Johnny Justice Jr, CRA, FOPS
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The Fates were Kind and the Stars Aligned for Johnny Justice, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

Johnny Justice, Jr. started from humble beginnings, yet went on to achieve a Professorship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas and was the founding force of the Ophthalmic Photographers’ Society (OPS). Johnny has been honest with his life’s narrative and gives us a “warts and all” history of his life. In 2019, we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the OPS, reminding us that history is significant to the way we are, and how we live our lives. Those early ophthalmic pioneers have made us proud of the OPS and lead us to aspire to the principles and dedication of our OPS forefathers. Johnny continues to work behind the scenes with the OPS and with his business, Justice Angiographics and the Angiogram Reading Center. He inspires us all, symbolizing the culture of ophthalmic photography and striving for perfection. The technicians, doctors and ophthalmologists he has met along the way are a Who’s Who of the history of ophthalmology and fluorescein angiography (FA). FA was a major contribution to the diagnosis and treatment of retinal and choroidal vasculature pathology and we continue to learn new things today as more technology is absorbed into ophthalmology.

The following is Johnny’s life described in his own words and illustrated mainly with images from the OPS Historical Archives.

I was born on March 1, 1939, the seventh and only boy of seven children, to parents that for reasons never explained to me ended their education in the third grade or thereabouts. It is safe to say that I was very lucky just to be born. Except for some hard to believe stories that my sisters passed on to me many years later, I don’t remember much about my early days. At the age of four I was placed in an orphanage, the Fannie Y. Bickett Home, near Raleigh, North Carolina (NC), along with three of my six sisters; Jeanette, Kathleen and Jane. I do not have any good memories of that less than memorable place; I guess we just existed there for around two years, with a few other rescued souls. During that time, my mother married a soldier from Monessen, Pennsylvania, a small town southwest of Pittsburgh.

In 1945, the Fates were kind to me when my sisters and I were unexpectedly trundled off to the Kennedy Memorial Home about five miles from Kinston, NC (Figure 1). This orphanage was located on a 1200 acre tract of rich farm land. It had been converted from a working plantation complete with a beautiful antebellum mansion which sat at the end of a pecan tree-lined driveway. The property had been donated by Captain and Mrs. William Kennedy in 1912. The trustees constructed a full campus along the sides of the historic avenue to the main house for the care of orphans whose numbers peaked in the mid-twentieth century and have gradually declined to the present. Over time the campus grew to include dormitories, a church, and more importantly, to me, a football and baseball field and a basketball gymnasium. In the late 1940’s the main dirt road was paved and

Figure 1: Cedar Dell Mansion, Kennedy Memorial Home (KMH), 1970s.
a beautiful swimming pool and tennis courts were added. From the outset we were given duties to perform which were rotated on a regular basis. We made up our own beds, cleaned the bathrooms and swept and mopped the floors. Other duties included setting the table in the dining room and then washing, drying and putting away the dishes after the meal. One of my fondest memories is of raking leaves all by myself on one side of the Hardee building where I lived. When I was finished with raking, without being asked, I just continued on and raked the leaves all the way over to the Canady building where the lazy older boys lived. The matron came out and asked why I was raking their leaves and I told her that it just looked like it needed to be done. She told me to come inside and then surprised me with a huge slice of chocolate cake and a big cold glass of milk! To this day I can still remember how proud I was of myself and how good that cake and milk tasted. Years later I appreciated the lesson I learned in that one afternoon of hard work. The unexpected reward I received was truly a seminal event in my life: I learned that outworking and out-smiling everyone pays big dividends.

In the spring we planted seeds and young plants by hand to grow crops of corn, potatoes, tomatoes, okra, squash, water melons, cantaloupes and more. We frequently had contests to see who was the fastest when we hand-picked the vegetables. Being very competitive, I was always among the fastest. We had three square meals a day with plenty to be had by all. The fresh foods we ate were nutritious and well prepared by the chefs, and the fresh frozen and canned vegetables prepared by the older girls were surprisingly good. We also participated in raising and slaughtering our own poultry and hogs. And yes, we hand milked the cows at our dairy until those amazing milking machines were installed at the Home, way before most of the dairy farmers in the area could afford them. We were bussed to elementary, junior and senior high schools in LaGrange, NC, a small farming community, about seven miles north on Highway 70. I felt sorry for some of the kids in rural NC in the 1940’s and beyond, because many of them were living in sharecropper shacks which were usually not well insulated and did not have electricity and running water. They had to go outside to pump the water and then bring it in for drinking and cooking purposes, as well as heating the water for bathing on wood burning stoves. And of course, they had to go outside to use outhouses to relieve themselves.

We at the orphanage were lucky because we had electricity, steam heat and modern plumbing in our dormitories along with indoor showers and toilets. During a very cold winter in the late 1940s, I spent the weekend with my friend, Jim Wiggins, who lived on one of the tenant farms located about three miles from the orphanage. I really thought I was going to freeze to death that weekend and I don’t remember ever being that cold again! Life was good at the orphanage and at school. Sure there were the occasional ups and downs, including arguments and fist fights, but all in all most of the kids were friendly with each other. These friendships are still evident when many of us get together for the annual July homecoming at the Kennedy Home. Its 100th anniversary was celebrated in 2012.

In the spring of 1953, I was shocked to be asked by the principal if I would like to go live with my mother, Josie Moore Luoma, in Monessen, Pennsylvania (PA), a steel town of about twenty-thousand people. I had not seen my mother for ten years and did not know much, if anything, about her because she had never visited us at either of the two orphanages. I only remember receiving a couple of barely legible letters from her during those years. My three sisters had run away in their teens without telling me their plans or saying goodbye. Nevertheless, I thought that it would be interesting to travel to a distant state, not knowing what it would be like to live with my mother and my step-father, Eugene Luoma, a southwest Pennsylvania native. They had met when he was a soldier stationed at Camp Butner near Durham, NC. When I arrived in Monessen, there was a strange off-putting odor in the air. Later I learned that odor came from the U.S. Steel coke plant which is a critical part of the steel making process. In no time at all I adapted to the odor and began to enjoy the beauty of the hills (mountains to me) in the Mon-Valley region. Sadly, the steel mill closed down in 1995. My mother seemed genuinely happy to see me, and my stepfather accepted the fact that I was there. Quickly I found that he enjoyed sports as much as I did so we got along very well indeed. He was a nice man of Finnish descent who toiled hard as a construction worker after his years as a soldier. Still, during the four years that I lived with them I sometimes felt as though I was living with strangers as they must have felt with me (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Johnny with his uncle B. V. Moore and three of his sisters, left to right Kathleen, Jane and Jeanette at KMH circa 1947.
When I arrived in Monessen I wanted to play organized baseball and learned that the Pony League had several teams. I went to the 9th Street Hill baseball field to sign up but discovered that all but one of the teams had full rosters of players. The Carver Aces, an all African-American team needed players and readily accepted me, and I was happy to be on their team (remember that this was the early 1950s and desegregated schools had not yet happened in NC). It was a fun summer for me, even if we did not win a lot of games. Later that year I became a student at Monessen Junior High School and, as in the orphanage, I did well with my studies. Then one afternoon when I was exploring downtown I noticed some kids going down the steps into the Grand Parlor, better known as “The Hole”, a basement business on Schoonmaker Avenue. I followed them down and was amazed to see a three-lane bowling alley and a billiards/pool parlor with about eight tables. I later learned that there was a nightly poker game that went on in a back room. I was standing there watching the kids shoot pool when the owner, Peter Druash, asked if anyone wanted to earn some money setting up pins for the afternoon bowlers. I didn’t mind taking it on, since work had been routine in the orphanage. I was told that I would be paid eight cents a line (game). So I went to the pin setting area where I met a kid by the name of Terry Tomer who was working in the adjacent lane. Much later Terry was to become a founding member of the Ophthalmic Photographer’s Society (OPS) (Figure 3). Pete, the owner, was a considerate person, piping in music mostly from the 1940s on a speaker back where we worked. My shift was from three o’clock in the afternoon until midnight. After working about six months I was asked if I could hang around and go out for food and drinks for the poker players. It was not too long before I was working as late as two o’clock in the morning. My grades at school suffered, but I enjoyed working and the “free” bowling and shooting pool, and I especially enjoyed making money! Pete took me under his wing and taught me the finer points of bowling and shooting pool. It was not long before I was winning quarters off the kids that came down to play. During this time Terry and I became best friends and it seemed as if I spent as much time at his house with his family as I did with mine. Terry was a terrific skater and over time taught me the finer points of roller skating at the Piggly Wiggly Skating Rink. Terry’s parents were good to me. His mother Ruth, who points of roller skating at the Piggly Wiggly Skating Rink. was a terrific skater and over time taught me the finer points of bowling and shooting pool. It was not long before I was working as late as two o’clock in the morning. My grades at school suffered, but I enjoyed working and the “free” bowling and shooting pool, and I especially enjoyed making money! Pete took me under his wing and taught me the finer points of bowling and shooting pool. It was not long before I was winning quarters off the kids that came down to play. During this time Terry and I became best friends and it seemed as if I spent as much time at his house with his family as I did with mine. Terry was a terrific skater and over time taught me the finer points of roller skating at the Piggly Wiggly Skating Rink. Terry’s parents were good to me. His mother Ruth, who was a beautiful woman, convinced me to stay in school instead of joining the Navy. When, at age sixteen, I had saved enough money to buy a car, Terry’s father, Bill, helped me find one. It was a 1948 Ford coupe, for which I happily paid $75.00. After three minor accidents I had to sell the car so that I could pay for the repairs on the one that was really damaged. Since I did not have a driver’s license, I took driving lessons offered by our high school. They really worked because my driving record over the course of the next 60 years has been very good.

In late 1956, my mother learned of her brother’s death in North Carolina, and she traveled to Durham for his funeral. During her stay with my eldest sister, Ethel, she became acquainted with Carol Jean Parker, a pretty teenager who lived next door. Upon my mother’s return to Monessen, she told me about Carol and suggested that I write her a letter. After a few weeks of letter writing and photo swapping we discovered we had fallen in love with each other. For my 18th birthday, I traveled to Durham to meet Carol in person. It became of the utmost importance to us that I leave Monessen as soon as possible so that we could be together. In May of 1957, I somehow managed to graduate from high school. I left Monessen on a Greyhound bus headed for Durham, NC the same day that I graduated. I still love Monessen and the kids I knew at school and have returned to visit with them regularly for our class reunions.

After spending lots of time with Carol and freeloading off my sister for a couple of weeks, we all agreed that I should seek employment. That is when the “fickle finger of fate” struck again for me. I was told by the State Employment Agency in Durham that a full time position as a darkroom technician trainee at Duke University Hospital had just become available. I was the only one of the twelve applicants who would agree to work as an intern for one month without pay. At the end of the month I was happy because I was accepted as the new darkroom technician. My starting salary was a meager $170 per month before taxes, but it was a job that appeared to present a good future and I was anxious to go to work and prove to the hospital, and especially to Carol, what a smart decision they had made in choosing me. Within two weeks, I learned to mix the darkroom chemicals from scratch, and how to develop film and make paper prints, which came easily for me. In fact, I conquered their huge backlog in a very short period.

Carol’s mother and step-father were alcoholics, so it made good sense, at least to us, to get her out of there.
and go ahead and get married. January 3, 1958 (Figure 4) was our wedding day, and we happily moved into our own apartment. I was almost nineteen and Carol had just turned seventeen. She continued with her studies to finish high school in 1959, easily finishing in the top of her class. We started our family with Michael Kent Justice, born in October, 1960, followed by Jay Douglas Justice, born in November, 1962. During my “middle-aged crazy” period in the late 1970’s, Carol and I divorced. Happily, one year later she took me back, we remarried, and we have been together for 34 more years and counting, 60 years total (Figure 5).

That trip to the employment office turned out to be a real game changer for me, and I resolved to start building my future. It did not take long for me to determine that the photographers at the hospital had little interest in training me in photography so I decided to take a correspondence course from the School of Modern Photography in New York City. Then, with the permission of the head of the department, Professor Elon H. Clark, I began using the Duke cameras to complete course assignments during the evenings and on the weekends. It was lots of fun because Carol, still a junior in high school, would join me and do her homework while I studied and practiced photography. During my time at Duke, I witnessed the use of an unusual camera that was designed to take photos of the retina in the back of the eye. I was not allowed to practice with that Zeiss Nordenson carbon-arc fundus camera (Figure 6) but the chief photographer, Raymond Howard, RBP, did allow me to look over his shoulder and look through a dilated pupil to see an incredible view of the optic nerve and retina. Wow! I wondered what would they think of next! I never ever expected that one day I would be working as a full-time specialist in diagnostic photography of the eye and without a college degree.

After a full year as a dark room technician, I was invited to interview with the famed pathologist, Dr. Wiley D. Forbus, and his master medical photographer, Carl M. Bishop, RBP, FBPA, in the Pathology Department at Duke Hospital. They had heard about the eager young medical photography trainee upstairs and they needed a replacement for their assistant chief photographer who had accepted a position at the University of Florida. Photographically speaking, it would be a relatively easy transition because I had been doing my school assignments using similar photographic equipment. It was a little unsettling, however, to find that I would be doing photography in the autopsy room of gross specimens that were removed from dead bodies. Even though I was leery of the prospect of specializing in this type of medical photography alone, it was an immediate opportunity to do full time photography in a shorter time frame than I had imagined. Within a week, I realized that I had made a smart decision because Mr. Bishop set about training me in a very organized fashion. Over the course of the next two years I became quite expert in the photography of gross specimens. We used a water-filled tank to rid the surfaces of reflections that might obscure tissue detail during standard photography. I also learned the difficult technique of photomicrography: photography of histological tissue specimens through a microscope.

Things went well for the two of us. I was happy at Duke and Carol had graduated from high school and was working at a local insurance company. Then one day in mid-summer 1960, I was visiting my friends in the upstairs photography laboratory when Leonard M. Hart, RBP, FBPA of the Durham Veteran’s Administration Hospital (VAH) walked into the room. He had recently moved from the Chicago VAH to take over as chief of Medical Illustration and Photography at the Durham VAH and he was looking to hire an assistant chief photographer to work with him. I was blown away when he offered me a GS-7 federal government position with a
$5000 annual income which was more than double my current salary of $2000. We were thrilled because it meant that Carol could stop working before the birth of our first baby and be a stay-at-home mom after he was born. I accepted, and was pleased to find that the photography equipment at the VAH included two Hasselblad C cameras complete with accessories, and an impressive Arriflex 16mm movie camera with several lenses. There were large darkrooms outfitted with modern enlargers, a contact printing machine, and E-3 Ektachrome color processing equipment. The cameras at the Duke Hospital were old 5X7 view cameras (Figure 7a,b), and the darkrooms were functional but had not been updated in years, so I was excited at the prospect of using modern equipment. Within two or three months, Mr. Hart felt comfortable turning most of the clinical and surgical photography over to me and began teaching me complicated cinematography and editing techniques (Figure 7c). I was thrilled to be working with him because he was an excellent, patient teacher.

Around the middle of 1961, Noble J. David, MD, (Figure 8), a neurologist affiliated with both Duke and the VAH, met with Mr. Hart to discuss attempting to copy a new technique, fluorescein angiography, pioneered by Drs. David Alvis, and Harold Novotny. Dr. John Hickam, their boss at the Indiana University School of Medicine, came down to Duke to meet with anyone who would listen about their recent success with the first ever fluorescein angiogram performed on a human, and their subsequent studies on diabetic and hypertension patients. Unfortunately, only a few physicians showed up for his presentation. Dr. J. Lawton Smith, a Neuro-ophthalmologist on the rise and a medical school classmate of Dr. David, was very much interested in this new angiographic technique. Hart had a Bausch and Lomb (B&L) fundus camera that he had modified by removing the carbon arc illumination system, replacing it with an electronic flash tube (Figure 9). Leonard went about ordering the filters that they had used in Indiana and installed them into the B&L fundus camera. He shot a few angiograms, which were very good, but he tired of it quickly and turned it over to me. My first angiogram was in perfect focus so I was off to a good start. I can still recall the excitement I felt as I anticipated the dye arriving in the central retinal artery. The recycling of the power was very slow back then, so timing the flash with the appearance of the dye was very important.

Although Dr. Smith was interested in FA, it did not catch on at Duke Ophthalmology because of internal politics. The Dean would not grant his request for Ophthalmology to be separated from Surgery and become a stand-alone department. That was ultimately a terrible decision, because at that time, future top ten ophthalmologist of the 20th Century, Dr. J. Donald M. Gass, and his wife, Margy Ann, were in town to be interviewed for a possible faculty appointment with Dr.
Smith and were looking at homesites as well. As it happened, Dr. Edward W.D. Norton, Chairman of the new Bascom Palmer Eye Institute (BPEI) at the University of Miami Medical School, had been trying to entice Dr. Smith to join their faculty and set up a world class Neuro-Ophthalmology service at the BPEI. He was very interested in Dr. Gass joining he and Dr. Smith at the BPEI. Smith and Gass had been fellow residents at the Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

While all of this was going on, I was across the street at the VAH, happily working with Mr. Hart. But in late 1962, I received a long-distance call from Dr. Smith telling me that I needed to be on the next “Whisper Jet” (Eastern Airline 727) to Miami because Dr. Norton wanted to interview me regarding setting up an FA laboratory at the BPEI. And I was indeed on the next “Whisper Jet” headed to Miami. During the interview I learned that Dr. Norton also wanted to design a photography studio for cinematography using a 16 mm Arriflex camera. He was personal friends with 3D expert Dr. David D. Donaldson, so he already had a Donaldson Stereo anterior segment camera.

My boss, Leonard Hart, and Raymond Howard of Duke Medical Photography had both turned down Dr. Norton’s offer to work at the BPEI. I was 23 years old and was his third choice, but was delighted to have the opportunity to co-establish FA with Dr. David at the BPEI. I started on our wedding anniversary, January 3, 1963. Drs. Norton, Smith and Victor Curtin began referring every case that had some retinal or choroidal pathology for FA. Dr. Norton notified the ophthalmologists in the greater Miami area that this exciting new test was available for their patients and that there would be no fee for the service. FA rapidly gained success. Six months later, Dr. J. Donald Gass arrived at BPEI and immediately was interested in FA (Figure 10). He was very excited to review the first two cases I had on file, post cataract CME, now called Irvine-Gass Syndrome, and “central serous”, now called ICSC, idiopathic central serous chorioretinopathy (Figure 11). Later, he and I set up the first weekly Tuesday night fluorescein conference (Figure 12), which is still on-going. On several occasions, Dr. Norton spoke of Lee Allen, an artist/oculartist who also enjoyed a wonderful reputation for his eye photography. I contacted him about getting a copy of his not yet published manuscript, the now classic article, “Ocular Fundus Photography” which included a description of his technique of stereo photography. I was delighted to learn that there were others who specialized in eye photography. Years later, I found out that John Goeller and Don Wong of New York, not yet involved in fluorescein angiography, had been taking fundus photos and external photos for academic eye departments for quite some time.

As time went by, more and more talented photographers began to come out of the woodwork. Sergeant Terry Tomer, fresh out of photography training in the U.S. Army, came to Miami to train in this new field, a different person from his Piggly Wiggly Skating Rink days. I had pre-arranged a position at the University of Indiana for him. At that time, the Biological Photographic Association (BPA) was the only society that was oriented toward
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medical photography. I was already a member of the BPA, so I went to one of their meetings, but unfortunately there was little information on eye photography. Although I did not realize it at the time, the idea of an alternative society was beginning to germinate in my mind. In the meantime, I was totally enthralled with FA and what I was learning at our weekly FA conferences. In 1966, I became friends with a wealthy entrepreneur from Philadelphia, and as a result of his offer to become my benefactor, I decided to leave Miami to attend pre-medical school near Philadelphia. I dreamed of becoming a retina specialist like my heroes at BPEI. Before leaving for school, I trained Dixie Sparks to do FAs, and Joseph Goren to take over doing movies in addition to his darkroom work. Three months after I began school, my benefactor was killed in a tragic automobile accident and the financial support ended. Frankly, I was not enjoying college, and without the necessary financial support, I dropped out and sought employment again as a medical photographer. The term ophthalmic photographer still did not exist.

In 1966, FA had not been attempted at the Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, so I went to visit Dr. Arthur Keeney, Ophthalmologist-in-Chief, to see if he would be interested in establishing angiography at “the Wills.” After approval by Dr. P. Robb McDonald and other members of the retina service, I was hired to set up the service. It was great to be back doing FA, and there were many more unusual cases being seen at the much longer established “Wills”. Two years later, after Dixie Sparks married Dr. Walter Gilbert, Dr. Norton came to Philadelphia to ask if I would be interested in returning to Miami. I happily agreed because I really missed the BPEI and preferred a warmer climate. Shortly after my return to Miami in 1968, I met Earl Choromokos, a research photographer with Dr. Noble J. David, who had been trained by Dixie. About that time, Don Wong called from New York to introduce himself. His professor, Dr. Irving Leopold, was really upset that he was going to the annual BPA meeting. He told me that Dr. Leopold said, “Go to Miami to learn from Johnny Justice, and then attend the annual American Academy of Ophthalmology meetings instead of wasting your time and our money at the BPA”. So Don came to Miami to observe our techniques. His visit to Miami began a long and competitive friendship that set the stage for my discussions with him, Terry Tomer, and Earl Choromokos about starting our own professional society (Figure 13).

In April of 1969, we met with Lee Allen at the Association for Research In Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) meeting in Sarasota, Florida and we agreed to have our first ophthalmic photography meeting at the Palmer House in Chicago on October 15, 1969. In attendance at this meeting were Lee Allen (Figure 14), Earl Choromokos, Ogden Frazier, Johnny Justice, Yvonne Magli, Mary Manella, Roger Lancaster, Terry Tomer, Anna Wiley and Don Wong. This is the group that Terry Tomer later suggested be designated as Fellows of the OPS. Following input from others attending that meeting, I nominated Lee Allen and he was unanimously elected Interim-President of the OPS. Lee then appointed me to act as Interim-Secretary-Treasurer and Program Chairman until the Society had its first formal election of officers. We decided at that meeting that we would refer to ourselves as ophthalmic photographers, and that the organization would be called the Ophthalmic Photographers’ Society.

On July 13, 1970, the OPS became a reality. Without the extraordinary help and enthusiasm of my secretary, Jessica (Pixie) Eichrodt, the understanding and support of Drs. Norton and Gass, and especially without the constant prodding of Don Wong, this society may never have become a reality. Later, Pixie was elected an Honorary Life Member for her herculean efforts towards establishing the OPS. (Unfortunately, I have lost track of Pixie. If anyone knows of her whereabouts, please contact me).

In 1971, I accepted Dr. David Paton’s offer to establish an FA and ultrasonography laboratory in the Department of Ophthalmology, Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) in Houston, TX. My proudest achievements during my ten years at Baylor were that my original and revised issues of the book, Ophthalmic Photography, were published by Little, Brown, and
Company, and that I was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1976. Later, in 1981, I resigned my professorship to establish Justice Angiographics (JA) and the Angiogram Reading Center (ARC) in Houston, TX. In 1986 I moved my extended family and JA and the ARC from Houston to the more centrally located Memphis, Tennessee (TN) and continued the business there. Carol and I remain active to a much lesser degree in their operation today. With the advent of digital imaging, film-based FA has slowly faded away and now internet based digital FA allows reports to be available online within one hour using a virtual private network (VPN) or by simply reviewing emailed jpeg FA images. Nowadays, Jay D. Justice is the CEO of Justice Ophthalmics (founded in 1992), and Chad P. Justice manages the day to day operation (Figure 15). Carol and Michael became Certified Retinal Angiographers (CRA), an OPS qualification involving both written and practical testing.

Since my days at BCM in Houston I must admit that I have not been as active in the OPS as I would have been if I had remained in academia. I am particularly pleased and proud of the many photographers, too numerous to mention individually, who have come to the forefront to take over the reins and keep the society moving upward. I am happy to say they are succeeding! If we continue in this pattern of quality growth and expansion in education and certification, I foresee nothing but continuing improvement of the professional image of our members and for the Ophthalmic Photographers’ Society.

**In Conclusion**

Johnny has had an outstanding and stellar career in photography and ophthalmology. He was the principal founding member of the OPS at its inception, recognized by his peers in the field of photography and ophthalmology. He has published prolifically and taught at multiple high ranking international ophthalmic meetings. His friendship with Terry Tomer has lasted for more than 60 years and the bond they forged back in the 1950s is even stronger today (Figure 17).

Finally, Johnny and Jim Gilman gave the 15th Donald Gass Lecture at the Annual OPS Meeting in San Francisco outlining the huge achievements that Johnny has accomplished in his lifetime, where he received a standing ovation of appreciation on this most auspicious of occasions: the 50th anniversary of the OPS.
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Tributes

Don Wong, RBP, FOPS

“In the Autumn of 1969, during the days of infancy of ocular fluorescence photography, Johnny was the Director of the Ophthalmic Photography Section of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, where he became renowned for his superior camera work in fundus photography and fluorescein angiography and other medical photography techniques. This expertise lent invaluable technical support to the genius of such pioneers as Drs. Edward Norton, J. Donald Gass and others seeking to unravel the mysteries of the retinal circulation and its impact and influence upon retinal diseases itself.”

“His close association and collaboration with these researchers ignited Johnny’s interest in angio-pathology which propelled him into yet another unique area of expertise, the ability to evaluate and interpret the findings demonstrated on the angiogram. The effect of these combined factors was to produce, in one individual, a bridge between the physician and the paraprofessional performing the procedure. This bridge was destined to become a catalyst in the rapid development of the profession of ophthalmic photography itself. It seems like just yesterday that Johnny, electric with energy and enthusiasm for his work, met other photographers at the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology that was held in Chicago in 1969. His intense interest in fluorescein angiography, combined with his appreciation of the value of organized scientific societies which could serve as a forum for the dissemination of education and information, moved him to ask the rhetorical question of each person, "what do you think of a society of eye photographers?"

Csaba L. Mártonyi, FOPS


With many thanks for all you have done for the Society (OPS) and for me, personally. You were always my hero as you were at the forefront of activity in the Society and made things happen. You always took time to recognize the potential of the newcomers and provide unselfish praise and encouragement. You have contributed greatly to the careers of many and the overall development of our profession and the OPS.

Edward W Norton, MD, Professor

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, Miami, FL

In the late 1960s, Dr. Edward W. Norton fondly known as “the Chief” of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute said of Johnny Justice at a neuro-ophthalmology program at the Fontainebleau Hotel, Miami Beach, “We first tried to hire angiography pioneer, Leonard M. Hart and Duke medical photographer Raymond Howard, but neither would accept and that left us with Johnny, a very young 23 year old Duke trained medical photographer, who had worked with Hart at the Veterans Hospital, Durham, NC. Dr. Norton, a rabid Boston Red Sox fan used a baseball analogy saying, “It was like hiring a utility outfielder and winding up with Ted Williams.” Later, Norton autographed a now famous photo of himself that was taken by Justice by writing, “To Johnny, With grateful appreciation for his contribution to the development of the BPEI - a photographer “par-excellence”. 10/12/1971

Edward Maumenee, MD

In the early 1970’s Dr. Reginal Stambaugh, a Palm Beach, FL ophthalmologist, arranged a special one day program at the famous Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach that was entitled “A Day of Fluorescein Angiography”. The faculty included Dr. Edward Maumenee of the Wilmer Institute, Drs. E. Norton and D Gass of the BPEI, Miami, FL, and Johnny Justice, Jr. of Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX. During the meeting Dr. Maumenee said: “It is truly unique that Johnny Justice, a non-physician, could play such an important role in the development and success of this very important sub-specialty of ophthalmology.”

Jerry Shields, M.D.

On 10/22/2011, Jerry Shields, MD, the renowned ocular oncologist said, “that what he learned at Johnny Justice’s fluorescein conferences at Wills Eye Hospital was very important in his decision to pursue Oncology as his specialty in Ophthalmology.”

J.P. Gilman, CRA, FOPS, J. Donald M. Gass, M.D.

From: Transcript Discovering Fluorescein Angiography

“I think Johnny played a very important role in the whole development of fundus photography and fluorescein.
angiography around the country because Johnny was an extremely enthusiastic individual who was more than just a fundus photographer. He had a real interest in what was going on in the patient’s eyes and was forever coming down to the clinic to get us to come up to photography to get us to look at some new observation he had made in a patient sent over by one of the local ophthalmologists.”

Ronald Frenkel, MD, FACS, FICS
Professor of Ophthalmology (Voluntary)
Bascom Palmer Eye Institute

Johnny has taught me far more about FA than anyone else in my formal training. I have shared numerous cases with him during the past 25 years, and to this day I still continue to seek his expert opinion and insight. He has been a wonderful resource for me and my patients. Johnny has served not only as a mentor but also as a trusted and caring friend.”

Terrance L. Tomer FOPS

I met Johnny over 60 years ago and we quickly became best friends. He became a member of the Tomer family and a big brother to me. I have always been impressed with the international recognition of him by ophthalmologists and especially by retina specialists. Lastly, thank you for your guidance in my career choices, the US Army and my training by you at the BPEI that led to my own success in photography and the Ophthalmic Photographers’ Society. You set high standards for me and many others that followed. I hope that you are as proud of me as I am of my “Big Brother”.

Chris Barry, FOPS

We met Barbara Klemenc from Slovenia at the International Congress on Ophthalmic Photography at Oxford, England in 2011. Barbara gave a wonderful talk on comparing images of natural items with ophthalmic photographs. We contacted Johnny about this wonderful new talent and Johnny took up the cause enthusiastically. Johnny helped Barbara to attend the 2013 Annual OPS meeting in New Orleans via the Johnny Justice Scholarship (Figure 18). Barbara was very excited but Johnny helped calm her nerves and she presented professionally in the Scientific Session and later wrote an article for the *Journal of Ophthalmic Photography*.

Barbara was overwhelmed, especially as the term ophthalmic photography did not even exist in Slovenia.

I recently contacted Barbara and she has been nominated for the Slovenian woman of the year and is currently involved with writing outline courses for Ophthalmic Photography for the government.

I think that this one instance encapsulates the Johnny “factor”. How many others has he inspired with his status, knowledge, teaching ability and sheer force of personality to become better photographers and achieve the highest levels in our field?


**Figure 18:** Terry Tomer (left), and Johnny Justice along with Barbara Klemenc of Slovenia and Chris Barry, FOPS of Australia (right).

**Editor’s note:** Johnny sent me his CV and what a CV it is! Starting in 1964 and continuing through to 1980 with 54 significant publications, here are some samples:

- His educational courses begin with multiple leaders in the fledgling field of Fluorescein angiography:

**OPS awards:**
- 1978 – The Ophthalmic Photographers’ Society recognized with appreciation, Johnny Justice, Jr., F.O.P.S., as its principal founding member and honored him for his many Outstanding Contributions to Ophthalmic Photography.
- 2000 – Received the (Paul Montague) OPS Honorary Life Membership.