



In Memoriam

Langdon “Red” Henderlite, B.C.O. passed away July 20, 2009; he was eighty-four years old. Langdon, a Richmond, Virginia native, was born to Langdon M. Henderlite, Ph.D.,DD., and Courtney Edmond (Frischkorn) on April 12, 1925. Langdon’s father was a missionary, and he spent considerable time in Brazil. Langdon’s first visit to Brazil was at age five, and he attended school in both Brazil and in Richmond.

in 1953, Langdon was hired at Galeski Optical in Richmond as an apprentice. Along with Joe Galeski, Clyde Andrews, Mary Holt, and Bob French, Langdon was an important contributor to the “Galeski Eye,” a unique (early) compression molded ocular prosthesis. By 1955, fueled by his outgoing personality, Langdon was designated the “traveling eye-man” for Galeski. A few of his travel stops included: Norfolk, Virginia; Roanoke, Virginia; Charlottesville, Virginia; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Bluefield, West Virginia and Huntington, West Virginia. The 1950s and 1960s saw a changing climate for prosthetic eyes as they evolved from glass, to stock plastic, to custom impression fit prostheses. Langdon continued to be a significant eye maker in Virginia and the surrounding areas and became a member of the American Society of Ocularists in 1960, three years after its inception. He became Board Certified in 1980.

With Galeski Optical soon to be sold to a Canadian optical company, Langdon formed an independent ocularist practice in downtown Roanoke in 1980. in 1981, he assumed Ludwig Hussar’s (the Hungarian dentist) ocular prosthetic practice from Oak Hill, West Virginia, and briefly collaborated with Pittsburgh and Morgantown ocularist Walter “Bud” Tillman in 1981-82. In his 1987 book *An Eye for an Eye*, Tillman credits Henderlite with being “self taught.” Tillman writes, “Langdon Henderlite, a long-time friend and professional associate spent several years reading all of the sparse literature on artificial eyes as well as visiting and talking to every ocularist he could find.”

Langdon continued to work in Roanoke and Johnson City, Tennessee until 1989, when he semi-retired to New Castle, Virginia. His “retirement” came a few years later in 1998. Langdon enjoyed a forty-five year career in the field of making custom ocular prosthetics. He is fondly remembered as “Red” (for his once orange-red hair!) and for his humor and compassion.