Richard C. Troutman, MD, established the Troutman Award to be presented annually to the first author of an article selected by the editors of the *Journal of Refractive Surgery* as outstanding in the previous year—but with a twist: the author must be under age 45 and a member of the International Society of Refractive Surgery of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (ISRS/AAO). Dr Troutman’s motivation was clear: to create an award of substance—the engraved iconic obelisk and a $5000 check awarded publicly at the AAO meeting—that would serve not only as recognition of an outstanding contribution, but also as encouragement to future productivity. It worked!

During the past 16 years, the 17 Troutman Award winners (2 in 1997) have published cumulatively approximately 300 peer-reviewed articles; that’s an average of approximately 17 articles per person. Yes, the range is wide: from 1 to 70 articles per author, with 9 of the award winners having published more than 12 articles each. Of course, there are many other motivations for publishing contributions in the ophthalmic literature, but the Troutman Award has played a role.

Which brings us back to the core issue: identifying high quality information on which to base our refractive surgery and ophthalmic practices. Yes, high quality. Among the myriad sources of information about refractive surgery—ophthalmology newspapers, current textbooks, Internet blogs, professional meetings—there is only one gold standard: the peer-reviewed literature. The readers of the *Journal of Refractive Surgery* are the recipients of untold man hours of work in the research and writing of a manuscript, the management of that manuscript by the Journal’s editors, the reviews by knowledgeable colleagues, and the fine-tuning and polishing of the manuscript not only by the authors but also by the editorial staff—all this to produce the highest quality information available. And fast! The *Journal of Refractive Surgery* publishes the articles on its website (http://www.journalofrefractivesurgery.com) at the time of final acceptance and editing, in advance of the print publication.

A secondary goal of all of this work and refinement is the competition to be “the best article of the year,” to earn the garland of the Troutman Award. The competition is intense, the selection of a winner difficult—requiring sustained effort and communication among the editors, who consider the originality, the thoroughness of analysis, the quality of writing and presentation, and the potential impact in refractive surgery and ophthalmology. Their work is worth it. Especially when we consider that the award provides another impetus for a younger ophthalmologist to continue substantive contributions—like the 300 articles from the past 17 Troutman Award winners.

Since 2007, the Troutman Award has been perpetually endowed by his grant to the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

The 2008 winner of the Troutman Award, José L. Rodríguez-Prats, MD, PhD, is featured on page 962. Congratulations to Dr Rodríguez-Prats as he becomes the 18th recipient of this prestigious award. Dr Troutman and his wife, Suzanne Véronneau-Troutman, MD, have funded other similar prizes. Since 1993, the biennial Pan-American Association of Ophthalmology (PAAO) Troutman-Véronneau Prize of $10,000 has been presented at their meeting for the best original presentation on a topic in cornea and/or corneal refractive surgery; this prize is perpetually endowed by a grant to the PAAO Foundation. Beginning in 2011, the prize topic will be expanded to include pediatric ophthalmology, emphasizing strabismus and strabismus microsurgery.

The latest Troutman award is the Troutman Cornea Prize of $5000 to be presented for the best paper published in the journal *Cornea* during the preceding year. It is presented at the annual meeting of the Eye Bank Association of America with the Cornea Society, and is perpetually endowed by a grant from Dr Troutman.
to the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. The first Troutman Cornea Prize will be presented in 2008 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Further supporting academic ophthalmology is the Richard C. Troutman Distinguished Chair in Ophthalmology and Ophthalmic Microsurgery at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, the chair Dr Troutman occupied for some two decades. Dr Véronneau-Troutman has perpetually endowed two scholarships at the University of Quebec and two scholarships at the University of Montreal, Canada.

The sum total of the Troutmans’ substantial contributions to academic ophthalmology goes far beyond the monetary value, because it extends to the very core of the academic enterprise—to educate and encourage aspiring colleagues throughout their careers.