage and the hardships the Irish endured during the potato famine in the mid-1800s, their professional paths would cross again.

A few years later, after completing a vitreoretinal fellowship at Presbyterian Hospital in San Francisco and serving two years as a retina/vitreous staff member at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, Flynn set out to pursue a career in academic medicine. He sent his resume to a handful of institutions, including Bascom Palmer. After discussing his job search with John G. Clarkson, M.D., current dean of the University of Miami School of Medicine, at a meeting in Texas, Dr. Flynn was invited for an interview at Bascom Palmer.

“That’s when I spoke with Dr. Norton a second time,” he recalls. “It was very lucky for me that Bascom Palmer was in need of a person specializing in retina, particularly, diabetic retinopathy.”

Dr. Norton hired the young Dr. Flynn, asking him to be a utility player of sorts — focusing on

“Interaction with the residents, fellows and patients makes my job fun.” — *Dr. Flynn*

instrumental in guiding my career. He encouraged us to be leaders in our field,” Dr. Flynn says. That leadership meant teaching at Bascom Palmer and at national meetings, participating in multi-center trials, performing ground-breaking surgeries and experimental therapies, and traveling the world to find answers to clinical questions. Drs. George Blankenship, Victor Curtin and Don Gass also had a major influence on Dr. Flynn’s early career.

Since arriving at Bascom Palmer in 1978, Dr. Flynn has participated as a principal investigator in a number of major collaborative studies including the ten-year “Early Treatment Diabetic Retinopathy Study.” He achieved national recognition as a leading retina-vitreous specialist, has served as president of key professional organizations including the Vitreous Society and the Retina Society, and has published more than 200 articles and edited four books. Dr. Flynn also has a special interest in endophthalmitis, infections involving the tissues and fluids of the eye.

But for all the accolades and accomplishments, the Professor and holder of The J. Donald M. Gass Distinguished Chair in Ophthalmology insists the friendships he has made, both socially and professionally, have been the most enjoyable part of his career at Bascom Palmer. The cutting edge experience he’s gained through colleagues at the Institute ranks a close second.

It’s that kind of professional activity, Dr. Flynn believes, that has earned Bascom Palmer recognition as one of the top two eye institutes in the world every year since 1985. “We are able to practice the highest quality ophthalmology at Bascom Palmer by asking for second opinions among our retina faculty and subspecialists,” he says. “Over the years we have had a tradition of excellence in all aspects of clinical care, research and teaching. The enthusiastic leadership of our chairman, Carmen Puliafito, give us a strong sense of optimism and direction for the future.”

Dr. Flynn greatly enjoys clinical ophthalmology, including patient care and retinal surgery. Dr. Flynn also takes great pride in the Retina Study Guide that he was instrumental in writing during the six years he spent on the Basic and Clinical Science Committee for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. The 300-page book, which provides a concise review of the retina field for residents, fellows and practitioners, is currently used today.

In spite of a busy clinical practice, Dr. Flynn manages to find time for traveling and playing tennis, two hobbies that provide a break. Dr. Flynn’s wife, Donna, a faculty member in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Miami School of Medicine for the past 25 years, joins him in his travels and on the court.

Dr. Flynn says he’s enjoyed “growing up,” in a professional sense, at Bascom Palmer. “Joining the faculty with some experience and being able to expand that knowledge as well as to make academic contributions on a daily basis have been very rewarding.”

diabetic retinopathy, but helping out in any area of retina care where assistance was needed. It would be the start of an impressive career.

Dr. Flynn says Dr. Norton played an important role in his professional development. “Dr. Norton was

#### DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

A person with diabetes is at risk for developing diabetic retinopathy, the leading cause of blindness in young and middle-aged adults today. The longer a person has diabetes, the greater their chance of developing diabetic retinopathy.



Normal Retina



Non-Proliferative Diabetic Retinopathy

#### SYMPTOMS OF DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

- LOSS OF CENTRAL OR PERIPHERAL VISION
- VISUAL DISTORTIONS OR BLURRINESS
- TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT VISION LOSS
- MAY HAVE NO SYMPTOMS DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF DISEASE.

If you have diabetes, get a dilated eye exam at least once a year. More frequent exams may be necessary after diabetic retinopathy is diagnosed.

To schedule an appointment with a retina specialist, please call 1-888-845-0002.