

Memories of a Modern Pioneer: Joseph A. LeGrand

ABSTRACT: *Joseph LeGrand, Sr., was a pioneer of the modern ocularist profession. He developed techniques of fitting, painting and fabricating plastic artificial eyes. He trained many ocularists and opened offices in dozens of cities in the United States and Canada. Mr. LeGrand died in 1983 as the result of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. His family, friends, and colleagues remember him fondly.*

Joseph A. LeGrand, Jr.

B.C.O., B.A.D.O.

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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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KEY WORDS:

entrepreneur, pioneer, American Society of Ocularists, apprentice, prosthetic eye, enucleation

INTRODUCTION

Joseph LeGrand, Sr., can be counted among the pioneers of the ocularist profession.¹ He is known for innovations in fitting, painting, and fabricating plastic eyes. He is also remembered as an entrepreneur who trained more than a dozen ocularists and established offices across Canada, along much of the Eastern seaboard, and in some other locations in the United States. Joe LeGrand was truly devoted to all aspects of the profession he loved including doctor relations and education. In spite of his accomplishments, he is probably best remembered for his warmth and sense of humor. Many members of the American Society of Ocularists have fond memories of seeing Joe at the bi-annual meetings (Figure 1). This article includes several submissions written by some of Joe's old colleagues and friends. Although he has been gone for almost 25 years, it is evident that he made an indelible imprint on their lives, which seems as fresh as when they first met him.

BACKGROUND

During the 1950s there was a new excitement and interest in prosthetic eyes. New surgical implants were being developed that promised to bring optimal motility to artificial eyes. Numerous technicians were tinkering with techniques for making and improving custom plastic eyes. Ocularistry had not developed into a recognized profession. There was little in the way of education and training available and certification was a long way off. A handful of glass eye-makers, often of German ancestry did much of the work. Some of them traveled extensively in order to provide their services. Many anophthalmic patients had only stock (ready made) prosthetic eyes available to



FIGURE 1 Joe wrote on the back of this photo, “You can tell a man by the friends he keeps.”

them. Often these eyes left much to be desired in terms of fit and appearance. Custom plastic eyes tended to be of uneven quality depending on the knowledge, skill, and level of concern of the individual creating them. It was during this decade that various men and women began to lay a foundation for the profession of ocularistry as we know it today.

Joe LeGrand's Roots

Among these early pioneers was a young man from Dallas, Pennsylvania. Dallas was a very small town in a region best known for its anthracite coal. Joe LeGrand would sometimes tell people he graduated tenth in his high school class, and then with sly humor admit that there were only twenty students in the class. Joe, the youngest of five children, was born on August 15, 1930. The oldest sibling was his sister, Jane. There were three older brothers: Lew, Brick, and Dick. Joe's Dad, Lewis, did accounting work for a hardware company. His Mom, Ruth, helped found the town's library, and she was a talented artist. Being the youngest child no doubt helped to hone Joe's personality and survival skills.

At age sixteen Joe's left eye was injured while playing basketball. His eye was badly scratched by another player's fingernail. Today, this same injury would probably not lead to eye-loss; however, there were no eye specialists around this part of northeastern

Pennsylvania. Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia seemed too far away for emergency care. A doctor treated his eye with tainted eyedrops, which caused the eye to become scarred and blind.

After high school, Joe attended Millersville State Teachers College near Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Figure 2). His major was industrial arts. Two events during

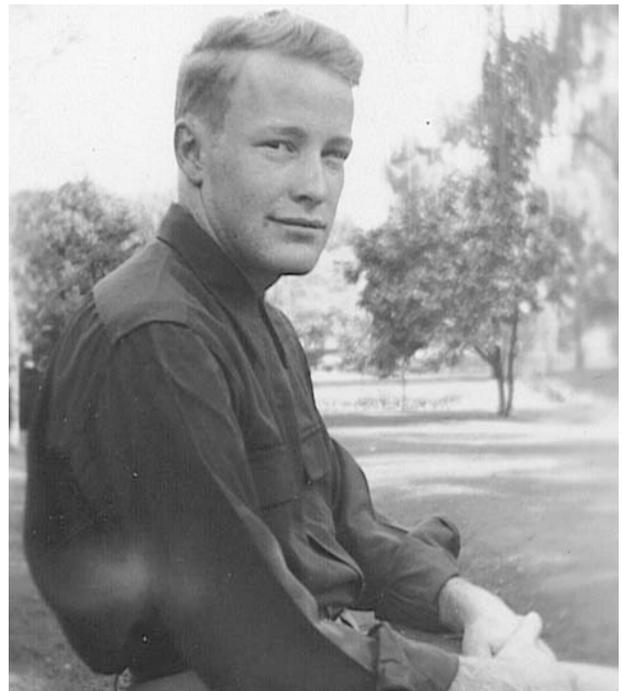


FIGURE 2 This photo was taken of Joe during his senior year at Millersville State Teachers College.



FIGURE 3 An early photo of Joe painting an iris.

his senior year led to his choice of eye-making as a career. The first event occurred while he was doing his student teaching at a high school woodshop class. A fight broke out between some big tough kids, and Joe got somewhat roughed up trying to break it up. This soured him on the teaching profession. The next event was the enucleation of his eye because of the pain associated with acute glaucoma. This event, of course, led to his obtaining his first prosthesis, and it sparked his interest in a profession where he could use his many talents to help other patients like himself.

The Beginning of a Career

In 1952 an ocularist in Philadelphia, Jack Ziegler, made Joe's first prosthesis. Shortly afterwards, Joe began to train with this same gentleman. He received a good foundation from Ziegler, but Joe ended up learning much on his own, as Ziegler left the profession less than a year later. Ziegler was a partner with George Stemet, who managed the business. The company also did contact lens work. Very quickly Joe became responsible for the artificial eyes (Figure 3).

From almost the beginning, Joe and the company's contact lens fitters worked in both Canada and Philadelphia. There was not enough work for them in Philadelphia alone. They would work in Philadelphia for two weeks, then drive to Montreal to work for two weeks. The Canadian connection came about when George Stemet got lost while on vacation in



FIGURE 4 Shown left to right: Doris, Joe, and Jackie Haugen.

Montreal. He stopped into Emile St. Jean Optician to get directions and "hit it off" with the owner. A part-time location for the company ensued.

In 1953, Joe married his college sweetheart, Doris Hinerdeer, of Lancaster. Doris taught elementary school for two years following college. In 1955 Joe and Doris moved to Montreal together with a contact lens fitter, Myron Haugen, and his wife, Jackie (Figure 4). The plan was to establish a full-time office in Montreal at the request of some of the doctors there. About one year later, however, Joe and Doris decided to move back to Philadelphia. Before long, the partnership was dissolved, and Joe started his own business (Figure 5). Myron and Jackie remained good friends and still stay in touch with Doris to this day.

All the while, Joe was improving his eye-making skills and experimenting with timesaving techniques. One of his early goals was to provide a custom eye of excellent quality in a day. A newspaper in Wilkes Barre, near Dallas, did a story on Joe in 1957. The article said, "Concerning his development of a one-day method for the making of custom eyes, LeGrand said his aim was to have the patient watch the whole process from beginning to end so that he or she would be assured of the craftsmanship and leave knowing they could go anywhere, do anything and meet anyone with self-confidence."²

This same article talks about Joe "flying the circuit" from Philadelphia to Toronto to Ottawa to Montreal once a month to cover his four offices. The



FIGURE 5 Joe took this photo showing his business card and pamphlet.

article mentions that he gave careful training to the technicians who worked with him. Little is known about these first technicians. The first trainee who “worked out” for the long term was Tom Dean, hired in 1964, eleven years after Joe started in the business. After his training, Tom moved to Montreal to run that office. He lives and works in Montreal to this day. At least 19 ocularists received training from Joe and his company. Appendix A presents a list of ocularists trained by Joe LeGrand. Eleven of these ocularists are still active in the field. Some of them have gone on to train many others. At its peak, LeGrand Associates had 30 locations. Appendix B presents a list of LeGrand Associates office locations in the United States and Canada.

A WONDERFUL MENTOR, A BRILLIANT INNOVATOR, A “MASTER EYE-MAKER,” AND A FRIEND

The following testimonials reveal the different aspects of Joe LeGrand’s unique talents and personality. Joe

succumbed to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) at the age of 52. ALS is commonly called Lou Gehrig’s disease in honor of the Yankee baseball great who was struck down by the disease at the peak of his career. Like Lou Gehrig, Joe is remembered not only for his professional accomplishments, but also for his decency.

Sebastian Demanop, Philadelphia

Before I describe the beginning of my friendship with Joseph LeGrand I want to introduce myself. I am Sebastian Demanop, hailing from Bangkok, Thailand. I am totally blind and a graduate of the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia. I also have degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Delaware. I arrived in the United States with a full scholarship and very limited resources in late August 1949 at age 21.

Joseph LeGrand became my good friend and benefactor. The friendship did not vanish after Joe’s departure from this earth. His oldest son, Joe, Jr.,

continues his father's legacy. Joe and I became good friends in spite of our wide difference in age.

In March 1952, I played for several hours outside on a cold winter day. The glass eye I was wearing was unable to withstand the severe cold temperature and exploded in my left eye. I bled profusely and was taken to the hospital. After I healed, the ophthalmologist told me to see Joe LeGrand for new plastic eyes because plastic can withstand the cold. The office was at 1000 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

We talked for a long time because Joe wanted to know a great deal about my arrival at Overbrook. He suggested custom-made eyes instead of stock eyes. I asked him about the difference in cost. Of course the stock eyes were beyond my financial reach, let alone custom-made. Joe told me not to let the cost deter me because the results were much better. He agreed to have me pay him \$2 a week. I accepted the offer. Each time I came to pay my debt I would have lunch with Joe. I gained in the bargain. When I got my debt down to the last \$12, he told me to forget the rest.

Subsequently, I became the District Rehabilitation Supervisor for the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services. Joe Continued to help other clients of the agency. His sons have continued their father's legacy.

Ari Fuhrmann, Miami

I met Joe LeGrand in November 1960, one month after I came to the United States and settled in Philadelphia. I was a dentist and an ocularist in Romania since 1947. Naturally I was looking for a job.

I remember my first encounter with Joe in the office at 1930 Chestnut Street. I spoke little English and understood only part of what he said, but the way he said it, soft-spoken and with a smile on his face, made me like him instantly. He told me that unfortunately he had no job opening at that time, but if I could make a bunch of brown stock eyes, he would pay me \$5 per eye. (At that time Medicaid paid very little for a prosthetic eye.) A few days later I brought 30 brown eyes. Joe paid me on the spot. His only question was that he wanted to know what kind of paint I used. I told him plastic through and through. All of a sudden his eyes lit up and his face became radiant. He said: "You're the man I'm looking for." Joe was trying to develop a cosmetic contact lens, and

my coloring system was ideal for it. A few months later we had a cosmetic contact lens.³ We fitted a patient with a scarred eye with that cosmetic contact lens, never made before in the entire world.

Joe always had a booth at the Wills Eye Hospital conference to display his prosthetic eye-making (Figure 6). We brought the patient along to the hospital. It was amazing to see ophthalmologists looking in her eyes, not knowing what to look for. The color match was perfect and the motility was excellent. I think we made history at that meeting.

We formed the LeGrand-Fuhrmann Corporation, a partnership to make cosmetic contact lenses. Joe was such an honorable man. Although we never had a written agreement, the profits were always shared honestly and equally.

Joe and I became good friends. I was invited many times to his home where I met his lovely wife and their three adorable children. Joe was a very giving person. I remember telling him that I played the flute and that I was still using an old wooden one, from the 30s. The next day Joe showed up with a modern flute and said, "I've had this flute since I played in the school band. You can have it. It only needs repadding." I still play that flute, and whenever I do, I think of Joe. Thanks to Joe, I joined the ASO. He even convinced me to teach classes and share some of my eye-making secrets.

Joe was also a fighter. When the dreadful ALS hit him, he never gave up lecturing for the society

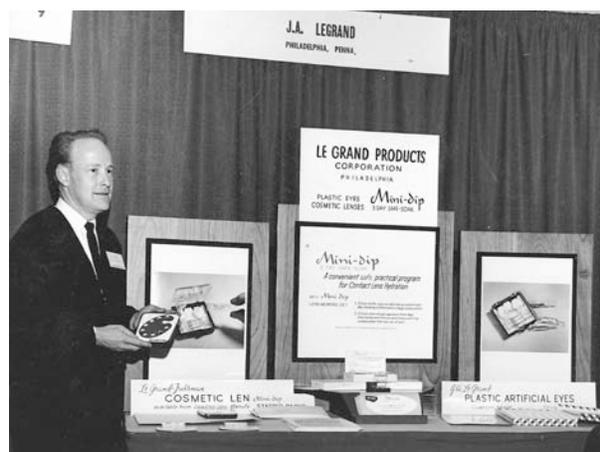


FIGURE 6 At this Wills Eye Convention, Joe promoted three different ventures: LeGrand-Fuhrman Cosmetic Lenses, Mini-dip Contact Lens Soaking System, and his artificial eye service.



FIGURE 7 Shown from left to right: Tom Dean, Bud Tillman, Joe LeGrand, Sr., and Joe Michel. Joe LeGrand did the painting of the raccoons.

with Doris at his side helping him along. I'll never forget how happy Joe was when I presented him with an engraved pocket watch following his lecture at the meeting in Chicago. The engraving read as follows: "To Joe, with appreciation for everything you did for me."

Tom Dean, Montreal, Canada

I first met Joe LeGrand in 1964 when I was 19 years old. I was applying for a job as a lab technician. I remember Joe very well. He was always an easy-going man with the patience of Job. One of my first memories is of Ari Fuhrman, Joe's business associate, begging him to take over from me in polishing an eye. It seemed to me I was taking forever to finish the job, and Joe still found scratches. To his credit, he did let me persevere and finally finish the eye. As a young trainee, I managed to commit every possible error a young apprentice could make. Joe was always there to offer advice, consolation, and constructive criticism. I have never forgotten that kindness and have always strived, most of the time unsuccessfully, to show the same patience in teaching trainees.

In many ways Joe set an example for ocularists to emulate. He was a proponent of innovation. The "LeGrand method" of using a wax tray, impression material, and metal button to create a model was innovative and an advancement in the technique of custom-fit ocular prostheses. He always had ideas to improve techniques (such as the "one cure" artificial eye), improve upon implants, and further human

development. Joe was a proponent of a person's self-development, of constantly striving to improve one's self. At one ASO meeting, he invited a man who specialized in teaching people how to maximize the joy in their lives, both professionally and personally. His approach to professionals, such as ophthalmic surgeons, was often innovative. Once we were invited to set up a booth at a Wills Eye Hospital conference to exhibit our product. Joe decided to showcase not our products, but the talent of the people who created those products. All of us in the company at the time were encouraged to create a work of art to be displayed at the meeting (Figure 7). The exhibit went well with good reviews from the doctors. Joe always thought "out of the box" decades before the phrase became popular.

As successful as Joe was in influencing many ocularists in North America, I will always remember him for his sense of humor. One story that comes to mind was a time, soon after I had moved to Montreal, when Joe visited me and took me to a local bistro owned by a friend of his. All of this was new to a young fellow straight from the suburbs. The owner took Joe and me to a small, numbered table on which sat a telephone. Looking around, I noticed all the small tables had phones. Supposedly, after a few drinks, if you noticed another table with a few girls, you would phone their table and try to connect with them. All of this was really exotic for a naive youngster from Philadelphia. Joe left me to go to the washroom and no sooner had he left when the telephone rang. When I answered the phone, someone with a pretty French accent asked if I was alone. Before I could stutter some sort of response, I looked around and found Joe and his friend bent over their phone laughing. Boy his buddy had quite the feminine voice. I had become a victim of their joke.

Another quick flash memory that just popped into mind was a day in the summer of 1967 when I was waiting for Joe on the site of the Montreal World's Fair, Expo 67. Out of the blue a small helicopter appeared, heading straight for me, then did a sharp right-hand turn, and dropped onto the tarmac. The left door opened and out popped Joe, all but running from the helicopter, muttering about never getting into another one again. Joe always had an ability to surprise you.

Joe's sense of humor showed itself every day,

sometimes at the oddest moments. During one visit to Montreal, Joe, my wife, and I were walking down Crescent Street on a beautiful summer evening. The sidewalks were crowded with people. Traffic had come to a halt behind a car that had caught on fire, with the firemen crowding around the open hood looking at the burning engine. At that moment, Joe looked over and shouted, "While you're in there, could you check the oil?" It never ceased to amaze me that as shy as Joe could seem, he could at spontaneous moments surprise you.

At the peak of his career, Joe had a company that employed multiple ocularists spread over the East Coast and Canada (Figure 8). Like most other talented people, ocularists are individuals who, at times, can be a challenge to handle. Joe had a talent that could take a room full of headstrong artists and fashion them into a cohesive unit. His legacy is apparent today in the number of ocularists who owe their start directly to him or the ocularists he trained. He made accomplishing the extraordinary look easy.

Walter Johnson, Denver, Colorado

On November 13, 1971, during a Saturday morning ice hockey scrimmage, I decided to throw a much-practiced hip check on the fellow captain of my high school hockey team. My intention was to demonstrate who was the real captain of the team. Unfortunately, while my teammate flew over my back, his skate blade slashed my left eye, and I fell to the ice in what became a "puddle of blood." This accident altered my life forever.

On December 13, 1971 I had an appointment in downtown Philadelphia with a professional whose title was ocularist. The company was LeGrand Associates. They specialized in making custom-made ocular prosthetics. I entered the office feeling very much like a "freak." To say I was feeling sorry for myself at this time would be an understatement. I was doing everything I could to hide my loss. Also, I was very apprehensive as I sat in the waiting room. Fortunately for me, a man with great energy and excitement came out to shake my hand and welcome me to his office. His name was Joe LeGrand, and he changed my life forever.

Joe LeGrand made my first artificial eye. He gave me my first full-time job. He was an incredible moti-



FIGURE 8 Joe checks a patient's iris size.

vator. He made everyone feel like they were the most important part of his company. Working with Joe was a pleasure because he wanted everyone to be part of a "family team" working toward the satisfaction of our prosthetic patients. Joe knew how to motivate every individual, and he definitely had a major effect on me. The challenges that Joe threw my way were exciting, and I thrived under his direction. Within a few months of working with Joe, I knew that I wanted to be the best ocularist I could be. I wanted to help people. I wanted to be like Joe LeGrand.

Today's Ocularist was the first official publication from the American Society of Ocularists. It was Joe LeGrand's idea and his "baby." He loved the idea of opening up our profession in an effort to share techniques. In the beginning, Joe struggled to get anyone to submit an article or paper or anything regarding the ocularist field. He shared his frustrations with me on many occasions, but he always went forward. This was Joe's natural personality. Thirty-seven years later, *Today's Ocularist* is called the *Journal of Ophthalmic Prosthetics*. To date, six out of the eight editors over the 37 years of publication have been LeGrand Associates' alumni, an example of what a positive influence Joe LeGrand had with all of his associates.

Joe LeGrand was a broad-minded and enterprising businessman. He encouraged new ideas and improvement of the craft. He had a vision of training enough quality ocularists to provide service to anophthalmic patients in most major cities in North America. He was a major influence in Canada for custom-made prosthetics. He was incredibly inventive in his fitting techniques that are used by many around

the world. LeGrand Associates alumni, or ophthalmologists trained by LeGrand alumni, represent over 20% of all Board Certified ophthalmologists in North America, the major hallmark of his legacy!

Nothing makes me more proud than saying that I was Joe LeGrand's friend. Joe was my mentor. I respected everything he said and did for our profession. I was fortunate enough to share much personal time with Joe. He was like a "second father" to me.

Marc Soper and I introduced and pledged the first donation for the Joe LeGrand, Sr., Award for the best ASO apprentice lecture back in the early 80s. This award has become one of the most important educational achievements presented by the ASO. Joe would be very proud of the way this award represents his goals as someone open with his knowledge and willing to pass it on to the next generation.

Joe LeGrand gave me the avenue to achieve everything you need to be successful. This man made my eye, then gave me direction for the rest of my life. I love and always will love Joe LeGrand.

James Willis, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

It would be a fair and accurate statement to say that I would not be where I am in life today were it not for Joseph LeGrand, Sr., In June 1974 I began working as a student optician in a contact lens clinic in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Just after I began my apprenticeship as an optician, I was informed that LeGrand Associates would be traveling to Edmonton to provide custom artificial eyes for patients in Alberta. Prior to that time our clinic provided only stock artificial eyes for patients. Initially, Brian Hall and Tom Dean were the ophthalmologists from LeGrand who provided the custom ocular prosthetic work in Edmonton. I became involved with LeGrand Associates by observing Brian and Tom work, and sometimes I assisted in the lab work. In September 1974, Joe LeGrand came to Edmonton. I had heard many great things about Joe and felt somewhat apprehensive about meeting him for the first time.

Joe immediately made me feel a part of the team and allowed me to shadow him for the week he was in Edmonton. Patients loved him. Because he also was a prosthesis wearer they formed an instant bond with him. It was amazing to watch his work and see how effortlessly he made a custom prosthesis. Over the

next two years he only came back to Edmonton a few times, but I formed a real bond with Joe. In January 1976, he contacted my employer at the contact lens clinic and asked permission for me to leave the optical firm to become an apprentice ophthalmologist with LeGrand Associates. I was totally blown away by this amazing opportunity, and in April 1976, I traveled to Philadelphia to begin my initial training as an ophthalmologist.

I had many great times with Joe, Sr., both in and out of the office during my apprenticeship in Philadelphia. He always treated me as a peer, something I deeply appreciated. He encouraged me to always strive for excellence and to constantly study and improve my knowledge and skill as an ophthalmologist so that the patient would receive the best possible service and prosthesis. As often pointed out, there are many people in the American Society of Ophthalmologists who owe their initial career training in ophthalmology to the influence of Joe LeGrand, Sr. I am very grateful to be counted in that number, and I am very thankful for the immense impact he had on my life. As they say, the rest is history. Thirty years later, I am still in the field of ophthalmology.

Antonio Guzman, Gainesville, Florida

Upon reflection, my career as a competent ophthalmologist truly began with LeGrand Associates. The LeGrand techniques are practical, easier, and produce a superior finished product. The innovations and contributions of Joe LeGrand, beyond a doubt, have shaped and transformed the field of ophthalmology. He genuinely stands out as a pioneer who broke new ground in our profession. I feel fortunate that Mr. LeGrand was the most predominant contributor to my training in my ongoing journey as an ophthalmologist.

The first time I heard about Joe LeGrand Associates was in 1975. At that time, I had just completed the Anaplastologist/Ophthalmologist program at Stanford Medical Center in Palo Alto, California. LeGrand Associates in Philadelphia offered me a job but I was not interested. I had been residing in California, the home of my family and friends, and I had no desire to leave. I easily decided to stay in California employed with the Veteran's Administration Hospital in San Francisco.

Thankfully, after a year, my department was

eliminated and I decided to give Mr. LeGrand a call. Immediately, I was sent a round trip ticket to Philadelphia and encouraged to interview for a job with LeGrand Associates. I still had no intentions of leaving my home in California, but considering my circumstances, I had nothing to lose. After all, I did have the free airplane ticket. Mr. LeGrand met me at the airport and was gracious enough to invite me to stay at his home for a few days. Little did I know that my intended short stay would not be so short.

I ended up staying in Philadelphia and becoming a part of LeGrand Associates. Being new on the job, I experienced a certain amount of uncertainty. When I first arrived, Mr. LeGrand used slides illustrating his techniques. He also told me how many artificial eyes that were produced in one day—3–5 eyes by one ocularist! His techniques for fabricating artificial eyes were new to me and different than what I had learned previously, and I was unsure whether I could meet his expectations.

Mr. LeGrand, with his understanding and kindness, however, proved these fears to be false. The first day I was at work at his office he told me, “I want you to forget anything that you know about making eyes; we have to start from scratch.” This was a great relief. Soon I began to learn a new way—Mr. LeGrand’s way—to fabricate an eye prosthesis. Mr. LeGrand was a natural teacher, willing to explain patiently and with detail. He treated us as equals and associates. I never thought of him as the boss. He was always willing to hear any concerns we had and would go out of his way to help us. He was also an outstanding manager and businessman, with associates in most major cities in the United States and Canada. Later, after working at the company’s New York City office, I became the company’s associate in Miami, Florida.

Working for him, I never can recall Mr. LeGrand being upset, except for one incident. This happened when I first started working for him. I had been assigned lab work and clean-up, and I wanted to do an impressive job cleaning. I thought I would even clean his painting egg dish spotless with hopes of recognition for a job well done. The next morning I found out the truth, this egg dish was just not any egg dish. I had just erased all of his color mixes for painting he had stored! I can only imagine the many laughs that Mr. LeGrand would have if he were still with us today. By the way, to this day, I still use an egg dish as

a palette for painting, which goes to show that the LeGrand ways are still in practice in both small and big details.

The LeGrand way made a tremendous impact on how I work and practice as an Ocularist. Being 37 years later now, I appreciate the time I spent with LeGrand Associates and what Mr. LeGrand taught us was possible to do. It was hard to imagine how 3-5 artificial eyes could possibly be made in one day; yet we learned how. It was a new idea to travel as an ocularist; yet he showed us how to be mobile with our equipment, traveling to various locations for work. What I believe made Mr. LeGrand so remarkable was that he set standards that were above and beyond. He was a man that proved if you set your mind to a task, you could accomplish it despite how unrealistic at first it may appear. This is just a small glimpse of who Joe LeGrand was. But my hope is that it will help to illustrate the man of influence that he was. His ideas, innovations, and contributions will always be remembered.

Heather Banfield, Nova Scotia, Canada

So many ocularists have Joseph LeGrand, Sr., to thank for their professional careers. I am one of those people. I first met Joe on January 9, 1978. Why do I remember that date? That was the day I left Nova Scotia to begin my training at Joe’s head office in Philadelphia. I remember every detail of that day. The pilot advised us as he started his descent that there was blowing snow on the runway. I remember laughing as we landed at the huge snowflakes that blew by the window with no accumulation on the ground. I was thinking, “They call this snow?” I remember taking the “limousine” to the Sir Francis Drake hotel and meeting Joe for the first time. He was waiting for me there. We went from there to his office. My first impression of Joe was of a kind, soft-spoken man. He was not intimidating, not ever.

Joe was an innovator. He had the foresight for this industry that surpassed all others. Many ocularists of that period were not anxious to share their ideas and techniques. Joe had a philosophy that not many of his peers agreed with at the time. He wanted to train ocularists and felt this service should be available to people without having to travel great distances. He did his part to ensure that an ocularist served most major

cities, at least part-time. He did this by training one ophthalmologist at a time. For those ophthalmologists who didn't know Joe, they probably do not realize that they are benefiting from his love of the profession. It was because of his openness and sharing that others started to do the same. Would we have a *Journal of Ophthalmic Prosthetics*? Maybe, but Joe was instrumental in its genesis. Even the ASO membership would not be as great as it is without Joe. It is because of his training of many ophthalmologists, and those going on to train others, that the ASO continues to grow stronger,

Joe was warm, kind, jovial and caring. He was a proud family man and often spoke of his children. He was intelligent and wise. He was my mentor, and I for one, will ever be grateful for the door of opportunity he opened and allowed me to enter. This profession is wonderful and rewarding. If only we all had the foresight of Joe LeGrand, where could we take this profession? I am eternally grateful.

Bruce Cook, St. Louis, Missouri

I met Joe LeGrand, Sr., in July 1979 at Washington University's Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri after I took an American Optical course in Southbridge, Massachusetts, fitting Monoplex (stock eyes). Joe allowed me to work with him that week fitting and fabricating custom artificial eyes. Doors began opening. Within one year, I was in New York City. There, at Columbia Presbyterian and Cornell Medical centers, Joe taught me fitting and fabricating custom artificial eyes.

I remember one evening, after a very busy day at Columbia Presbyterian, driving to Greenwich, Connecticut. We went there for dinner. The restaurant overlooked the Atlantic. (What a view!). During dinner, Joe jumped up and ran over to a giant sliding glass door shouting, "It's falling!" As it turned out, the door was falling. A gust of wind had dislodged the door from its track. Had it not been for Joe, people eating under the door could have been badly hurt.

One hot summer, Joe and I went to his summer home in Stone Harbor, New Jersey. We went motor boating together with his golden retriever. We were traveling pretty fast when I saw something black coming at us. The next thing I knew, we were on a sandbar and his dog was swimming away for dear life.

Never a dull moment with Joe!

I always remember a story he told me about a young man who grew up in South Africa. The boy inherited his family farm and, to make it in the world, he sold the farm. Later, after blowing all his money, he decided to return to the farm and work as a hired hand. When he returned to the farm, it was now a diamond mine! "Diamonds in my backyard!!!" Joe said, "There may be diamonds in your backyard too." Later, I realized how true that was!

Joe LeGrand, Sr.'s, "trickledown effect" has reached many current ophthalmologists, including Corine, my daughter. She will be taking her boards this year.

Joe's untimely death left me wishing I could have spent more time with the man I have always referred to as "Master Eyemaker."

Walter Tillman, Cheat Lake, West Virginia

It is difficult to estimate the incredible influence Joe LeGrand, Sr., had on the field of ophthalmology. He was always innovative, always looking for a better way to produce artificial eyes easier and faster. He went in a completely different direction than the impression-fitters. The main difference is this: the impression-fitters took the impression first. The last part of the fitting with the LeGrand method is the impression. What a time-saver!

When I first began with LeGrand, we would start with a sheet of wax, fold it four times, heat it, and carve it into the shape of a prosthesis (Figures 9, 10, 11, 12). This would be altered to fit the periphery of the socket and achieve the desired palpebral fissure. The wax shape would then be marked for iris position with a black grease pencil. A circle would be scribed in the wax, the wax within the circle removed, and the painted iris button, with masking tape on the back embedded into the wax shape. The shape had to be retried into the socket, and then the iris button had to be removed and repositioned until it was just right. The shape was then ready to be processed. The first and only mold that was made was the one used to cook the plastic prosthesis. This was the empirical method of custom-making a plastic artificial eye.

At that time, Joe didn't believe that the impression made much of a difference. One day, however, he had a patient whose eye kept turning out of the position it was designed to be in. He kept adjusting



FIGURES 9, 10, 11, 12 Joe demonstrates the steps of designing an empirical wax shape.

the shape to no avail. He put some adhesive tape on the posterior of the prosthesis, placed alginate on it, inserted the prosthesis into the socket, and held it in the proper position until the alginate set. He processed the prosthesis, and it worked. The prosthesis stopped turning.⁴ He had taken an impression using an empirical shape as a molding shell.

Joe may have observed Tom Cogger in New York City, a highly regarded scleral lens-maker and contact lens-fitter. A scleral lens is a clear piece of plastic that covers the eyeball. A prescription is ground into the part that covers the cornea to correct vision. Tom never fit cosmetic scleral cover shells. He only worked with seeing eyes. As you can imagine, the impression is critical in these cases. When he took an impression of a living, seeing eye, rather than using a syringe, as he had for over 20 years, he would simply spatulate the alginate onto the posterior of a molding shell and place it on the patient's eye. Joe was doing the same thing. He was taking an impression using the anterior surface of the prosthesis as a molding shell. As far as I know, this was the beginning of what has been dubbed the "empirical impression method."⁵ We have been taking impressions using this wonderful time-saving method since 1970.

Carving the initial wax shape was cumbersome and time-consuming. Joe solved this problem by making a silicone mold of the average shape of a prosthesis (Figure 13). This average shape measured 25 mm vertically and 27 mm horizontally, and, of course, it honored the trochlea. The mold had two left and two right shapes. Liquid wax was poured into the mold and, when the wax hardened, we would have basic wax shapes with which to begin. This procedure was another tremendous timesaver. With a minimal amount of work, we had a wax shape that would become the anterior surface of the prosthesis, and it could be immediately tried in the socket. The periphery and the position of the iris button would be adjusted. Then, using this wax shape, we were ready to take an impression of the socket.

At the same time, Joe invented the black anodized aluminum iris button. Out of the silicone mold would come an empirical shape with the aluminum iris button located in the ideal position (Figure 14). The shape could be polished and tried into the socket in a period of 10 minutes to 15 minutes (Figure 15). The periphery was checked by moving the shape

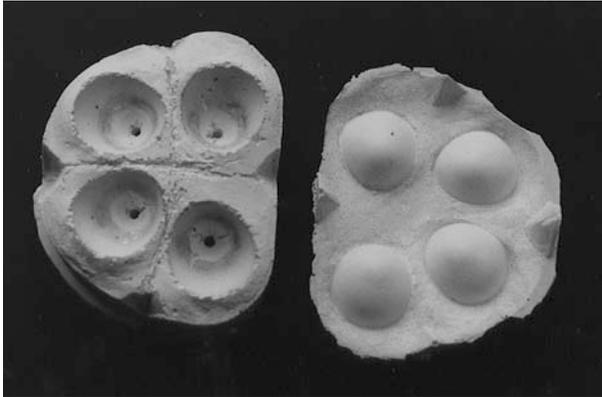


FIGURE 13 Joe invented a silicone mold, which he used to make precast wax shapes.

in the socket upward, and from side to side. The periphery of the shape was then modified by carving away or adding wax. In order to reposition the aluminum iris button, we simply heated the stem, allowing it to easily be shifted without removing it from the wax shape (Figure 16). After we had the correct iris position, stem position, and palpebral fissure, we would make two relief holes laterally in the shape, spatulate alginate onto the posterior, and then insert it into the patient's socket. I usually have the impression-fitted model ready for processing in 30 minutes. After Joe secured a flask that holds two shapes, I began to schedule my first two patients for new eyes 30 minutes apart. After 1 hour and 15 minutes, I am ready to process two eyes for the first cooking.

We would then take the shapes to the lab. Originally, we used pure rapid setting dental impression plaster in a bass flask. We had to work quickly to get the mold

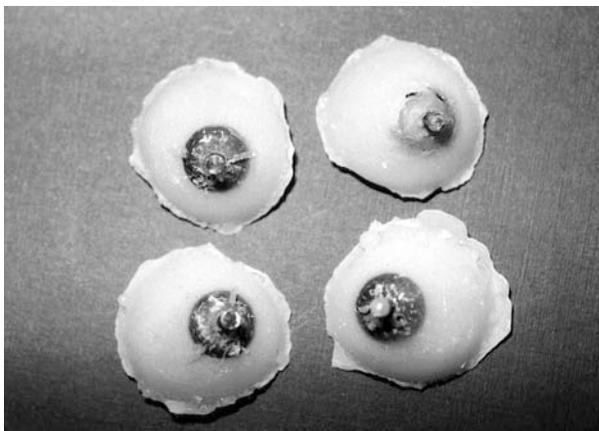


FIGURE 14 Pre-cast wax shapes with aluminum iris buttons in place.

into the plaster before it set up. We used tinfoil as a separator until the day that Joe introduced Alcotex, a liquid separator. Alcotex was preferred over foil because it was faster and neater.

Most ocularists used a hand polisher. I think some still do. Joe used the Baldor lathe. I don't know whether he was the first. The advantage of the Baldor lathe is that you have both hands free. Also, because you can use large wheels, you have more power than you would have with the hand polisher. As a result, the prosthesis is polished faster, and I think better.

I don't know whether Joe invented the method of painting directly on the back side of the iris button instead of on a black disc, as that method was being used when I began my apprenticeship. There are advantages. First, you check the color by looking at it through the plastic dome to pretty much see what you're going to get with the finished prosthesis. Second, I once heard a talk on repairing delamination or round white spots in the iris color. I have never seen this with an eye made by the LeGrand method. Why repair something that can be avoided in the first place? Also, you can save money on black disks!

At first, we used acrylic lacquers to paint the iris color. Most of us changed over to dry pigments after observing Gus Bethke in New York. I also learned (from Gus) that you could modify the iris color while coloring the sclera by painting on top of the iris and coating it with monomer-polymer syrup. I have made one change: after finishing the fitting, and while there is time while the plaster/stone mold of the wax model is hardening, I paint a background color on the back of the button from memory, then finish the color when matching the sclera.

We would use a dime to scrape away plaster to add corneal dome to the mold. One day Joe came in with the first "dome" he had made from a material marking wheel. Then there was the exacto knife holder he used to shift the stem of the aluminum iris button. These were seemingly little things, but still things that would make the method easier.

Joe was fanatical about polishing, probably because he wore a prosthesis himself.⁶ One day he introduced the "final polishing with Silvo." Silvo was used at the time (and probably still is) to polish hard contact lenses. He showed me a prosthesis before and after polishing with Silvo under a microscope. It was amazing. There was a fine network of lines that you



FIGURE 15 Patient with wax fitting shape.



FIGURE 16 Tools used to alter wax shape include carving knife, spatula, and alcohol torch.

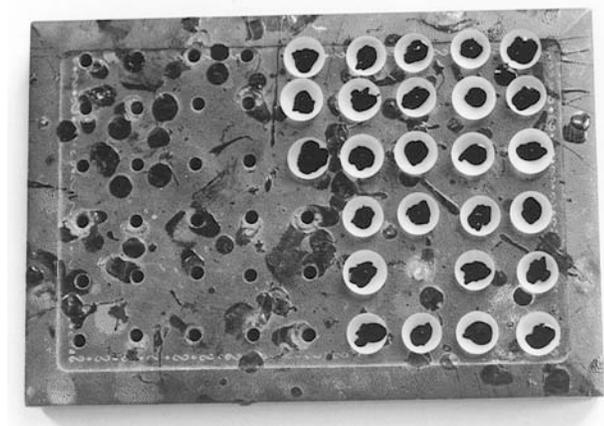


FIGURE 17 Iris buttons were placed in a holder to receive drops of black pupil paint.

could not see with a loupe. After polishing with Silvo, probably 97% of the lines were gone. I still use Silvo for my final polish.

We made our own iris buttons (Figure 17). The method of putting some black paint on the back of the iris button, then placing the stem of the button into the chuck on a Baldor lathe, and trimming the pupil with a razor blade must be the simplest and fastest way to get the desired pupil size. Also, the pupil is not raised above the iris. It would be next to impossible to use this method of trimming the pupil using a hand polisher.

In my book, *An Eye for An Eye*,⁷ I argued that Mr. Allen was modifying the anterior surface of the prosthesis to correct eyelid anomalies and not modifying the impression.⁸ The impression largely involves the posterior wall of the socket. With a false tooth, the tooth is not the impression. The impression is that part of the tooth that goes against the gums. The impression of the eye socket is the posterior wall and the periphery. The anterior surface of the prosthesis is not determined by the impression, but by judgment of the ocularist.

Joe never finished tinkering. When I left the company, he was working on an idea where you would use a clear plastic shell with a stem on the front surface for the fitting. The iris and the sclera would be painted on the posterior of the shell, which represented the anterior surface of the prosthesis. This would be used as an impression tray, the alginate would be spatulated onto the posterior and the tray inserted into the socket. What was the advantage? It was only one cooking, which would reduce the time by at least an hour and a half. (That does not consider the time it would take to make the clear shell.)

Most of us simply do things the way we were taught, doing precious little to change things. Joe was never like that. He was always looking, inquiring, modifying, changing, trying to make it faster, easier, better. He left the field of ocularistry a method of fabricating artificial eyes that is unparalleled.

So, that's the legacy. Joe LeGrand, Sr., developed a method to make impression-fitted plastic ocular prosthesis in 3 ½ hours to 4 hours. We ocularists have inherited the method from Joe. Because of this method, his company expanded. First, Joe Wadsworth, M.D., the chairman of the Ophthalmology Department at Duke, called, He

asked, “I heard you can make a prosthesis in one day? Is there any chance you can do our artificial eyework?” Then Bill Volloetton, the chairman at the Charleston College of Medicine in Charleston, South Carolina, called. He had heard we could make a prosthesis in one day. Then, Herb Kauffman from the University of Florida in Gainesville called. We answered, “Yes, it’s true. We can make the prosthesis in one day easily.” Then the University of St. Louis called. And on and on.

I started ocularist services for LeGrand Associates in the following locations: Durham, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; Greenville, South Carolina; Gainesville, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; St. Louis, Missouri; Austin, Texas; Norfolk, Virginia; Bridgeport, Connecticut; and Louisville, Kentucky. I also made trips to Cleveland, and I lived and worked in Philadelphia and New York City. As each location grew, Joe had to hire apprentices. Eventually the new ocularists would be moved to the growing location. That explains why 26 of the Board-Certified ocularists were trained by LeGrand Associates, or by someone who had been trained by LeGrand Associates. There are five Fellows. Joe LeGrand, Sr., was a past president as were Walter Johnson and Danny Acosta.

Joe LeGrand, Sr., also started *The Journal of Ophthalmic Prosthetics*. At that time, it was called Today’s Ocularist. Five members of the current editorial staff came up through LeGrand Associates. Yes, Joe LeGrand had quite an impact on the field of ocularistry through his method of making artificial eyes. I’m sure he would have done more, but he passed away at the young age of fifty-two from Lou Gehrig’s disease.

I once gave a lecture on the LeGrand method. I used a video with a wide screen and 35-mm slides. After the lecture, a great ocularist who had gone in the other direction, Lee Allen, the inventor of the modified impression technique, came up to me and said, “If I were younger I would seriously look into your methods.” Of course, these were not my methods. They were the methods of the maestro, Joe LeGrand, Sr.

Joe LeGrand, Jr., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

It would take a book to tell everything about my Dad. My Mom did a great job of making a scrapbook about Dad that covers not only his career, but also their courtship, marriage, and family life (Figure 18). Our



FIGURE 18 A great couple: Joe and Doris on their 25th anniversary. This photo was taken at their cottage in Stone Harbor, Jew Jersey.

family had our share of triumphs, joys, heartache, and (to borrow a phrase) moments of epic silliness. There were family vacations in Maine and Stone Harbor, New Jersey. There was a family trip to the Philippines and Japan. One childhood memory has to do with a company called “Arrowhead.” The name came from our address, 16 Arrowhead Trail. Dad started Arrowhead to teach his children about business. Laura, Dave, and I were partners in a business that fabricated and sold contact lens cases. In his basement workshop, Dad set up a small assembly line where we would transform small square sheets of aluminum into a finished product. At one station the corners were cut away. Then the aluminum went to two stations that bent it into the proper shape to hold a plastic insert for contact lenses. I believe these were sold to compliment Dad’s “Mini Dip” contact lens cleaning system, which he developed and patented. We may have been the only children on the planet in the

business of manufacturing contact lens cases.

An important part of Dad's story is the staff at his home office. His receptionist/scheduler, Peg Brown, his secretary, Janie Hebden, and his bookkeeper, Rose Kennedy worked there. They were all great, loyal employees. Jack Jensen was hired in 1979 to be an administrative assistant and manager. Jack, together with my sister, Laura, was responsible for the business becoming computerized before PCs existed. Our first computer was an IBM 34, bigger than a refrigerator. Laura was a student at the University of Delaware when she designed custom programs for the business. My wife, Debbi, worked as our receptionist/scheduler for a couple of years shortly after we were married. Joseph Michel was a talented ophthalmologist who worked in the Philadelphia office for many years. When Joe Michel came to work for my Dad, the story goes that Dad said they couldn't have two "Joes" in the office, so what nickname would he like? That's when Joe Michel became "Mitch."

Joe "Mitch" Michel gave me a lot of my training. It was great to learn from two ophthalmologists who had slightly different approaches to doing things. For instance, rather than using paints and pigments to tint a sclera, Mitch would use chalk powder, which he applied with his fingers. When Dad hired him, Mitch would sometimes tell the story about how he said to Mitch "I would like you to come work with me," rather than saying, "Come work for me." Dad would say, "Mitch, I told you I misspoke."

Working at LeGrand Associates was fun. There was so much energy and humor. The patients felt as if they were part of the excitement. Many of them formed strong attachments to my Dad and the rest of the staff. By 1978, Dad moved the Philadelphia office into a beautiful townhouse he bought at 313 South 17th Street (Figure 19). Dad was proud of the fact that Drs. Francis Adler, and Harold Scheie, both icons of ophthalmology in Philadelphia, had once occupied the office. Built in the 1860s, the office featured high ceilings, hardwood floors, ornate fireplaces, and leaded glass windows. More than a few patients took a nap in the large window seat. The large rooms lent themselves to Dad's philosophy of openness. The two fitting areas were hidden only by dividers. Two painting tables were set up side by side. Patients were aware of other patients there, some perhaps getting an eye made the same day that they were.

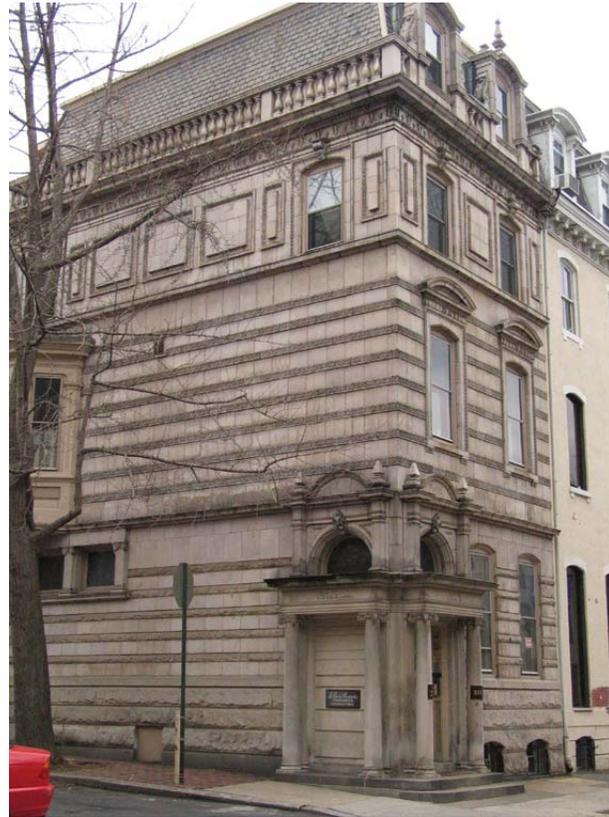


FIGURE 19 Joe was very proud of his company headquarters located in this historic building at 313 South 17th Street in Philadelphia.

In most cases, eyes were completed in one day.

In the waiting room there was a bulletin board with photos sent by patients. Dad designed a poster that had a yellow "smiley face" captioned "Tell your doctor." To the left was an unhappy version of the smiley face captioned "Tell us."

I came to work for LeGrand Associates in 1979. I was 23 years old and looked like I was about 17. I made many mistakes in the lab, and, as others have said, Dad was incredibly patient. The worst was on a trip to St. Louis where he was remaking a scleral shell for a young man. It was a difficult case, and Dad had labored mightily on both the fitting and the artwork. When I went to "press" the clear plastic dough for the final cook, I failed to make sure the thin shell was seated perfectly in the mold. The shell cracked; it was ruined. Dad was so good about it. It just made me feel worse and worse. I wished he would just yell at me. The patient took it extremely well. He decided he would fly to Philadelphia to have Dad try again. My

father often talked about “going the extra mile” to do a good job for our patients. In this case, the patient flew hundreds of miles to have my father make his prosthesis.

We made a lot of road trips to Louisville and St. Louis. I also tagged along on trips to Toronto and New York City where we worked in two hospitals: Columbia Presbyterian and New York Hospital. Dad was always introducing me to people. In New York, he introduced me to Robert Ellsworth, a leading doctor in the care of eye tumors, and his entire staff. I remember there was a receptionist at the clinic in New York Hospital who seemed quite hostile. The rest of the staff complained about this woman. Dad decided to make her his “special project,” treating her with great kindness and respect. I saw an amazing transformation take place in this woman’s attitude.

Traveling with my Dad was an adventure. I remember running through airports to make connections. One time, with the gate for the connecting flight several football fields away and a very tight connection, he told me to run ahead and ask the crew to hold the plane. They were just closing the door, but they held the plane, and Dad and I had another story to tell.

I enjoyed driving into work and home with my Dad. He loved to tell funny stories, but sometimes he would get very serious. Our route would take us past an abandoned high-rise project that had been stopped by a labor dispute. I remember his comment one time as we drove by the rusting steel skeleton: “A monument to ignorance.”

The LeGrand method of eye-making is known for being fast; however, I think Joe LeGrand rarely made an eye in less than five hours. Sometimes it would take much longer. While doing it faster was important, he never sacrificed the quality by hurrying on a difficult case. On the road, he would make two a day, with my helping (or hindering) in the lab work. I remember trying to anticipate when he was going to finish the veining and final art work, and I would then mix the clear plastic for the next step in the lab. Often, the painting session would seem to go on and on, and my batch of plastic would go bad. All the while Dad would be telling stories. Dad, the patient, and their assorted family members would be laughing, having the grandest of times. He once commented that the final veining and iris overpainting was what really

“made the eye.” Michael Hughes, an ophthalmologist trained in the Veterans Administration system, who came to work with me in 1988, sometimes expressed admiration for the details in Dad’s scleras. We took Polaroid photos of each finished case. Like trophies, we would review a stack of ten photos of ten great-looking eyes as we flew home from a long week of work. Dad designed a “photo report card” to send to doctors with a hand-written note about the case. We did this faithfully for many years.

Debbi and I moved to Louisville, Kentucky, in 1981 in order for me to work there and in St. Louis. We thought this would be home for the rest of our lives. We had not been in Louisville a full year when Dad came to visit us and tell us the bad news about his diagnosis of ALS. We moved back to Philadelphia. After awhile, Mom and Dad sold their suburban home so that they could move into an apartment on the third floor of the building in town. Dad designed and helped build a beautiful kitchen in the apartment. He petitioned the City of Philadelphia for a variance to build a personal-use elevator on the outside of the building, which gave him access to the office on the second floor and the outside world as his symptoms progressed. He threw himself into involvement in the local ALS support group. He came up with ideas for raising funds for research. Always thinking big, he started planning an event he called “The Million Mile Run for ALS.” He got as far as meeting with top executives of Burger King, who considered giving corporate support. On October 12, 1982, Debbi gave birth to our first child, Adam. He was my parents’ first grandchild. (Our son, Nicholas, was born three and a half years later. The next grandchildren were Laura and Jack Jensens’ boys, Travis and Russell. Niki and David LeGrand’s three children, Delaney, Noah, and Alise are the youngest of the seven grandchildren.) On January 22, 1983, at age 52, Dad’s battle with ALS came to an end.

Tony Guzman, my friend, and long-time manager of LeGrand’s Florida offices, tells me that my Dad used to talk about the importance of finding a doctor to be your “champion.” A champion was someone who would support you, believe in you, and brag about you. He said it was key to success. I’m sure Dave and Laura would agree: Dad was our champion in every sense of the word.

John Kelley, Sr., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I met Joe LeGrand, Sr., in the 1950s, shortly after he entered our profession. It was a difficult time for new entrants into the field. It was a time of transition following World War II when there was a shift from glass to plastic as a material and method of choice in the fitting and fabrication of ocular prosthetics. The glass eye-makers had controlled the field in the United States for more than a century. As might be expected they did not readily accept these “upstarts” who were not trained by the glass eye-makers. They feared the inevitable financial loss and dramatic change in the profession. Joe had to deal with this situation by relying on his college training in fine arts and his natural administrative abilities. In spite of these difficulties, Joe saw his practice grow quickly from a single office in Philadelphia to several offices in the eastern United States and Canada. Joe and I often had friendly debates over the merits of rapid expansion and training of new ocularists. His success proved that his approach could work.

One credit not often given to Joe was the part he played in the decision to join the NCHCA and seek national accreditation for our examination process. Joe heard through our friends in the Contact Lens Society that a new government-funded organization to oversee the healthcare industry had been formed. Joe, at this time president of the ASO, was quick to recognize the significance of this organization. Joe and I attended our first meeting in Atlanta in the late 1970s. Later we joined NCHCA. the National Examining Board of Ocularists (NEBO) was formed. A new examination developed. The rest is history. None of this may have come to pass was it not for Joe's initial, assertive action.

A final thought and acknowledgment of our competitor/friend relationship, and of Joe's good sense of humor occurred shortly before Joe died. We were having lunch at a small restaurant near our offices. The conversation became somewhat serious, and I asked Joe if there was any possible connection between Lou Gehrig's disease and our exposure, as ocularists, to monomer fumes, etc. Joe explained to me that he had done extensive investigation via his physician on this matter. The studies revealed no connection. Then, Joe, with the most serious expression on his face, told me that the doctor explained, “It

only happens to nice guys.” His grin told me that I was safe. Joe, Sr., was a professional, a competitor, and a friend

CONCLUSION

Joseph LeGrand was an innovator, mentor, entrepreneur, and friend to many. His impact is still being realized today in the field of ophthalmology.

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APPENDIX A**Ocularists Trained by LeGrand Associates, 1964-1983**

Daniel T. Acosta
 Daphne Archibald
 Emery Benedek
 Bruce Cook
 Tom Dean
 Charles Doiron
 Mary Fran Griffin
 Antonio Guzman
 Jose Gorrin
 Brian Hall
 Walter J. Johnson
 Joseph A. LeGrand, Jr.
 Joseph Michel
 Marie-Cecile Nadeau
 Robin Oliver
 Walter T. Tillman
 Claudine Tourangeau
 James Willis
 Larry Willis

APPENDIX B**LeGrand Associates Locations, 1978****United States**

San Francisco, California
 Santa Clara, California
 Bridgeport, Connecticut
 Gainesville, Florida
 Miami, Florida
 Atlanta, Georgia
 St. Louis, Missouri
 Albany, New York
 New York City, New York
 Durham, North Carolina
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
 Charleston, South Carolina
 Greenville, South Carolina
 Salt Lake City, Utah
 Norfolk, Virginia
 Charleston, West Virginia
 Clarksburg, West Virginia

Canada

Calgary, Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta
 Winnipeg, Manitoba
 Saint John, New Brunswick
 St. John's, Newfoundland
 Halifax, Nova Scotia
 Ottawa, Ontario
 Toronto, Ontario
 Montreal, Quebec
 Quebec City, Quebec
 Regina, Saskatchewan
 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

LeGrand Associates Locations, 1982**United States**

Albany, New York
 Asheville, North Carolina
 Atlanta, Georgia
 Durham, North Carolina
 Gainesville, Florida
 Greenville, South Carolina
 Hollywood, Florida
 Jacksonville, Florida (Two Locations)
 Louisville, Kentucky
 Miami, FL
 New York, New York (Two Locations)
 Orlando, Florida
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Richmond, Virginia
 Roanoke, Virginia
 Saint Louis, Missouri
 Salt Lake City, Utah
 Virginia Beach, Virginia
 Winston Salem, North Carolina

Canada

Calgary, Alberta
 Edmonton, Alberta
 Halifax, Nova Scotia
 Ottawa, Ontario
 Regina, Saskatchewan
 Saint John, New Brunswick
 Saint John's, Newfoundland
 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
 Toronto, Ontario
 Vancouver, British Columbia
 Winnipeg, Manitoba

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I would like to sincerely thank each contributor to this article. I enjoyed reading each and every word. I learned some new things about my father, and several of the stories were new to me. Thank you also to my Mom for helping me with background details, photos, and proofreading. Thank you to our Editor, Michael Hughes for asking me to write this article. It has been challenging, inspiring, healing, and fun. Most of all, I would like to thank my Dad for the memories.

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