



# WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY

## **The World Council of Optometry (WCO) Announces 2023 International Award Winners**

**ST. LOUIS, AUGUST 22, 2023**—The [World Council of Optometry \(WCO\)](#) is pleased to announce the recipients of its prestigious international awards, which recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to advancing optometry around the globe. These awards will be presented during the [4th World Congress of Optometry/O=MEGA 23](#) in Melbourne, Australia on 8 September 2023.

### The WCO Distinguished Service Award in Memory of Dr. Uduak Udom

Dr. Scott Mundle, from Winnipeg, Canada, has been selected to receive the 2023 Distinguished Service Award in Memory of Dr. Uduak Udom. This award is the highest award that WCO can bestow and is given to an individual who, over time, has made outstanding contributions to the achievement of WCO's Vision and Mission.

Dr. Mundle and has held many leadership roles over his career, including his time as President of the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) from 2002-2004 and President of the World Council of Optometry from 2017-2019. Dr. Mundle currently serves as a Board Member of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, a role he has held since 2021 and currently serves on the Board for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

Dr. Mundle stated, "I am extremely surprised, humbled, yet honoured to be recognized in this manner by the World Council of Optometry, especially for an award named in memory of my colleague and friend Dr. Uduak Udom. As well, to be recognized along with previous recipients and optometric leaders and icons, such as Robert Chappell, my former Waterloo Professor, George Woo and one of my classmate and wife's mentor, Brien Holden, is truly an honour."



*Scott Mundle*

The Young Leader Award in Memory of Dr. Paul Berman

Dr. Ameer Abou Adela, from Lebanon, is the recipient of the Young Leader Award in Memory of Dr. Paul Berman. This award is given to an optometrist who has been in practice for less than 10 years and shows promise as a future leader of the profession as well as contributing to the vision and mission of WCO.

Currently completing his PhD studies in Optometry at KwaZulu Natal University, Dr. Adela founded the Vision Care Association (VCA) in Lebanon, a non-profit non-governmental organization (NGO), in 2017. Dr. Adela currently serves as VCA president. Since its founding, VCA has become a WCO Country Member organization, as well as a member of the Eastern Mediterranean Council of Optometry (EMCO).

He has also been instrumental in VCA launching five VCA advocacy programs— Eyecare, Education, Legislation, Environment, and Research and engaged in three workshops through WCO’s Education Mentor Grant program.



*Ameer Abou Adela*

WCO International Optometrist Award

Dr. Sajeesh Kumar Kamala Raghavan, from India and the United States, is the recipient of the WCO International Optometrist Award for his extraordinary contributions and commitment to the development of the profession of optometry and vision care globally.

A tenured associate professor at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Dr. Kumar has worked as an optometrist in several countries across the globe and authored seven books in health sciences and informatics. His innovative use of informatics technology has had an influence on optometric education. His work in optometry informatics and tele-optometry services has also revolutionized the delivery of eye care services, particularly in traditionally underserved communities.

Dr. Kumar stated, "I extend my heartfelt gratitude to WCO for acknowledging my global efforts in advancing optometry through informatics. This recognition strengthens my resolve to shape a technologically vibrant future for eye care on a global scale."



*Sajeesh Kumar Kamala Raghavan*

Memorial Lecture in Honor of Ms. Karen Sparrow, 9 September 2023

Dr. Priya Morjaria was chosen as the inaugural speaker for the Memorial Lecture in Honor of Ms. Karen Sparrow. Ms. Sparrow was a public health optometrist who tirelessly worked to address the needs of populations that were often unable to advocate for themselves and in areas where eye care was sorely lacking. Ms. Sparrow, a longtime WCO volunteer, shared her spirit, passion, and dedication to public health optometry in a way that epitomized the mission of WCO.

A friend and colleague of Ms. Sparrow, Dr. Morjaria shares her late friend's passion for public health and has worked with several eye care international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in low- and middle-income settings. Dr. Morjaria is the co-chair for the School Eye Health Working Group at the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and currently serves on the WCO Board of Directors as the Public Health Committee Chair.

Those attending the O=MEGA23/WCO4 in September are encouraged to attend this lecture on Saturday, 9 September 2023 (3:30 p.m. local time) at the Plenary Room, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.





*Priya Morjaria*



*Karen Sparrow*

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**About the World Council of Optometry**

The World Council of Optometry (WCO) is an international membership-based non-profit organization for individual optometrists, industry professionals and optometric organizations that envisions a world where optometry makes high quality eye health and vision care accessible to all people. Its mission is to facilitate the development of optometry around the world and support optometrists in promoting eye health and vision



care as a human right through advocacy, education, policy development and humanitarian outreach. To learn more, please visit [www.worldoptometry.org](http://www.worldoptometry.org) or follow on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter/X](#) and [Instagram](#).

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