



TRUHLSEN EYE INSTITUTE

WEIGEL WILLIAMSON CENTER FOR VISUAL REHABILITATION

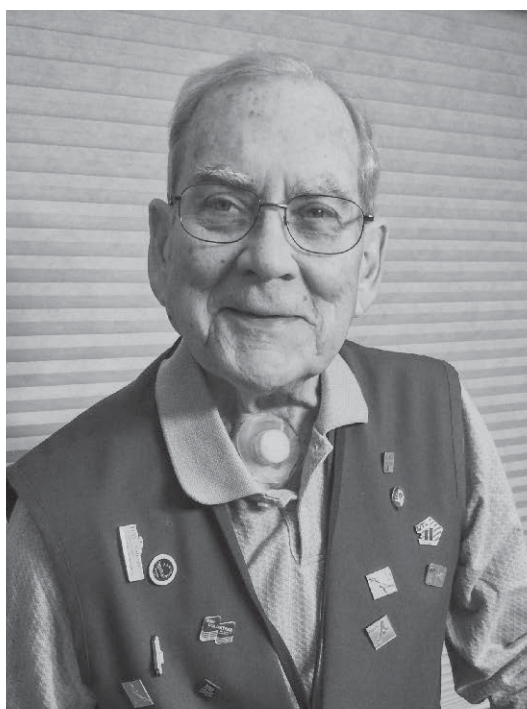
Visionary

Making a difference through your generosity

SPRING 2014

LOW VISION SUCCESS STORY

Lisa Spellman, Publications/Media Specialist, UNMC Public Relations



Walter Canney

When he was just 17-years-old, Walter Canney joined the Navy. The legal age was 18, but that didn't stop Canney. It was 1952 and a year before the end of the Korean War when Canney enlisted.

He served for three years working on the grounds crew for the legendary Blue Angels aviation team, followed by college, a family, a dozen years working for other public power companies and finally a job as CEO of the Lincoln Electric System.

Canney would say he's had a full life, one with few complications.

"I'm old but not giving up," said the 79-year-old Lincoln resident.

And even after a bout of laryngeal cancer in 1993 that cost him his voice box, Canney wasn't going to let something like macular degeneration stop him.

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Pioneer of Low Vision Clinic Retires

Lisa Spellman, Publications/Media Specialist, UNMC Public Relations

When the Low Vision Clinic began in 1983, Kathy VonDollen's office was a desk and a chair in space she shared with others.

Today, VonDollen, a registered nurse, has two chairs in her own office in the Weigel Williamson Center for Visual Rehabilitation, with an entire free standing clinic dedicated to low vision rehabilitation.

And that's not all that has changed in the last 31 years.

"Technology has been the biggest change providing our patients greater options than when I first started," said VonDollen, who has been coordinator of the low vision clinic since its inception.

What hasn't changed is VonDollen's commitment to helping people with low vision, something she is going to miss when she retires this spring.

"It's going to be hard to say goodbye," VonDollen said.

But just knowing that her mission to help those with low vision will continue through the Weigel Williamson Center makes her smile.



Kathy VonDollen

Sitting in her office, VonDollen recalls how she dreamed of a place like the Weigel Williamson Center, what she envisioned the building would look like, right down to the door handles and wall outlet covers.

They're black.

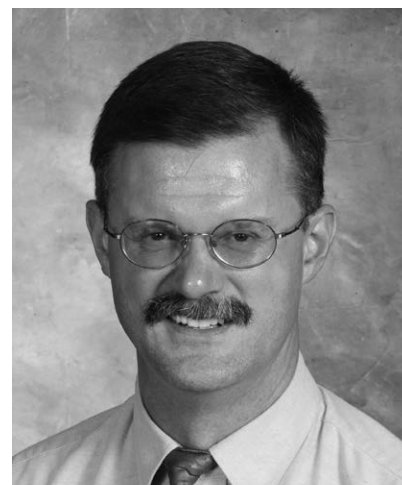
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Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to be able to share with you our most exciting news from the last year: the opening of our new satellite clinic in Lincoln. Every Monday, Evy Katz, our occupational therapist, and I are now making a trip to either Hastings or Lincoln where we provide our low vision services. These services have been very well received by the community in Greater Nebraska, as transportation to Omaha is often very difficult and a hardship for many of our clients.

The opportunity remains to support the work of the Center with a gift to the Dinsdale Endowment Fund. Such funding assists us in our efforts to ensure these important low vision services are available to Nebraskans all across the state.

Thank you for following the Weigel Williamson Center through our newsletter. Our desire is to keep you connected to our mission to provide hope and help for all people with vision loss.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John D. Shepherd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John D. Shepherd, M.D., Director

LOW VISION SUCCESS STORY Continued from Page 1

Diagnosed by a retina specialist at the Lincoln VA hospital in 2010 with wet macular degeneration in his right eye, Canney didn't just ask what could be done to treat it, but also was interested in how to live with it.

He met with a social worker with the visual impairment program at the Omaha Veterans Administration hospital who referred him to the Weigel Williamson Center for Visual Rehabilitation.

"The folks there helped me to understand my visual limitations, optimize what I do have and identify one or more devices that would make my living a little easier," Canney said.

Reading was Canney's biggest challenge, but with hand held magnifiers and goose neck lamps, he is able to read the newspaper and address envelopes.

Next came telescopic glasses to make watching television in the evening easier, then big number measuring cups and bump dots for his kitchen stove.

Today Canney is confidently living independently in his own home through the help he has received, and continues to volunteer every Wednesday morning at the outpatient clinic information desk at the Lincoln Veterans Administration hospital.

It's pretty easy to get depressed and give up, said Canney. But there's always help if you just look for it.

Pioneer of Low Vision Continued from Page 1

"Even though it's not as aesthetically appealing as the lighter outlet covers, we wanted to show the contrast and how these simple changes in a person's living environment can make a big difference," VonDollen said.

The plans for a more comprehensive low vision clinic supported by eye care providers in the community became a reality when the Weigel Williamson Center opened its doors in April 2008.

It was a dream come true not just for VonDollen but for the professionals with which she worked.

Professionals like Joseph Zahn, Ph.D., who was the first director of the Low Vision Clinic, Howard Dinsdale, M.D., Ellen Weiss, O.D., Dean Arkfeld, M.D., Frank Graf, O.D., and assistant clinic coordinator Pat Jones, R.N.

"It was those folks who helped keep the low vision clinic going throughout the years," VonDollen said.

And with the support of the University of Nebraska Foundation and Gerald Christiansen, M.D., a campaign was started that would eventually raise \$1.1 million dollars toward construction of the Weigel Williamson Center.

Quick Tips

for Easier Living with Low Vision

Evelyn Katz, OTR/L

- 1. Lighting**—place light as close as you can to the task you are performing, without creating glare. Try a headlamp, gooseneck lamp or flashlight. Ott Lite makes a battery powered 30 LED task- lamp that is both lightweight and portable. This lamp is available in our low vision store.
- 2. Colored Glasses**—reduce glare indoors and out with yellow or light plum glasses. These enhance contrast, too.
- 3. Contrast**—use dark against light colors to make objects stand out. Dark switch plates on light walls, a dark place mat under light colored plate and cup, a bright colored coin purse or makeup bag in a purse with a dark lining...
- 4. Touch**—use sense of touch and texture. Mark essential appliance settings, even cell phones, with self-adhesive bump dots for easier identification. Bump dots are available in our store in a variety of sizes and colors, even clear. Household items like rubber bands, nail polish or sticky back Velcro can also be used for labeling.
- 5. Organization**—everything in its place. Reduce clutter and keep counters clear to make it easier to find an object. Bright colored baskets or bins can be used to give items that are used together in an activity a “home.”

For more ideas see **Making Life more Livable:**

Simple Adaptations for Living at Home After

Vision Loss, Revised by Maureen Duffy, 2002

Available from AFB Press, New York, NY; **Out of the**

Corner of My Eye: Living with Vision Loss in

Later Life, by Nicolette Pernot Ringgold, AFB Press

Today patients are provided visual rehabilitation services by medical director John Shepherd, M.D., occupational therapist Evy Katz, VonDollen and Jones.

Patients have a variety of devices to choose from, including hand held magnifiers, CCTVs for reading and writing, to telescopic lenses to help them watch television or for driving.

“The variety of options available to a person today has expanded so much over the years. It’s wonderful to have so many choices,” VonDollen said.

“We are going to miss her,” Jones said. “Kathy is so compassionate in caring for each and every one of her patients. She helped to set the standard for low vision care.”

ASK DR. SHEPHERD

Question:

I have low vision. How do I know what strength of magnifier I should buy?

Answer:

Hand held magnifiers are available in strengths from 1X magnification up to 15X magnification. Video magnifiers can magnify up to 77 X. What strength of magnification is best for you depends upon several factors. The particular activity in which you want to participate, the length of time involved in the activity, and the severity of your visual impairment will affect the choice of the best magnifier. A low vision evaluation is the most reliable way to determine the proper magnifier for you.

If you would like to honor

KATHY VONDOLLEN

for her years of service, consider making a donation to the Weigel Williamson Excellence Fund.

For assistance contact Karen Levin with the University of Nebraska Foundation, 402-502-4921 or klevin@unfoundation.org.

A Place for Renewed Hope and Help for Those with Low Vision

THE STAFF OF THE WEIGEL WILLIAMSON CENTER FOR VISUAL REHABILITATION

John D. Shepherd, M.D.

Director of the Weigel Williamson Center

Frank Graf, O.D.

Optometrist on Staff

Patti Fries, O.D.

Optometrist on Staff

Evy Katz, OTR/L

Low Vision Occupational Therapist

Kathy VonDollen, R.N.

Coordinator

Pat Jones, R.N., B.A.N.

Assistant Coordinator

The Weigel Williamson Center is a service of the Truhlsen Eye Institute. It relies on the generosity of donor support in order to fulfill its mission of hope and help for those with low vision.

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Nebraska
Medical Center

**Weigel Williamson Center
for Visual Rehabilitation**

Truhlsen Eye Institute
986085 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-6085
402.559.2463

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DONOR PROFILE: **Bob Kathol**

Bob Kathol's memory of the day he was diagnosed is very clear – unlike his vision that day three years ago. Kathol and his wife, Bette, were on their way to a Creighton basketball game. As he was driving, he couldn't read any of the signs leading to the event center.

Once in his seat, Kathol realized he wasn't able to see the numbers on the scoreboard, the basketball going into the hoop or the numbers on the players' jerseys

His affiliation with the Weigel Williamson Center began a few days later.

Kathol's vision was compromised by an inflammation on his optic nerves which prevented proper functioning, leaving him with significantly reduced vision.

"When I arrived at the Center for my appointment, I felt demoralized and apprehensive about the circumstances, but after spending a few hours there, I left feeling like a new man with a spring in my step," Kathol said.

He is very grateful for the consultation and training he received from Evy Katz and the discussion of his diagnosis and the low vision devices he received from the Center's director, Dr. John Shepherd.

"The level of professionalism I received as a patient was extremely impressive," said Kathol. "Dr. Shepherd took the time to learn about my condition and offered practical solutions to my problem. The Weigel Williamson Center provided me with results that helped me both mentally and physically."

The Center has made such an impact on Kathol's life, he thought supporting the Center with a personal gift was only a modest payback for the inspiration he received from the first and ensuing visits he had at the Weigel Williamson Center.

"I am in a position in my life now that I am able to give back like my father always taught me," said Kathol. "When I have the opportunity to highly recommend the Center to others I do, but I wanted to do more by providing the means to give other people the chance to have the experience that I did."