



ROSS EYE INSTITUTE

advances

Elizabeth Olmsted Ross, MD '39, is a woman with vision and the desire to support it. She dreamed of a unique center that would combine research and eye care and has worked to make it happen. UB's new Ira G. Ross Eye Institute—named in honor of her late husband—broke ground last fall and is scheduled to open in spring 2007.

Olmsted Ross was the motivating force. She donated \$3 million to the initiative on the condition that it be matched with another \$3 million. Her premise enticed other individuals and foundations to support the center, including well-known local foundations like the John R.

Oishei Foundation and the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, along with nationally prominent organizations such as Research to Prevent Blindness.

However, Olmsted Ross didn't stop there. Having helped raise two-thirds of the \$9 million goal, she now has issued another challenge—a million dollar match that already is drawing responses. Dr. Amar Atwal and his colleagues at Atwal Eye Care have pledged \$100,000; the Carlos and Elizabeth Heath Foundation has pledged \$100,000; and governmental agencies are expressing interest as well.

The Ira G. Ross Eye Institute will diagnose and treat eye diseases, as well as provide prevention and rehabilitation services.

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Additionally, it will provide educational programs for both physicians and members of the Western New York community. **BP**

—SUZANNE CHAMBERLAIN

Research to Prevent Blindness

Gail Seigel, PhD, receives \$50,000 award

GAIL SEIGEL, PHD, assistant professor of ophthalmology and physiology and biophysics in the UB School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, has received a \$50,000 Sybil B. Harrington Scholar Award from Research to Prevent Blindness to support her research into diseases of the eye.

The award is part of the organization's special scholar program designed to support outstanding young scientists who are conducting research

of unusual significance. Research to Prevent Blindness (RPB) is the leading nongovernment supporter of eye research, and has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in grants to advance treatment and cure eye diseases.

Seigel's research centers on chemo-resistant cells in retinoblastoma, an eye cancer caused by the loss of a pair of tumor-suppressor genes, cell death in diabetic retinopathy, high-resolution imaging in retinal disease and corneal repair.

Seigel works under the auspices of UB's Ira G. Ross Eye Institute, a collaborative center for eye and vision care involving the UB Department of Ophthalmology, the research arm (see article, above); the Elizabeth Pierce Olmsted, M.D., Center for the Visually Impaired, the rehabilitation and training arm; and University Ophthalmology Services, the clinical diagnosis and treatment arm. **BP**

—LOIS BAKER