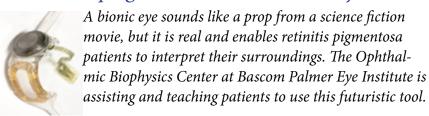




- **3** 2014-2015 Status Report
- **4** A Message from the Medical Director
- 5 A Message from the President
- 6 Cornea Recipient Profile: Felix Beltran

Posters have the power to entertain, inform and persuade. Visual artist Felix Beltran has spent his life perfecting the medium, despite a lifelong struggle with corneal disease. He recently received a cornea for transplant from the Florida Lions Eye Bank.

## 10 Research: Helping Patients Use the Bionic Eye



- 13 2014-2015 Financial Report
- **14** *2014-2015 Donors*

#### ON THE COVER

Self-portrait of cornea recipient Felix Beltran from a poster the artist created. Read Mr. Beltran's inspiring story on page 6.

# 2014-15 STATUS REPORT

	JULY 1, 2014 - JUNE 30, 2015			Since 1962	
TISSUE RECOVERED BY FLORIDA LIONS EYE BANK	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • • • • • •	• • • • •	•
Total number of eye donors: Surgical donors: Research donors:	1,022	752 270			
Total eyes/corneas recovered:	2,038			88,249	
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • • • • • •	• • • • •	•
TISSUE DISTRIBUTED BY FLORIDA LIONS EYE BANK FOR TRANSPLANT					
Corneas/eyes distributed for transplant: Corneas transplanted in USA: Corneas transplanted outside USA:	881	696 185		44,254	
Corneas imported and distributed for International Gratis Program:	285				
Sclera and preserved corneas distributed for surgery:	454			15,618	
Total tissue provided for transplant:	1,620				
RESEARCH AND PATHOLOGY LABORATORY	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • • • • • •	• • • • •	•
Whole globes/ corneas distributed for research and education:	618				
Specimens examined in Ocular Pathology Lab: Specimens from patients treated at Bascom Palmer: Specimens from patients treated elsewhere: Specimens received from medical examiners:	3,924	3,409 433 82		97,091	
Total tissue for research & pathology:	4,542				
•••••	• • • • •	• • • •	• • • • • • • •	• • • • •	•

## MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Sander R. Dubovy, M.D.

As 2015 comes to an end we are able to look back on a very successful year in which the Florida Lions Eye Bank pursued new projects as we continue our advancement in providing corneal and scleral tissue for transplantation, performing diagnostic ocular pathology studies and contributing to education and research in ophthalmology.

On the medical front, there have been a number of advancements that we have undertaken this past year. In order to improve efficiency and go paperless, a new database was obtained for tracking tissue, donors and recipients. This has proven to be quite helpful and has allowed us to be more efficient with our time and energy. We have seen an increase by almost 20% in eye donors to the eye bank. This has allowed us to increase corneal tissue for transplant by more than 18 precent and increase distributed research tissue by more than 27 percent. The eye bank is always trying to optimize our



resources to provide as much of our sight saving resources as possible. For many years the eye bank provided only full thickness corneal tissue for transplant. About ten years ago we began providing partial thickness tissue for specific diseases as corneal surgeons began performing descemet's stripping automated endothelial keratoplasty (DSAEK). This procedure has become more widely used over time. A similar procedure, Descemet's membrane endothelial keratoplasty (DMEK), in which only Descemet's membrane is transplanted has become more widely used. As a result, we have purchased equipment, trained our personnel and are in the process of validating our preparation so that we can provide these tissues to our corneal surgeons in early 2016. The pathology laboratory has remained busy with an increase in specimens by 7 percent.

The staff has done a tremendous job in the arena of educating the public and increasing awareness for donation. The new eye bank logo was unveiled this year and coupled with our updated website, as well as use of social media there has been an increase in our visibility in the community. The first Donor Family Day at Marlins Park in which the loved ones of eye donors were recognized was a tremendous success. Our second Donor Family Day is being scheduled for the coming year and we look forward to another wonderful event. Our Executive Director, Elizabeth Fout Caraza was an invited speaker at the Lions International Meeting in Hawaii. This was a great honor and helped increase visibility on a national and international stage. Finally, the magazine Negocios featured an article about the eye bank which went into detail about the wide variety of services the eye bank provides so as to restore the beauty of sight.

In summary, 2015 has been a very busy and successful year for the Florida Lions Eye Bank. I would like to thank all of the staff for their diligence and hard work which has allowed the eye bank to grow and flourish. I would like to congratulate President Bob Hilliard, the Board of Directors and all of the Lions for their contributions which allow for the distribution of the eye bank's sight saving procedures. As always, I urge you to involve yourself in the Eye Bank activities, whether it be signing a donor card, donating time or resources, or attending events that help raise the public awareness for tissue donation. It is only with your help that we can continue in our quest to restore the beauty of sight.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bob Hilliard



At the Installation of Officers, my address centered on "Reaching Out." At our annual retreat in August, our new marketing representative, Andre Doren, presented the Board with several choices for a new eye bank logo. After much review and consideration, our board selected one. With approval by the membership, this new logo was unveiled at our "Beauty of Sight" celebration held at the Perez Art Museum in the fall.

Our constitution and bylaws committee presented recommended changes to our Constitution regarding membership and the creation of additional positions. With board and membership approval, all Lions of Florida and the Bahamas are members and the following new positions were added, Vice President for District L and District O.

During the first quarter an Open House/Lions appreciation day was held at Bascom Palmer with tours of the eye bank and Bascom Palmer with dinner for all. This was all followed by a special treat to a great baseball game with the Miami

Marlins with recognition of the eye bank through announcements all during the game.

Our very first Donor Appreciation Day was also held at Marlins Park. Many of the families of our donors were treated to a great day at the park. Many an eye was filled with tears of joy as those who provided the gift of sight were honored. This was truly a memorable and very joyful occasion.

Throughout the year, our Florida Lions Eye Bank was represented at many local events, District Cabinet meetings for all Four Districts as well as all Multiple District Conferences and, of course, the Lions of Florida and the Bahamas Convention held the first weekend in May in Orlando. Florida Lions Eye Bank updates can be found monthly in all district newsletters as well as the Multiple District magazine. FLEB leaders and members have worked through zone meetings to encourage participation in our Century Club and provided information on teh Florida Lions Eye Bank Memorial Wall.

I want to send a special thank you to Lion Elizabeth Fout-Caraza for an outstanding job directing the daily operations and to Elina Hackworth for her never ending "will do" attitude no matter what you ask of her. Needless to say, all of our accomplishments have been a joint effort by our outstanding Board of Directors, the terrific staff and most of all, the wonderful Lions of Florida and the Bahamas.

Service, like success, is a journey, not a destination!

### 

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#### **PROFILE**

# Cornea Transplants Keep Visual Artist Felix Beltran Creating and Teaching

Throughout its history, the poster has been characterized by a distinctive feature:

persuasion.
- Felix Beltran

For more than 150 years, the eye-catching iconic art of the poster has sold everything from skin cream to steamship travel and promoted everything under the sun: carnivals, concerts, sporting events and political causes. Fueled by new printing processes, urbanization and political change, poster art first developed as a medium for visual communication in the early 19th century, ushering in the modern age of advertising Posters served an aesthetic purpose as well, transforming city streets into public art galleries. Even in the modern era, poster art has remained a staple of the graphic design trade, due to its power to convey a message.

"Throughout its history, the poster has been characterized by a distinctive feature: persuasion," said Felix Beltran, a world-renowned visual artist, master of poster design and four-time corneal transplant recipient. During his decades-long career, Beltran has created a wide variety of posters, graphic art, commercial logos and large scale visual designs.

Born in Havana, Cuba, Felix Beltran came to New York in 1956 to study at the School of Visual Arts, the American Art School, and Art Students League of New York. Beltran's nearly five year stay in New York coincided with an artistic explosion in the City that made a profound impact on his life. Jazz music, experimental poetry and films, innovative architecture and the beat movement all provided a fertile environment for the young artist to develop his craft.

But soon after beginning his training in graphic design, painting, and lithography, Beltran developed sight-threatening keratoconus. A disease of the cornea, keratoconus is a condition in which the cornea thins and bulges outward into a cone shape. The condition often appears in adolescence or young adulthood, and results in blurred vision, sensitivity to light, and in severe cases, blindness. The cause is unknown. Vision can be corrected with glasses or contact lenses, but advanced cases often require a cornea transplant.

While cornea transplants had been performed since the early 1900s, the procedure was not widespread at the time of Beltran's diagnosis in the 1950s. Fortunately for Beltran, he was referred to one of histo-



Beltran's 1969 silkscreen print, "1ER Ciclo de Cine Sobre el Transito" is part of the permanent collection at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City.

6

ry's great cornea transplant pioneers, the acclaimed Spanish surgeon Ramon Castroviejo, M.D. At the time, Dr. Castroviejo was practicing in Manhattan as the director of Ophthalmology at St. Vincent's Hospital. Twenty years earlier, Dr. Castroviejo had revolutionized the techniques of cornea transplantation and invented specialized surgical instruments to improve patient outcomes. His work prompted the medical community to adopt cornea transplantation as the gold standard for severe corneal pathology.

Like the many artistic luminaries of that age whom Beltran had befriended, Dr. Castroviejo was another master – one who could save his sight. After one examination, Dr. Castroviejo told Beltran that a cornea transplant was his best hope for restored vision. But how could young foreign student pay for the services of the world's preeminent eye surgeon?

"I told him that I could not afford his fees, so we discussed how to settle the payment. The doctor finally settled on two of my paintings in return of his services," Beltran said. The trade was beneficial to both parties: Dr. Castroviejo received original works from an emerging artist and Beltran regainied his eyesight and, with it, the ability to continue his studies.

Beltran returned to Cuba for several years and then traveled to France for further training. In 1965, he enrolled in the Circulo de

- Continued on the next page



Cornea specialist Sonia H. Yoo, M.D. with patient Felix Beltran



Beltran's undated poster honors Nelson Mandela's lifelong contribution to humanity.

### PROFILE - continued from previous page



In November 2013, Felix Beltran lectured to the students at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles. Students showed off the posters they designed in honor of Beltran's visit and his life-long contributions to visual art. At left, student Louis Alvarado and at right, Masters of Fine Art graduate Rachel Fishman.



Beltran created this 1970 poster to commemorate the 17th anniversary of the Cuban revolution.

Bellas Artes in Madrid, Spain. During his studies abroad, government leaders back in Havana took note of his prodigious abilities in visual communication. Around 1970, Beltran returned to Cuba and became the lead graphic designer for the propaganda department of the Communist Party of Cuba, as well as a professor of graphic arts at Havana University. Most of the artwork Beltran produced during this time focused on promoting the Cuban revolution. "At the time I was young and thought I could change the world," Beltran said.

Indeed, Beltran's work rose to prominence during this era, appearing at high-profile exhibitions such as the World Expositions in Montreal (1967) and Osaka (1970). Unlike most Cuban citizens, Beltran's status allowed him to travel throughout Europe, the United States and Mexico where he lectured and served as an international poster juror. Betran's relationship with a Mexican university led to an offer of a teaching position in the late 1970s. In 1980, he left Cuba in self-imposed exile and moved to Mexico, where he lives to this day. He is currently a professor at Universidad Antonama Metropolitana in Mexico City.

Over the course of his distinguished career, Felix Beltran's work has been displayed in over 500 exhibitions around the world. He has written four books, and received over 100 awards in art events throughout North, Central, and South America, and Europe. Mr. Beltran was a fellow of the New School for Social Research in New York, the Graphic Art Center at Pratt Institute, and the Council for International Exchanges of Scholars in Washington, D.C. Beltran was awarded a Doctorate Honoris Causa in Arts from the International University Foundation in Delaware. His work is featured in the permanent collections of 60 museums, including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City.

Felix Beltran, now 77, still struggles with keratoconus. He has had four cornea transplants, two in each eye. The two most recent transplants were performed at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute with tissue

provided by the Florida Lions Eye Bank. Ophthalmologist Sonia Yoo, M.D. performed both surgeries.

Of Beltran's most recent procedure, Dr. Yoo was pleased to report, "Mr. Beltran's unique and positive outlook on life and art has helped him to achieve a beautiful visual recovery thus far."

The Florida Lions Eye Bank is proud to have played a role in restoring the beauty of sight to Mr. Beltran, for whom vision is instrumental to creativity. Nearly 60 years after his first cornea transplant, the acclaimed artist no longer has to trade artwork for a surgeon's services. Still, Beltran wanted to show his appreciation to his transplanting surgeon with an original work of art. After a recent checkup, Beltran presented Dr. Yoo with an abstract portrait of the doctor created with a pattern of different sized circles, pictured below.

"The circles are corneas, of course," Beltran said.





Mas conciencia, menos accidentes, lithograph, c. 1970, is part of the permanent collection at the Museum of Modern Art.

### RESEARCH

# Assisting Blind Patients to 'See' with Bionic Eye

Alex Gonzalez, Mariela C Aguilar, Ninel Gregori, Janet Davis, Byron L. Lam, Potyra R. Rosa, Jean-Marie Parel. Ophthalmic Biophysics Center, Bascom Palmer Eye Institute



Patient Carmen Torres (R) with Ninel Gregori, M.D. who performed the sub-retinal implant surgery.

Thanks to postoperative support and a customized training program, a patient who received a retinal implant is now better able to interpret the images she receives from the device. The Ophthalmic Biophysics Center at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, with funding from the Florida Lions Eye bank, created an original, innovative support program to help this remarkable patient learn to see again.

Carmen Torres, of Tampa, Florida, is one of only a few dozen patients

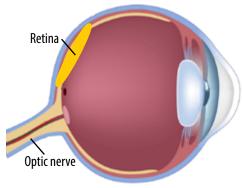
Carmen Torres, of Tampa, Florida, is one of only a few dozen patients in the U.S. who has received the retinal implant known commercially as the Argus II Retinal Prosthesis System. Sometimes called the "bionic eye," this device provides electronic stimulation of the retina to induce visual perception in blind individuals – specifically those with severe retinitis pigmentosa (RP).

Carmen had a normal childhood and adolescence, enjoying sports, riding motorcycles and working around the house. She was diagnosed with RP as a young woman. Like most RP patients, her vision deteriorated slowly, first affecting her peripheral vision and then her night vision. Carmen wore glasses and continued to work as a program coordinator.

"One morning I woke up and could not see my reflection in the mirror, only a gray fog," Carmen recalled. "I closed my eyes and opened them again and slowly my reflection appeared. But that would be the last time I would ever see myself." That was more than 20 years ago.

Though RP had damaged her retinas, Carmen's optic nerve still functioned normally. This, along with her desire for greater independence, made her a strong candidate for the retinal implant. In November 2014, Carmen had the prosthesis implanted during a five hour procedure performed by Dr. Ninel Gregori and Dr. Janet Davis. The operating room team included neuroophthalmologist Byron Lam, M.D., and Jean-Marie Parel, PhD, of the Biophysics Center. The surgery took place at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, one of only a handful of hospitals in the world performing the complex procedure.

"Being blind for more than 20 years, I did not know what to expect," Carmen said. "After the surgery I could see white lines and dots, but I didn't know how to interpret them." Carmen's description of her



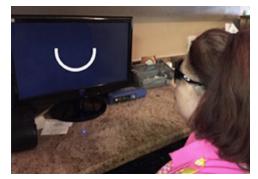
Retinitis Pigmentosa damages the retina, the portion of the eye responsible for capturing images from the visual field. In the retina, light is converted into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain via the optic nerve. RP is named for dark deposits which appear in the retina. Some RP patients retain some vision, while others are completely blind. It is often congenital.

surroundings is due to the intrinsic limitations of the retinal implant. The Argus bionic eye system (shown below) includes the implant array in the retina (1), a miniature video camera housed in the patient's glasses (2), and a small computer worn by the patient (3). The camera captures a scene and the video is sent to the computer where it is processed and transformed and sent back to the glasses via a cable. The information is transmitted wirelessly to an antenna in the retinal implant, signaling an electrode array which emits small pulses of electricity. These pulses bypass the damaged photoreceptors and stimulate the retina's remaining cells, which transmit the visual information along the optic nerve to the brain, creating the perception of patterns of light.

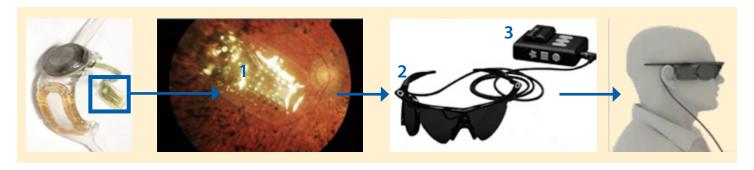
The technology behind the Argus prosthesis is extraordinary, but the picture the patient actually sees is much less detailed than human eyesight. The electrode array only has 60 pixels, arranged in a 6 x10 grid that appear as white dots on a black background. A higher pixel density corresponds to greater clarity and detail of an image: generally, a pixel count of about 80 per horizontal centimeter is needed for a person to recognize a friend's face in a photo. The low pixel density the Argus device provides can only display very basic shapes, and light and dark contrast. The dots flicker and change to indicate movement in the environment, but the resolution of the image is limited by the 60-pixel array. Deciphering what these white dots represented meant a big learning curve for Carmen.

This is where the ingenuity and support of the Biophysics Lab made a tremendous difference to Carmen. Allocating a portion of a \$150,000 grant from the Florida Lions Eye Bank, the Biophysics Center created a training program for Carmen, something not offered by the man-

- Continued on the next page



Carmen practices identifying shapes on the computer screen.



### RESEARCH - continued from previous page

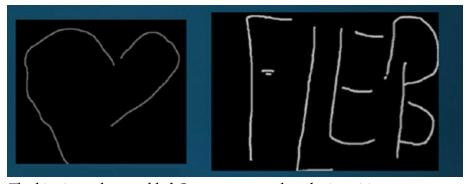


A grahic shows how basic the image of an outstretched hand appears to a patient using the Argus II device.

ufacturer of the retinal prosthesis. The Biophysics Center staff developed customized computer software and worked closely with Carmen to help her interpret shapes, light, and movement. With practice and support, Carmen was soon able to understand what she was "seeing." "I learned to slowly scan what was in front of me, so the pattern of dots made sense. It is like learning a new language," Carmen said. Before long, she was identifying letters and numbers on the computer screen. She learned to read text, and was given a specialized pen and tablet so she was able to see images of what she wrote projected on a screen.

Seeing outside during daylight is still difficult because saturated light creates a blur. The clearest images Carmen can see with the bionic eye are created by contrast between light and dark. "Just like white light on a dark screen, I can see better at night. I can see car headlights, lights coming out from a window, street lights," Carmen said. Still, her bionic eye often plays tricks on her. She was stumped as to why there was a large number eleven on the front of her refrigerator. Finally, she realized she was "seeing" the two vertical refrigerator door handles.

Articulate and analytical, Carmen spoke to students and staff during a lunch to mark her one-year anniversary of the surgery. She enthusiastically said she would help coach future patients who received the bionic eye. "The assistance and training I've received here has really changed my life," she said. The Biophysics Center hopes to use the training program devised for Carmen to help other retinal prosthesis recipients. The Florida Lions Eye Bank is proud to lend its support to this cutting-edge effort to restore the beauty of sight.



The bionic eye has enabled Carmen to see what she is writing.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

2014-2015			2013-2014	
• •	• • • • • •	• • •	• •	• • • • •
\$	2,541,590		\$	2,045,754
\$ \$	37,882 111,379		\$ \$	72,218 399,529
\$ \$	46,535 115,091		\$ \$	24,810 110,344
\$	420,811		\$	338,190
\$	(461,150)		\$	1,520,466
\$	2,812,138		\$	4,511,311
•		• • •	• •	• • • • • •
<b>\$</b>	2,482,336 128,015		\$ \$	2,433,299 155,114
\$ \$	205,586 140,037		\$ \$	252,192 177,652
\$	2,955,974		\$	3,018,257
\$	2,955,974		\$	3,018,257
\$	(143,836)	• • •	\$	1,493,054
	\$ \$\$\$\$ \$ \$ \$	\$ 2,541,590 \$ 37,882 \$ 111,379 \$ 46,535 \$ 115,091 \$ 420,811 \$ (461,150) \$ 2,812,138 \$ 2,482,336 \$ 128,015 \$ 205,586 \$ 140,037	\$ 2,541,590 \$ 37,882 \$ 111,379 \$ 46,535 \$ 115,091 \$ 420,811 \$ (461,150) \$ 2,812,138 \$ 2,482,336 \$ 128,015 \$ 205,586 \$ 140,037 \$ 2,955,974 \$ 2,955,974	\$ 2,541,590 \$ \$ 37,882 \$ 111,379 \$ 46,535 \$ 115,091 \$ \$ 420,811 \$ \$ (461,150) \$ \$ 2,812,138 \$ \$ \$ 2,482,336 \$ 128,015 \$ \$ 205,586 \$ 140,037 \$ \$ \$ 2,955,974 \$ \$ 2,955,974 \$

## **DONATIONS**

# to the Florida Lions Eye Bank

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

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July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

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Lake Wales Lions Club

Lake Worth Lions Club

Marathon Lions Club

Marco Island Lions Club

Miami Buena Vista-Biltmore Lions Club

Miami Colombian Lions Club

Miami Dade Interamerican Lions Club

Miami Doral Lions Club Miami Five Stars Lions Club Miami Interamerican Ecuador Lions Club

Miami Lakes Lions Club

Miami Lautaro Lions Club

Miami Lions Club

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Palm Beach Gardens Lions Club

Plant City Lions

Port St. Lucie Downtown

Port St. Lucie West Lions Club

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