

In Memory of Dr. Bradley Straatsma (1927-2026)



It is with immense sadness that we learned of the passing of Dr. Bradley Straatsma, founding Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), a global leader in ophthalmology and a great friend of the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO).

Dr. Straatsma was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the United States, and graduated from Yale University School of Medicine. In 1959, he joined the faculty of UCLA, where he laid the groundwork for what would become the Jules Stein Eye Institute. When the university's new Department of Ophthalmology was inaugurated in 1968, he became its first Chairman.

Beyond his university commitments, Dr. Straatsma served in the highest leadership positions in national and international ophthalmology. He was President of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, the American Ophthalmological Society, the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology, the Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology, and the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis, as well as Chairman of the American Board of Ophthalmology.

Among his eminent legacies, Dr. Straatsma is well known for effectively creating the American Academy of Ophthalmology as we know it today, and writing the Academy's blueprint for ophthalmologic care. He also strengthened the peer review process of the *American Journal of Ophthalmology* during his tenure as the Editor-in-Chief from 1983-2002.

In the early 2000s, Dr. Straatsma took his expertise across the continents and collaborated with the Africa Eye Foundation to plan for an eye care facility. He was directly involved in the eventual establishment of the Magrabi ICO Cameroon Eye Institute at Yaoundé, Cameroon. The Institute, which opened in 2016, serves to improve, preserve, and restore eye health and vision for the people of central Africa.

In recognition of his visionary leadership and selfless contributions, the APO awarded Dr. Straatsma the Jose Rizal International Medal in 2003. Over the years, he attended our congress multiple times, sharing his knowledge and experience with colleagues in our region.

On April 16, 2026, Dr. Straatsma passed away peacefully at 98 years of age. He is survived by his children, Derek, Cary, and Greer. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family during this difficult time.