

IN MEMORIAM

**A Tribute to Dr. Robert C. Allen, an Inspirational Teacher,
Humanitarian, and Friend (Nov. 18, 1950–Mar. 24, 2005)**

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ABSTRACT: Dr. Robert C. Allen was a gifted educator, as well as experienced ophthalmologist, who was a close personal friend of Dr. Edlich at the University of Virginia Health System. While serving on the faculty at the University of Virginia Health System, Dr. Allen proved to be a compassionate physician, who developed close personal relationships with the residents, faculty, and his patients. Dr. Allen was invited by Dr. Edlich to be a member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Long-Term Effects of Medical Implants*. When Dr. Allen told Dr. Edlich that he had ocular melanoma in 2000, this news was a wake-up call to Dr. Edlich on the need to prevent skin cancer, as well as ocular melanoma. Empowered by this news, Dr. Edlich was honored to co-author four articles on skin cancer prevention, as well as the latest article focusing on prevention of ocular melanoma. The Ocular Melanoma Foundation (Richmond, VA (USA)) was founded in 2003 by Dr. Robert C. Allen to increase awareness, enhance education, and provide advocacy among both patients and health care professionals regarding this rare, but potentially lethal cancer. It has a website that provides patient information, up-to-date information and enables communication/discourse between and among patients and practitioners (admin@ocularmelanoma.org). Dr. Allen died on March 24, 2005, at his home surrounded by family and loved ones.

When surgeons are faced with challenging healthcare diseases, Dr. Edlich's mentor, Dr. Owen Wangenstein, advised Dr. Edlich that he should seek the advice and guidance of skilled basic scientists, who are familiar with the problem. Dr. Wangenstein is recognized as the greatest surgical teacher during the 20th century. Consequently, Dr. Edlich enlisted the advice and guidance from the two co-authors of the next article regarding the scientific basis for the selection of sunglasses to prevent the development of cataracts, pterygia, skin cancer, as well as ocular melanoma. Dr. Reichow is a Professor of Optometry at Pacific University College of Optometry (Forest Grove, OR (USA)). Dr. Citek is Associate Professor of Optometry at Pacific University College of Optometry (Forest Grove (USA)).

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In their comprehensive evaluation of sunglasses, they found some disturbing results. Despite being endorsed by The Skin Cancer Foundation, the Walgreens eyewear samples offer only partial protection to the potential hazards of sunlight exposure. Those individuals who spend considerable time outdoors should seek sun filter eyewear with impact resistant polycarbonate lenses that provide 100% ultraviolet filtration, high levels of blue light filtration, and full visual field lens/frame coverage as provided by high wrap eyewear. There are several brands that offer products with such protective characteristics. Performance sun eyewear by Nike Vision (Nike Inc., Portland OR [USA]), available in both corrective and plano (nonprescription) forms, is one such brand incorporating these protective features, as well as patented optical and tint designs. Numerous Nike styles offer interchangeable lens options to meet the changing environmental conditions encountered outdoors. These technologies are incorporated into performance-driven frame designs inspired by feedback from some of the world's best athletes. Nonprescription Nike eyewear are available on-line at <http://www.nike.com/nikevision>, as well as at various well-known retail outlets. Nonprescription and prescription Nike eyewear are also available at the offices of many eye care professionals.

Even though our latest report did not include soft contact lens, it is important to emphasize that Dr. Reichow and Dr. Citek have played a leadership role in coordinating the development of the Nike MAXSIGHT, an innovative fully tinted soft contact lens. This contact lens provides distortion-free optics, whether or not you wear prescription contacts. They filter out more than 90% of harmful blue light and 95% of UVA and UVB. For the contact lens, you should go to the website for more information <http://www.nike.com/nikevision/content.html>. The website has a list of practitioners who can service the patients with the respective sunglasses. With their exciting technologic advances in sunglass products, as well as tinted soft contact lens, the authors would encourage Nike Vision to develop an expanded international marketing program that allows all individuals in the world to easily purchase its products.

KEY WORDS: ocular melanoma, melanoma of the conjunctiva, iris, ciliary body, choroid, prevention, The Skin Cancer Foundation, Ocular Melanoma Foundation, sunglasses, sunscreen lotions/gels, ultraviolet fabric protection/umbrellas/awnings, ultraviolet film, ultraviolet structures, sun protective clothing

I. INTRODUCTION

Dr. Robert C. Allen was a gifted educator, as well as experienced ophthalmologist, who was a close personal friend of Dr. Edlich at the University of Virginia Health System (Fig. 1). While serving on the faculty at the University of Virginia Health System, Dr. Allen proved to be a compassionate physician, who developed close personal relationships with the residents, faculty, and his patients. He left the University of Virginia Health System to become Professor of Ophthalmology and Pharmacology, as well as Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Medicine. When he left the University of Virginia Health System, Dr. Edlich invited him to be a member

of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Long-Term Effects of Medical Implants*. When Dr. Allen called Dr. Edlich about being diagnosed with ocular melanoma in early 2000, their conversation was a wake-up call to Dr. Edlich on the need to prevent skin cancer, as well as ocular melanoma. Empowered by their conversation, Dr. Edlich was honored to co-author four articles on skin cancer prevention, as well as the latest article focusing on prevention of ocular melanoma.¹⁻⁵ In these articles, Dr. Edlich became aware that The Skin Cancer Foundation (New York, NY [USA]) had taken a leadership role in preventing skin cancer, as well as ocular melanoma. To its credit, The Skin Cancer Foundation has granted its Seal of Recommendation to products that meet the Foundation's criteria for effective ultraviolet sun



FIGURE 1. Dr. Robert C. Allen.

protection products. These products include the following: sunscreen lotions/gels, ultraviolet fabric protection/umbrella/awnings, ultraviolet film, ultraviolet protective structures, sun protecting clothing, ultraviolet fabric protection, and non-prescription sunglasses and fashion wear. The requirements for nonprescription sunglasses and fashion wear included 99% or greater of blockage of solar UVA radiation (320–400 nm), as well as 99% or greater of blockage of solar UVB radiation (290–320 nm).

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Australia has taken a leadership role in developing educational programs in its country to prevent skin cancer, as well as ocular melanoma. Scientists in Australia have reported studies on ultraviolet light exposures as a risk factor for ocular melanoma.⁶ While ultraviolet radiation has been suspected as a possible cause of ocular melanoma, this association is still controversial after a study by Guénel et al.⁷ The existence of an excess risk of ocular melanoma in welders may now be considered established. Exposure to ultraviolet light is a likely causal agent of ocular melanoma in welders. With the exception of California, there is no State or Federal legislation in the United States that requires photoprotective education for school children and high school students.²

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