MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
Ronald Ward Everson
(1931-2018)

Ronald W. Everson was born September 14, 1931 in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, and attended public schools in Richland Center, Wisconsin. After graduation from Richland Center High School, he attended Ripon College in Ripon, Wisconsin for two years and then the Chicago College of Optometry, where he completed his doctorate in optometry in 1954.

After optometry school, Everson served as an optometrist in the Medical Service Corps of the United States Army, where he reached the rank of first lieutenant. In 1957, he entered the physiological optics graduate program at Indiana University, earning an M.S. degree in 1959, with a thesis entitled “Visual acuity and refraction in relation to eye position.” From 1958 to 1960 at Indiana University, Everson had a fellowship from the American Optical Corporation.

From 1961 to 1964, Everson was a lecturer in the Indiana University Division of Optometry (now School of Optometry) and in the physiological optics graduate program, and was the director of the orthoptics clinic for the Division of Optometry’s clinic. In 1964, he took a position as associate professor of physiological optics at Pacific University College of Optometry in Forest Grove, Oregon, serving also as the first director of their graduate program in physiological optics.

Everson returned to Indiana University in 1968. He was assistant professor of optometry from 1968 to 1974, when he was promoted to associate professor. In 1978, he became a member of the IU Graduate School faculty. He was assistant director of internal affairs for the School of Optometry from 1972 to 1977 and then director of internal affairs from 1977 to 1982. In that latter role, he took on a variety of responsibilities, including supervising the school’s electronics and graphics facilities, managing class scheduling, and revising the School of Optometry Bulletin.

Everson had extensive involvement in service, particularly in the IU School of Optometry, but also in the optometric profession. He chaired the school’s committee on admissions for many years, during which time he developed a system to evaluate applicants on the basis of extracurricular activities, cultural background, and optometry admissions test scores, in addition to the usual undergraduate grade point average. He chaired the curriculum committee and the academic review committee for several years. He served on various other school committees, and was co-chairman of the Bradford Woods Conference on Optometric Planning for several years. The annual Bradford Woods conferences were unique informal think tank conferences during which a variety of topics relating to optometric care were discussed. In 1963, he was lecturer for eight educational television programs in a series entitled The Sense of Sight for the IU Department of Radio and Television.

Everson was a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and a member of the American Optometric Association and the Indiana Optometric Association. He was a consultant to the National Board of Examiners in Optometry for many years and was on the editorial council of the American Journal of Optometry and Physiological Optics from 1978 to 1984. He was a vision consultant for the University of Portland in Oregon, and worked with the National Science Foundation High School Science Student Institute at IU.

In 1975, when Everson perceived a gap in the optometry curriculum in the area of ocular physiology, he applied for and received a grant to develop the school’s ability to present classroom and laboratory
instruction in that area. With the introduction of the course into the curriculum in 1976, he assembled an instructional team, but later took on all of the instructional activity himself.

Everson was a meticulous writer, with a combination of a “high regard for the proper selection of words and phrases” and a “keen intellect,” as one colleague noted. He was a co-author of the chapter on aniseikonia and anisometropia in the third edition of the famous textbook Clinical Refraction by Borish and of a chapter on protection against photic damage in retinitis pigmentosa in another textbook. He assisted with the translation from French of two chapters in the book, *Form and Space Vision*, by LeGrand. He was a contributor to the third and fourth editions of the *Dictionary of Visual Science*, and one of the four co-editors for the fifth edition.

It was in teaching that Ron Everson particularly excelled. In the professional optometry curriculum, he was well known for the courses in ocular motility and visual optics that he taught for many years, but he also taught courses on geometrical optics, ocular physiology, environmental optics, and clinical optometry at various times in his career. In addition, he taught ocular optics to physiological optics graduate students. One faculty colleague observed that Everson was “one of a very few optometric educators capable of teaching courses throughout the range of visual science and clinical optometry,…an unusual scope of competence which allowed him to integrate material from widely divergent sources and present a truly broad, balanced and unique viewpoint to his students.”

Everson’s courses were exceedingly well prepared and polished. Lectures were lucidly presented with skillful use of blackboard illustrations and sometimes detailed handouts to facilitate understanding. Some physiological optics graduate students preparing for careers in academic optometry audited his classes in order to observe how he approached the explanation of difficult concepts. He received many teaching awards from optometry students, and alumni remember him as one of their top instructors and for presenting material “clearly, logically, and concisely.”

Everson had a phenomenal ability to remember names and faces. When entering a lecture, he could quickly scan those present and know immediately who was absent. It is reported that when students returned and appeared at his office door years after graduation, Ron had the ability to look up from his work and, without hesitation, greet them by name.

Ron Everson was a quiet man, who cheerfully assisted students and faculty colleagues whenever asked. Because of his reserved nature, his contributions are often overlooked. Away from optometry, he was a member of the IU Theater Circle for several years. He maintained ties with family members in Wisconsin, and did extensive genealogy studies of his Everson and Ward ancestors. He retired from Indiana University in 1996. He died at his home in Bloomington on August 3, 2018.

We request that this memorial tribute to Ronald Everson be presented to members of the Bloomington Faculty Council, that it be preserved in its minutes and archives, and that copies be sent to his sisters Carol Elder and Elizabeth Bette Perkins.

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