PRESS RELEASE | Monday 2nd November 2026
*Attached as a word doc for convenience*

**70 years of orthokeratology celebrated with new Ortho-k Pioneers Award**

With 2026 marking the 70-year anniversary since Dr Robert Morrison's discovery of orthokeratology in 1956, orthokeratologist.org, the world's largest dedicated community of orthokeratologists, has launched the Ortho-k Pioneers Award, as part of The Orthkars | Golden Eyeball Awards, to celebrate, showcase and tell the story of the trailblazers of ortho-k.

The global history of ortho-k is now available as a 10-part series on the site, authored by co-founder Jaimin Patel. The series covers the key early pioneers and will form the basis of an ongoing series that will unearth the largely untold stories of the latter-day innovators in each country. The optometrists who made their own ortho-k lenses in their homes in the 1970s they tested on their own patients, the first use of topography, the early adopters using skill, courage and belief to forge new paths and the remarkable story of an early RGP materials manufacturer - now one of the largest lens material companies in the world - who made his first materials in his garden shed!

**Jaimin Patel, orthokeratologist and co-founder of orthokeratologist.org, says:**

"George Jessen is usually incorrectly credited as the founder of ortho-k. While he created the first 'orthofocus' lenses in the early 1960's, a term he first used in 1962, it was Dr Robert Morrison's landmark study in 1956 that discovered the 'orthofocus' technique upon which Jesson's lenses were based. Dr Morrison demonstrated that fitting rigid contact lenses stopped myopia progression in teenagers over a two-year period.

But how did Jessen's 'orthofocus' become 'orthokeratology', the term we use today? Well, that was down to another fascinating pioneer called Newton Wesley, who proposed the term 'orthokeratology' at a 1962 contact lens specialists' conference in Chicago. The term orthokeratology derives from three Greek words: Ortho (orthos), meaning "correct"; Kerato (keras / keratos), meaning "cornea"; and -logy (-logia), meaning "the study of" or "the practice of". Put together, orthokeratology literally translates to "the practice of correcting the shape of the cornea".

Wesley himself is an often-overlooked pioneer whose historical impact was impressive. He was fascinated by the simple communication of names and terms. Indeed, born Newton Uyesugi to Japanese immigrant parents in 1917, he changed his own name from Uyesugi to Wesley to make it easier for his patients to pronounce. This understanding of the need for simple words to enable

patient communication meant that he campaigned for years to get the word ‘contact lens’ added to the dictionary. It eventually happened and subsequently become a global household term. Significantly his own name Wesley became an early optical brand, attached to several pioneering milestones in the field of optometry. Remarkably the final evolution of Wesley’s innovations, the direct descendant if you will, is what we knew recently as Ciba Vision, and today as Alcon.”

**Deven Lakhani, orthokeratologist and co-founder of orthokeratologist.org, says:**

“The Ortho-k Pioneers Award, as part of our annual ‘Orthkars | Golden Eyeball Awards’, is a fitting way to not only celebrate the original trailblazers and those who boldly followed in their footsteps, but to showcase the current pioneers who sit on the leading edge of ortho-k innovation and are writing the next chapter of this incredible story we’re proud to be part of. As we see the global adoption of the term ‘night lenses’ - easy to understand, share and explain - in place of the less accessible ‘ortho-k’, which many feel has held category growth back, the next evolution is truly under way. With the public being routinely offered the three simple mainstream options of glasses, day lenses and night lenses, we like to think that Wesley in particular with his passion for simple names and easy communication, will be looking down with a smile on his face and a nod of approval!”

**LINKS**

The History of Ortho-k | 10 part series, by Jaimin Patel | Orthokeratologist & Co-Founder | Orthokeratologist.org
The Orthkars | Golden Eyeball Awards




70
YEARS OF
ORTHO-K
1956 - 2026
ORTHOKERATOLOGIST.ORG

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**orthokeratologist.org | ABOUT US**

"A rising tide lifts all the boats", we see ourselves as the tide. A business with purpose, our ambition is to provide a platform from which the industry can grow >$1bn of new retail sales globally and save >1 million dioptres in children.

**WHAT'S ON THE SITE?**

A huge 900 page global site that covers everything you need to get started as an orthokeratologist, grow your ortho-k business, meet like-minded practitioners and develop in the field: all lens options, topographers, biometers, solutions … certification, accreditation, CPD, training, events, discussion forums, podcasts, interviews, how-to guides, product reviews, research, annual awards…

1. **A global view, with country-specific communities and content:** orthokeratologists can keep up to date with the latest global advances, while accessing local discussions, CPD, news and events.
2. **The Orthkars | Golden Eyeball Awards:** the world's first orthokeratology awards. Non-commercial, no sponsors. We showcase and recognise those who have done most for our sector.

3. **Real people, real stories:** every month we feature orthokeratologists from around the world and share the 'Wow!' videos of patients seeing for the first time, their lives changed by ortho-k.
4. **Independent Market Place:** every option in each country for lens manufacturers, topographers, biometers, solutions, practice management software etc. Alphabetically listed along with reviews and advice guides to help orthokeratologists find the right support and suppliers.
5. **Forums:** live global discussions and local issues, everything from tackling the 2050 myopia pandemic to whether to measure axial length. Community self-help, live troubleshooting, experienced orthokeratologists sharing knowledge with new fitters.
6. **Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs):** our amazing KOLs write incredible articles, produce fascinating podcasts and deliver captivating keynotes, but never reach a global orthokeratology audience. We can now broadcast them to a worldwide audience of orthokeratologists.

GUEST LOGIN AVAILABLE: Orthokeratologist.org is a member only site behind a login wall. If you would like a guest login, please request one HERE