

SOUTHERN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY RECEIVES LARGEST GIFT IN ITS 87 YEAR HISTORY

Following his death in 1989 Dr. Mark Franks and his wife, Mary, bequeathed approximately \$500,000.00 to the Optometry Association of Louisiana for the sole purpose of establishing a loan fund for Louisiana students attending Southern College of Optometry. After several years of legal and financial transactions to establish the trust, it came to fruition in 2000, at which time the college agreed to help administer the loan program with oversight from the OAL.

Over the years approximately \$200,000.00 has been loaned to Louisiana students. In addition, with proper investing the fund has grown to approximately \$1,500,000.00.

To expand on the potential impact envisioned by Dr. Franks more than 30 years ago, this year an agreement was reached to donate the existing trust fund to S.C.O. to create the Dr. Mark W. and Mary Franks Scholarship and Loan Fund. The total value of 1.5 million dollars makes it the largest single bequeathment gift in the college's 87 year history.

"Southern College of Optometry is grateful to the Optometry Association of Louisiana and the memory of Dr. Franks and his wife in establishing this fund", said Dr. Lewis Reich, SCO president. Dr. Franks was a self-made man who came to Memphis in the early 1950s. The education he received at SCO

enabled him to practice Optometry in Winnsboro, Louisiana until his death in 1989, so the collaboration on this gift is a fitting tribute to the memory of a remarkable SCO graduate.

SCO Board of Trustees Chair Dr. James Sandefur, a 1965 graduate, also serves as the OAL's Executive Director and joined Dr. Reich in making the announcement at the college's reception for friends and alumni during SeCO International's New Orleans convention for 6000 professionals from around the world.

"Louisiana is one of the most forward-thinking states when it comes to the practice of optometry and the scope of our profession, so this gift underscores our state's commitment to recruiting the best and brightest students to join our profession and follow in the tradition of Dr. Mark Franks," said Dr. Sandefur

"As someone who knew and was a friend of Dr. Franks, I know first-hand that Dr. Franks loved optometry, Louisiana, and knew how important it was to give back to his profession so future Doctors of Optometry could follow in his footsteps."

Dr. Franks was born in Owasso, Oklahoma. After working in construction, he served his country in World War II and pursued an engineering degree before switching to optometry. He worked his way through SCO by serving as a draftsman on a Memphis railroad yard.

Memories of Dr. Franks were provided by his practice's longtime partner, Dr. Bill Marionneaux, a 1969 graduate of SCO.