

Nomination letter: Russell Van Gelder, M.D., Ph.D.

It is an honor to nominate Russell Van Gelder for membership in the American Ophthalmological Society. Dr. Van Gelder was born and raised in and around New York City. He earned his BS, MD, and PhD degrees from Stanford University before completing his ophthalmology residency and uveitis and medical retina fellowships at Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Van Gelder joined the faculty at Washington University in 1999, serving as Residency Program Director and Director of the Uveitis Service. His superlative work was rewarded by his being named the Bernard Becker Professorship at Washington University.

Dr. Van Gelder is an active clinician-scientist and educator. His research has been continuously funded by the NIH since 1999. His laboratory has been at the forefront of two fields, non-visual photoreception and pathogen detection in uveitis. As a graduate student, he developed the amplified RNA technique used in almost all gene expression profiling experiments. In the field of non-visual photoreception, Dr. Van Gelder and his team have made a number of seminal discoveries: assays allowing characterization of the photoreceptive properties of cryptochrome proteins; establishing the importance of melanopsin in non-visual photoreception; demonstrating for the first time the multiple physiologic subtypes of intrinsically photosensitive retinal ganglion cells; establishing that the melanopsin photocycle is distinct from that of rods and cones; and most recently demonstrating the presence of a novel photoreceptive pathway in the retina utilizing the orphan opsin neuropsin. His laboratory has also been at the forefront of optochemical approaches to vision restoration. In the area of uveitis, the Van Gelder laboratory pioneered application of multiplex and real-time PCR to ocular pathogen detection; developed the Biome Representational in Silico Karyotyping (BRiSK) methodology for representational deep DNA sequencing; performed the definitive characterization of the ocular surface microbiome; and discovered that torque teno virus is a highly prevalent on the ocular surface and found in the vitreous in culture-negative endophthalmitis.

Dr. Van Gelder has authored or coauthored more than 150 papers and book chapters. He has received numerous recognitions for his research, including the Research to Prevent Blindness Career Development Award, the Translational Scientist Award of the Burroughs-Wellcome Foundation, and an 'Audacious Goals' award of the National Eye Institute. He has given over 20 named lectures and over 100 invited talks, and this past June was our department's featured speaker at our annual resident and fellow graduation program.

Dr. Van Gelder is Associate Editor of *IOVS* and serves on the editorial board of *Ophthalmology*. Nationally, he served in 2015 as President of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, having previously served as chair of the AAO Council. He is also past president of the American Uveitis Society and a trustee of the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology.

In 2008, Dr. Van Gelder was recruited to the University of Washington in Seattle, where he currently serves as the Boyd K. Bucey Memorial Chair, professor and chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology. He is the founding director of both the UW Medicine Eye Institute and the University of Washington Vision Science Center. He lives near Seattle Washington with his wife Suzy, a professor of pathology at UW. They have two children, a daughter in college and son in high school.

I have had the pleasure and privilege of getting to know Russ well through our time together on the Board of Trustees of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and serving together on the *Ophthalmology* editorial board. He is a wonderful person and will be a great addition to the AOS.

George B. Bartley, M.D.



## EMORY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Hans E. Grossniklaus, MD *Professor*  
*Director, Ocular Oncology Service*  
*Director, L.F. Montgomery Laboratory of Ophthalmic Pathology*

September 12, 2016

Membership Committee  
American Ophthalmological Society  
655 Beach Street  
San Francisco, California 94109

RE: Russell N. Van Gelder, MD, PhD

Dear Membership Committee:

I would like to most strongly recommend Russell N. Van Gelder, MD, PhD, to be a candidate member for the AOS. Dr. Van Gelder is a very accomplished clinician scientist and is currently Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Washington.

Dr. Van Gelder received his MD at Stanford University and PhD at Stanford University in 1994. He subsequently was a Resident in Ophthalmology at Washington University in St. Louis, as well as a Uveitis and Medical Retina Fellow at Washington University. He was an Assistant and Associate Professor at Washington University and then became a Boyd K. Bucey Chair of Ophthalmology in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Washington.

He is a Past President of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), Trustee of the AAO, and is currently a Trustee of the Society of Heed Fellows.

He has been continuously funded by the NIH since 1999 in primarily two areas of research: non-visual photoreception and pathogen detection in uveitis. He has over 150 published papers including in high-quality journals such as *PNAS*. He has won numerous research awards, including an RPB Career Development Award and an Audacious Goals Challenge (award from the NEI).

Dr. Van Gelder is Associate Editor of *IOVS* and on the Editorial Board of *Ophthalmology*. He is the Founding Director of the University of Washington Medicine Eye Institute and University of Washington Vision Science Center. His wife, Suzy, is a Professor in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Washington, and they have two children, a daughter in college and a son in high school.

I most strongly recommend Dr. Van Gelder to be a candidate for membership in the AOS. He will make strong scientific and social contributions to the AOS.

Sincerely,

*Hans E Grossniklaus*

Hans E. Grossniklaus, MD  
Professor of Ophthalmology and Pathology  
Emory University School of Medicine