
News

Ohio State Optometry Emeritus Dean Frederick W. Hebbard, Revered Leader in Optometric Education, Dies at 93

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Emeritus Dean Frederick W. Hebbard, OD, PhD, of The Ohio State University College of Optometry, passed away on August 14, 2016. He was 93.



Dr. Hebbard was born on August 6, 1923 in Eureka, Utah and grew up in Vallejo, California. After graduating from high school, he served in the U.S. Navy as a pattern maker at Mare Island. He first found out he was myopic during a military physical, which sparked his interest in vision. When the war ended, he started optometry school at the University of California, Berkeley, graduating with his optometry degree in 1949 and a Ph.D. in 1957.

After earning his Ph.D., Dr. Hebbard accepted a faculty appointment at Ohio State, where he excelled in various teaching, clinical, and research roles. He truly built upon the optometric education foundation at Ohio State by guiding the design, construction, and dedication of the new west wing of Fry Hall, which opened in 1961. In addition, he negotiated with the university to acquire Starling-Loving Hall for the College of Optometry.

Dr. Hebbard was instrumental in bringing the OD degree to Ohio State, spearheading the expansion of the five-year curriculum (concluding with a BS-Optometry degree) to a six-year curriculum (concluding with an OD degree). In fact, he designed the doctoral hoods and presided at the first awarding of the OD degree.

He became the College of Optometry's first dean on January 1, 1968. During his tenure as a faculty member and administrator, he was responsible for many initiatives that helped solidify optometry's presence and prestige, not only on Ohio State's comprehensive health sciences campus, but nationwide as well. He worked tirelessly to preserve optometry's independence from Ohio State's College of Medicine in the mid-1960s when the Department of Ophthalmology proposed that the optometry program be placed under its administrative structure.

Dr. Hebbard was a respected leader in optometric education and served on many boards and committees for the American Optometric Association, the American Academy of Optometry, The Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry, and the National Board of Examiners in Optometry.

He recruited a world-class faculty of luminaries in optometric education, including Neal Bailey, Richard Hill, J. Boyd Eskridge, Brad Wild, Jerry Lowther, John Schoessler, Ron Jones, Michael Polasky, Arol Ausburger, Paulette Schmidt, Jim Sheedy, Kevin Alexander, Joe Barr, and Greg Good, just to name a few.

Dr. Hebbard retired from Ohio State in June 1988. During his tenure, 1,081 Doctors of Optometry and 91 graduate students in physiological optics received their degrees from Ohio State.

At the time of his retirement, Dr. Hebbard told a reporter from Ohio State's student newspaper, the *Lantern*, "I've always enjoyed the university's atmosphere. The students at Ohio State are very fine young people. One of the blessings in my life is I have had a career I truly enjoy. My job [has been] my hobby; if you enjoy your job, you don't need another hobby."

Emeritus Dean Richard Hill, OD, PhD, notes, "Dean Hebbard had a remarkable life, and was a strong influence in the development of our profession. He will be remembered as a visionary and leader of high standards."

Dr. Hebbard's most recent successor, Dean Karla Zadnik, OD, PhD, observes, "Dr. Hebbard's legacy resides in the College of Optometry at The Ohio State University. He dedicated his professional life to the advancement of students and faculty. He will be missed."

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Frederick A. and Betty L. Hebbard Memorial Fund. Established in 1976 in memory of his parents, Dr. Hebbard created this fund to support the College of Optometry and its education and research programs. To make a donation, visit <https://www.giveto.osu.edu/makeagift/?fund=603051> or call 614-292-2100.