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**THIRD ANNUAL INVESTIGATOR AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED  
FROM PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA**

***National Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Supporting  
Vision Research Programs that Save Sight***

**CHICAGO (June 9, 2006)** – Prevent Blindness America, the nation’s oldest voluntary eye health and safety organization, announced today the recipients of its 2006 Investigator Awards. Winners were selected from Duke University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Minnesota by a team of scientists from the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO).

Vision research has the potential to preserve quality of life for millions of Americans. Through its Investigator Awards, Prevent Blindness America supports research into many of the most pressing threats to vision.

“We are very encouraged by the number of promising research initiatives this year,” said Daniel D. Garrett, senior vice president of Prevent Blindness America. “By funding some of these projects, we hope to help scientists add to the growing body of critical work into the causes of and cures for blindness.”

For the second year in a row, Duke University has been selected as a Prevent Blindness America Investigator Award winner. Kelly W. Muir, MD, at Duke University School of Medicine, received the 2006 award for her research project entitled “Randomized Trial of Literacy Level Appropriate Education in Improving Patient Adherence to Glaucoma Therapy.” The study seeks to determine if employing an educational program catered to the patient’s level of literacy will improve the treatment of patients with glaucoma.

Charlotte E. Joslin, OD, of the University of Illinois at Chicago, also received an Investigator Award for her study “Chicago-area Acanthamoeba Keratitis.” The condition is a severe and painful infection of the cornea that can cause corneal scarring and even blindness. This serious infection is thought to be caused by exposure to Acanthamoeba in contaminated water. In response to a recent increase of cases in the Chicago area, the study aims to determine the source of the organisms through patient study and water analysis.

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Previous tests on adults with diabetes have shown that there are strong predictors of future retinopathy. Because type 2 diabetes is on the rise in children and young adults, Marilyn E. Schneck, Ph.D., at the University of California, Berkeley, will characterize changes in the vision of adolescents with diabetes in an effort to prevent sight loss in these young patients. The project is entitled "Objective Assessment of Retinal Function in Adolescents with Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes."

Anterior Ischemic Optic Neuropathy (AION) is a devastating eye disease caused by the disruption of arterial blood supply to the optic nerve head. Linda K. McCloon, Ph.D., from the University of Minnesota, received the Investigator Award for her research project, "Intranasal Application of Neuroprotective Agents in Rats with Anterior Ischemic Optic Neuropathy." The results of the study could produce a simple and cost-effective treatment for AION as well as glaucoma and other vision debilitating injuries to the optic nerve and retina.

For more information on the Prevent Blindness America Investigator Awards, or for free brochures on vision research and eye diseases, call toll-free at 1-800-331-2020 or visit [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org).

### **About Prevent Blindness America**

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, it's committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020 or visit us on the Web at [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org).

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