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Alumni Profile

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Linfield College

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John Paul Creasman ’59 is a miracle worker to the thousands of people whose eyesight he has helped restore.

Creasman, assistant professor in ophthalmology and department chair at the Mayo Clinic in Arizona, has devoted his life to humanitarian work and education around the world. Over the past 35 years, he has fully realized his offerings in materials and skills in underserved areas of Africa, the North Pacific and South America.

Last year, Creasman received the Mayo Clinic Alumni Association Humanitarian Award for his contributions to medicine, education and humanistic missions.

“Most of the blindness in the world today is due to cataracts,” and that’s easy to rectify,” said Creasman, who, after graduating from Linfield College, earned his medical degree from Baylor University College of Medicine. “And the rewards for the patient, and for me as well, are dramatic. It’s exciting to watch people see for the first time in many years.”

Humanitarian work is second nature to Creasman, who grew up near the San Carlos Indian reservation in southeastern Arizona and often helped his parents provide food, clothing and shelter for those in need.

“You don’t just take, you give back,” said Creasman. “I wouldn’t know how to do it any other way.”

His primary focus has been a small clinic in Vera Cruz, Baja, Mexico, which he founded in 1972 and travels to several times every year.

“I would have disappeared into the woodwork at a large university,” said Creasman, who, during his first week on campus, was invited to play pool with then-President Harry Dill.

“He said, ‘The back door’s always open. Come over any time you want.’” Creasman recalled. “Linfield was literally a friendly in many ways. Many of my Linfield classmates are still my closest friends today. In this environment you make friends that last.”

— Laura Davis