

# PRESS RELEASE

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## International Eye Foundation's *Promotion of Peace & Vision Awards* presented in San Francisco

Kensington, MD, October 28, 2009

At a reception held October 25<sup>th</sup> at the Palace Hotel, San Francisco during the joint meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) and the Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology, the 2009 IEF *Promotion of Peace & Vision Awards* were presented.

The *Promotion of Peace and Vision Awards* were created in 1997 to recognize individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the International Eye Foundation's (IEF) mission of restoring sight and preventing blindness through their active involvement and support. The Awards are dedicated to the vision expressed by IEF founder Dr. John Harry King, Jr. "...the promotion of peace through the prevention of blindness."

Louis D. Pizzarello, M.D. Chairman of Vision 2020/USA and recipient of the 2009 AAO "International Blindness Prevention Award" chaired the joint International Eye Foundation and SEVA Foundation reception honoring volunteers and supporters of both organizations.

The **IEF 2009 *Promotion of Peace & Vision Award to an Ophthalmologist*** was presented to Chandler R. Dawson, MD by Larry Schwab, MD who serves on IEF's Board of Directors and himself received the *1997 Promotion of Peace & Vision Award to an Ophthalmologist*.

A noted researcher, public health leader and a senior advisor to the World Health Organization, Dr. Dawson authored over 250 scientific publications on corneal diseases impacting public health such as trachoma, the viral conjunctivitis, herpetic ocular infections, and orphan corneal infections which have blinded people in developing countries for centuries. Dr. Dawson did his early research on Indian reservations where trachoma was still prevalent in the US just 40 years ago. That was followed by decades of on-the-ground investigation in Tunisia and Egypt.

The inaugural **IEF *Promotion of Peace & Vision Award to A Corporation*** was given to Merck & Co., Inc. by Victoria M. Sheffield, President & CEO of the International Eye Foundation. Merck received the award for its outstanding commitment to controlling and eliminating onchocerciasis (river blindness) worldwide. IEF has partnered with Merck since 1988 when Merck began donating the drug Mectizan® to control the parasites that cause river blindness.

"Through the MECTIZAN Donation Program, and the commitment of partners such as the International Eye Foundation, significant progress is being made to control and even eliminate river blindness around the world," said Michael Rabinowitz, Global Brand Leader of Ophthalmics, Merck & Co., Inc., who accepted the award on behalf of Merck. "More than 80 million people are now treated with MECTIZAN every year, a testament to Merck's commitment to putting patients first."

Thomas H. Price, III, recipient of the ***Promotion of Peace & Vision Award for a Community Member*** will be presented with the award at the IEF Board meeting in December in Washington, DC.

The International Eye Foundation, based in Kensington, MD, USA prevents blindness and restores sight in the developing world. Founded in 1961 and in "official relations" with the World Health Organization, IEF programs focus on clinical and surgical eye care services, childhood blindness. 'River blindness' control and expanding the availability of ophthalmic instruments, supplies and equipment. IEF's major initiative focuses on management and sustainability of eye care institutions to improve the quality, efficiency, and availability of eye care worldwide.

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