

# 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.



## Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology

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May 4, 2026

Dear Council Members & Member Society Presidents,

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 APAO.

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 was also directly involved in the eventual establishment of the Magrabi ICO Cameroon Eye Institute at Yaoundé, Cameroon, which 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 APAO awarded him the Jose Rizal International Medal in 2003.

Please find attached an obituary for Dr. Bradley Straatsma. If you would like to recount any personal memories of him and/or share some treasured photos with him, please write to [secretariat@apaophth.org](mailto:secretariat@apaophth.org) by May 11, 2026. We will share all these memorable accounts on the APAO website.

Best regards,

Prof. Tetsuro Oshika  
President, APAO

Prof. Clement C Tham  
Secretary-General & CEO, APAO

**Our heartfelt condolences.**

*Namrata SHARMA  
Treasurer, APOA*

**I was so saddened to hear the passing of. Dr Bradley Straatsma, a global leader in ophthalmology and a good friend of APOA. My deepest condolences to his family and friends.**

*Ava HOSSAIN  
Immediate Past President, APOA*

**Deepest condolences!**

*Dennis LAM  
Immediate Past Secretary-General, APOA*

**On behalf of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists, I would like to express my sadness and convey my deepest condolences to his loved ones.**

**We are where we are today because of the vision and leadership of giants like Dr. Bradley Straatsma. We are grateful for his life.**

*Colin CHAN  
Regional Secretary for Australia and New Zealand, APOA*

**Deepest condolences.**

*Sharfuddin AHMED  
Regional Secretary for Bangladesh, APOA*

**On behalf of the Cambodian Ophthalmological Society and myself, I would like to express my condolences to the families of Dr. Bradley Straatsma for the passing of their loved one.**

*Do SEIHA  
Regional Secretary for Cambodia, APOA*

**I was deeply saddened to hear this news. Dr. Straatsma was truly a legendary leader in ophthalmology—a teacher of teachers, an ophthalmologist's ophthalmologist, and personally very kind to me as well.**

**My heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues.**

*Motohiro KAMEI  
Regional Secretary for Japan, APOA*

**On behalf of the Malaysian Society of Ophthalmology and the ASEAN Ophthalmology Society, I wish to extend our deepest condolences on the passing of Dr. Bradley Straatsma, one of the founding pillars of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.**

**His vision and leadership in establishing AAO have left an enduring legacy that continues to inspire generations of ophthalmologists across the region.**

*With sympathy & respect,  
Liza Sharmini AHMAD TAJUDIN  
Regional Secretary for Malaysia, APOA*

**My heartfelt condolence and a big sympathy to his family at this sad time!**

*Rohit SAIJU  
Regional Secretary for Nepal, APOA*

**Deepest condolences from the Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan. Dr Bradley Straatsma was an icon in ophthalmology and he will be remembered in ophthalmology for a long time.**

*Muhammad MOIN  
Regional Secretary for Pakistan, APOA*

**I am deeply saddened by Professor Bradley Straatsma's demise. Please convey my condolences to his loved ones on behalf of College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka.**

*Lalitha SENARATH  
Regional Secretary for Sri Lanka, APAO*

**My heartfelt sympathy to his family and all colleagues at this sad time!**

*Wanicha CHUENKONGKAEW  
Regional Secretary for Thailand, APAO*

**We extend our deepest condolences on the passing of Dr. Bradley Straatsma, an outstanding pioneer in ophthalmology who made profound contributions to the global medical community. His dedication, vision, and enduring legacy will always be remembered and cherished. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his family and loved ones during this difficult time.**

*Ngoc Dong PHAM  
Regional Secretary for Viet Nam, APAO*

**We join the ophthalmology community in mourning the loss of a truly distinguished leader whose remarkable contributions to ophthalmology, education, and international collaboration have left a lasting legacy worldwide. His dedication to advancing eye care and strengthening the global ophthalmic community will continue to inspire future generations.**

**Please convey our deepest condolences to his family, colleagues, and all who had the privilege of working with him.**

*With sincere sympathies,  
Reynaldo M. JAVATE  
Subspecialty Secretary for the Asia Pacific Society of  
Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, APAO*

**I was saddened to learn of Professor Bradley Straatsma's passing. He was a man of great academic repute whose immense contributions left an indelible mark on ophthalmology. His departure creates a profound void in our community. My thoughts and prayers are with his family; may he rest in peace.**

*Rajvardhan AZAD  
Chair, Ophthalmic Education Standing Committee, APAO*

**The Ophthalmological Society of Bangladesh (OSB) is deeply saddened and joins in mourning the loss of Dr. Bradley Straatsma, a global leader in ophthalmology.**

**Dr. Bradley Straatsma's career was defined by excellence in academic medicine and a profound commitment to international research. We recognize him as a visionary mentor whose influence shaped the careers of specialists across the Asia-Pacific region and the world. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family and the global medical community.**

*With heartfelt condolences,  
Md. Tauhidur RAHMAN  
President, Ophthalmological Society of Bangladesh*

**Mongolian Ophthalmologists' Society extends its deepest condolences on the passing of Dr. Bradley R. Straatsma. 🙏🙏🙏**

**Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his family and loved ones.**

*Bayartsetseg ZAANKHUU  
President, Mongolian Ophthalmologists' Society*

**Nepal Ophthalmic Society (NOS) extends the deepest condolences on the passing of Dr. Bradley Straatsma, an outstanding pioneer in ophthalmology who made profound contributions to the global medical community. His dedication, vision, and enduring legacy will always be remembered and cherished. Rest in Peace.**

**Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and loved ones during this difficult time.**

*Purushottam JOSHI  
President, Nepal Ophthalmic Society*

**On behalf of the Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan, I express profound sorrow on the passing of Bradley R. Straatsma, an iconic figure in global ophthalmology.**

**Prof. Straatsma's exemplary contributions to clinical practice, academic leadership, and international ophthalmic collaboration have left an indelible mark on our profession. His distinguished service, including his leadership within the American Academy of Ophthalmology, significantly advanced the standards of eye care and education worldwide.**

**His legacy as a visionary leader, mentor, and scholar will continue to inspire generations of ophthalmologists across the globe, including here in Pakistan.**

**We extend our deepest condolences to his family, colleagues, and the international ophthalmic community. May his soul rest in peace.**

*P Salim MAHAR  
President, Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan*

**The Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology extends its deepest condolences on the passing of Dr. Bradley R. Straatsma, a distinguished pioneer in ophthalmology whose contributions have left a lasting global impact.**

**His legacy will continue to inspire future generations. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his family and loved ones.**

*Marie Joan V. LOY  
President, Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology*

**On behalf of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists of Thailand (RCOPT), we extend our deepest condolences on the passing of Dr. Bradley Straatsma.**

**His extraordinary dedication to ophthalmology and medical education has left a lasting impact on the global eye care community.**

**Our sincere sympathy goes to his family, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time.**

*With deepest sympathy,  
Pannet PANGPUTHIPONG  
President, The Royal College of Ophthalmologists of Thailand*

**My heartfelt condolences. I knew Bradley Straatsma for several years. Worked with him closely from AIOS. When I was AIOS Scientific Committee Chairman in 2003, he came to DELHI AIOS, and had AOI meeting. His contribution to ophthalmology is enormous. We will miss him. My condolences to the family.**

*S. NATARAJAN*

*Immediate Past President, Asia Pacific Ophthalmic Trauma Society*

**The Asia Pacific Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (APSOPRS) expresses its deepest condolences on the passing of Dr. Bradley Straatsma, a visionary in global ophthalmology whose influence transcended borders and generations.**

**His extraordinary contributions to academic leadership, clinical excellence, and international collaboration have left an enduring imprint on the field.**

**We join the global ophthalmic fraternity in honoring a life defined by dedication, integrity, and a profound commitment to advancing eye care worldwide. His legacy will remain a guiding light for future generations of ophthalmologists and surgeons.**

**On behalf of APSOPRS, we extend our heartfelt sympathies to his family, colleagues, and all who had the privilege of knowing him. His remarkable life's work will continue to inspire and shape the future of ophthalmology.**

**May his legacy endure through the countless lives he uplifted and the institutions he helped build.**

*With deepest sympathies,  
Kasturi BHATTACHARJEE*

*President, Asia Pacific Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*