OSU's First Dean Leaves Remarkable Legacy

Emeritus Dean Dr. Frederick W. Hebbard, of The Ohio State University College of Optometry (OSU), passed away on Aug. 14, 2016, at age 93. A remembrance of his life is being planned.



Dr. Frederick W. Hebbard

Having served in the U.S. Navy, Dr. Hebbard entered optometry school at the University of California, Berkeley after World War II. He received his optometry degree in 1949 and a PhD in 1957 and subsequently accepted a faculty appointment at OSU. There, he excelled in various teaching, clinical and research roles. According to the university, Dr. Hebbard was instrumental in bringing the OD degree to Ohio State, spearheading the expansion of the five-year curriculum (concluding with a BS-Optometry degree) to a six-year curriculum (concluding with an OD degree). He became the College of Optometry's first dean in 1968. During his tenure as a faculty member and administrator, Dr. Hebbard was responsible for many initiatives that helped solidify optometry's presence and prestige, not only on Ohio State's comprehensive health sciences campus but also nationwide. He worked tirelessly to preserve optometry's independence from Ohio State's College of Medicine in the mid-1960s when the Department of Ophthalmology proposed that the optometry program be placed under its administrative structure.

Dr. Hebbard was a respected leader in optometric education and served on many boards and committees for ASCO, the American Optometric Association, the American Academy of Optometry and the National Board of Examiners in Optometry. By the time he retired in 1988, he had also recruited a world-class faculty to the College of Optometry.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Frederick A. and Betty L. Hebbard Memorial Fund. Dr. Hebbard created the fund in memory of his parents to support the College of Optometry and its education and research programs. Donations can be made online or by calling (614) 292-2100.