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Insight
into
NSUCO
Research

ALSO IN
THIS ISSUE...

PROFILE ON
DR. ARNIE PATRICK

SPOTLIGHT ON
ANDREW VALENTI

REMEMBERING
DR. STANLEY CROSSMAN

Nova Southeastern University • College of Optometry



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As a child growing up in an upscale area of southern New Hampshire, OD3 student Andrew Valenti enjoyed many carefree days playing sports and hanging out with friends. However, he also possessed a laser-like focus when it came to where his professional destiny lay.



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Stanley Crossman, O.D., who was an NSUCO faculty member for 11 years, passed away in December at the age of 85. He brought a truly unique perspective to the college and made considerable contributions to the development of optometry as it is practiced today.



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For some, the proverbial climb up the professional ladder occurs seamlessly. However, for others, it's a much more arduous ascent. The latter scenario certainly epitomized what Arnie Patrick, O.D., dealt with as he attempted to make a career change in his late 30s.

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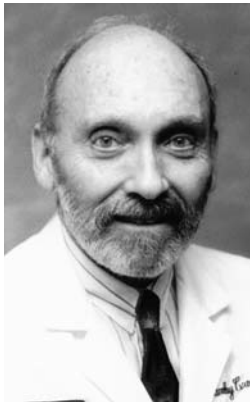
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IN MEMORIAM:

Recollections of Dr. Stanley Crossman

by Nathaniel King, B.A., Co-Editor, *The Visionary*



Stanley Crossman, O.D., who was an NSUCO faculty member for 11 years, passed away on December 2, 2011, at the age of 85 in Hollywood, Florida. A native of Pennsylvania, Dr. Crossman graduated from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1948 and maintained a solo practice for 30 years in the Philadelphia area.

Dr. Crossman felt he had reached a turning point in his life when, in 1965, he made the decision to participate in a certification program called Vision in the School-Aged Child from the Gesell Institute of Child Development in Connecticut. The certificate he earned from that year of inspiration hung lovingly on the wall above his desk as a constant reminder of his personal beliefs and approach toward the field of optometry.

Early on, he recognized the relationship between learning and vision when his young patients began excelling in school after training sessions. As a hospital staff optometrist in the 1960s and 1970s—a time when such a position was unheard of elsewhere—Dr. Crossman was conducting VT-based techniques he had made a great effort to learn. He stated that “Learning is a process. If you take it seriously and have the passion to continue it beyond school, you will become a better optometrist and a better person.” In addition to his service at NSUCO, he taught at Pennsylvania College of Optometry, the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico School of Optometry, and The Verona, Italy, College of Optometry.

During his 11 years at NSUCO, he taught courses in anomalies of binocular vision, vision development, learning disabilities, and pediatrics and helped create the binocular vision clinic specialty section. Dr. Crossman brought a truly unique perspective to the college and made considerable contributions to the development of optometry as it is practiced today.

Individual Recollections...

“Stan was part of the very robust northeast behavioral vision community during his time in Philadelphia. Following his retirement from Nova Southeastern University, he continued to lecture internationally until recently. He very much enjoyed private practice and the dynamic and exciting times of sharing with the pioneers of behavioral optometry: John Streff, Dick Apell, “Skeff” Skeffington, Al Sutton, Bruce Wolff, Elliot Forrest, Stan Levine, Ellis Edelman, Bob Kraskin, Amiel Francke, Baxter Swartwout, and many, many more.

When circumstances led him to teaching, he took this up with enthusiasm, but also with love of the profession and his students. By the time I met Stan, love was his defining force. He was enthusiastic about the power of optometry to provide insight and to help others enhance their lives, remove restrictions on thinking and action, and become more competent, connected, and vital. He was enthusiastic about the support and connection that good diet and regular exercise can provide. One could say he loved these things. But most of all, he loved people.

This love for people was no abstract thing for Stan. It was individual. When he asked how you were, it was not an idle question. Certainly he had a great love for his son, his daughter, his granddaughter, and his family. But if you were in front of him, he had a great love for you. He looked after me personally, always asking how things were going, how I was feeling, whether I needed anything, how my family—each by name—was doing, and how mutual friends were. The conversation would be

largely about you, unless he had some personal story he felt might be helpful. My strong impression from talking to others is that this was his natural and unaffected *modus operandi*; he really cared. For me, being with Stan was something indescribably wonderful, like being warmed by the sun.

I’m pretty sure Stan carried this into his teaching. There must have been frustrations as the behavioral optometry he so cared for became less and less of interest to many students, but I doubt this ever reduced his love for those he was teaching. I do know that I have met many of Stan’s students and have heard many good things about him. I would guess this, in addition to his obvious astuteness, is why he was sought as an international speaker. I know he had been asked to speak in Italy shortly before his passing and would have gone had his stamina permitted.

His stamina was about the only thing that changed in Stan’s last year. He still kept up the love and talked enthusiastically about diet, the ocean, exercise, and people. And still one did not hear much about him, except that he was fine. A few months before Stan’s passing, I visited him in the hospital—a very foreign place for Stan. He told me about the lovely people he’d met there and joked around a little. He asked about me and spent time counseling me until he literally could no longer continue. He was weak, but happy, content, peaceful, and loving. That was, and is, Stan.”

...Walter J. Chao, O.D.

“I knew Stan when he worked at Nova as well as seeing him regularly at meetings. He would always tell me, ‘Rick, what you are doing is deep therapy; it might take longer, but you will help the person more.’ It took me years to figure out what that meant. He would also yell at me regarding my diet—I believe Stan subsided on tree bark. He still motivates me.”

...Rick J. Morris, O.D., FCOVD

“Stan was a dedicated Italophile. He visited Italy many times as both a visiting professor and student of Italian art and culture. Stan would often exhort me to ‘go to Italy, Joe, it’s in your blood!’ I visit Italy once a year, usually ending up in Florence—Stan’s favorite city.”

...Joseph Pizzimenti, O.D.

“Dr. Crossman was one of those instructors who made a positive impact on his students. He was a remarkable educator who had a clear passion for teaching and an infectious love and understanding of the complexities of binocular vision and vision therapy. His teachings were balanced combining both classical and behavioral optometric philosophies. Dr. Crossman was more than an educator; he was a friend whose compassion for his students and patients was evident both in and out of the classroom and clinic.

Dr. Crossman’s passing is a true loss to our profession; however he still lives on in those who knew him. Dr. Crossman is alive in every MEM I perform, every CI I treat, and every child I help. He lives on in all those who he has taught, and he will be dearly missed.”

...Gregory M. Fecho, O.D.

“I first met Stan when I interviewed at NSUCO (then Southeastern). Stan made it a point to show me the campus and even called me afterward to encourage me to think about joining the Nova faculty. His support was one of the key reasons I decided to come.

Stan Crossman was a thoughtful teacher, colleague, and friend and a caring mentor to students and younger faculty members. His love of the profession and of the value of developmental vision was clear to everyone whose path he crossed. Stan took great pleasure in explaining concepts and applications to students and residents. He also made a point of nurturing those around him—asking about their families, life challenges, and goals—and was well-respected nationally by his fellow educators. He gave much to the college in its early stages to create an environment in which pediatric optometry and vision therapy could thrive and was integral to the development of the pediatric optometry residency. He will be missed.”

...Rachel “Stacey” Coulter, O.D., FAAO, FCOVD

“Stan Crossman had two full careers in optometry. His first career was in private practice; his second as an educator. He excelled at both. Stan’s passion for developmental vision was evident in the enthusiasm he had while teaching. He was able to impart his wisdom and knowledge on thousands of students in Florida, Puerto Rico, and Italy. He also had other interests he was passionate about. He was well-versed in nutrition, fitness, neurology, and posture and incorporated all of those into behavioral and developmental optometry.

Stan was a mentor to many students. His ability to help students understand that treating patients meant caring for them as a whole person—not just as a *pair of eyeballs*. He also spent endless hours instructing students who were struggling to grasp concepts from his courses.

However, Stan’s greatest quality was his ability to see the good in everyone. He had exceptional energy and verve, which did not wane throughout the day. He treated everyone with respect and greeted everyone with a smile. His thirst for knowledge and his love of life will be missed. He will live on through optometrists, all over the world, who practice developmental and behavioral optometry with his beliefs and teachings.”

...Richard E. Sorkin, O.D., FAAO, FCOVD

“Stan Crossman was the kind of teacher that taught from a wealth of knowledge and experience without a hint of arrogance or sense of superiority. His sincerity in wanting to help you grow as an individual both personally and professionally was appreciated by students and colleagues alike. He practiced behavioral optometry in a manner that was methodical, logical, and evidence-based, yet he was still able to discuss and teach the theories behind classical binocular vision practices at all levels. He was an ideal teacher in a pediatric/binocular vision world that encompasses both ends of the wide spectrum of practice philosophies. Stan Crossman was a kind and gentle soul who will be missed by all of us who knew and loved him.”

...Yin C. Tea, O.D., FAAO

