

GRATEFUL CORNEAL TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT



**Dr. David and Barbara Silverstone
Laud UCI Eye Surgeon.**

Talk to most patients who have endured several eye surgeries, and you'll probably hear plenty of complaints about doctors, hospitals and the entire medical system. Not so with Barbara Silverstone.

"My ophthalmologist is a superstar!" Barbara says. "Before my husband and I celebrated our anniversary on December 5, 2004, I called Dr. Roger Steinert and asked what charity he recommended to support advanced eye research. He said, the Discovery Eye Foundation was - hands down - the best choice we could make." As a result, the Silverstones recommended that their friends and family donate to the DEF.

What led the Silverstones to support DEF in such a unique way? To start, Barbara's husband, David, is a clinical professor of ophthalmology at Yale. Although David is obviously a big fan of vision research, the real reason for the generosity springs from Barbara's battle against keratoconus, assisted by renowned UCI Ophthalmologist Roger F. Steinert, M.D. (see article on page 3). Barbara's struggle began in her early 20s, when she first experienced vision problems while a senior at UCLA.

"I had a burning desire to attend graduate school, but I was unable to move on because my eyes, especially my left eye, were quickly deteriorating. My first husband and I married soon after I received my undergraduate degree and I became pregnant. I experienced multiple episodes of hydrops (corneal swelling) and lost most of the vision in my left eye during my pregnancy, which resulted in my spending a year with only one working eye. It became clear that I would need a corneal transplant."

Barbara's first corneal transplant in 1976 went well and improved the vision in her left eye to 20/20 with a gas permeable hard contact lens. This allowed her to raise two children and apply to law school once the children reached school age. After an amazing 27 years with no further problems, Barbara's right eye developed multiple corneal problems. She turned to Dr. Steinert, who was then working at Harvard to help.

In June 2003, the right eye received a successful corneal transplant. Within weeks, the 27 year old corneal transplant in Barbara's left eye began to completely break down. They went ahead with a re-transplant of the left cornea in September, 2003 - Barbara's third transplant to-date.

"It has all been incredibly challenging and life altering," says Barbara. "What I appreciated through it all was that Dr. Steinert was always available. He has been so devoted to saving my eyesight and helping me reach my goals."

Incredibly, Barbara now has 20/20 vision without glasses or contact lenses. She is thrilled with the life her surgeries have enabled her to realize. She is still an avid reader, golfer, gardener, cook and traveler.

"I cannot tell you how important it is to me to have such wonderful people helping me all along the way to reach my goals. My husband is a tremendous source of love and strength. Dr. Steinert's superior skills and moral support have made the entire experience easier. That's why I want to support the Discovery Eye Foundation and all the wonderful work that doctors like Roger Steinert are doing to help people hold onto their dreams." ▲