

Daniel R. Gerstman

Excelling both in academics and athletics, Daniel R. Gerstman grew up in Rantoul, Illinois. He graduated from the University of Illinois in 1966 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology. Subsequently he received Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Optometry degrees, as well as a Master of Science degree in Physiological Optics, all from Indiana University. After working in the private practice of optometry for a time, he continued his academic work by completing a program in primary care and developmental/low vision training at the Optometric Center of New York. Dr. Gerstman joined the faculty of the Indiana University School of Optometry as an assistant professor in 1971. In the course of the past 36 years he has served the school as teacher, researcher, and administrator, finishing up his career as executive associate dean for budgetary planning and administration.

Dan's career at the School of Optometry has been multifaceted. Centered around his love for teaching and genuine concern for his students, he has been able to juggle successfully both considerable administrative and classroom responsibilities. Relating well with his students, he frequently could be seen talking informally with them about everything from optics problems to the fortunes of his beloved Chicago Bears. (His computer's desktop wallpaper is colored Bear indigo blue and orange.) Dan's dedication to his students is reflected in his selection for the Professor of the Year award—11 times. His commitment to a first-class education in geometric optics and his commitment to his students represent an exemplary legacy.

Because 36 years goes by one day at a time, it is profitable to remember and consider accomplishments that are the result of focused and steady achievements. Dan has done research in low vision. He is also a primary author of *Examination Review in Optometry*. This publication has gone through four editions and continues to be used by optometry students in preparation for National Board Examinations. He has been heavily involved in service to the school, university, community, state, and profession. He has served as either member or chair on a considerable number of IU committees during his tenure, including the campus and university budgetary affairs committees and several university reviews of programs and officers. On the state level, he was active in the Area 10 Council on Aging, which brought Rural Transit to the community for the benefit of senior citizens.

Over the years those considerable administrative responsibilities came in the form of various executive roles at the School of Optometry. Dan has served as assistant director of the Division of Patient Care, chief of Low Vision Services, chief of Geriatric Services, assistant to the dean, and associate dean for budgetary and fiscal affairs. In 1995 he assumed his present position as executive associate dean for budgetary planning and administration. A respected and resourceful administrator, he has successfully negotiated a number of financial challenges, including difficult budget cycles and the changeover to responsibility center management.

Normally, not all of one's efforts and achievements are immediately or easily visible. So it is with Dan's record of bringing in external resources for the School of Optometry. If one were to look through school records, it would become evident that Dan has brought in multiple grants, gifts, and loans of equipment from the ophthalmic industry. These have made an essential impact on the school's assets. Dan's understanding of the industry and his persuasiveness in presenting the needs of the school have resulted in enhanced optometric education for generations of optometry students through access to modern, sophisticated ophthalmic equipment.

Certainly one of Dan's lasting contributions has been the financial health of the School of Optometry. Such efforts are not always immediately visible or recognized, and because a healthy, stable economic situation is seldom given front-page recognition, Professor Emeritus Paul Pietsch calls Dan one of the "unsung heroes" of the School of Optometry.

Dan has many interests outside the field of academia. Among others is the care and feeding of his 1959 Corvette, which he has owned since the 1960s and which resides in mint condition in the Gerstman garage under extraordinary security. It is rumored that Hollywood producers have asked him to allow its use in movies but were reportedly turned down, and that students wishing to become his associate instructors were required to know not just optics, but also the characteristics of a 1959 Corvette AND the location of Ellettsville on the map.

Dan has three children, Heidi, Anita, and Matthew, ten grandchildren, and one grand-dog. The faculty, staff, and students of the School of Optometry wish Dan and his wife, Rozzie, many more happy years living in Barley Manor, their "ancestral" home in the suburbs of Ellettsville, where he will continue to develop his repertoire of fond (and occasionally, tall) tales of life in that community.