

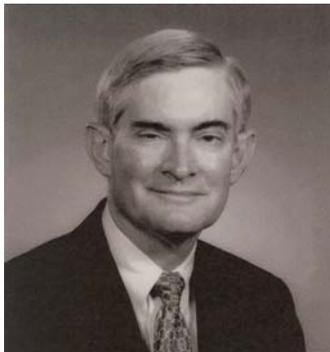
## **Three HOS Members receive Outstanding Humanitarian Service Award from American Academy of Ophthalmology**

The Houston Ophthalmological Society is proud to recognize members Dr. Robert Butner, Dr. Downey Price, and Dr. Paul Steinkuller, each of whom has received one of the highest international honors given by the American Academy of Ophthalmology- the Outstanding Humanitarian Service Award.

This award recognizes Academy members for contributions in charitable activities, care of the indigent and community service performed above and beyond the typical duties of an ophthalmologist.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology or AAO is the world's largest association of eye physicians and surgeons, with more than 27,000 members; only two Humanitarian awards are given annually. Houston is the only city to have had three award recipients. Beyond their individual contributions, each of these ophthalmologists has inspired others in Houston to serve those in need.

### **Robert W. Butner, MD** **2001 AAO Humanitarian Award**



Robert W. Butner, MD, received the Outstanding Humanitarian Service Award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology at the 2001 Annual Meeting in New Orleans.

Dr. Butner has demonstrated perseverance and commitment to teaching diagnostic and surgical techniques and to improving patient care through his teaching and care in war-torn Eastern Europe, often in hospitals under direct fire. Since 1992, Dr. Butner has made numerous trips to the Balkans, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Albania, and Romania. Each trip was dedicated to sharing knowledge and skills with ophthalmologists eager for new information that could be applied to examining and treating wounded patients. Dr. Butner taught indirect ophthalmoscopy, scleral buckling, vitrectomy and techniques for removal of intraocular foreign bodies during these trips. Dr. Butner traveled without compensation, often at his own expense and in harm's way, leaving his practice in Houston for weeks at a time. Dr. Butner worked through the auspices of the AAO Committee on International Ophthalmology.

Dr. Butner received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Rice University in 1964, and was elected to membership in Phi Beta Kappa. He attended Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, where he received his medical degree in 1968. Dr. Butner interned at Tulane University in 1968-1969, and then completed his residency and fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine in 1975 and 1976, respectively.

Dr. Butner is on the faculty of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, and staffs the Retina Clinic at the LBJ General Hospital of the Harris County Hospital District. Dr. Butner was a Green Beret, and retired with the rank of Colonel. He now serves in the Texas State Guard, through which he was mobilized to serve during Hurricane Katrina in a shelter for evacuees in Beaumont. He has been awarded the military parachutist qualification badge by the governments of Taiwan, Italy, Tunisia, Nepal, Argentina, Russia, and Israel.

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**C. Downey Price, MD**  
**2005 AAO Humanitarian Award**



Dr. Price's passion for medical missions began with a request from a missionary in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. The country had a desperate need for medical and surgical eye care, and Dr. Price responded.

Between 1974 and 1986, he led 17 medical mission teams to Leogane, Haiti, providing pro bono medical and surgical eye care. Dr. Price helped raise funds and was able to fully equip an operating room, an eye clinic and staff quarters at Hospital Sainte Croix. Over the years, many Houston Ophthalmological Society members have contributed free sight-saving care during these missions (see box below), and many HOS members have also contributed funds to support the work.

In 1986, at the request of the Ministry of Health and the Methodist Church of Belize, Dr. Price and the Reverend B.T. Williamson started an eye care program. With the help of donations from churches and the private sector, Dr. Price and others were able to build the first free standing eye clinic in Belize and later a new fully equipped surgery center in the northern city of Corozal. Since 1986, two to four medical mission eye teams travel to Belize each year to provide free eye care.

In 1987, at the invitation of the Andean Rural Health, Dr. Price initiated medical eye teams, first to Carabuco on Lake Titicaca, and later to Cochabamba in Bolivia in the Andes Mountains. Dr. Price led medical teams, which provided eye care to the Aymara and Quechua Indians. With the help of churches and the private sector, he was able to build and equip an eye clinic, outpatient surgery center and an optical lab.

In 1991 in El Salvador, Dr. Price and Rev. Williamson began an eye program. Funds were raised and a two story medical/surgical building was built in El Salvador, equipped to provide eye care for the underserved. Later, an optical lab was added and Dr. Price started annual medical mission trips to that country.

In 1992, Dr. Price and Rev. Williamson formed and incorporated Benevolent Missions International (BMI), a non-profit organization dedicated to providing pro bono medical and surgical eye care to underserved areas of the world. Dr. Price, along with others, accomplished their mission through BMI by recruiting health care professionals and lay personnel, providing cost free health care services and furnishing essential equipment and supplies. Since the formation of BMI, Dr. Price has been instrumental in leading medical and surgical eye mission teams to Burundi, Central Africa, Costa Rica, Central America, Fiji and American Samoa.

Dr. Price credits his devoted wife, Edna, who provides her support, as well as her administrative services in helping raise funds and recruit volunteers for these missions.

**HOS is particularly proud to recognize those members who have traveled at their own expense to volunteer with BMI missions**

<b>Jeffrey Arnoult</b>	<b>Kenneth Hyde</b>	<b>Stephen Pflugfelder</b>
<b>Bill Banks</b>	<b>Mark Jenkins</b>	<b>Mitchell Porias</b>
<b>Todd Barfield</b>	<b>Daniel Jenkins</b>	<b>Downey Price</b>
<b>Charles Broman</b>	<b>James Key</b>	<b>Bill Quayle</b>
<b>Harold Caplan</b>	<b>Lacy Koonce</b>	<b>Phil Scott</b>
<b>Michael Caplan</b>	<b>Ruben Lemos</b>	<b>Fred Simon</b>
<b>Charles Clark</b>	<b>Robert Lowe</b>	<b>Mike Spiegelman</b>
<b>David Coats</b>	<b>Michael Mann</b>	<b>Richard Thomson</b>
<b>Joseph Darsey</b>	<b>Paul Mann</b>	<b>Nancy Webb</b>
<b>Robert Gillett</b>	<b>Brent McQueen</b>	<b>Randy Whitford</b>
<b>Daniel Goldman</b>		

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**Paul G. Steinkuller, MD**  
**2007 AAO Humanitarian Award**



Paul G. Steinkuller, MD was nominated to receive the Outstanding Humanitarian Service Award by the American Association of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus.

Dr. Steinkuller has been practicing pediatric ophthalmology for over twenty-five years. Almost half of those twenty-five years have been spent caring for the underserved and underprivileged in Africa. From 1981 to 1983, Dr. Steinkuller worked for a US AID project - the "Kenya Rural Blindness Prevention Project"- which was part of a population-based ocular disease survey of twelve thousand people. His work on this project included examining inhabitants of rural villages in geographically distinct regions. He would camp out for a month at a time before returning to Nakuru to his wife Joan, a pediatrician, and their three children. This random cluster sampling study was, and still is, the largest such study ever done in

sub-Saharan Africa. When not traveling, he treated patients in the clinic and operating room and taught ophthalmic assistants to do cataract surgery.

From 1985-1987, Dr. Steinkuller worked for another US AID project "Malawi Childhood Blindness and Mortality Prevention Project". During this time that he worked on this project Malawi children were found to be at the highest risk for vitamin A deficiency, with secondary blindness and death. Dr. Steinkuller worked with the local Ministry of Health and village authorities who were in charge of vitamin A distribution, diet, and farming. He also continued treating ophthalmology patients, medically and surgically.

From 1998-2004, Dr. Steinkuller worked for CBM (Christian Blind Mission), an international Christian medical organization. CBM's primary purpose is to improve the quality of life of the world's poorest persons with disabilities and those at risk of disability. CBM has been involved in more than a thousand supported projects in one hundred thirteen developing countries.

In the villages of Madagascar Dr. Steinkuller focused on reducing the extent of cataract blindness. He trained general physicians to do medical ophthalmology, IOL procedures and glaucoma surgery, reducing the load of blinding diseases in the general population. At the time, there were only twelve ophthalmologists for seventeen million people. Dr. Steinkuller trained Malagasy physicians, two at a time for a course of 18 months each. He trained five ophthalmologists, three of whom are now teaching ophthalmology in that country. His efforts will soon have doubled the number of ophthalmologists in that country. Most importantly, his training program has provided people in remote rural areas access to very high quality eye care. In 2004, Dr. Steinkuller received the Chevalier Award from the government of Madagascar for his excellence in training ophthalmology. Dr. Steinkuller's wife, Joan Steinkuller, MD, also worked tirelessly with Paul.

Living and working in Africa was not without some risk. Dr. Steinkuller suffered from malaria several times. During his stay in Madagascar civil unrest erupted, with violence and gunfire lasting six months. Casualties came to their hospital. Their daily lives were disrupted and chaotic.

After returning from Africa, Dr. Steinkuller re-joined the faculty at the Baylor College of Medicine Department of Ophthalmology, training residents and fellows in pediatric ophthalmology. He has been recognized by the Department four times, receiving the Best Teacher Award in 1991, 1996, 1998, and 2007.

As one colleague stated, "Dr. Steinkuller is a superb clinician and surgeon; highly effective, accomplished educator; and compassionate, dedicated physician who is richly deserving of the award". •