Bascom Palmer Welcomes Renowned Ophthalmologist, Glaucoma Researcher Dr. M. Roy Wilson

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute is honored to welcome M. Roy Wilson, M.D., M.S., as visiting professor of ophthalmology. Dr. Wilson will be spending one year engaged in glaucoma and epidemiology research.

On August 1, Dr. Wilson, an ophthalmologist, glaucoma researcher and academician, will begin a one-year sabbatical at Bascom Palmer to get reacquainted with advances in glaucoma clinical care and research.

“This sabbatical allows me an opportunity to concentrate on the types of activities I enjoyed in my early career,” Dr. Wilson said. A member of the University of Miami Health System’s Board of Directors, he recently stepped down as president of Wayne State University, a position he held for 10 years.

“Roy Wilson has a long and distinguished career in academic leadership, and we are honored that he has selected the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute as his academic home during his sabbatical year,” said Eduardo C. Alfonso, M.D., the Kathleen and Stanley J. Glaser Chair in Ophthalmology and director of
the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. “In addition to his expertise in glaucoma, Dr. Wilson is world renowned as a data scientist and epidemiologist. His concentration on research will enrich Bascom Palmer’s exceptional scientific research portfolio.”

‘Profound Insights and Innovative Perspectives’

“Dr. Wilson’s career accomplishments are truly inspiring. His lifelong commitment to equity, inclusion, and advanced patient care perfectly aligns with our mission here at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute,” said Felipe A. Medeiros, M.D., Ph.D., professor of ophthalmology and vice-chair of translational research. “Collaborating with him represents an exciting chapter in our shared journey to advance glaucoma care and research at Bascom Palmer. I am particularly excited about the profound insights and innovative perspectives that Roy will bring to our ongoing work, enriching our research environment and strengthening our mission to fight glaucoma.”

In 1986, Dr. Wilson was named chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles; he became dean of the university’s College of Medicine seven years later. Concurrently, he was associate dean of the UCLA School of Medicine and professor of ophthalmology at the UCLA Stein Eye Institute.

Dr. Wilson was appointed dean of the School of Medicine and vice president for health sciences at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1998. Five years later, he became president of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, where he established the Paul Foster School of Medicine. In 2006, he became chancellor of the University of Colorado at
Denver and Health Sciences Center in Aurora, where he consolidated the campuses and created the Colorado School of Public Health. He was also chair of the University of Colorado Hospital board of directors during this time. Dr. Wilson served as deputy director of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) before he was appointed president of Wayne State University in 2013.

"Dr. Wilson is recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in the field of ophthalmology. He has made immense contributions in the areas of glaucoma research, education, service and clinical care. We are excited to tap into his expertise," said Steven J. Gedde, M.D., professor of ophthalmology, the John G. Clarkson Chair in Ophthalmology and vice chair of education at Bascom Palmer.

**Focus on Glaucoma**

Dr. Wilson received his Bachelor of Science degree *magna cum laude* from Allegheny College and his medical degree from Harvard Medical School. He completed both a residency in ophthalmology and a fellowship in glaucoma at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. While at Harvard, he became interested in epidemiology, which led him to a project involving glaucoma data. Subsequent studies in St. Lucia and Cameroon led him to focus on glaucoma and blindness in populations from the Caribbean to West Africa. He received a Master of Science degree in epidemiology from UCLA in 1990.

An invited member of the American Ophthalmological Society; Alpha Omega Alpha; the Glaucoma Research Society; the Society of Medical Administrators; the National Academy of Medicine;
and the American Academy of Arts and Science, Dr. Wilson has served on numerous federal committees, including the Food and Drug Administration advisory committees for dermatologic and ophthalmic drugs and ophthalmic devices. He served on the executive committee of the National Eye Institute’s Ocular Hypertension Treatment Study Clinical Trial and chaired the data monitoring and oversight committees for the Los Angeles Latino Eye Study III and the African American Eye Disease Study.

Commitment to Diversity

Dr. Wilson has also served on numerous advisory councils at the NIH, including the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities; the National Center for Research Resources; and the Advisory Council to the Director, where he chaired the Working Group on Diversity. He currently serves on the Diversity in the Healthcare Workforce Subcommittee of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Academic Affiliations Council.

Dr. Wilson has served on many national boards, including as chair of the board of trustees of the Association of American Medical Colleges. He currently serves on the boards of Research!America; the Alliance for Health Policy; and the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. In each of these roles and throughout his career, he has been committed to diversity, equity and inclusion within the educational and medical communities.

Over Dr. Wilson’s illustrious career, he has delivered 27 named and honorary lectures and been invited to present more than 275 presentations, on topics ranging from racial equality
and diversity in medicine to defining glaucoma in the 21st century.

Dr. Wilson’s high-impact research includes more than 135 peer-reviewed publications, 25 book chapters and two books. His most recent book, *The Plum Tree Blossoms Even in Winter*, published in 2022 by Wayne State University Press, describes Dr. Wilson’s childhood struggles, health issues and his journey to becoming a leader in global health and higher education.

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