

Local Ophthalmologist Honored by Prevention of Blindness Society

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The Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington® (POB) celebrated 81 years of providing sight-saving services in the D.M.V. area and raised vital funds and awareness for the organization's local vision programs on Saturday, March 4 at the Night of Vision® gala, which was held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Georgetown. Doug Kammerer, chief meteorologist of NBC News 4, served as the master of ceremonies.

POB honored two local community members: **William L. Rich III, MD, FACS, received the 2017 Professional Service Award** for his outstanding work in the field of vision care; and Pete Piringer received the 2017 Community Service Award for his tireless commitment to the mission of the organization.

"The Night of Vision gala is our annual opportunity to shine the spotlight on individuals who have set a high standard of leadership and commitment to the issues surrounding vision loss and blindness," said Michele Hartlove, POB executive director. "This event is an opportunity to acknowledge Mr. Piringer's commitment to our organization's work and Dr. Rich's contributions to the ophthalmology community."

Dr. William L. Rich III of Solomons Island, Maryland, is currently the past president and Medical Director of Health Policy for the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), the oldest American medical specialty society. Additionally, Dr. Rich co-founded Northern Virginia Ophthalmology Associates in 1976, retiring in December 2016 after 40 years of service to the Northern Virginia community.

Mr. Pete Piringer of North Bethesda, Maryland, is the external affairs and public information officer for the Montgomery County, Maryland Fire and Rescue Service, and is also president of the College Park, Md. Volunteer Fire Department. Additionally, he has served our communities for several decades in a myriad of professional and volunteer public service roles including fire fighter, emergency services dispatcher, public information officer, and director of communications.

The Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington serves the District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince George's counties of Maryland, and Northern Virginia. POB screens more than 8,000 children annually for vision loss and strabismus, and thousands of adults for glaucoma. The organization provides thousands of low-income and homeless community members with eyeglasses each year, and helps those with low vision retain their independence through personalized rehabilitation programs at its Low Vision Learning Center. Its Aging Eye Network, Macular Degeneration Network and Stargardt's Network provide public programs and support groups to the community.

For more information about the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington, visit youreyes.org.

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