

I would like to thank The Canadian Orthoptic Council, The Canadian Orthoptic Society and the Canadian Ophthalmological Society for giving me the opportunity to speak today. For those of you that don't know me , I would like to share some information with you. I have had the honour of practicing orthoptics for the past 43 years. I have been involved in the education of over 40 orthoptic students, residents in ophthalmology, and medical students. I've worked in all sectors of the field – from private practice to the hospital setting.

I do not typically speak in public and I have never presented during our scientific conferences. However, the opportunity to share The Canadian Orthoptic Society's history on their fiftieth anniversary was an opportunity I could not turn down. I would like to thank the Saskatoon orthoptists for their input and especially Mike Walby who helped me put together my first PowerPoint presentation. Orthoptics has been the most rewarding career I could have chosen. I love going to work as much now as I did as a newly certified orthoptist in 1974.

This lecture is in honour of Catherine Lunn, and I believe it fitting to open with her story. She was born in Edinburgh in 1907 and emigrated with her family to Moosomin, Sask. After graduating from high school, she trained as a nurse at St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg.

She went overseas as a Captain with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps. She became matron of the General Hospital in Taplow, England where she nursed many sick and wounded Canadians.

When the war ended, she returned to Canada and settled in British Columbia where she trained to become an Orthoptist. She became head of the Orthoptic Teaching School at the Vancouver General

Hospital in 1953 and educated 48 students before she retired in 1973.

In 1967 Kay was one of the driving forces behind the founding of The Canadian Orthoptic Society with goals of having national recognition for the science and to ensure there were national standards for the education of orthoptists. She became secretary of that newly developed Canadian Orthoptic Council from 1967 to 1972. She was also president of the Canadian Orthoptic Society from 1967 to 1969. She was on the examining board of the American Orthoptic Council as well as an examiner for the first Canadian exams held in 1971. She was well known internationally and was the first Canadian to be awarded the prestigious Lancaster Medal by the American Association of Certified Orthoptists in 1971. Kay was also the Canadian representative to the first International Orthoptic Congress held in London, England in 1967.

Kay was a pioneer in Canadian orthoptics. To quote one of her students “Kay was an excellent teacher. Very strict, but we all respected her. Her high standards of professional conduct were lessons well learned by the young and inexperienced. If she criticized, it was with a twinkle in her eye and encouragement. We all slightly feared her as students, but became fast friends afterwards. She was a lovely person to know.”

Kay died peacefully in Vancouver on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1998 at the age of 90 years. She is remembered fondly by her family, her colleagues, former students and her many friends.

Since her passing, both the society and the council have grown significantly while remaining within her core vision of education

and quality patient care. This anniversary is a good time to visit the history and I am honoured to be able to compile and present it.

2017 is a year of important anniversaries:

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle at Vimy Ridge

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Hockey League

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of the Beatles Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first human heart transplant

The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Elvis Presley's death

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Princess Dianna

And of course, the anniversaries that are most important to us:

My 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (I guess this is only important to me!)

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the international orthoptic association &

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Orthoptic Society

1967 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada with celebrations held throughout the year. Expo 67, one of the most successful World's Fairs received international acclaim. It was a time of demonstrations protesting the Vietnam war, hippies, peace and love. Fashions of the time included the mini skirt which seemed to get shorter and shorter – try doing an orthoptic workup in one of those! The Beatles reigned supreme along with The Beach Boys, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Aretha Franklen and the Bee Gees. Teenagers were listening to eight track players and watching The Beverly Hillbillies, Bewitched, Hogan's Heros or I Dream of Jeannie on television.

The medical field in the 1960s also included several new and exciting innovations. Perhaps not as exciting as an orthoptist in a miniskirt . . . 1963 included the first artificial heart and the first liver transplant; in 1965 the portable defibrillator and ultrasounds happened, and most notably in 1967 the first successful human heart transplant happened. Drugs were not just for hippies in the 1960s: the Birth Control Pill first hit the market, valium debuted to sooth nerves of businessmen and housewives, blood pressure drugs were developed.

Of equal importance is an overall cultural activism – one which drove protests of Vietnam and corrupt politics, but also drove an increase demand for access to health care. Informed consent, something central to the medical field today, became a requirement by 1966 and in Canada medicare was extended to all 10 provinces.

Ultimately, the 1960s would be remembered by changes to pharmaceuticals and these new social models toward informed, accessible health care.

It was within the context of these changes that the Canadian Orthoptic Society was formed. Officially sanctioned by the Canadian Orthoptic Council and Canadian Ophthalmological Society, the letters of incorporation were signed May 9, 1967.

The first annual meeting was held in Quebec City on June 27,1967. There were 19 members whose applications had been accepted, and these became the founding members. The mandate of the Canadian Orthoptic Society was *to maintain the honour and integrity of orthoptics as an auxiliary branch of ophthalmology, to improve and maintain orthoptic standards and to keep abreast the advancement in knowledge related to orthoptics as well as fostering a national interest in the profession.* At that time, the aim of the Society was to raise the standard of teaching to make reciprocity possible on an international basis, to ensure students were provided with the

required didactic and practical training, to ensure teaching facilities were adequate, to prepare an official syllabus, formulate regulations, arrange and set examinations and issue certificates to passing students. Until there were enough candidates for the exam process students would sit the American examinations.

There were 9 teaching centres accredited by the Canadian Orthoptic Council in that year. One in British Columbia, one in Saskatchewan, one in Manitoba, one in Ontario and 5 in Quebec.

It would be interesting to the Canadian Orthoptic Male Brotherhood (COMB) that one of the Council recommendations was that orthoptic students should be of the female persuasion - due to the patient base being primarily children, it was believed that women, given their caring nature, would be best suited for the job. This was soon changed to a guideline only, and retracted.

In July 1967, the first International Congress of Orthoptics was held in London England with 450 delegates from 23 countries and 6 continents. Canada was one of eight founding members of the IOA. It was decided by the Society that the representative to the International Congress would be elected after each International Congress was held, thus making the term of office 4 years.

In June 1970, a design was selected for a Canadian Orthoptic Society pin. This pin would be in both an English & French version.

In 1971 five students were certified at the first Canadian Orthoptic Council examinations. As today, the exam had three components – written first with a mark of 70 per cent required to do the oral and practicum. Of note, there were 66 active members of TCOS.

1974 the Quebec Health Insurance Law gave optometrists the right to practice orthoptics but not orthoptists. The orthoptists legal status was lost and training schools closed in Quebec. This was later

repealed in 1988 and legal status was regained by the orthoptists certified by the Canadian Orthoptic Council.

In 1974 the Canadian Orthoptic Council presented the following motion to the Canadian Ophthalmological Society:

Whereas, The Canadian Ophthalmological Society is vitally concerned with eye health care delivery in Canada,

And whereas, Orthoptists play a vital supportive role in achieving high quality eye health care delivery,

Be it resolved, that the Canadian Orthoptic Society have the recognition and support of the Canadian Ophthalmological Society in the following areas:

- a) Full recognition and support of certified orthoptists as professional personnel working within ophthalmological sponsorship
- b) Full support and furtherance of the basic and continuing education of orthoptists under the aegis [sic] of the Canadian Orthoptic Council.

In 1976 reciprocity was approved by the American Orthoptic Council for Canadian orthoptists who had taken and passed the Canadian Orthoptic Council examinations. These orthoptists would be eligible to join the American Association of Certified Orthoptists.

There had been much discussion between the Canadian Orthoptic Society and the Canadian Orthoptic Council regarding a condensation for orthoptists who had been certified by the Canadian Orthoptic Council. In 1977 the Council approved the use of OC(C) for all orthoptists certified by the Canadian Orthoptic Council. In 1989 the Canadian Orthoptic Council requested that the Society consider changing their name to avoid confusion when just initials were used with the Canadian Ophthalmological Society. Over the next couple of

years numerous designations were considered. After some time, it was recommended that the abbreviations TCOS and LSCO be the official abbreviations of the Society's name. In 1990 the Society was granted provisional membership in JCAHPO with full membership attained 2 years later. The purpose of JCAHPO was to enhance the quality and availability of ophthalmic patient care by encouraging the recruitment, training and use of competent allied health personnel.

In 1992 guidelines were established for accepted continuing education activities and credit allotment. It was agreed that proof of continuing education would be on a three-year rotating basis with 30 credits needed to maintain certification.

1993 was the inaugural Dr. John Pratt-Johnson lecture. This lecture is presented annually in honour and appreciation of Dr. Pratt-Johnson's contributions to pediatric ophthalmology and orthoptics.

The first discussions between the Canadian Medical Association and TCOS regarding the possibility of national CMA accreditation of the orthoptic teaching programs were held. A committee was struck and a task analysis completed. Entry level competencies would have to be written and validated by the membership.

In 1999 the competency profile was completed. The validation process consisted of sending the competencies to the membership for weighting of the importance and frequency of use. The application was made to CMA with all the supporting data in January 2000. The application was accepted, the conjoint committee on accreditation took it to the board of CMA for final approval and CMA took over the accreditation of the Canadian schools in 2000.

In the late 1990s the orthoptists were recognized by the Quebec government and given a classification like physiotherapists. The Canadian Orthoptic Council set up a satellite preceptorship program

to help with the need for orthoptists in Quebec and to assist the French speaking orthoptists in taking the Canadian exams.

In 2000 the annual teacher's meeting became the Consortium of Canadian Orthoptic Teaching Programs. This was the first year as a full member of the Canadian Medical Association accreditation process. The Canadian Orthoptic Council instituted an "Award of Distinction" honoring a candidate who has achieved over 90% in each of the three exam parts. The American Orthoptic Council had representation by the Canadian Orthoptic Council but requested a representative from TCOS as well. The TCOS website could now be accessed by the public as well as members. The Vision Science Masters program at Dalhousie University was in its final stages of development

In 2001 the first edition of the TCOS Newsletter was published. This was a huge undertaking by Karen Nicholson and 17 years later it is still a job well done by Karen. The Vancouver teaching program successfully went through the first CMA accreditation process. The First COC Award of Distinction was presented.

In 2002 discussion ensued regarding the producing of a video to promote the profession of orthoptics. This would be a combined effort from TCOS, the Canadian Orthoptic Council, American orthoptic Council and AACO.

The Romanow commission had been formed in April 2001 to look at the sustainability of the Canadian health care system. A submission was made to the Commission outlining the role orthoptists play, the perceived shortage of professionals in ophthalmology and in our own profession and how cost effective it is to treat amblyopia compared with other conditions. This submission was a tremendous amount of work and Karen McMMain, Joan Parkinson and Reena Green were recognized for the work undertaken.



The IWK School of Orthoptics in Halifax announced that its proposal for a Masters program at Dalhousie University had been approved. In September 2002, a Masters in Clinical Vision Science would be offered with a concurrent graduate diploma in Orthoptics and Ophthalmic Medical Technology under the faculty of Graduate Studies and the faculty of Health Professionals.

In 2003 the Canadian Orthoptic Council continued with issued of manpower- it is consistently difficult to recruit ophthalmologists to the Council. A proposal was passed allowing more orthoptists to fill positions on the COC. It was decided that the Vice President position and the head of the exam committee would be filled by an orthoptist. A combined COC/TCOS Ethics Committee was struck. A code of ethics and a scope of practice were approved by TCOS and these were submitted to this committee. These documents along with recertification guidelines were to serve as the professional practice guidelines. The American Association of Certified Orthoptists presented the prestigious Lancaster Award to Ann Haver – only the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian orthoptist to receive the honour. This is a lifetime achievement award, recognizing those individuals who have contributed to the orthoptic profession.

In 2004 the revised TCOS website was designed and implemented. All mailouts would be posted to the members only section. A motion was proposed and accepted that included increasing the terms of office as well as reimbursement of travel and accommodation for some executive positions. It was becoming increasingly more difficult to find individuals willing to volunteer to represent TCOS on the executive. Giving new members the opportunity to participate in TCOS strengthens the Society.

The inaugural Lunn Lecture was given in 2009. This lecture is sponsored by the COC and the COS and will be given by an orthoptist every two years to recognize their contribution to the profession. The first lecture was presented by Louise Labow Dailey(spelling?)

In 2010 JCAHPO bylaw changes resulted in TCOS losing regular status to affiliate with no voting privileges. The TCOS newsletter celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and a Facebook group called The Canadian Orthoptic Society is created.

In 2012 there were 103 TCOS members. The IOA Congress was held in Toronto. The Hospital for Sick Children's orthoptic teaching program in Toronto was discontinued. The American Orthoptic Council Board now has both a COC and TCOS member sitting on the Board. An application for a Certificate of Continuance was completed to remain registered with Industry Canada as a Not for Profit Corporation

The first TCOS scientific session award was presented in 2013. Presentations were judged on content, originality, relevance and presentation style. Karen McMinn, the new IOA president initiated World Orthoptic Day to be held the first Monday in June.

TCOS lost a great supporter. Dr. John Pratt-Johnson died September 9, 2015. His contribution to pediatric ophthalmology and orthoptics was immeasurable. He was an extraordinary man.

Carole Panton was honoured by the AACO and presented with the Lancaster Award – the third Canadian orthoptist to be recognized for her contributions to the orthoptic profession.

The Canadian Medical Association announced that as of February 2018 they will no longer be accrediting allied health teaching programs, including the orthoptic programs. Following this announcement TCOS and COC developed a working group which

formally became the Accreditation Ad Hoc committee. This group has been working with the other allied health groups also formerly accredited by CMA to work toward finding a suitable option for accreditation. After considering proposals and meeting with many accrediting groups, Accreditation Canada was chosen as the accrediting body for the allied health programs in Canada and contracts are being drawn up. Moving forward COC, as the regulatory body for orthoptists in Canada, will be the representing group to Accreditation Canada and will appoint a representative to the program council as part of their advisory board.

The development of a strategic plan for the Society was felt to be beneficial to support the future direction of the Society. It was felt that a facilitator would help to provide focus and direction and plans for this were undertaken.

In 2016-2017 TCOS continued to solidify its key values, mission and vision in continuing to implement the Society's strategic plan. The ad-hoc committee met virtually with a professional facilitator to draft a strategic plan for TCOS. With input and commitment from this group and the guidance from the facilitator, the committee could draft a mission statement, vision, determine strategic directions as well as strategic action plans for the next 5 years. The current working draft was presented to the membership at the AGM at this meeting.

In finishing, The Canadian Orthoptic Society is your voice. This voice is only as strong as you make it by becoming involved. The Society has worked to make it easier to be come involved by implementing such things as funding executive positions to attend the annual meetings. We must use this time of celebration to not only look back but to look ahead to the future. The potential is unlimited. You can

achieve anything you want if you put in the effort. I want all of you to love your chosen career as much as I have. Please play a part in advancing the profession, strengthening membership and building a sustainable membership.

To quote a favourite figure skater of mine, Elvis Stojko:

The past is history

The future is a mystery

But today is a gift....

That's why they call it the present

So cherish every minute of it.

Thank you