

Below is the transcript of the speech Dr. William Cochran, President Emeritus of Southern College of Optometry, gave after accepting his Lifetime Achievement Award at ASCO's Annual Leadership Luncheon in Denver, Colorado.

*Thank you Dr. Damari for that generous introduction. To be so honored by one's colleagues is a humbling experience and I am truly humbled. Thank you ASCO for this award and recognition.*

*One hundred two years ago, in 1916, my maternal grandfather, Jim Edgar, began my family on a lifelong journey with optometry when he graduated from Needles Institute in Kansas City, later to become Northern Illinois College of Optometry.*

*His daughter, my mother, and my dad continued the optometric legacy when they graduated from SCO in the early 1940's.*

*My entry into the profession, although associated by birth, officially began 50 years ago with my graduation from SCO in 1968.*

*I tell you this to emphasize the tremendous changes our profession has undergone during the past century; from jeweler-optometrist to refraction and detect to primary care; becoming full-fledged participants in the healthcare delivery system.*

*While the efforts of many individuals, some present with us today, contributed to the advancement of the profession, optometric education has been, is and must continue to be the drive of future success.*

*Education is **key** to the future and the dedicated women and men who serve as faculty and administrators in our schools and colleges are the ones who **turn** the key.*

*Optometry has overcome many challenges during the past one hundred years. **The challenge now is to continue to expect and require excellence in our schools and colleges. And to ensure that all optometry institutions are held to the highest standards!***

*To my fellow practitioners and to our partners in industry: I encourage you to continue to generously support our sisters and brothers in optometric education; the key to the future.*

*To my fellow educators: I urge you to seek out, mentor and encourage bright young minds to consider a career in optometric education. I am thankful to be your colleague and I am grateful for your service and commitment to the profession of optometry.*

*Thank you again for this wonderful honor.*