



Five Exemplary Optometry Students Named Dr. Marvin R. Poston Leadership Award Winners

VSP Global® is proud to honor five students of optometry as recipients of the 2018 Dr. Marvin R. Poston Leadership Award. Named after a founding member of California Vision Services, now known as VSP Global, the award is presented annually in collaboration with the [National Optometric Association](#) (NOA), to recognize young leaders in the field of optometry who have upheld the same commitment to leadership, service, and diversity as Dr. Poston.

The 2018 recipients are:

- **Chizoba Heather Ogoke** – Midwestern University, Arizona College of Optometry
- **Astiney Franklin** – Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- **Jeromica Ward** – Southern College of Optometry
- **Fayiz Mahgoub** – Western University College of Optometry
- **Nicole Akpunku** – Illinois College of Optometry

“Dr. Poston believed success in optometry requires strong role models, academic perseverance, mentoring, and a passion for eye care,” said Jarett Johnson, OD, MPH, VSP Global board member, and long-time NOA member. “Through this award, we are honoring his legacy by continuing to create opportunities for the next generation of Doctors of Optometry.”

In 1939, Dr. Poston (1915-2002) became the first African American to graduate from the University of California, Berkeley School of Optometry. Poston went on to become the first African American Doctor of Optometry to practice in the West Coast. He was honored as Optometrist of the Year by the American Optometric Association and California Optometric Association. Poston was also appointed to three terms on the California State Board of Optometry.

“My father would be proud to see today’s diversity of Doctors of Optometry,” said Marlene Bell, daughter of Dr. Poston. “He championed the need for diversity and inclusion, a comprehensive understanding of conditions of the eye, and economic success in private practice. He’d be delighted to know that the NOA and VSP Global have partnered to make this a reality each and every year.”

The 2018 recipients all maintain active roles within the [National Optometric Student Association](#) (NOSA). In addition to the award, the recipients receive a one-time financial award of \$4,000. The winners were evaluated on the following criteria:

- Active member of NOSA

- Committed to a career of leadership and service to the profession of optometry
- Business-minded student who is preparing for a career in private-practice optometry

The winners were named at NOA's 50th annual conference in San Antonio, Texas on July 11-15, 2018.