



Executive Director Message

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” – *Henry Ford*



Barry Elliott
Executive Director

In 1944, the Lions of Alabama came together to form Alabama Lions Sight Conservation Association. The Lions are the largest provider of indigent vision care in Alabama. During the past 75 years, the Lions have provided vision care to more than 400,000 indigent residents of Alabama. The first Executive Director for ALSCA was Mrs. Hugh Denman from 1946-1950. She brought the young girl in the picture to Dr. Austin Callahan. He performed surgery and straighten her eyes and fitted her with glasses,

which of course changed her life. Dr. Callahan used this as a promotion to secure donations for the eventual construction of the Eye Foundation Hospital.

During World War II and after, Alabama Lions Sight patients received surgical care from two local Birmingham ophthalmologists, now long deceased, at a 50% reduced rate. Dr. Alston Callahan moved his private practice to Birmingham following the years after the war. It was the custom, both in New Orleans where he was trained at Tulane Medical School and in Atlanta where he practiced, for ophthalmologists to care for Lions' patients free of charge, if the Lions paid for hospitalization care, when needed. Dr. Callahan offered to continue that tradition in Birmingham. His offer was accepted and Lions B.Q. Scruggs of Talladega and Harry Fox of Clanton, never failed to appreciate and to mention Dr. Callahan's generosity throughout their lives. These patients became the basis for the training of resident ophthalmologist at the Eye Foundation Hospital in 1965.

The Lions have had a continuous relationship with the hospital that is today UAB Callahan Eye Hospital. There have been many changes during the years of the services that Lions and the hospital partner together. When the hospital was sold to UAB, Dr. Alston Callahan had it stated in the sale that the Lions would forever have a presence in the hospital and partnership providing vision care to the indigent. In the ophthalmology school program, a three year program, five new residents are admitted



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each year. Each year the Eyesight Foundation and Alabama Lions Sight sponsor a residence reception for all fifteen residents. You will see in the other caption, several residents enjoying a night out at Regions Field, viewing the Birmingham Barons hosting the Montgomery Biscuits. It is always an enjoyable evening and a way to introduce the Lions to the resident program at the hospital.

Our mobile vision screening units are gearing up for a busy schedule, now that school is beginning the fall session. There will be new opportunities for screenings in Walker County, Birmingham City, and several other county school systems. It is exciting to see the schedule getting busy. Alabama Lions Sight has added the services of case management as a follow up to those screened who are being referred. It is important that those screened are assisted to get their eyes examined. Lion Erin Bishop is a fine addition to our staff to provide this service.

The six month pilot program with the Alabama Department of Public Health ended on July 31 with a resounding success. In the four pilot clinics during this project, the Mobile Eye Clinic realized a 93% increase in patient visits! It has created such great excitement and success that the partnership is continuing and expanding! Hopefully, there will be many exciting things to report in the near future. Truly Lions have come together, and for seventy-five years have kept the partnerships together so that the work of Lions are providing for many successes.

We Serve!

PDG Barry Elliott
Executive Director