






Optometric Physician™

A weekly e-journal by Art Epstein, OD, FAAO

Volume 15, Number 37

Monday, September 14, 2015

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The Amazing Sullivans

I've had the pleasure of highlighting the accomplishments of many individuals. Yet, I've never had occasion to acknowledge the accomplishments of an entire family, at least not until now.

A few weeks ago I wrote about DEWS-II and TFOS, the Tear Film and Ocular Surface Society (<http://www.tearfilm.org/>), an organization that has led our understanding of dry eye and ocular surface disease. While truly a collaboration of many, in truth, TFOS likely wouldn't exist today if not for the Sullivan family.

David Sullivan, PhD, who serves as an associate professor at Harvard's Department of Ophthalmology and a senior scientist at the Schepens Eye Research Institute, has been a driving force behind TFOS since its inception. Of note, David has received the Academy of Optometry's Carel C. Koch Memorial Medal Award for "outstanding contributions to the enhancement and development of relationships between optometry and other professions."

Rose Sullivan was trained as a critical care nurse, did a stint at the Schepens Eye Institute, and now serves as operations manager for TFOS. I'll share from first-hand experience that Rose keeps TFOS on track and without doubt, is one of the nicest people I know.

Amy Gallant Sullivan, David's and Rose's daughter, is among the most remarkable and unstoppable individuals I've ever met. She co-founded TFOS, serves as its executive director and is responsible for much of the growth and success of the organization. Amy lives near Paris and leads a most interesting life.

Many of you know Ben Sullivan as the chief scientific officer and founder of TearLab. Ben is another example of the apple not falling far from the tree. He has a PhD in bioengineering from the University of California, San Diego. I've had the pleasure of working with Ben and can attest to his brilliance.

To be honest, I am not sure what drives the Sullivan family. I wish I understood it better since most families could use more of whatever their secret sauce is. Regardless, I can tell you that we are all fortunate for this family's vision and their dedication to unraveling the mysteries of the ocular surface.



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