

# SECO INTERNATIONAL ANNOUNCES 2010 AWARD WINNERS

## OPTOMETRIST OF THE SOUTH, YOUNG OPTOMETRIST OF THE SOUTH, PARAOPTOMETRIC OF THE SOUTH AND AWARD OF MERIT TO BE PRESENTED DURING HOUSE OF DELEGATES TODAY

ATLANTA (February 12, 2010) – SECO International – one of the largest optometry meetings in the world and one of the most comprehensive sources of continuing education for eye care professionals – announces the recipients of its three prestigious 2010 awards, recognizing significant contributions to the profession of optometry. William E. Malone, O.D., has been named **Optometrist of the South**, SECO's highest honor. In addition, Elizabeth Steele, O.D., F.A.A.O., receives SECO's **Young Optometrist of the South** award and Belinda Coberly has been named **Paraoptometric of the South**. SECO's **Award of Merit** will be awarded to The EyeSight Foundation of Alabama.

The awards will be presented to the recipients during the SECO International House of Delegates meeting today at 3:45 p.m. at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis Hotel. More than 7,000 optometrists, opticians, certified ophthalmic technicians, paraoptometric professionals and representatives from the leading industry companies are in Atlanta attending the SECO International meeting held February 10-14 at the Georgia World Congress Center.

"Every year SECO recognizes several outstanding individuals for their tremendous contributions to the optometry profession," said Jonathan Shrewsbury, O.D., President of the Southern Council of Optometrists. "This year, we are honored to recognize Dr. Malone, Dr. Steele, and Ms. Coberly not only for their numerous achievements, but for raising the standard for the level of optometric care patients receive today. They all are truly exceptional optometry professionals."

## OPTOMETRIST OF THE SOUTH

**William E. Malone, O.D.**, of Biloxi, MS, has been named the **2010 Optometrist of the South**, SECO's highest honor. Dr. Malone has been practicing optometry for 40 years in a private practice. He also has served as an Adjunct Professor for the Southern College of Optometry for nine years and in the Mississippi Air National Guard for 30 years.

For nearly a decade, Dr. Malone also has served as an optometrist for Coastal Family Health Center in Biloxi, MS. He provides eye exams, ocular health care, glasses and contact lenses for uninsured and low-income patients on the Gulf Coast.

“Today, I am as excited about practicing optometry as I was 25 to 35 years ago. I provide state-of-the-art optometric care for patients who have delayed or simply forgone ophthalmic care in the past, due to cost,” said Dr. Malone. “I have been to many countries, as well as states in the U.S., providing eye care for our military personnel. I also have been on humanitarian missions to Mexico, Honduras and Bolivia, providing eye care to people who have never had an eye exam or glasses.”

Dr. Malone joined the Mississippi Air National Guard in 1974. After 22 years as the Chief Optometrist for the 186 Medical Group, he became one of a few optometrists to become Commander of a Medical Group. During his eight years in command and his previous 22 years as a Chief Optometrist, he received numerous medals and accolades for his accomplishments.

Dr. Malone is a 40-year member of the Mississippi Optometric Association (MOA) and has held every leadership position in the organization. He is the 2009 MOA recipient of the James P. Brownlee Optometrist of the Year award. As a member of the AOA and MOA, Dr. Malone has championed many legislative issues and continues to look for ways to serve the profession.

## YOUNG OPTOMETRIST OF THE SOUTH

SECO has named **Elizabeth Steele, O.D., F.A.A.O.**, of Trussville, AL, the **2010 Young Optometrist of the South**. This SECO award recognizes an optometrist in practice for less than 10 years, but who has already made a significant impact in the field of optometry.

Dr. Steele graduated with honors from the UAB School of Optometry in 2003. As a student, she was very involved with the student association and served as the AOA PAC liaison to the school. After her residency with the Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center, she accepted a position at the UAB School Optometry as an Assistant Professor of Optometry.

As an instructor at the UAB Eye Care Clinic, Dr. Steele was honored with the 2005 and again in 2009 with the Clinical Science Instructor Teaching Award at the UAB School of Optometry. In 2007, she earned a fellowship for the American Academy of Optometry. She lectures frequently to optometry students and to fellow optometrists for continuing education.

Dr. Steele also has been active with the Alabama Optometric Association, chairing its most active committee – the Education Committee – for the past three years. Dr. Steele also has served as an officer for the Birmingham Area Optometric Society and was the President in 2009. She is currently serving on the AOA’s Faculty Relations Committee and on the Optometric Educator’s Exchange Sub-Committee.

## PARAOPTOMETRIC OF THE SOUTH

SECO has awarded **Belinda Coberly, CPO**, of Elkins, WV, its **2010 Paraoptometric of the South** honor. Ms. Coberly has worked with Dr. Joseph Trupo for 16 years in Elkins, WV. She is an optical manager and laboratory technician.

Ms. Coberly received her CPO certification in 1998 and is currently studying to take her CPOA certification test in the spring of this year. She has served as Vice President of the West Virginia Paraoptometric Organization from 2000 to 2002 and as President from 2002 to 2007, when the organization merged with the West Virginia Optometric Association and became the WVOA Paraoptometric Section.

Since 2007, she has served as a liaison to the WVOA Executive Director and Executive Board and helps plan the Annual Congress continuing education courses and activities for the paraoptometric of West Virginia. She also instructs continuing education classes at the Annual Congress.

Ms. Coberly plans to continue to serve Dr. Trupo and his patients until his retirement, earn her CPOT certification and become a full-time lecturer for paraoptometric education. "My passion is to encourage and educate paraoptometric to become the best they can be in the career field they have chosen," she said.

## AWARD OF MERIT

SECO has named **The EyeSight Foundation of Alabama (ESFA)** as its **Award of Merit** recipient. The ESFA -- located in Birmingham, AL, adjacent to the UAB School of Optometry -- is a non-profit organization with a mission of being a catalyst for improving eye care through education, research and access to care. Created 12 years ago, the foundation's vision is "making a difference in the eyes of the world."

Over the past 12 years, the ESFA has become the largest contributor to the UAB School of Optometry, donating more than \$3.5 million for research, infrastructure and equipment, and numerous eye care initiatives.

"Since its inception, the ESFA has remained steadfast to its philanthropic mission of promoting the health of the human eye through the support of education, research and patient care activities, including indigent care, throughout the state of Alabama," said Peggy Striplin, Senior Director of Development, UAB School of Optometry. "The ESFA has done more than any other charitable organization in the state to develop a comprehensive network of program providers and equip them with the resources to address the vision health needs of the people in Alabama."

### The SECO Tradition

SECO International is produced annually by SECO International, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Southern Council of Optometrists, Inc. SECO International, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, is a not-for-profit membership association founded in 1923, and counts as its members practitioners in the 12 southeastern states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. The annual SECO conventions regularly attract more than 7,000 national and international eye care professionals, vendors, and allied ophthalmic personnel. SECO International is widely acknowledged as the largest optometric educational meeting in the world.

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