

## CLIFFORD W. BROOKS JR.

Dr. Clifford W. Brooks is a luminary in optometry and world-renowned in the area of ophthalmic optics. He has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as an educator and administrator at the School of Optometry and has made a significant impact on his students, colleagues, and the school, as well as the profession of optometry.

Cliff was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. He became a Hoosier for life when he stepped onto the campus of Indiana University as an undergraduate student majoring in English. In time, Cliff decided that English was not for him but didn't know what career would best suit him. After career-aptitude testing indicated that he would excel in the areas of business and health care, he chose to pursue the profession of optometry. Cliff received his Bachelor of Arts and Doctor of Optometry degrees from Indiana University in 1969 and 1971, respectively.

Upon graduation, Cliff practiced optometry in southern Indiana for about a year. Although he enjoyed seeing patients in private practice, he knew God had other plans for his life. In 1972, he accepted a guest lecturer position at Höheren Fachschule für Augenoptik in Cologne, Germany, where he taught courses in refraction and contact lens fitting.

Upon his return to Indiana in 1974, Cliff accepted a position as an assistant professor at the Indiana University School of Optometry. This was the beginning of a 45-year career at IU. He was promoted to associate professor in 1981 and to professor in 2010.

As a new faculty member, Cliff was assigned to teach a dispensing course in the Optometric Technology Program. As he prepared for the class, he realized there was not an appropriate textbook to guide his teaching. This lack prompted him to write several handouts with figures for his students. This small manual created to fill a void for one particular class was the start of Cliff's writing career. Within five years, this teaching manual was published as the first edition of *System for Ophthalmic Dispensing* and is the text used in optician/technician programs and schools and colleges of optometry as the primary textbook or reference for ophthalmic optics courses around the world. In total, Cliff has



written 11 textbooks, along with multiple textbook chapters, and has contributed to the *Dictionary of Visual Science*. He has published 43 journal articles in the area of ophthalmic optics, covering subjects such as spectacle lens design; edging and surfacing of spectacle lenses; and proper fitting, adjustment, and repair of frames. Who knew those English writing classes as an undergraduate would be so important in shaping a career!

Cliff is a very accomplished, well-respected, and beloved educator. Over the years, he taught many different courses to optician, technician, and optometry students in the clinic, classroom, and laboratory. He also lectured extensively, both nationally and internationally, in the area of ophthalmic optics. Cliff is a thoughtful and enthusiastic teacher. He is dedicated to the success of each student and is continually striving to present the material he is teaching in such a way that the students will have both a conceptual and practical understanding of the topic. This approach is very important, since students must be able to take the knowledge that they have acquired in the classroom and apply it in the clinical setting.

Cliff's excellence in teaching was recognized numerous times by both optician/technician students and optometry students naming him as professor of the year. He received the Teaching Excellence Recognition Award

twice from the School of Optometry and the Trustees' Teaching Award three times from the university. Cliff has also been recognized nationally for his teaching. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the National Academy of Opticianry, named Educator of the Year by the National Federation of Opticianry Schools, and received the Joe Bruneni Award from the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry Special Interest Group in Ophthalmic Optics for his contributions to ophthalmic optics educators.

Cliff worked tirelessly in service to the School of Optometry, the university, and the profession of optometry. He served on numerous school and university committees and held various administrative positions throughout his career, including director of the paraoptometric programs from 1977 to 2010 and executive associate dean for academic affairs from 2010 until August 2019. Cliff was well suited to be an administrator because he was always calm and diplomatic, and he led by example. He would never ask the faculty to do something that he hadn't already implemented in his own class. His creativity and hard work helped expand the Optician/Technician Program, and his commitment to our students and his colleagues has been an invaluable asset to the school while he served as executive associate dean. Cliff has not only had an impact at the local and national level, but also globally. He founded Fellowship of Christian Optometrists International, Inc. in 1986, which currently has active chapters at nearly all of the schools and colleges of optometry that participate in mission trips providing eyecare and eyeglasses around the world.

As Cliff approaches retirement, he is looking forward to writing the 4th edition of his book *System for Ophthalmic Dispensing* and spending more time at home with Vickie, his wife of 51 years. The optometry faculty, staff, and students wholeheartedly thank Cliff for his years of friendship, leadership, and service and wish him continued health and happiness in this next phase of life.

*Nicole Lynn Himebaugh*