



THE HISTORY OF THE GENETIC EYE FOUNDATION

The contribution made by Dr Francis Bathurst Halliday AM., MB., BS., DOMS., RANZO. (ret.) in the collation of this history of the Genetic Eye Foundation is gratefully acknowledged. Dr Halliday, the respected founding father of the GEF, is an Ophthalmologist passionate about patient care. His co-operation, willingness to engage in meetings, allowing unlimited access to his personal files, is very much appreciated by the writer.

The formation of The Genetic Eye Foundation, a non-profit organisation dedicated to research, and the support of people with sight problems, dates back to 1963.

At that time, in the course of routine ophthalmic practice and following in the footsteps of his father, the eminent ophthalmologist Doctor John Charles Halliday, Doctor Frank Halliday became interested in treating retinitis pigmentosa.

He commenced patient care and research at the Outpatient Department of Royal North Shore Hospital in 1975, when it was recognised a need existed for a national organisation to promote awareness, diagnosis and support for patients with hereditary eye disease.

The Retinal Dystrophy Service, as it was then called, came into being in 1979, when the clinic was transferred to the Sydney Eye Hospital, later to be moved to the Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick. The chief source of funding after 1981 was by voluntary donation and only the grass roots support of patients and eye specialists kept it going.

Dr Frank Halliday was the founding President when, on 4th July 1989, and twenty-six years after commencing his research, the Genetic Eye Foundation was incorporated.



From back left: Mr. Richard Grills, Mr. Bruce Stanhope, Dr. Keith Masnick, Ms Eulalie Giles, Professor Minas Coroneo, Ms Roz Sturt (Secretary), Mrs. Sylvia Levi, Mr. James Raissis and Mrs. Hellene Coroneo.

The Genetic Eye Foundation has in its keeping the largest data base of retinal dystrophy family trees in Australia. A collection that has made research into genetic material (DNA) and family counselling possible. Our activities in respect of hereditary eye conditions include recovery of medical information of patients with hereditary eye conditions, support for existing services and provision of new ones, patient care and education. By means of DNA testing we hope to determine who is, and who is not, at risk of inherited eye disease.

The Genetic Eye Foundation has a proud and commendable history, with a dedicated list of donors, and a membership comprising those affected, their families, researchers and health professionals. Funds are limited. Over the past few years the GEF has provided funds for genetic research at POW Hospital, and also for the research being undertaken by the 'Bionic Eye' project in the Ophthalmology Department of the University of NSW.

FRANCIS BATHURST HALLIDAY, AM

MB, MS (Syd) DOMS (Lond) FRACS, FRANZCO

Francis Bathurst Halliday was born on 15 June 1915, the youngest of six children of Fannie and Dr. John Charles White Halliday, in Rockdale NSW.

He was educated at public schools at Warrawee and Gordon, completing his secondary education at Knox Grammar School, Warrawee. He matriculated for entry into University of Sydney, graduating in 1940 with a Bachelor of Medicine and a Master of Surgery.

Whilst his father supported him in his medical training and career endeavours, Francis had no real preference for any particular specialist field. Although ophthalmology may have seemed a natural progression, Francis developed strong skills and expertise in other areas of medicine. As many doctors had joined the military services in response to the urgent need in that area, the opportunity for recent graduates to experience higher levels of medical responsibilities became a necessary part of hospital work, and Francis took advantage of these opportunities.

Following his residency period at Royal North Shore Hospital, he enlisted in the AMF, later transferring to the AIF, where he saw active service as a RMO and Divisional Medical Officer with 7th Division in the final stages of World War II at Balakpapan, Borneo. Whilst in Balakpapan Francis had the opportunity to assist Dr. John Kingsley, an Ophthalmologist attached to the Base Hospital. This association solidified his desire to pursue ophthalmology as a career.

In 1946, Dr. Francis Halliday went to England for post-graduate ophthalmology training at Moorfields Eye Hospital and the Royal Eye Hospital London, DOMS of the Royal College of Physicians, London, and the Royal College of Surgeons, England, 1947.

Upon his return to Sydney, Dr. Francis Halliday resumed his career at Royal North Shore Hospital as Assistant Ophthalmic Surgeon, helping to build up the eye department. He was also an Honorary



Ophthalmic Surgeon at Hornsby and District Hospital, Concord Hospital, Nerringah Home of Peace Wahroonga, and the Church of England Children's Homes.

He commenced private practice in Macquarie Street, Sydney (1948) and at Hornsby, suburb of Sydney, (1949). Francis moved his Macquarie Street practice to the suburb of Eastwood in 1960, one of the first Macquarie Street Specialists to 'decentralise'.

In 1967 Dr. Francis Halliday relinquished ophthalmic surgery to extend private practice and further his research interests in Retinal Dystrophy, a type of eye disease still little understood. He received a research grant to commence a Clinic of Comprehensive Services and Clinical Research at Royal North Shore Hospital.

Dr. Francis Halliday helped found the Retinal Dystrophy Society of NSW in 1975. Recognising the need for a co-ordinated approach to address visual handicap issues, he worked with many groups to found The Advisory Council on Visual Handicap in 1976. In 1979, with initial funding from the NSW/ACT Save Sight Foundation, He established the Co-ordinated and Comprehensive Services and Research Unit, with facilities provided by The University of New South Wales, The School of Community Medicine and the Prince of Wales Hospital. This led to the founding of the Retinal Dystrophy Service at the Prince of Wales Hospital.

During the 1980's, Dr. Francis Halliday liaised with the new and developing Genetics Department of the Children's Hospital Randwick, which led to collaboration with the Molecular Genetics Laboratory, to find the causative genes in Retinal Dystrophy. Out of this work, the Genetic Eye Foundation was founded in 1989.

Dr. Francis Halliday, working through the Genetic Eye Foundation until retirement in 1996, continuing to expand the extensive collection of family pedigrees started in the late 1960's, which has become one of the largest medically related genetic pedigree collections in the world.

In 1996, Dr Francis Halliday was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (AM) for services to medicine in the field of ophthalmology, particularly in the area of Retinal Dystrophy and the establishment of the Genetic Eye Foundation. He continued his interest in community health services following his retirement from the Genetic Eye Foundation, in establishing OMNI (Old Men, New Ideas) and working with the Council of The Aging (COTA). 

JOHN CHARLES WHITE HALLIDAY

MB,ChM (Syd) DPH (Camb) FRCS (Edin) FRACS



John Charles White Halliday was born on 19 June 1871, the youngest of eight children of Mary and Francis Halliday J.P. (Mayor of Bathurst) in Bathurst NSW.

With his brothers, Claud and Wesley, John attended All Saint's College Bathurst, for the early secondary

school years. The Headmaster, recognising John's high level of academic achievement, advised his father to send him to a school in Sydney, where he would be further extended and give better expression to his abilities.

John at the age of 16, was enrolled as Charles Halliday on 2 February 1888 as a boarder at Newington College, Sydney, and placed in Form V (1), which indicated that he served in the College Cadet Unit. In 1888 he was awarded the Form V (1) Classics Prize, the School Prize, and the Mathematics Prize. He stayed on for a further year in 1889, winning the Wigram-Allen Scholarship in Mathematics. John was an active member and Secretary of the College Literary and Debating Society, and a College Prefect. He was Dux of the College in 1889, being awarded the Schofield Prize, and a special gold medal by the Headmaster for his performance in the Senior Public Examination.

The results of the Senior Public Examination in connection with the University of Sydney in 1889, saw John Halliday awarded a Silver Medal for proficiency in Ancient History and Geometry, with "A" class passes in English, Latin, Greek, and Mechanics and "B" passes in French, Arithmetic, and Trigonometry.

John graduated from University of Sydney in 1896 with second class honours in the degree of Bachelor of Medicine, and a Master of Surgery.

John studied Ophthalmology in England in 1898 and 1899, returning to establish a general medical practice at Rockdale and "practicing as an oculist" in Macquarie Street Sydney in 1901.

John had an insatiable love of reading covering a wide range of topics including religion, biographies of prominent historic achievers, social issues and politics. He enjoyed reading murder and mystery novels as relaxation, a diversion from study and medical journals. Greek myths and legends and Rudyard Kipling's stories about India were popular readings to his children and grand-children in the early 1900's. John developed an interest in India as a result of reading essays and papers relating to the sub-continent.

In 1901 John Halliday was appointed as Clinical Assistant in Ophthalmology to Doctors Andrew Pockley and Warren at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital at Camperdown, Sydney. His status was elevated in 1906 to Assistant Honorary Ophthalmic Surgeon, and in August the same year was appointed as Acting Assistant Ophthalmic Surgeon to Sydney Hospital.

In June 1903 John Halliday married Fannie Hindmarsh. They had six children between 1904 and 1915, the youngest son, Francis Bathurst, followed his father into medicine and ophthalmology.

Dr. John Halliday went to Armritsar, India to learn the techniques of intracapsular cataract extraction developed by Lieut. Col. Henry Smith. He further applied, perfected, adapted and modified Smith's pioneering work upon his return to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. From 1920 to 1931, John Halliday was appointed Ophthalmic Surgeon at RPA, from then on, as Consulting Ophthalmic Surgeon. He continued to practice as Consulting Surgeon to the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, Prince Henry Hospital (the Coast Hospital), the NSW Institute for the Deaf and Blind, and the Church of England Homes for Children.

As a member of the Ophthalmological Society of New South Wales, Dr. John Halliday was able to express his strong social conscience in actively supporting efforts to provide high standard ophthalmic services through well trained staff and accessible facilities. The establishment of the Optical Prescription Spectacle Makers in October 1932, and the Medical Eye Service Clinic in 1934 are examples.

John Charles White Halliday died 23 September 1946. He was survived by his wife, Fannie, and six children; John, Kingsley, Beatrice, Robert, Maxwell, and Francis.

I'D LIKE TO HELP WITH EYE RESEARCH

Your contribution would assist in keeping pace with increased demand, especially in the area of support for the visually impaired.

The Genetic Eye Foundation relies on individuals, corporations and fund raising events to support our very successful research programs.

We sincerely thank those who have given so generously this year.

For more information on The Genetic Eye Foundation and The Bionic Eye Foundation programs and on how to volunteer time or contribute financially to this worthwhile cause, please call our secretary,

Roz Sturt
Phone 02 9382 2493
or 02 9399 9211
or 0408 374 539
To make a credit card or cheque contribution.

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I'D LIKE TO HELP WITH EYE RESEARCH

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other)

First Name

Surname

Address

Town / Suburb

State Post Code

Phone

Mobile

MY GIFT WILL BE:

\$25.00 \$50.00 \$200.00 Other

PAYMENT:

Cheque Visa Mastercard Amex

CARD NUMBER

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CARD EXPIRY DATE DD / MM / YYYY

Signature

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

I would like to become a regular donor

I would like information on bequests

OTHER WAYS TO DONATE

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP Individual \$25.00 Family \$55.00 Professional \$110.00 Corporate \$220.00

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Focused For Others To See