



October 14, 2024

Helen Keller Prize for Vision Research Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to recommend Daniel F. Martin, MD for the Helen Keller Prize for Vision Research. I know you have had the opportunity to review the many accomplishments Dr. Martin has made in vision research in his abbreviated curriculum vitae. Rather than review the extensive list of accomplishments, I would like to highlight why he deserves this award beyond these accomplishments.

Dr. Martin has been a particularly important investigator in AIDS and AMD clinical research. In fact, he may be the most influential individual researcher in this area, with more experience in intravitreal treatments than any other investigator. In addition, he was a critical investigator in the Age-Related Eye Disease Study, which has provided important epidemiological evidence to understanding AMD, including the genetic associations. As the chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Cleveland Clinic he is an influential world leader in ophthalmology.

He was the chairman for the Comparison of AMD Treatments Trials. As such he has become the world leader in understanding the effects of anti-VEGF treatment for neovascular AMD. This includes not just the relative treatment effects of anti-VEGF treatment, but the "natural" history and risk factors associated with anti-VEGF treated neovascular AMD, including a search for genetic factors. He has been a leader in AMD clinical research for the last three decades, but he will also be an extremely important leader in the coming decade because of his appointment as Network Chair for retina studies within the Diabetic Retinopathy Clinical Research Retina Network. The DRCR Retina Network has been very effective in the last two decades in demonstrating new treatments for diabetic retinopathy and leading the change in the

new era of care for diabetic retinopathy. As that network morphs into a combined Diabetic Retinopathy and Retina Network, Dan has been the leader for that change and once again he will be the world leader in retina clinical research, as that network will be the major focus for clinical research in retinal diseases causing blindness.

Dr. Martin is certainly deserving of this prestigious award. We are finally in position to develop new approaches to prevent or slow the development of late AMD, and Dan will lead that effort. In addition, his position as chairman of the retina section of the DRCR network he will be involved in many new advancements in treating and preventing blindness from retinal disease in the coming decade. As he leads these efforts it will be appropriate that he would be a recipient of the Helen Keller Prize for Vision Research. If I can provide any other information that could be helpful, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frederick L. Ferris III".

Frederick L. Ferris III, MD

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## Helen Keller Prize for Vision Research: Nomination of Daniel F. Martin

I met Dan Martin in 1984 when he was starting his third year of medical school at Johns Hopkins. At that time, I was on the full-time faculty at the Wilmer Eye Institute and was director of medical student ophthalmic education at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Dan already had spent several summers and vacations working with an orthopaedics practice in Arkansas and his future there was secure: he would perform a residency in orthopaedic surgery and then join a mature practice in his hometown. But all that would change.

After he took the required one-week clerkship in ophthalmology, he was sufficiently intrigued that he decided to sign up for a one-month elective. After the one-month elective, he opted to spend several additional elective months working with my colleagues and me at the Wilmer Retinal Vascular Center (RVC) where we were engaged in patient care and were participating in several NIH-supported multicenter clinical trials. During that several-month stint, Dan witnessed first-hand the enthusiasm of the RVC team for clinical research and clinical trials that would determine how patients with vision-threatening conditions like diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration would be treated in the future. As a direct result of those experiences, he decided to abandon his plans for orthopaedics and to pursue a residency in ophthalmology where clinical research would be an important component of his career. Understandably, I was delighted with his decision for many reasons. I was confident even then that he would pursue a career in academic ophthalmology. I am not sure that I could have predicted then he would become an international star whose leadership in clinical trials would influence clinical practice in three of the most vision-threatening conditions in the world.

I have followed Dan's career closely and carefully for the 40 years since he first took the ophthalmology clerkship as a medical student. I could not be more proud of all that he has accomplished in every area in which he has been engaged. I can think of no one else who has been at the forefront of improving clinical practice for patients with age-related macular degeneration (Comparison of AMD Treatments Trials), CMV retinitis in patients with AIDS, and most recently as co-leader of the DRCR Network (diabetic retinopathy). I could write several more pages about his leadership in each of these areas, but I would merely be repeating what is elegantly summarized in his bio-sketch. Suffice it to say that hundreds of thousands of patients have benefitted and will continue to benefit from treatments shown to be effective in trials that he designed and led and that thousands of ophthalmologists worldwide continue to employ those treatments on a regular basis, knowing that the data guiding those treatment recommendations are unassailable.

The list of prior Helen Keller Laureates, beginning with my mentor, Arnall Patz, is most impressive. Each has had enormous influence on the practice of ophthalmology or made a significant contribution to vision science. Daniel Martin is of a kind with those awardees. It gives me enormous pleasure to recommend him for the 2025 Helen Keller Award. I am confident that the Prize Selection Committee will recognize his design and leadership of trials which have influenced and continue to guide clinical practice today. I hope that the Committee will select him as the next Helen Keller Laureate.

Stuart L. Fine, MD

Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology, part-time, University of Colorado  
Emeritus Professor and Chair of Ophthalmology, Univ. of Pennsylvania  
Emeritus Professor of Ophthalmology, Johns Hopkins University

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Daniel F. Martin MD is Chair of the Cleveland Clinic Cole Eye Institute, the Barbara and A. Malachi Mixon III Institute Chair in Ophthalmology, and Professor of Ophthalmology in the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Martin completed medical school at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine followed by residency and chief residency in ophthalmology at Emory University School of Medicine. He completed a fellowship in vitreoretinal surgery at Duke University Eye Center followed by a fellowship in uveitis and clinical trials at the National Eye Institute/National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Martin currently serves as the Network Chair for the DRCR Retina Network. He previously served as the Study Chair for the Comparison of AMD Treatments Trials (CATT) and has served as Study Chair for many other national clinical trials including those that led to FDA approval of the ganciclovir implant and valganciclovir. Dr. Martin has served as PI, member of the DSMC, and/or member of the Steering Committee for dozens of other studies including AREDS, SOCA, and MUST. He has published more than 220 peer-reviewed articles, delivered 45 named lectures, and delivered more than 550 invited lectures. Dr Martin has served in numerous society leadership roles including currently as President of the Macula Society. Dr. Martin has been the recipient of numerous awards including the 74<sup>th</sup> Edward Jackson Memorial Lecture, the AAO Lifetime Achievement Award, the AAO Secretariat Award, the AAO Senior Achievement Award, the Heed-Gutman Award from the Society of Heed Fellows, the J. Donald M. Gass Medal from the Macula Society, the Roger Johnson Award in AMD Research from the University of Washington, the Pyron Award and the Crystal Apple Award from the American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS), the Rosenthal Young Investigator Award from the Macula Society, the Sam and Maria Miller Award for Scientific Achievement in Clinical Research from the Cleveland Clinic, the J. Donald M. Gass Lectureship Award from the Retina Society, the Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Clinical Trials, and the Cless Medal. Dr Martin has previously served on the Board of Governors for the Cleveland Clinic.