

Preface: The ISRS/AAO Comes of Age

By Drs. Jorge L. Alió and James J. Salz

Science is essentially international and it is only through a lack of historical sense that national qualities have been attributed to it.

—Madame Marie Curie

The International Society of Refractive Surgery of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (ISRS/AAO) has come of age. This book commemorates nearly 30 years of important moments in the Society's history, from the early developments of the International Society of Refractive Keratoplasty (ISRK) and refractive surgery to the events that culminated in the 2003 union of the International Society of Refractive Surgery (ISRS) and the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Refractive Surgery Interest Group (RSIG) resulting in today's ISRS/AAO.

This book also celebrates the contributions of some of our subspecialty's earliest pioneers—many of whom are still actively involved in refractive surgery. Our mission was not to present a history of refractive surgery, but to highlight the important connection between the ISRS/AAO and the subspecialty which remain inextricably intertwined—one would not have existed without the other.

The Society's founders Drs. José I. Barraquer, Miles H. Friedlander, Casimir A. Swinger and Richard C. Troutman relentlessly championed the ideals that formed the bedrock of our Society and the subspecialty of refractive surgery. Beginning with the intuitive genius of Barraquer, factors such as emerging technology, professional practice and scientific knowledge have merged to create, in an amazingly short period, a new subspecialty in ophthalmology that has touched millions of people, enhancing lives in often life-altering ways with improved vision and quality of life.

In only 30 years, refractive surgery has moved from curious observations of the flattening effect of corneal incisions with stainless-steel blades to today's high-tech femtosecond lasers, and the advanced knowledge of visual optics that promise to restore vision to levels that would have been considered impossible a few decades ago.

Since its inception, the ISRS/AAO has fostered the connection and cooperation among colleagues, innovation, creativity, technological developments and uniform standards of professional practice. The Society is committed to educating members practicing in a variety of cultural and socioeconomic milieus and providing them with a forum for the lively exchange of ideas and information—all advancing refractive surgery into exciting, and often uncharted territory.



ISRS/AAO members stand united in their pursuit of one goal—to improve the quality of vision for our patients by improving the surgical manipulation of the optical elements of the eye. This is the definition of refractive surgery.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude for the support from the many individuals who contributed to this book with their opinions, memories, photographs and anecdotes. We also appreciate the generous industry support from Advanced Medical Optics, Inc., Alcon, Inc., Bausch & Lomb, Inc. and Nidek Co. Ltd., all of whom made this book possible.

As the ISRS/AAO comes of age, it is still in its active and empowered youth. From a fruitful past, a most exciting future is waiting for us. A future full of exciting challenges, which are certain to carry on the ISRS/AAO's tradition of excellence in our subspecialty.

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Sincerely,
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Foreword

By Dr. George O. Waring III

As the ISRS/AAO approaches its 30th anniversary, we can celebrate and reflectively ask, “What are the essential characteristics of our Society that have allowed it to flourish and foster the development and growth of refractive surgery for nearly three decades?”

The question is relevant because many societies, study groups and collaborative gatherings concerned with refractive surgery have come and gone over the past 30 years. The ISRS/AAO owes its longevity and persistent success to consistent values including education, international cooperation, innovation and ethical leadership.

Dedication to Education

The Society has focused on educating ophthalmologists in refractive surgery since its genesis as a study group in the late 1970s dedicated to teaching and advancing the techniques of Dr. José I. Barraquer—cryolathe keratophakia and keratomileusis.

Those grueling courses, which expected surgeons to learn and master the many steps of cryolathe keratomileusis, may have been more demanding on the instructors than they were on the students. The Society’s meetings have maintained a strong pedagogical emphasis, veering neither toward polemics in which the Society is trying to sell or popularize particular techniques, nor toward constraint in which the Society is trying to muzzle the presentation of new ideas. Rather, the meetings have emphasized presentations of standard techniques with new scientific information, as well as emerging ideas, innovations and sometimes information that Dr. H. Dunbar Hoskins Jr. has described as “so new it may not be true.” As the Society has grown, so has the subspecialty of refractive surgery.

The educational emphasis continues to expand. The Society now holds an Annual Regional Meeting at an international venue in the middle of the year. In 2006, the Academy’s Subspecialty Day sponsored by the ISRS/AAO set a record for registration and in 2007, the Society sponsored three separate courses held during the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s Annual Meeting. Joining with other ophthalmic societies and refractive surgery groups around the world, the ISRS/AAO also cosponsors more than a dozen meetings each year.

Internationalism

It is no accident that the word “international” is first in the Society’s moniker. The group’s founders were well aware that refractive surgery has international roots, and no one can claim that the subspecialty arose in one specific geographic location or was dominated by only one venue. Refractive surgery has been influenced by the prescient 19th century laboratory work of Dutch ophthalmologist Dr. Leendert Jan Lans in the Netherlands, by Italian, Russian and American

efforts in the late 1800s, and by Barraquer’s lamellar techniques for myopia and hyperopia in Colombia, which were adapted and refined by Dr. Jorg Krumeich in Germany and many ophthalmologists in the United States.

Other influences included Dr. Tsutomu Sato’s incisional techniques for myopia in Japan, Dr. P. Siva Reddy’s work in India and Dr. Svyatoslav Fyodorov’s varied developments in Russia. Late-20th-century surgeons have also contributed: Dr. Richard Troutman’s techniques for corneal astigmatism, wedge resection and relaxing incisions; excimer laser developments in the United States by Drs. Marguerite B. McDonald, Charles Munneryn, Rangaswamy Srinivasan and Stephen L. Trokel followed by its clinical applications by Drs. Theo Seiler in Germany and John Marshall in England, the design of early accommodating intraocular lenses by Drs. Stuart Cummings in the United States and Khalil Hanna in France—the list goes on and on.

With the establishment of the ISRS/AAO International Council, and members around the world, the Society continues to contribute to and draw from the broad international refractive surgery community.

Dedicated Leadership

Hundreds of ophthalmologists have donated their time, creativity and work to the Society as officers and committee members. The term “contributed” is accurate—there is no remuneration for these individuals, many of whom have spent not just days, but weeks and months creating, supporting and expanding the Society’s programs, many of whom serve multiyear terms.

The dedication of these individuals to the Society’s educational mission, broad surgical perspective, international emphasis and composition, and robust *Journal of Refractive Surgery* is why the ISRS/AAO has survived and flourished for three decades—and is destined to continue its growth and impact into the future as an affiliate of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.