

# A NEW DISCUSSION



**A**t the Baylor College of Medicine in 1960, Alice McPherson, MD, became the world's first full-time woman retina specialist. Since then, the field has changed. We see medical schools in which more than half of the classes are composed of women. Residency programs frequently have equal numbers of men and women. Departments of ophthalmology employ women professors of ophthalmology and are led by women chairs.

Efforts to close the gender gap in ophthalmology have been ongoing in our professional societies, many of which count women such as Julia A. Haller, MD (past president of the Retina Society and the American Society of Retina Specialists), and Emily Y. Chew, MD (past president of the Macula Society), among their senior leadership. Women retina specialists owe a debt to such leaders. Those who came before us; who led the way with hard work, family focus, and personal sacrifices; who never said no; who strived for excellence while maintaining a strong sense of self: These are the women to whom we owe gratitude.

Still, we have a long way to go to achieve gender parity.

It wasn't so long ago that I heard men in my department say that we shouldn't hire women because it takes two

women to do the work of one man. The truth was then, and is now, that women have to do twice the work as their male colleagues to be recognized for equal contributions.

Retina has reached the moment when women want to talk about the issues we face in our field, and both men and women want to have an open discussion about the common challenges that young vitreoretinal surgeons face. This requires honest conversations on topics such as equal pay for equal work and the uniqueness of a woman's voice in our subspecialty. Ideally, this dialogue should focus on what elevates men and women (our accomplishments and intelligence), not what separates them (our genders).

I pounced at the chance to help lead this discussion when *Retina Today's* Chief Medical Editor, Allen C. Ho, MD, and Associate Medical Editor, Robert Avery, MD, invited me to be the Guest Editor for this issue. I hope you enjoy reading this issue's open and frank discussion as much as I enjoyed curating it. ■

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