

A salute to Team Shields

“Life all around is a kind of sporting event and the best any of us can do is to try continually to improve our game.” —*Harvey Cushing*

When I read the advice of the iconic surgeon Harvey Cushing to his son Bill, I cannot help but think of the Shields Team. Tremendous parents, athletes and sports fans, in addition to physicians *par excellence*, they epitomize not only the team concept but also the principle of lifelong work to improve one’s game, an unceasing commitment to excellence that inspires all around to lift their games, too. It is a great credit to the *Indian Journal of Ophthalmology* that it has undertaken this special issue to salute the Shields partnership which has benefitted so many patients all over the world, and a tremendous honor to me on behalf of Wills Eye Hospital to provide a brief introductory overview of this Team of Destiny [Fig. 1].

Jerry and Carol Shields took very different paths to the Wills Eye Hospital. Jerry was a country boy from Pride Station, Kentucky. Growing up in a large family, he roamed the outdoors, loved nature, and developed a fascination in particular with butterflies. An amateur and youthful lepidopterist, he tracked them, classified them, and studied them. They were his introduction into the world of biological science and investigation. Jerry, as the youngest of eight children in rural Kentucky, was destined to work in the coal mines with his older brothers. His curiosity for science, however, drove him not only to apply to college and attend Murray State but also later to apply to medical school and matriculate at the University of Michigan. A 2-year commitment in the U.S. Navy took him to Vietnam and service as a medic, where he became convinced not only that medicine was his calling but also that ophthalmology would be his specialty. Jerry returned from service and so impressed his Wills interviewers in Philadelphia that he gained a spot in the Wills Eye Hospital residency, entering in 1967. There he developed an immediate and lifelong friendship with W. Richard Green, MD, later to become a renowned Johns Hopkins/Wilmer Institute eye pathologist, who coached him one-on-one in evening pathology sessions. Jerry went on to further fellowship at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology with Lorenz Zimmerman, MD, and returned to Wills Eye Hospital for a retina fellowship. He then made the innovative, momentous, and at the time startling decision to inaugurate an Ocular Oncology Service at Wills Eye, gaining the support of Drs. William Annesley and William Tasman and the Retina Service. Through consummate dedication and hard work, he built that service into a huge tertiary referral center.

Carol Lally was also born into a large family, but hers was in the prosperous suburb of Sharon outside Pittsburgh. She excelled in the classroom and on the athletic field and became one of the first women to enter the University of Notre Dame, when that school began to admit women. At Notre Dame, she performed with remarkable distinction in the classroom and on the basketball court, where she was one of the inaugural founders of Notre Dame’s women’s varsity basketball team. Among her many college accolades was the Byron Kanaley

Award (1979) given to the top student-athlete at the University of Notre Dame. She was the first woman awarded this prize. Following graduation, she went on to serve her alma mater at the highest level on the school’s athletic advisory boards, as an honored speaker, and in 2005 became the first alumna to be presented with an honorary degree from Notre Dame. Dr. Shields matriculated in medical school at the University of Pittsburgh where she had a brilliant track record and was inspired to become an ophthalmologist, following in her older brother’s footsteps not only in the profession but also at Wills Eye Hospital, where she came in 1984 – and the rest is history! After her training in ophthalmology at Wills, she went on not only to fellowships in ocular pathology, orbital surgery, and oncology but also to marriage with Dr. Jerry Shields, building a lifelong and uniquely productive professional and personal partnership that has resulted in the world’s leading oncology practice and seven children! [Figs. 2-4].

Over the past 55 years, Jerry Shields, later joined by Carol, has built a remarkable Ocular Oncology Service at Wills Eye Hospital for patient care and academic endeavors. He and his team have published more than 1800 scientific reports in peer-reviewed journals. He has authored or coauthored 13 major textbooks on ocular tumors. Two of the “Shields and Shields” textbooks have become a standard resource for ophthalmologists, *Intraocular Tumors. An Atlas and Textbook* (3rd edition. Philadelphia, Lippincott Wolters Kluwers, 2016) and *Eyelid, Conjunctival, and Orbital Tumors. An Atlas and Textbook* (3rd edition. Philadelphia, Lippincott Wolters Kluwers, 2016).

The Wills Eye Hospital Ocular Oncology Service has become a globally leading center of excellence for patients with eye tumors. This team of four full-time ocular oncologists provides care for approximately 150 new cases of retinoblastoma and 500 new cases of uveal melanoma each year. In addition, they provide service for numerous other tumors of the eyelid, conjunctiva, orbit, and intraocular structures including lymphoma, metastases, hemangioma, and many more.

Carol and Jerry have shared their knowledge worldwide and their fellowship has trained nearly 200 ocular oncologists,

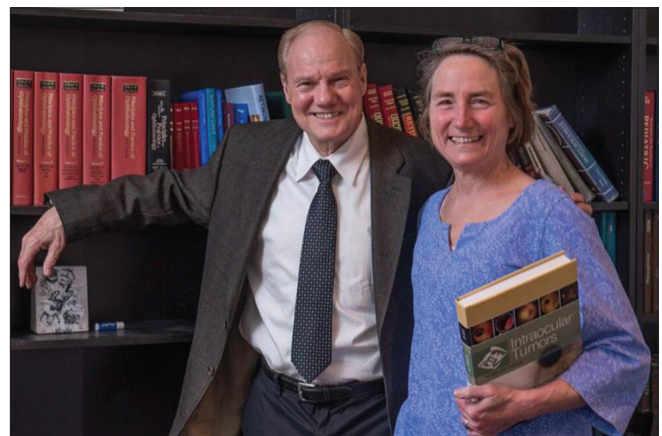


Figure 1: Jerry and Carol Shields in front of a book case filled with their publications



Figure 2: Jerry and Carol Shields on their wedding day, October 26, 1986

most of whom have risen to leadership positions in Europe, Asia, South America, North America, Africa, and Australia. In tribute, Jerry’s peers nominated him to be the first President of the International Society of Ocular Oncology. Carol has followed in that role.

The Shieldses’ generosity with their time and knowledge is staggering, with literally thousands of invited talks given worldwide, scores of named lectureships and keynote addresses [Fig. 5], hundreds of courses and symposia, and hundreds of medical students, residents, fellows, and ophthalmologists mentored. When one reflects that at the time of Jerry’s inspiration



Figure 3: Jerry and Carol Shields beaming, with the first two of their beautiful children



Figure 4: Jerry and Carol Shields and their seven progeny at the Wills Eye Ball in 2017, an occasion that honored the Oncology Service and its Philadelphia-wide partnerships with the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Drexel University/Hahnemann Hospital Department of Radiation Oncology, and Thomas Jefferson University. The funds raised contributed to the Brady-Shields Endowed Chair at Wills Eye Hospital, whose inaugural incumbent is Professor Jerry A. Shields



Figure 5: A group picture taken in my office at the time of the announcement of the Brady-Shields Endowed Chair, with Ophthalmologist-in-Chief Emeritus William Tasman, MD, Carol Shields, pioneering radiation oncologist and career-long Shields colleague Luther Brady, MD, Mrs. Alice Lea Tasman, Julia Haller, MD, and Jerry Shields

to start an Ocular Oncology Service, there were fewer than 10 physicians worldwide with interest in ocular tumors, and that Wills Eye Hospital was then evaluating only five patients a year with ocular melanoma and fewer with retinoblastoma, the arc of their achievement comes into clearer focus.

Above and beyond their phenomenal clinical success, academic productivity, and teaching and mentorship accomplishments, Jerry and Carol Shields are beloved figures worldwide [Fig. 6]. They are unfailingly willing to help with clinical conundrums, and to sort out diagnostic dilemmas. They take telephone calls and emails from friends and strangers alike, returning them immediately with sound advice and helpful recommendations. They are great and competitive tennis partners, basketball contestants, dinner guests, and travel companions. They are good sports, who love surprises and pranks! They came dressed as two of the Seven Dwarfs from the Disney movie Snow White to a surprise 50th birthday Halloween costume party that my husband threw for me! And the Shieldses can keep a secret – they drove the entire party wild with curiosity, capering mischievously, masked, and maddeningly totally incognito!

The Shields name has conferred great added distinction on Wills Eye Hospital, and Carol and Jerry have served as top ambassadors for our profession all over the planet. The Shieldses are very arguably the most renowned ophthalmologists on the globe. It is a real privilege to relish this terrific tribute to them – bravo to the *Indian Journal of Ophthalmology*!



Figure 6: The Shields Team – eternal life of the party!

Julia A Haller

Ophthalmologist-in-Chief,
Wills Eye Hospital, Thomas Jefferson University,
Philadelphia, PA, USA.
E-mail: jhaller@willseye.org

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code:	Website: www.ijo.in
	DOI: 10.4103/ijo.IJO_2041_19

Cite this article as: Haller JA. A salute to Team Shields. *Indian J Ophthalmol* 2019;67:1918-21.

About the author



Julia A. Haller, MD is Ophthalmologist-in-Chief of Wills Eye Hospital, where she holds the William Tasman, M.D. Endowed Chair. She serves as Professor and Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University and Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals, and Co-Director of the Wills Vision Research Center at Jefferson.

Dr. Haller was educated at the Princeton University, and Harvard Medical School. After a Halsted surgical internship at Johns Hopkins and a fellowship in ocular pathology with Frederick A. Jakobiec, M.D. at Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, she completed her residency in ophthalmology at the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins. She received a Heed Fellowship award for her retina training at Hopkins, directed by Ronald G. Michels, M.D. She then became Wilmer's first female Chief Resident, joined the faculty thereafter, and was named the inaugural Katharine Graham Professor of Ophthalmology in 2002, and the inaugural Robert Bond Welch, M.D. Professor of Ophthalmology in 2006. At Wilmer, also she directed the Retina Fellowship Training Program. She assumed leadership of the Wills Eye Hospital in 2007.

One of the world's most renowned retina surgeons, Dr. Haller has published over 350 scientific articles and book chapters. Dr. Haller's honors include the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) Lifetime Achievement Award, the Strittmatter Award, the Gertrude Pyron Award from the Retina Research Foundation/American Society of Retina Specialists, the Louis Braille Award from Associated Services for the Blind, the Heed Award from the Society of Heed Fellows, the Gass Medal from the Macula Society, the Crystal Apple Award of the ASRS, the Kreissig Award from EURETINA, the President's Award from Women in Ophthalmology, a Secretariat Award from the AAO, and the Rolex Achievement Award. She holds Chair XVI of the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis. She is president of the Women in Medicine Legacy Foundation, Chair of the Society of Heed Fellows, serves on the Council of the American Ophthalmological Society, and is a past president of the Retina Society, the ASRS, and the AUPO Board of Trustees, and a founding member of Women in Retina. Her editorial board service has included the American Journal of Ophthalmology, RETINA, Retinal Physician, Retina Times, Ocular Surgery News, Retina Today, and Ophthalmology Times. A Director of Celgene Corporation, and past Trustee of Princeton University and the Bryn Mawr School, Dr. Haller serves on the boards of the Johns Hopkins Medical and Surgical Association and The College of Physicians of Philadelphia.