

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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OPS Bestows OCOP Awards to Two Outstanding OPS Members

The Ophthalmic Photographers' Society's Board of Directors has awarded the Society's highest honor, the Outstanding Contribution to Ophthalmic Photography Award, to Timothy J. Bennett, CRA, OCT-C, FOPS, and to Ditte J. Hess, CRA, FOPS. By every description these two individuals fulfill the intent of this prestigious award in the body of their work, their roles in the ophthalmic imaging community, and their dedication to our profession.

The OCOP is not given lightly – it has been awarded to 19 individuals since its inception in 1974, including these two honorees in 2013. The first person to receive this award was David Donaldson, the inventor of the Donaldson Stereo Viewer. Since that time, recipi-

ents have included ophthalmic imagers, ophthalmologists, and scientists who have made significant contributions to ophthalmic photography practice, instrumentation, and literature. To quote the OPS website, "The Outstanding Contribution to Ophthalmic Photography Award, the OPS's highest honor, is awarded to select individuals who have promoted or advanced ophthalmic photography and imaging through their craft, writing, or innovations."

Appropriately, the nomination and award process for the OCOP is rigorous and passes through several levels of scrutiny: nomination is made by four OPS members, the nomination is reviewed by the OCOP/HLM (Honorary Life Member) committee, and their recommendations are

Member of the Ophthalmic Photographers' Society	1987
Certified Retinal Angiographer (CRA)	1987
Certified Ophthalmic Photographer and Retinal Angiographer (COPRA*)	1990
Certified Optical Coherence Tomographer (OCT-C)	2008
Fellow of Ophthalmic Photographers' Society (FOPS)	1999
Outstanding Contribution to Ophthalmic Photography Award recipient	2013
Don Wong Award, "Has Implementation of OCT Affected Utilization of Fluorescein Angiography?"	2005
OPS President	2004-2008
OPS Secretary	2009-present
OPS Board of Certification	1991-1998, 2003-2004
JCAHPO Commissioner representing OPS	1995-2006
Journal of Ophthalmic Photography, Assistant Editor	1996-2000
OPS Bylaws Committee, Member then Chair	1995-present
Journal of Ophthalmic Photography Editorial Review Board	2010-present
National Organization for Competency Assurance, OPS representative	1995
OPS/ASCRS Photo Competition judge	2005-2010
OPS/AAO Photo Competition judge	2008-2010, 2012
OPS Board of Certification Test Development and Subject Matter committees	1996 - 2008
OPS Philadelphia Regional Chapter, Founding member & Vice President	1993
OPS Website committee, member and contributor	2010-present

* OPS Board of Certification discontinued the COPRA credential in 1994.

Table 1: Timothy Bennett, FOPS, OPS committee service, and his contributions to the ophthalmic community outside of the OPS are too numerous to mention in this table! This list highlights his most significant service.

made to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors then reviews the nomination again and votes on awarding the honor. It speaks volumes that the vote was unanimous for each nominee. That these honors were both given in the same year indicates the degree to which each recipient is valued by our Society.



Timothy J. Bennett, CRA, OCT-C, FOPS

While Tim and Ditte are both tremendously talented and dedicated ophthalmic imagers, they have made their contributions to ophthalmic imaging and OPS in their own unique ways. (See sidebars). Each has been an OPS member for many years, each has served on OPS Boards and multiple committees, and each is considered an expert in all aspects of ophthalmic imaging, specializing in some. But individually, Tim and Ditte have made significant impact on imagers and the practice of ophthalmic imaging using their personal gifts and professional expertise.

Tim became active in OPS Board and committee work almost as soon as he became a member. His talents and abilities were obvious from the start and he was quickly recruited by the Board of Certification to serve in multiple capacities. Soon his superior writing skills, his gifts as a communicator and his outstanding organization abilities led him to serve the Society as an OPS commissioner to the Joint Commissioner on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology, (JCAHPO), a key member



Ditte J. Hess, CRA, FOPS

of the OPS By-laws committee, and ultimately, to complete two terms as OPS President.

In addition, no one has contributed more to the ophthalmic imaging literature than Tim. Long considered the Society's expert on stereo imaging and monochromatic imaging, Tim's mastery of all aspects of ophthalmic imaging is evidenced in his writing and teaching about many topics.

Indeed, when asked what he considered his greatest contribution to the OPS, he said, "I would have to say the collective body of educational content I've produced for the OPS through lectures, the OPS website, and the *Journal of Ophthalmic Photography*." Considering his service as an Assistant Editor to the *Journal of Ophthalmic Photography*, the number of publications he has written, his years of lecturing and the educational modules he has contributed to the OPS website, Tim's writing and lecturing skills truly are unrivaled.

Ditte also jumped into OPS service almost as soon as she became a member. She was present and contributing in the very early years of the Society, serving on both the Board of Directors and the Board of Certification in the late 1970s. Her outstanding talents as an ophthalmic photographer landed her a position at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, arguably the center for the growth of ophthalmic imaging and the modern practice of ophthalmology. There she was instrumental in the

Member of the Ophthalmic Photographers' Society	1972
Certified Retinal Angiographer (CRA)	1987
Fellow of Ophthalmic Photographers' Society (FOPS)	1990
OPS Secretary	1976-1977
OPS Board of Directors	1978-1979, 2010-present
OPS Board of Certification	1993, 2004-2010
OPS Board of Education	1994-1998
OPS International Conference on Ophthalmic Photography committee	2006-2008
The Don Wong Award recipient, "Intraoperative OCT Using the Bioptigen OCT"	2009
"Best of Show", recipient, Stereo Photography Division, "Retinoblastoma"	2010
The Csaba Martonyi Award, Outstanding Image, "Retinoblastoma 5b"	2010
JOP Article of the Year Award recipient, "ROP – A Visual Experience"	2012
Outstanding Contribution to Ophthalmic Photography Award recipient	2013

Table 2: Ditte Hess, FOPS, has a long list of contributions to the OPS beyond this list which include not only service on Boards committees, but also mentoring through lectures and in the CRA program, and promoting the profession with her award winning images.



Johnny Justice, Jr. with Outstanding Contributions to Ophthalmic Photography Award recipient Ditte Hess, CRA, FOPSP.

development of physician training and in refining the techniques that are the foundation of ophthalmic imaging. When asked about her experiences in ophthalmic imaging, she responded, "the most rewarding experience for me has been to have had the privilege of working alongside such great ophthalmologists as Don Gass, Edward Norton, Victor Curtin, John Flynn and Lawton Smith (also known as the "Founding Five" of the BPEI); to learn firsthand what they were in the midst of learning and figuring out themselves, and more importantly, to be respected by them. Needless to say, had it not been for Johnny Justice and Earl Choromokos and their training, none of this would ever have happened for me. Nothing like being at the right place at the right time!"

Throughout her career Ditte has shared the knowledge learned from these giants with other imagers using her excellent teaching and mentoring skills. She has served long on the Certified Retinal Angiographer program's portfolio committee and is often named as a true mentor for individuals seeking that certification. She is also recognized internationally as an expert at imaging babies and children using handheld instruments, and she is dedicated to teaching those skills to other imagers.

Happily, both Tim and Ditte list the Ophthalmic Photographers' Society as an essential component of their professional development and experience. When asked what she thought has been her greatest contribution to the OPS, Ditte humbly answered, "I honestly believe that it's not that I have made great contributions to the Society, it is that the Society has always been there for me!! I have merely given back as often as I could.



Paula Morris, CRA, FOPSP, with Outstanding Contributions to Ophthalmic Photography Award recipient Timothy Bennett, CRA, FOPSP.

The OPS Community is an amazing place. I have been a member of this community since 1972, and it's like a large family. You get together once or twice a year and you re-live many wonderful memories, you make new ones, you see friends, old and new, you share knowledge, pearls, tips and techniques, and hopefully you can make a positive impression on a new member!"

It is not surprising that Tim used the same word, "community" when speaking of the OPS. When asked about the value of the Society he said, "The OPS truly is a community. It's a community of professional colleagues willing to share ideas, experiences, knowledge and friendship. I continue to be amazed by what this dedicated group of volunteers has accomplished: a strong and vital membership, an accredited certification program, a spectacular professional journal, great classroom and online educational offerings, an interactive website loaded with great content and resources for our members and the public, an active professional presence in social media, collaborative projects with other medical and allied health organizations. I'm humbled and proud to be a part of all we've accomplished. Playing an active role in the leadership of the Society and the profession – volunteering for the OPS has been the highlight of my career."

Considering the love and dedication these two imagers have for our profession, and the numerous ways each of them has enhanced our Society, there are no individuals more deserving of the Outstanding Contribution to Ophthalmic Photography Award than Tim Bennett and Ditte Hess. Congratulations and thank you for all you have accomplished and continue to do for the OPS.