

# OPTIFORUM

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION BUMPER EDITION



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Marlon Brando

## KEY EVENTS:

### KEY HISTORIC EVENTS 1924

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- The 1924 Winter Olympics, officially known as the First Olympic Winter Games, were a winter multi-sport event which was held in 1924 in Chamonix, France (initially referred to as International Winter Sports Week).
- Gandhi is released from prison after serving only two years of a six-year sentence following surgery for appendicitis.
- Adolf Hitler goes on trial for treason.
- J.B.M. Hertzog becomes the third Prime Minister of South Africa.
- Birth of South African Optometric Association

### OTHER FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS 1924

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- Marlon Brando April 3
- George H.W. Bush: June 12
- Jimmy Carter: October 1
- Allan Cormack :23 February – South African American physicist and 1979 Nobel Prize laureate.
- Stephen Fry: 14 July – Springbok rugby captain.
- Elias Motsoaledi: 26 July – political activist.
- Robert Sobukwe: 5 December – anti-apartheid activist
- Chris Eksteen- SAOA past-president
- Jackie Heatley – Former OASA President

### TOP POP SONG CHART: 1924

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NO	TITLE	SONG ARTIST
1	Rhapsody in Blue	George Gershwin
2	It Had to Be You	Isham Jones
3	California, Here I Come	Al Jolson
4	Charleston	Arthur Gibbs & his Gang

## FOREWORD

The Optiforum, published biannually, is to be regarded as an official mouthpiece of the SAOA, presented as a compendium of news, views, and reviews, which are relevant to the professions of optometry and dispensing opticianry.

Importantly, the Optiforum is also made available to our partners and stakeholders with whom we regularly engage and whom we thank for their continued support.

## INTRODUCTION

In excess of 900 delegates attended SAOA Centennial Celebration Conference held at Emperors Palace from 18 to 20 July 2024. This included 460 optometrists (local), 63 from outside the borders of South Africa, 80 students and 240 representatives from industry (representing 61 exhibitors).

The theme of the event embraced the spirit of celebrating the SAOA's 100-year anniversary underpinned by the slogan 'A Tradition of Excellence, the Force of the Future'. The entire programme, over the three days, was designed to ensure a balance of learning, networking, and being entertained.

## MESSAGE FROM SAOA PRESIDENT

"Over the past century, the SAOA has been a beacon, touching countless lives and leaving an indelible mark on our profession in our country, the African continent, and the globe at large. From humble beginnings to remarkable achievements, our journey has been nothing short of extraordinary. As we reflect on our rich history, we honor the visionaries who paved the way, the trailblazers who broke barriers, and the dedicated individuals who have contributed to our success.

Today, we celebrate our legacy, our resilience, and our unwavering commitment to Education, Advocacy, Professional Development, Regulation, Ethics and Quality. Let us cherish this moment, learn from our past, and look forward to a brighter future. Thank you for joining us on this momentous occasion!". To read more, [click here](#).



**NIVIEN SUBRAMANY**  
SAOA President



## FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

The human race has been fascinated by the number '100' for 'CENTURIES'. The number '100' has become a powerful symbol used throughout history to represent many concepts in various cultures. It is a number that depicts completion and indicates success.

The number '100' has also crept into our everyday language. In response to a simple question such as "How are you?" it is not uncommon to receive a response such as "100 percent" or "hundreds".

The celebration of the SAOA 100-year anniversary is a milestone of enormous significance for the professions of Optometry and Dispensing Opticianry in South Africa, representing a home and rock that has weathered many a storm on their behalf. The anniversary provides the appropriate platform to pay tribute to all members of the SAOA, past and present, all of whom have made an indelible mark in the journey to date, in their own ways, collectively, and individually.

The SAOA Centennial Celebration Conference has proved to be a worthy vehicle, representing the opportunity to glance in the rear-view mirror and acknowledge all that has come before, to celebrate, and to march into the future with much pride and enthusiasm.



**HARRY ROSEN**  
SAOA CEO



## COMMENT FROM EDUCATION AND CLINICAL STANDARDS DIRECTOR

The academic program that we have meticulously crafted is a testament to our commitment to excellence and innovation in Optometric education. Through a careful selection of topics, speakers, and interactive sessions, we aim to foster a dynamic learning environment that will inspire and empower all participants.

Our goal is to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas, the exploration of new perspectives, and the cultivation of expertise in our respective fields. By bringing together experts, practitioners, and thought leaders from diverse backgrounds, we hope to create a rich tapestry of insights and best practices that will shape the future of Optometry. I am deeply grateful to all the members of the Education Committee who have dedicated their time, energy, and expertise to curate this exceptional program. Their passion for education and their unwavering commitment to excellence have been instrumental in shaping the content and structure of this conference. To read more, [click here](#).



**DR NABEELA HASROD**



## THE OPENING CEREMONY

The event began with iconic singer Vicky Sampson leading the singing of the national anthem. The Opening Ceremony thereafter encompassed the official Welcome Address by SAOA President, Nivien Subramany, followed by acknowledgement of all past SAOA presidents in attendance, all of whom were presented with a presidential pin, medal, and a copy of the SAOA 'Tradition of Excellence' Booklet.

The Ceremony included a tribute to all conference sponsors, preceded by a salute to industry legend, Hilly Goldberg who recently turned 102 years. Congratulatory messages were presented by leaders of organisations relevant to the South African professions of Optometry and Dispensing Opticianry which included the President of the World Council of Optometry, President of the African Council of Optometry, Chairperson of the Professional Board of Optometry and Dispensing Opticians, amongst others.

A moving keynote address was delivered by stalwart, Peter Brauer, entitled, 'A Walk Down Memory Lane' which involved recognition of the youngest SAOA member, Priyanka Jugdeo, 22 years, and most senior SAOA member, Sidney Saks, 95 years who received a standing ovation. The Opening Ceremony closed with an inspirational rendition of the 'African Dream' by Vicky Sampson. Very few dry eyes in the house.





## MESSAGE FROM PBODO CHAIR



**YURISA NAIDOO**

As a professional association, the SAOA has achieved a remarkable 100 years of experience in serving the interests of its members and the professions of optometry and dispensing opticianry. While both organizations serve the professions, we occupy different vantage points on the landscape of optometry and dispensing opticianry.

By working together in the past, the Board and the Association have shared knowledge and expertise that catapulted optometry into the era of diagnostic scope expansion and paved the way for our journey to therapeutic scope expansion. As we continue to collaborate, we can support each other's strengths and weaknesses and foster a culture of growth and continuous learning in addressing the challenges that lie ahead.

A few words and wishes from Madiba that resonate for the SAOA. In a letter to the ANC on its manifesto launch in 2009 he wrote,

"I wish the organisation well in its deliberations as it celebrates its past and reflects on its future, both immediate and long-term. The primary challenges for our country remain the consolidation and deepening of our democracy and the fundamental improvement of the lives of all South Africans."

**Congratulations to the Association and best wishes on your centennial celebration! To read more, [click here](#).**

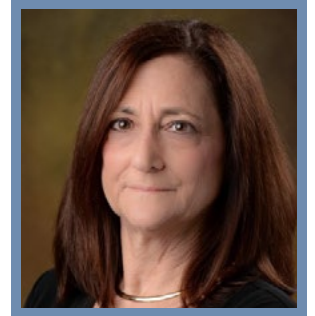




## MESSAGE FROM WCO PRESIDENT

When each of us completed our optometric education, we took an oath similar to the oath I had taken during my graduation in 1981 – I want to share some lines that I feel apply to the celebration:

*I solemnly pledge that I will faithfully and conscientiously administer the art and science of Optometry. I will uphold and promote the ideals of the optometric profession. I will do all in my power to improve my knowledge of Optometry and increase the extent of my contribution to the health and welfare of society.*



**DR SANDY BLOCK**  
WCO President

These lines from the oath I took highlights the importance of serving our patients at the best and most current care available. My experience with the many amazing optometrists that I have met from South Africa, has demonstrated that each of you who represent optometry have surpassed the intent of the oath.

The profession of optometry here in South Africa has always worked diligently to advocate for the broadest scope of practice, ensure that the most up-to-date care is taught and practiced here. I have seen that your leadership is never satisfied with the status quo – no - there is continuous effort to educate the students to be exemplary in their care, that all current and future optometrists continue to ask hard questions, and follow through to learn the best mechanism to seek answers while striving to provide the best practices of care to your patients and last but certainly not least continue to move to stay abreast of the latest methods of care.

As the current president of WCO I want to acknowledge that the SAOA has been part of the WCO for many years. In fact, the SAOA was one of the founding members of our organization. Many of you are probably unaware that the WCO is going to celebrate our centennial in 2027. And while we have changed our name over the years, we have always worked to represent our members to ensure our patients are best served. I would like to close and wish you the best as you celebrate your 100-year anniversary! To read more, [click here](#).

## MESSAGE FROM AFCO PRESIDENT

As President of the African Council of Optometry (AFCO), it is with great pride and admiration that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the South African Optometry Association (SAOA) on the momentous occasion of its Centennial Celebration. This milestone not only marks 100 years of remarkable dedication and service to the optometric profession in South Africa but also highlights the SAOA's enduring commitment to advancing eye care across the continent. For a century, the SAOA has played a pivotal role in shaping the optometry profession, advocating for high standards of practice, and ensuring that quality eye care is accessible to all South Africans. Their efforts have set a benchmark for excellence, inspiring other optometric organizations across Africa to strive for similar achievements. Furthermore, SAOA is one of the founding members of AFCO. To read more, [click here](#).



**DR. ENOWNTAI  
NKONGHO  
AYUKOTANG**  
AFCO President

## MESSAGE FROM WCO GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIVE FOR AFRICA



**PATRICK MAWILA**  
WCO Africa Representative

On behalf of our continental members of the WCO, I stand here proud to celebrate this day with you. On the day we recognise the milestone well traversed marking a Centennial today.

The WCO is grateful to be associated with the SAOA. The SAOA has tirelessly participated in many victories for the profession, the battles won equate to a giant.

The SAOA is also acknowledged for having produced many leaders at the global stage over the decades. The WCO draws courage from the SAOA steadfastness in representing the profession.

The centennial celebration is befitting to be shared with the birthday of our greatest statesman, Nelson Mandela.

**Congratulations and best wishes for the Centennial milestone.**

## GREETINGS FROM SECO INTERNATIONAL AMBASSADOR

"Greetings from SECO International.

Standing before you today is an immense honor and privilege to celebrate a remarkable milestone – the 100th anniversary of the South African Optometric Association (SAOA). On behalf of SECO International and the Southern Council of Optometrists (SoCO) in the United States, I extend our heartfelt congratulations on reaching this significant centennial.

For a century, the SAOA has been a beacon of excellence and dedication in the field of optometry. Your steadfast commitment to advancing the optometric profession and providing high-quality continuing education to optometrists and eye care professionals has been truly inspiring. This dedication has undoubtedly had a profound impact on the vision, health, and well-being of countless individuals throughout South Africa and beyond." To read more, [click here](#).



**DR GLEN STEELE**  
SECO Ambassador



## A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE



Join me for a walk down memory lane as we admire the landscape and challenges that faced the leaders of our Association. As it is today, the road on this epic journey has been littered with potholes, uphill and sharp bends. Too many events to do justice to all of them but will highlight the events that are noteworthy or changed the course of our profession or changed the character of the SAOA.

### WHERE DID WE COME FROM?

Parents often have this question asked of them by their young children and might be embarrassed by their lack of a succinct answer or simply not know the best way to respond. Some of you might be in the early part of your career and considered to be children of the optometric fraternity.

Mr. Nelson and his founding colleagues would not recognize the SAOA that they formed in 1924 if they were present today. They would be proud, thanked profusely and held in awe for their foresight if they were indeed here. We have achieved so much as an Association of colleagues with a common purpose. Let all optometrists in our country recognize what our leaders have achieved over the past 100 years, strive to continue their legacy and commit to membership and involvement in this wonderful association, since unity will result in growth of our profession and benefit the public of South Africa.



**PETER BRAUER**

If you are not a member of the Association that is the custodian of your profession, then you should seriously consider how and who you think will shape the future of your profession. The entity is bigger than the sum of its parts. With the best intentions in the world splintered individual efforts will not equate to the result of cohesive action. To read more and view 'The Walk Down Memory Lane', [click here](#).



## THE BIRTH OF OPTOMETRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH \*

The year was 1976 when Optometry was introduced at the University of the North (UNIN), as it was then called. Hilda Mtshali (now Mrs. Ndatshe) from Phola Location, near Witbank (now Emalahleni) and I, Olga Skhosana (now Manitshana), from Mofolo Village in Soweto were the first two students to register.

The university had made allowance for a maximum of four students to graduate per year due to financial constraints but also to avoid flooding the then-white optometric market with Black optometrists. We were especially proud to be doing a bachelor's degree in optometry. Heretofore, only a diploma was offered at the whites-only Witwatersrand Technikon. Moreover, we could establish our own practices upon qualification instead of entering the job market.

***\*The first Optometry degree to be offered in South Africa was at the University of the North in 1975, followed by the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) in 1979, the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) in 1984, and University of Free State in 2002. To read more, [click here](#).***



**HILDA NDATSHE**



**OLGA MANITSHANA**

## YOUNGEST MEMBER OF SAOA

I obtained my B. Optom (hons) and degree at UKZN, Westville and graduated in May 2024. I live with my family in Durban and currently work at Execuspecs La Lucia Mall.

I am currently completing my Master of Optometry on developing Digitalised Vision Therapy (UKZN).

I would describe myself as open-minded and energetic. I am always open to new experiences and have a very optimistic outlook on life in general. Practicing meditation, yoga and high energy Bollywood dancing are a few things I definitely enjoy.



**PRIYANKA JUGDEO**

## MOST SENIOR MEMBER OF SAOA

Sidney Saks served the SAOA for many years, including as President in 1971. He served on the Professional Board of Optometry (HPCSA) for exactly twenty years. Sidney received Honorary Life Presidency as well as Distinguished Service Award from the SAOA.

In the words of Sidney Saks, "A ground-breaking event happened in 1971. While I was vice-President of the SAOA, I led a delegation of Professors of Optometry from America to Pretoria University to meet the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and the Professor of Ophthalmology, to dissuade them from establishing an Optometry department in the Faculty of Medicine." The outcome was that Optometry did not develop as a sub-department of Ophthalmology but could develop as an independent profession.



**SIDNEY SAKS**

## MOST SENIOR PRACTICING MEMBER OF SAOA

My career in optics began in 1963. At the time we were called opticians and not optometrists. Our training involved an apprenticeship with a practicing optician. As the old adage goes: One learns by doing.

My private practice began in the then-Indian suburb of Fordsburg in Johannesburg. The segregation laws dictated that people of color were limited to specific areas due to apartheid. During that time, I was one of the first Indian opticians servicing the Indian community. Friendships and bonds in the optic industry were then forged and maintained to this day. In 1974 I wrote an exam and registered with the South African Medical and Dental Council and was accredited as an optometrist. Professor Jannie Ferreira requested me in 1990 to supervise the clinics at the University of Johannesburg. At that time, I was the first non-white staff member. This gave me the opportunity to position myself at the forefront of optometry developments. This supervising position at UJ continued for 26 years. I have since then closed my private practice but, at my ripe old age of 91, I continue with my optometry by giving my services at a community clinic and at an old age home.

I still play golf twice a week and recently I hit a hole in one. I am blessed with a wonderful wife and two sons. My wife, Rabia has been for the past 65 years my greatest pillar of strength. I can truly say my career and family have contributed to a life well lived.



**ISMAIL SULIMAN MOOSA**

## TRIBUTE TO HILLY GOLDBERG



It was a privilege to have Hilly Goldberg, who will be 102 years old on his next birthday, in the audience during the Opening Ceremony of the SAOA Centennial Celebration Conference. Hilly was the owner of one of the giants of the optical industry at that time (1947), Standard Optical, and remained involved for a period of 50 (fifty) years.

### **Under his leadership, Standard Optical was responsible for many 'firsts':**

- First company to import Essilor Verilux products.
- First company to launch B&L soft contact lenses.
- First company to introduce CR 39 lenses – prior to this, all lenses were glass.

In those days, many frames had a gold content. The tortoise shell frames were genuine tortoise shell. Styles were limited but there were a multitude of sizes. Hilly was responsible for importing different styles of frames from France which were sold by Standard Optical. The ovation given to Hilly at the conference was certainly well-deserved and appropriate.





## TRIBUTES TO BRIAN SNEAG

Every now and then, Planet Earth experiences something special, a rare phenomenon that becomes engraved in our history. Such a phenomenon could include a scientific breakthrough, an extraordinary sporting accomplishment, or a personality of stature. For most of us, where applicable and who are privileged enough, we can only boast to anyone who would be prepared to listen that “I was there” or “I had the privilege of attending a meeting where he/she was present.”

It was with heavy hearts and great sadness that we learnt of the passing of a stalwart and legend of the profession, Brian Sneag, on 18 September 2024, just a few days prior to his 82th birthday (20 September). We, at the SAOA, are in that privileged position to proudly boast that we knew Brian Sneag; he was our friend, our champion of professional standards and morality. He is already sorely missed. Our condolences to Brian's daughters, Jodi and Michelle and family. May he rest in peace. To read more, [click here](#).





## ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The academic programme took the form of 5 (five) tracks representing a mix of high standard lectures, paper presentations, workshops, and posters, involving both local and international speakers. To view the academic programme, [click here](#).

## THE EXHIBITION

The world-class trade exhibition, comprising 61 exhibitors, located in the Centre Court of Emperors Palace, was the focal point where delegates had access to the latest technology relating to optical devices and equipment, and who congregated to converse, enjoy refreshments, and engage with members of industry.





## THE GALA DINNER

Arguably, the highlight of the event, the Gala Dinner, held on 19 July, was masterfully facilitated by Master of Ceremonies, well-known radio personality, Zain Johnson, with entertainment and music provided by the extremely talented 'Morning After.'

The evening included the presentation of Centennial Celebration awards by SAOA President Nivien Subramany and Vice President, Sandy Govender, supported by SAOA Marketing Administrator, Noko Thema across the spectrum of award categories. To view the award recipients, refer below.





## ZAIN JOHNSON: SAOA AMBASSADOR AND MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Zain Johnson is a seasoned and established Radio Presenter and Traffic Reporter, and a household name in Cape Town.

In 1992, Johnson discovered his passion for radio and has been on our airwaves ever since. With a Bachelor's Degree in Education and Teaching and having been a teacher himself this background provided him with the necessary skillset to be on radio combined with his natural talent and ability as an expert communicator. To read more, [click here](#).



ZAIN JOHNSON





# AWARDS OF THE CENTURY

## THE AWARDS COMMITTEE



**MARNA PIETERSE**



**CHRIS EKSTEEN**



**ZENA JACOBSON**



**PROF TUWANI  
RASENGANE**

At the heart of effective recognition is its meaningfulness to the SAOA membership and, importantly, to the recipient. This necessitates a move away from one-size-fits-all towards a more personalised, thoughtful acknowledgment of individual achievements. The goal is to ensure that the recognition received is not just seen as a gesture but as a genuine appreciation of the individual's contributions.

Considering the milestones that characterise the growth and development of the SAOA as well as the evolution of the professions of Optometry and Dispensing Opticianry over a period spanning 100 years, and then attempting to recognize those individuals whose efforts are to be regarded as exemplary or outstanding during this time is almost an impossible task. In this regard, however, a dedicated Awards Committee was formed by the SAOA Board to consider nominations received from SAOA members or to identify potential award recipients themselves, in collaboration with the SAOA CEO and Board. The emphasis for consideration was the recognition of achievement, in different categories

The recognition of specific individuals whose contributions, considered to have made a significant difference, over time, in no way detracts from the importance of saluting those SAOA members, including past president, office bearers and staff members whose untiring efforts have contributed significantly to where the SAOA stands today.



## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OPTOMETRIST OF THE CENTURY AWARD

AWARDED TO THE SAKS/BRAUER FAMILY FOR INCREDIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF THE PROFESSION OF OPTOMETRY AND SAOA OVER THE YEARS.



PETER BRAUER



SIDNEY SAKS

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

IN RECOGNITION OF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS HAD AN EXCEPTIONAL POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE PROFESSIONS AND/OR SAOA DURING HIS/HER LIFETIME.

BRIAN SNEAG





## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD: EYECARE PROFESSIONALS

IN RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP, PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE, AND SIGNIFICANT SERVICE TO SAOA/PROFESSIONS OVER A SUSTAINED PERIOD OF TIME IN THE FIELD OF EYE CARE.



**NIVIEN  
SUBRAMANY**



**MARNA  
PIETERSE**



**ZENA  
JACOBSON**



**PROF PAUL  
RAMKISSOON**

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD: SAOA CEO



**HARRY ROSEN**

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 'FRIEND OF THE SAOA' AWARD

IN RECOGNITION OF THOSE (NON-MEMBERS) WHO HAVE GIVEN OF THEIR TIME, CONTACTS, AND INFLUENCE IN SUPPORT OF AN SAOA INITIATIVE OR INITIATIVES BEYOND THAT WHICH CAN BE RECOGNISED THROUGH TRADITIONAL CHANNELS. THE IMPACT OF THESE CONTRIBUTORS HAS BEEN PROFOUND.

### RETINA SA



MANNY MOODLEY



CLAUDETTE MEDEFINDT

### SECO



DR GLEN STEELE



## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

FOR EXCEPTIONAL DEDICATION TO THE PROVISION OF EYE CARE TO COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN NEED OVER TIME.



PROF JANNIE FERREIRA



PROF KOVIN NAIDOO

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION PRESIDENT DISCRETION AWARD

FOR EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT IN SUPPORT OF THE SAOA AND/OR TO ADVANCE THE PROFESSION OF OPTOMETRY OR DISPENSING OPTICIANRY OVER TIME - IN RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP, PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE, AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENT OVER A SUSTAINED PERIOD OF TIME IN THE FIELD OF EYE CARE.



PATRICK MAWILA



G NELSON



## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION DIPLOMAT AWARD

FOR EXTRAORDINARY AMBASSADORSHIP AND ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE SAOA AT ANY GIVEN TIME.



SANDY GOVENDER



DOLLARS BOLOKA

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION INDUSTRY AWARD

TO A SUPPLIER OF FRAMES, LENSES, CONTACT LENSES, OR EQUIPMENT FOR OUTSTANDING SUPPORT GIVEN TO THE SAOA OVER TIME.



HOYA LENS SA



COOPER VISION

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

IN RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP, PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE,  
AND SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENT OVER A SUSTAINED PERIOD OF TIME WITHIN  
ACADEMIA



**DR DIRK BOOYSEN**



**PROF VANESSA MOODLEY**



**PROF SOLANI MATHEBULA**



**PROF BILL HARRIS**



## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

IN RECOGNITION OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY AN INDIVIDUAL OR DEPARTMENT WITHIN OR IN COLLABORATION WITH THE STATE SECTOR TO IMPROVE THE EYE HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES IN NEED.



**FAITH CHABEDI**

## CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATION

ISSUED TO RECOGNIZE AND LAUD INDIVIDUALS FOR REMARKABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT, EXCEPTIONAL EXECUTION, OR SELFLESS COMMITMENT IN DIFFERENT ENDEAVOURS WITHIN THE EYE CARE ARENA.



**ANDRE BRITS**



**JOHN STEIN**



**PROF ALAN RUBIN**



**PETER MULLER**





**STEF KRIEL**



**CHRIS ON BEHALF  
OF JOE EKSTEEN**



**JOHAN LEIDING**



**DR BINA PATEL**



**LOOCK VAN ZYL**



**PK GOVENDER**



**STEVE GOLDBERG**



**CATHY FRANCONI**

## THE JOE EKSTEEN STORY

**BY CHRIS EKSTEEN**

My dad was the first so called 'non-white' Optometrist in Cape Town. He wanted to study Optometry in South Africa but at that time the course was not available to him, and he had to do the Optometry course by correspondence through the Union College. He wrote his then Optics exams in December 1934 and passed. He was awarded the Diploma in Optics on the 14th of March 1935 in Johannesburg, but the course was unfortunately not universally recognised until many years later.

After much negotiation, on the 25th of November 1985, my dad became an Associate Member of the South African Optometric Association. To read more, including some history on his life outside of Optometry, [click here](#).



**JOE EKSTEEN**

## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION LOYALTY AWARDS: OPTOMETRISTS: 50 YEARS + AND DISPENSING OPTICIANS: 20 YEARS +

**FOR EXCEPTIONAL LOYALTY AND COMMITMENT TO THE SAOA OVER TIME - BASED ON LENGTH OF 'UNBROKEN' SERVICE AND MEMBERSHIP.**

To view SAOA member recipients of this award, [click here](#).

## THROUGH MY EYES AND MIND: CELEBRATING, ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION



Dr Irvin M Borish and Prof Paul Ramkissoo attending the American Academy of Optometry meeting in Orlando, Florida in 2000.

It is an immense privilege to share my perspective on the existence of the South African Optometric Association (SAOA) as well as optometry in the Republic of South Africa (RSA). I wear the badge of honour with pride, serving the noble profession of optometry. It has given me so much – in return, I strive to give my best in advancing eye and vision care at all times. Allow me to unveil the SAOA's time capsule and that of the profession of optometry through my eyes and mind, capturing both our victories and challenges. To read more, [click here](#).



**PROF PAUL RAMKISSOON**



## PERSPECTIVES OF OCULARISTS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

OASA came into being in 1996 with its first official meeting and appointing office bearers in 1997.

In 2000, SAOA Executive Director (at the time), Mr. Harry Rosen invited OASA to become members of SAOA, offering OASA members numerous benefits, for example, Indemnity insurance, legal advice, extending the Optometric Coding Structure to include Ocularist codes and guideline pricing, and representation at Medical Aids to resolve challenges, to name but a few. OASA members voted unanimously to make, "affiliate membership" with SAOA, an OASA membership criteria.

Over the years, OASA has enjoyed many collaborations with SAOA, including lecturing at some of the SAOA conferences and participating in numerous outreach programs like screening with Ster-Kinekor and Kids Shall See, to mention a few. To read more, [click here](#).

It has been a privilege to be part of SAOA, participate in many programmes, and interact with the executives and members over the years. *Here is wishing SAOA everything of the best for the Centennial celebrations and beyond.*



**PEDRO CARVALHO**

## THROUGH THE DARKNESS AND INTO THE LIGHT

### *Jurgen Tolksdorf*

In 1973 I qualified with the first batch of 4-year diploma students at the Witwatersrand Technikon. At the time this was the only optometry course in the country. Both the Dip. Optim.SA and the fellowship FOASA were awarded by the SAOA. However, the transition from a 3-year to a 4-year course did not come without some painful side effects, for some people. For instance, a friend of mine, who was a year ahead of me, unfortunately failed his final 3rd year - not only did he have to repeat his 3rd year, but he also had to join us in our 4th year. Adding two years to his study placed a dampener on his previous sunny disposition! However, I am happy to report that he managed to successfully qualify with us.



For my generation, one cannot write about the history of South African Optometry, without mentioning the great contributions of Kenneth Turnbull. His achievements are intrinsically linked to the progress of South African optometry as a profession. During all my years of undergraduate studies, Ken was the head of the Optometric Department at the Witwatersrand Technikon. It was located in the middle of Johannesburg near the central railroad station. One of his favourite sayings was: "You have to break a few eggs to make an omelette," which he certainly did. To read more, [click here](#).

## PERSPECTIVES OF EYESITE

Since the inception of EyeSite in 1999, EyeSite has always had a special relationship with the SAOA. Over the years, we have covered numerous community-driven and industry events and shown them to the eyecare profession through our various media channels. Headline News originated in the EyeSite.co.za Magazine and is currently published in the Eye-Opener newsletter.

It was about 15 months ago that we learned about the Centennial Conference that was going to take place in July 2024. The anticipation for the event was huge and we knew that this would be a special event, made even more exciting by the fact there had been no events since the pandemic began.

EyeSite shared a stand at the Conference with Retina SA, and it was the first time we were at a conference exclusively as an exhibitor. Everything was impressive, professional, and the sure highlight was the interactive hi-tech app that helped manage each delegate's specific requirements for the conference.

From an impressive Opening Event to the Gala Evening Function, everything took place seamlessly. The SAOA can be proud to have put on a world-class event of such stature and I am sure it will only go onwards and upwards from here!



**SIMON GOLDBLATT**



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**PATRICK MAWILA**



**SANDY GOVENDER**

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## CLOSING REMARKS

***“This is not the beginning of the end, but the end of the beginning.”*** - Winston Churchill

We have spent the past three days together, taking advantage of the platforms for learning and socializing that have been provided, and trust that these days will remain with us as pleasurable memories for years to come. Let us carry the insights and connections made here forward as we continue to build the SAOA. We arrived here as individuals but let us leave with a sense of community. Let us hold onto the spirit of this centennial celebration conference and continue to support each other in this shared journey. I want you to remember that in as much as we enjoyed the sessions, remember the relationships that we have built and the possibilities we have uncovered. Let us continue to nurture and cultivate our Association, THE SAOA.

Before officially closing, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt ‘thank you’ to all delegates, our partners, and sponsors for making this an unforgettable experience. We always say that we could have come here and done all the preparations, had all the fanfare and singers but the event would not have accomplished its purpose without you.

I would also like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated Centennial Celebration Conference Committees who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this event possible. To the organizing committee, since its inception in March 2021 your hard work, attention to detail, and unwavering commitment have resulted in a truly unforgettable experience for all of us. Your efforts have been outstanding. From meticulous planning to flawless execution, you have demonstrated exceptional teamwork, creativity, and dedication. Please accept our sincere appreciation for your efforts. Your contributions have made a significant impact, and we are grateful for your service.



**NIVIEN SUBRAMANY**  
SAOA President

**UNTIL NEXT TIME!** - Nivien Subramany

## THANK YOU, SAOA



*Congratulations to you and your team for an incredible Centennial Celebration!*

*The office staff wore their broad smiles all the time and welcomed delegates warmly at the SAOA stand and at every nook and cranny of Emperor's palace. I was extremely impressed by how adept they were about the Centennial celebration and at directing us in the venue. Prelina and I made use of the staff when we were lost (most of the time). They were well-trained and loved what they were doing.*

*The directors were easily visible and mingled with exhibitors and colleagues, exuding an abundance of hospitality and collegiality.*

*It was a sheer pleasure being with your team. Looking forward to the next time ...*

Paul & Prelina Ramkissoon

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*Congratulations to you and the SAOA team on a successful and memorable centennial conference! Thank you for allowing me to visit the exhibition area on the Thursday - much appreciated.*

Shannon de Klerk: Vision Magazine

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*Congratulations to the profession of Optometry on its fitting and successful celebration of the first 100 years.*

*I am well aware of your personal contribution and recognised many of my colleagues who have added much over the years. Their wise minds and steady hands will ensure a future for the eye care profession.*

Denny Mofatt

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*Thank you for affording Intras the opportunity to exhibit at the Association's recent Centennial Celebration Conference at Emperors Palace.*

*Your careful planning and diligent organisation were evident in this well-run conference. It is heartwarming to know the Association's historic reputation is in such good hands.*

*Congratulations on this memorable event,*

Marianne Birkholtz, Company Representative, Intras (Pty) Ltd



## THANK YOU, SAOA



*Thank you so much for your really special letter, it really means so much to me and I am truly so blessed to have been a part of this amazingly memorable event, we really appreciate your support so much and it was an absolute pleasure to work with you and your team, you are so professional and so well organised and really so good at what you do.*

Amanda Janse van Rensburg Groups & Conventions Events Co-ordinator, Emperors Palace Hotels, Casino, and Convention Resort

*It was indeed an amazing experience. We look forward to bigger and better such conferences in the near future. Thank you for your endless support. You are the best.*

Tsietzi Suzan Nkhumishe (Nkambule), MD & FOUNDER

*I think this was the best-arranged conference I have been to, and I have been to a couple. Thank you very much for including Eyeonic in the Centennial celebration. We were overwhelmed by the interest in Eyeonic and look forward to working with the team at SAOA in future.*

Nico Myburgh, Eyeonic South Africa

*...thanks for a conference that was exceptional in all respects. Team Health Focus Eminance looks forward to the next one.*

Paul T. Cooper, Health Focus

*I have heard such great reports of the recent SAOA congress! I want to congratulate you both, and all who helped you, on what appears to have been a truly special event.*

*Well done! Knowing our profession, I now know you are not only capable leaders, you're also great tightrope walkers, jugglers, diplomats, peacekeepers, etc! Thank you for all you do for us.*

Peter Swanepoel

## THANK YOU, SAOA



*On behalf of Retina South Africa, I would like to compliment you on an outstanding conference – one of the best I have attended in years. The networking, quality, and general atmosphere are a tribute to SAOA management team and the dedication and care that contributed to a resounding success that will be spoken about for the next 100 years. (A very high bar for the next!)*

Karen Denton | Head of Education and Advocacy

*Please will you convey my congratulations to the entire SAOA team for a conference that was world-class from beginning to end. I'm sure that there were many challenges along the way, and even during the conference itself. However, everybody I spoke to, from delegates to exhibitors, gave only positive feedback.*

*SAOA Team, I salute you!*

John Stein

*Congratulations on a successful conference! Your hard work has definitely paid off. Thank you for everything, we thoroughly enjoyed it.*

Ingrid Newcombe, GIO

*The CPD allocation was very seamless and the turnaround time for allocation was excellent. So, again another success story of the centennial celebration conference.*

Patrick Mawila



## SAOA MEMBERSHIP IN A NUTSHELL: 10 POINT PACKAGE

1

**SAOA HAS ONLY ONE MANDATE – OUR MEMBERS!**

**SAOA PROTECTS RIGHTS OF MEMBERS IN ALL AREAS OF OPTOMETRIC ENDEAVOUR**

2

**SAOA ADVOCATES AT ALL LEVELS TO ACCOMMODATE PROFESSIONAL NEEDS OF MEMBERS**

**SAOA PROMOTES THE NECESSITY FOR REGULAR EYE HEALTH & VISION EXAMINATIONS**

3

4

**SAOA PUBLISHES NEWS, VIEWS & UPDATES ON ALL MATTERS RELATING TO OPTOMETRY & DISPENSING OPTICIANRY**

**SAOA PROVIDES GUIDANCE & DIRECTION PERTAINING TO LEGISLATIVE, ETHICAL, PRACTICE MANAGEMENT & CLINICAL MATTERS**

5

6

**SAOA PROVIDES ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT ON AN INDIVIDUAL & COLLECTIVE BASIS WHERE PROFESSION & PRACTICE RELATED CHALLENGES ARISE**

**SAOA PROVIDES HIGH STANDARD CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

7

8

**SAOA PROVIDES A NETWORKING PLATFORM, LOCALLY & INTERNATIONALLY**

**SAOA NEGOTIATES BENEFITS & DISCOUNTED ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEMBERS, INCLUDING INDEMNITY INSURANCE**

9

10

## CONCLUSION



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the Force of the Future

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