

William Edmunds Benson, M.D.

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"My father always told me to have a long memory for the good things people do for you and a short one for the bad. Never forget those who have helped you."

Dr. William Edmunds Benson is nationally recognized for his work on the treatment of diabetic retinopathy and retinal detachment. He is Professor of Ophthalmology at Thomas Jefferson College of Medicine and Attending Surgeon at the Wills Eye Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he served as Director of the Retina Service from 1992 to 2002.

Born November 29, 1943 in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, Dr. Benson came to Waterbury when he was 10. He credits his mother, a librarian at the Silas Bronson Library and the daughter of two schoolteachers, for inspiring him to get the best possible education. "My mother," he says, "read all of the time." He graduated from Sprague Elementary School, and was co-valedictorian of Crosby High School in 1961. He was awarded a B.A. in French, Summa cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa, from Yale University in 1965. He studied his junior year in France, where he met Linda Fried whom he married in 1966. He received his medical degree from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University in 1969, having been elected to the Alpha Omega Alpha honor medical society in his junior year. After completing his internship at Presbyterian Hospital in New York City (1969-70) and residency in Ophthalmology at Barnes Hospital, Washington School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri (1970-73), he was awarded a fellowship in retinal diseases at the prestigious Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami School of Medicine (1973-75).

In 1975 he became the Director of the Retina Service of the Scheie Eye Institute. In 1977 he joined the staff of the Wills Eye Hospital. At Wills, Dr. Benson was the principal investigator of the Early Treatment Diabetic Retinopathy Study. He has served on several committees at Wills and was president of the medical staff from 1998 to 2000.

He has authored or co-authored 106 papers in refereed journals and 45 chapters in various textbooks. He has written two textbooks and has edited four. He has served on several editorial boards of ophthalmology journals. He has given seven named lectures, and hundreds of others in the United States and around the world. He is much sought after as a consultant to other physicians.

Dr. Benson has served on numerous academic committees of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. He was the chairman of the Basic and Clinical Science Course, which writes review books for residents and the chairman of the Ophthalmologic Knowledge Assessment Program which writes examinations for residents. He received the Academy's Senior Honor Award in 1994.

Dr. Benson served as a Director of the American Board of Ophthalmology for eight years (1991-2000) where he shared responsibility for producing the certification examinations for new ophthalmologists. He chaired the Board in 2000.

Dr. Benson has taught hundreds of residents and fellows about retinal diseases. The residents of Wills Eye Hospital selected him as Teacher of the Year in 1981. The Ophthalmic



Club of Philadelphia honored him as a Life Member in 1996. He is also a member of the Retina Society, the Macula Society and the American Ophthalmological Society. He was named One of the Best Ophthalmologists in Philadelphia several times. In 1996, *Ophthalmology Times* selected him as One of the Best Ophthalmologists in America. He has also been listed in *Who's Who in Ophthalmology*.

Dr. Benson is very grateful for the education he received in Waterbury and elsewhere. He says that he always "wanted it written on (his) tombstone that 'He paid his dues.'" Accordingly, although largely retired from clinical practice, he continues to teach residents and fellows at Wills Eye Hospital, considering the time spent to be a small part of what he owes to his profession and to patients with eye diseases.

Dr. and Mrs. Benson reside in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania.

His current goal is to get his book, on the history of the tariff and its role in causing the Civil War, published.