



2024 AOA OPTOMETRIC EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Nominee: Jeffrey J. Walline, OD, PhD

Nominated by: Ohio Optometric Association

The Ohio Optometric Association (OOA) is honored to nominate Jeffrey J. Walline as the 2024 American Optometric Association (AOA) Optometric Educator of the Year. Dr. Walline has an outstanding record of professionalism, career achievement, and service to optometry that make him a deserving candidate.

I. SERVICE TO OPTOMETRIC EDUCATION

Dr. Jeffrey Walline's impact on optometry and optometric education is remarkable. The whole of his career in optometry has been dedicated to research, advancing optometry, and preparing the next generation of ODs. Since the receipt of his Doctorate of Optometry from the University of California, Berkeley School of Optometry, Dr. Walline has been actively teaching or involved in optometric research. He received his master's in Physiologic Optics and a PhD in Vision Science from The Ohio State University College of Optometry. He was an Academy Ezell Fellow and started his teaching career there in 1996.

In 2005, Dr. Walline joined the faculty at The Ohio State University College of Optometry as Assistant Professor, then Associate Professor in 2011, and appointed as Associate Dean for Research in 2015, where he is responsible for the Graduate Program in Vision Science, one of the premier programs of its kind. Dr. Walline has taken the program to new heights by creatively restructuring its coursework and attracting ODs and students alike to partake in advanced graduate education in research. Dr. Walline has advised 25+ graduate students and chairs the Research and Graduate Studies Committee as well. He became Professor in 2016 and subsequently named Distinguished Professor in 2023. He was recently selected to lead The OSU College of Optometry as Acting Dean effective January 1, 2024.

In addition to his impressive career at OSU College of Optometry, Dr. Walline is a well-respected presenter of continuing education. He has traveled the globe giving more than 300 lectures. He has carried his messages related to his own research on the effect of rigid gas permeable contact lenses on juvenile myopia progression, the positive influence successful contact lens wear can have on children's self-esteem, and the importance of educating patients about safe contact lens wear. He has presented his work internationally, and findings from his studies have been published by lay press from around the world. Dr. Walline also helps educate Optometrists in practice on these important topics throughout the county and the world. Dr. Walline is also on the Board of Directors for the American Academy of Optometry and has served in numerous capacities within that organization. Since taking on the role of Acting Dean of The Ohio State University College of Optometry, Dr. Walline has volunteered his time to travel the state providing continuing education on myopia control and updating members on the College.

Dr. Walline has a lengthy listing of published work including peer-reviewed publications, editor-reviewed publications, published abstracts, book chapters and book reviews. He is the recipient of numerous awards and honors including the Outstanding Scientific Paper Award (2001), Outstanding Graduate Student Leadership Award (2002), and the Multicultural Center Award for Faculty (2009). He was given the William C. Ezell Fellowship by the AOA in 1999, 2000, and 2001 and in 2009 was named Research Diplomate, Cornea, Contact Lenses and Refractive Technologies Section of the AAO. In 2016, Dr. Walline was named one of the 30 Most Influential in Contact Lenses and as one of the 250 Innovators in Optometry. In 2018, he was presented with the Global Specialty Lens Symposium Award of Excellence.

II. SERVICE TO THE VISUAL WELFARE OF THE PUBLIC



An advocate for children's vision health, not only does much of Dr. Walline's research and teaching center around pediatrics, but his volunteering as well. He has served on the Board of Directors for the Ohio chapter of Prevent Blindness and strived to increase the organization's awareness of optometry. Dr. Walline also has been a member of the American Public Health Association (1999-2000; 2009-2011) and has served as a member of the Food and Drug Administration Myopia Control Review Taskforce since 2016. He participates in legislative activities aimed at educating state lawmakers of the importance of optometric care including Optometry Day at the Statehouse, an annual event by the Ohio Optometric Association.

Dr. Walline has dedicated much of his time to educating Ohio school children on the importance of a lifetime of comprehensive eye care through the Apollo Award winning Realeyes Program. The Realeyes Classroom Initiative was developed by the OOA and made possible through grant funding by the Ohio Department of Health. For nearly twenty five years, volunteer doctors have used the Realeyes program to educate students from preschool through 12th grade about eye anatomy, eye safety, eye disorders and proper vision care. In 2014, Dr. Walline became the Medical Director of the program which has reached 1.6 million students. Even before he became Medical Director, Dr. Walline was a top presenter and to date, has presented to over 19,500 students in more than 750 central Ohio classrooms – more than any other volunteer presenter in the history of the Realeyes program.

III. SERVICE TO OPTOMETRY

Dr. Walline is well known for his service to multiple organizations advancing optometry. Since 2012 he has served on both the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Optometry (AAO), of which he is president-elect and serves as Meeting Chair, and the Board of Directors of the AAO Foundation. He is a fellow of the Academy and a Diplomate in its Section on Cornea, Contact Lenses and Refractive Technologies; and for many years, he served as the national chairman of the Student-Faculty Liaison Committee (2008-2012).

Dr. Walline has been a member of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) since 2007, serving on its Diversity Taskforce and later Committee (2007-2011). In 2015 he joined and is currently serving on the ASCO Academic Research Committee.

His involvement since 1998 in the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) is also notable as Dr. Walline has represented optometry on multiple committees since 2002 chairing the ARVO Diversity Issues Committee (2009-2010) and directing the ARVO K-12 Education Program (2002-2009).

Over the course of Dr. Walline's career, he has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors for his impact on optometric education and research. His influence on Optometry is wide reaching as an innovator and leader. Most recently Dr. Walline was awarded the Donald Dorb Award from the Contact Lens and Cornea Section of the AOA and was named a Growing Research Opportunities Academy Fellow from The Ohio State University Office of Research in 2021. In 2023, Dr. Walline was the recipient of the Eyecare Business GameChangers Award.

IV. SERVICE TO AOA AND/OR ITS AFFILIATES

To the AOA and its Ohio affiliate, Dr. Walline's contributions continue to impress. A member of the AOA/OOA since 1996, he immediately became active in the OOA on a local level as Secretary of the Central Ohio Optometric Association (COOA). Soon after, from 1999-2000, Dr. Walline served as COOA Governor. He has been a member of multiple OOA committees throughout his career including the COOA, the New Technologies Committee, the Assistance to Graduates and Undergraduates Committee, the Legislative Committee, and the Children's Vision Committee. Dr. Walline's commitment to the Realeyes Program as Medical Director has helped to continue the growth of the program. For his impressive contributions and dedication to the organization, the OOA named Dr. Walline its Optometrist of the Year in 2018.



Active in the AOA as well, Dr. Walline was a member of the AOA Cornea and Contact Lens Section from 2009 through 2017 rising through the ranks serving as Secretary, Vice Chair, Chair, and Immediate Past Chair 2016-2017. Dr. Walline took on a new role within the AOA joining the Council on Research in 2017 and continues to serve currently. He began serving on the AOA Center for Independent Practice Steering Committee just this year. Dr. Walline also served as the faculty advisor to the Ohio State chapter of the American Optometric Student Association (AOSA) through 2023.

V. PUBLIC SERVICE

Dr. Walline also has demonstrated service within his Ohio State community. He is a Member of the University Enterprise Faculty Advisory Committee and Facilities Committee. He also serves within the OSU College of Optometry as a Member, Stewardship Committee, the Business Continuity Planning Taskforce, the Executive Committee, and the Admissions Committee. He also provides volunteer service as a Reviewer to many journals including JAMA, and IOVS.

He continues his service by volunteering at health fairs educating the public at large about the importance of a lifetime of comprehensive eye care. He routinely volunteers at large, annual health fairs at the Ohio State Fair and the Arnold SportsWorld Expo, and at local health fairs and summer camps. Dr. Walline also serves his community sharing his love of cycling as a Spin instructor.

Dr. Walline's record of service, contributions, and impact on optometry is truly impressive and inspiring to other ODs. His passion to advance patient care and optometric education has resulted in innovative research and excellent teaching. He is an articulate, visible and popular ambassador for the profession of optometry and the education of optometry students. For all he does for students, patients and the public in Ohio and across the nation, Dr. Walline is a praiseworthy candidate for this significant award.