

A Tribute to the late Edwin R. Johnston (The Practical Ocular Prosthetist)

For most of you younger members of our society, the name 'Ed Johnston' may not be as familiar as those of past ASO legends such as several of the ASO organizers: Allen, Laubheimer, Lewis, Scott and Soper, all of whom also contributed notable articles to the ASO Journals. But, Ed distinguished himself very quietly in his own way by mastering the art of being the most capable and efficient itinerant ophthalmologist within our group because of his love to provide his services to those in the less populated cities and towns along the east coast and the southern states. This most likely can be credited to Ed's early years of training before and/or shortly after the establishment of the American Society of Ophthalmologists.

From what I recall, Ed had married Eleonore, the daughter of one of the lesser known German glass eye making families (Koehler) that practiced in New York City, and as the custom was in the older days all of the glass eye makers planned a number of road trips each year for those patients that were far beyond the reach of the big city. Because of these traveling experiences during those earlier years, Ed would later key in on this segment of service while also becoming one of the few remaining links our profession had during the gradual changeover from the empirically fitted stock and custom blown glass eye making to the present elimination of fitting any stock eyes and specializing in the modified impression moulding technique for making plastic ocular prostheses and flush fitting corneoscleral cover shell type prostheses.

Despite the fact that I only saw Ed at the ASO meetings, these sessions did leave an impression upon me that gave me some instant recall when reading Lisa's message in 'The Forum' of his passing. Of course there were several other aspects of Ed Johnston's life that I can recall, this of course was when we had a more closely knit (20 to 40) group when ASO met. These memories involved both 'during and after' the formal annual (only) society meetings. This was when the teaching schedule was not keyed in on 'continuing education' credits and 'psychometrician' based scoring of test results, but consisted more of round-table discussions and separate lectures that did not require testing. This was where Ed's contributions were more appreciated and their preparation was not that time consuming. And, the afterhours included Ed 'commandeering' the motel bus once in Port St. Lucie, Florida and again in Dallas, Texas to take the group of us to dinner.

In closing, and as part of this tribute to the easy going Ed with the inhibited personality, I must add to this tribute by including his congenial wife Eleonore, especially after the formal meetings since any ASO banquet during those earlier years without them would have been strictly dullsville. Ed and Eleonore were ASO's own 'Arthur Murray' dance team. (For those of you who are too young to know, Arthur Murray and his wife were professional teachers of ballroom dancing more than a half century ago) They were always the first to get on the dance floor and the last to call it a night.

Ray Jahrling