

## **Lois Pope's \$1 Million Donation Will Help Fund the Gift of Sight**

March 8, 2024



Dear Friends:

Fifty years ago, a groundbreaking TV show called the “Six Million Dollar Man” premiered on ABC. It starred Lee Majors as Air Force Col. Steve Austin, an astronaut who was horrifically maimed in a NASA flight accident. Among his devastating injuries was the loss of his eyes. You may recall the words to the opening monologue:

Steve Austin, astronaut: a man barely alive  
Gentlemen we can rebuild him  
We have the technology  
We have the capability to make the world’s first bionic man  
Steve Austin will be that man  
Better than he was before  
Better, Stronger, Faster



**Dr. Eduardo Alfonso and Lois Pope**

I am reminded of that show because the researchers, engineers, doctors, computer scientists, and technologists at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, led by my dear friend, Dr. Eduardo Alfonso, have embarked on a high-impact, life-transforming initiative to do something equally if not more, revolutionary than a bionic eye: they are working feverishly on a Whole Eye Transplant! When successful, it will mark the first time a working, full-sight eye will be transplanted – to date, the eye, as well as the ear, brain, and spine are the only organs yet to be transplanted.

As many of you know, my mother suffered terribly for years from macular degeneration, a disease that affects some 20 million people. It was in her memory that I made a major gift a few years ago to Bascom Palmer to establish the Lois Pope Center for Retinal and Macular Degeneration Research.

In addition to those afflicted with macular degeneration, there are millions more people with blindness and vision loss. So, it is easy to understand how important and essential the Bascom Palmer Whole Eye Transplant Initiative is and why it needs to become a reality as soon as possible.

It is for this reason that, at a press conference the other day, I announced a \$1 million donation to Bascom Palmer to fast-forward this pioneering endeavor.

If my gift can help the Bascom Palmer team make a Whole Eye Transplant happen more quickly, then I will not only again honor my mother's memory, but I will also fulfill a lesson she taught me when I was just a little girl. She told me that there were always people who were less fortunate than we were, and if we had some means to help them, we had a responsibility to do so.

I am proud and privileged, therefore, to make this latest contribution to Bascom Palmer. And there is a much greater benefit to my gift than just spurring the development of the Whole Eye Transplant. Indeed, the research and innovative techniques being used for that will come from all areas of the University of Miami, the parent institution of Bascom Palmer. It is a collaborative venture that will leverage the diverse expertise of the university's College of Engineering, various departments of the



**Dr. Daniel Pelaez, Dr. Eduardo Alfonso, Lois Pope and Dr. Felipe A. Medeiros**

Miller School of Medicine, the Miami Transplant Institute, and, of course, the pioneering spirit of the researchers at the Lois Pope LIFE Center, home to Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. Together, they have embarked on this multi-disciplinary journey, driven by the opportunity to achieve the extraordinary. The Whole Eye Transplant will be one outcome, but their work could also lead to cures for spinal cord injury, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and other neurological diseases.

As President John F. Kennedy said more than 60 years ago in his "Moon Shot" speech at Rice University, "We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win, and the others, too."

Similarly, Bascom Palmer chooses to develop the Whole eye Transplant...and intends to win. The future of millions with blindness and eye disease is at stake.

With love always,

*Lois*



# SUPPORTERS OF LIFE CELEBRATE THE GIFT OF SIGHT



1. Tova Leidesdorf & Lois Pope 2. Maude Cook & Caroline Harless 3. Dr. Eduardo Alfonso & Lois Pope  
4. Joseph McNamara, Arlette Gordon & Max McNamara 5. James Borynack & Adolfo Zaralegui  
6. Marietta McNulty, Adolfo Zaralegui & Lois Pope 7. Cathy & Andres Fanjul  
8. Ari Rifkin & Ahuva Rosen 9. Steven Locante, Suzi Goldsmith & John Deese



## ***Lloyd Schiller Donates \$500,000 to Pups4Patriots in Honor of Lois Pope***



Brooke and I go to two or three worthwhile events each year, there seems to always be one thing in common, and that is there's this lady, Lois Pope, who is always there, always the Chief Donor. Lois's passion and tireless efforts for helping others, and her generosity with so many worthy causes has impacted hundreds of thousands of human lives AND hundreds of thousands of animal lives!!!

So, Lois, tonight I'd like to honor YOU, and I'd like to make this \$500,000 donation to American Humane IN YOUR HONOR. Thank You, Lois, for being such a positive inspiration! And THANK YOU AGAIN TO ALL OUR VETERANS AND YOUR FAMILIES!!!

*~Lloyd Schiller (a portion of his speech during American Humane's 6th Annual Pups4Patriots Dinner Dance)*

## ***Drifting Away***



A stunning image of a young polar bear drifting to sleep on an iceberg, by British amateur photographer Nima Sarikhani, has won the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award.

LOIS POPE AND THE BOARD OF LIFE  
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