

Dr. Aaron Harry Basman, Optometrist

The *A. H. Basman, OD Scholarships* were established by the Manitoba Association of Optometrists and are named in honour of Dr. A. Harry Basman, a Past President and former Executive Director of MAO.

Aaron Harry Basman served in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in England during the Second World War. On returning home to Canada, he was accepted into the School of Optometry at the Université de Montréal (UdeM) and graduated in 1950. In 1952, Harry registered with MAO, which was then called Manitoba Optometric Society (MOS), and established a practice in Beausejour where he practised for 35 years.

Dr. Basman served on the MOS Convention Committee for many years. He served on Council and as President in 1973 and again in 1978-79. As President, he focused on negotiations with Manitoba Health, Medical Services of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and the Department of Veteran's Affairs. During his second term as President, he was influential in leading the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) to officially recognize Optometry as qualified to refer low vision clients.

Harry served as the first Executive Director of the MOS from 1980 until 1991. He was presented with the MOS Optometrist of the Year Award in 1991 and, in that same year, was the recipient of Honourary Life Membership in the Canadian Association of Optometrists.

Dr. Basman was remembered by his colleagues as a "people person" and a gentleman. He was available to provide advice and support to younger optometrists. Harry passed away on December 19, 1991 at the age of 71. His obituary noted that "[h]e was an individual who put the needs of others first and all who knew [Harry] were better off for the experience."

For many years, MOS had presented bursaries to Manitoba students attending schools of Optometry. In 1992, the bursaries were renamed as the A. H. Basman, OD Scholarships.