

THE *Greenberg* PRIZE
End Blindness 2020

**HISTORIC EFFORT TO ‘END BLINDNESS’ MARKS MAJOR MILESTONE
WITH LEADING SCIENTISTS RECOGNIZED FOR PIONEERING WORK
AT VIP CEREMONY FEATURING TRIBUTE TO RUTH BADER GINSBURG**

The December 14, 2020, streamed ceremony to feature Art Garfunkel, Margaret Atwood, Al Gore, Michael Bloomberg, Sen. Chris Coons, Frank Stella, and a special appearance by Grammy Award-winning jazz great Diane Schuur

Ceremony to also feature moving tribute to late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, including footage of Justice Ginsburg reading from End Blindness co-founder Sanford D. Greenberg’s memoir, “Hello Darkness, My Old Friend”

Washington, DC—December 3, 2020—End Blindness 2020—an unprecedented joint effort by leading scientists and figures from the worlds of business, politics, culture, art, music and entertainment to rid the world of blindness—is about to mark a major milestone. On December 14, 2020, 13 pioneering scientists will share \$3 million in prizes, from The Sanford and Sue Greenberg Prize to End Blindness, for their groundbreaking scientific and medical contributions to permanently and universally eradicate a condition that has plagued humans since the beginning of time. The hour-long streamed ceremony will be freely accessible and open to all at www.EndBlindness2020.com.

The Greenberg Prize awards ceremony will feature **Art Garfunkel, Margaret Atwood, Al Gore, Michael Bloomberg, and Sen. Chris Coons** among other luminaries. Musical performances will be provided by special guests. Grammy Award-winning **jazz artist Diane Schuur**, who was blind from birth due to Retinopathy of Prematurity, will share a few special words. Art-world legend **Frank Stella** will unveil a sculpture created in honor of the prize.

The Greenberg Prize ceremony will also feature a moving tribute to the late **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**, a longtime supporter of the End Blindness movement. The tribute will include exclusive footage of Justice Ginsburg reading from *Hello Darkness, My Old Friend*, the memoir of End Blindness 2020 co-founder Sanford D. Greenberg.

“While today’s prize marks the culmination of years of challenging scientific work, in reality this prize is only the beginning of a journey of innovation and cooperation,” Dr. Greenberg says. “Together, we are forging a new reality, one in which blindness will no longer determine the future of millions of people. We will end blindness, sooner than any of us can imagine, permanently and for everyone.”

Recipients of The Greenberg Prize include members of the scientific and medical communities who have pioneered breathtaking advances in the fight to end the debilitating condition. Prize recipients are being honored in two categories: the **Outstanding Achievement Prize**, highlighting profound strides toward treating and curing blindness, and **The Visionary Prize**, providing funding for scientists whose research exhibits significant potential in ending this ancient scourge.

Outstanding Achievement Recipients:

- Dr. Ravindran Ravilla, Aravind Eye Care System
- Dr. G. N. Rao, The L.V. Prasad Eye Institute
- Dr. Jean Bennett, Center for Advanced Retinal and Ocular Therapeutics, Department of Ophthalmology, Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania
- Dr. Gustavo Aguirre, Division of Experimental Retinal Therapies, Department of Clinical Sciences & Advanced Medicine, School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania
- Dr. William Hauswirth, Department of Ophthalmology of the University of Florida
- Dr. Albert Maguire, Center for Advanced Retinal and Ocular Therapeutics, Department of Ophthalmology, Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania

Visionary Recipients:

- Dr. James Fujimoto, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Research Laboratory of Electronics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Dr. David Huang, Casey Eye Institute and Department of Ophthalmology, Oregon Health and Science University
- Mr. Eric Swanson, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Research Laboratory of Electronics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

- Dr. Zhigang He, Boston Children’s Hospital F.M. Kirby Neurobiology Center
- Dr. Simon John, The Jackson Laboratory, Department of Ophthalmology, Columbia University
- Dr. Botond Roska, Institute of Molecular and Clinical Ophthalmology Basel
- Dr. Masayo Takahashi, RIKEN Center for Biosystems Dynamics Research; Vision Care, Inc. as part of Kobe Eye Center

“This is not just a prize but the 21st century equivalent of a moonshot, the effects of which will resound through history,” according to Dr. Peter McDonnell, director of the Wilmer Eye Institute at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and a member of the End Blindness National Governing Council. “Since time immemorial, blindness has been understood as an immutable fixture of the human condition. The great shift End Blindness has brought about demonstrates this is no longer the case. Together, we will end blindness—and sooner than anyone had ever imagined.”

“Hearing the power of this idea—that blindness is something we can end—is like undergoing a paradigm shift in the way you understand the world,” says Dr. Jeremy Nathans, professor of Molecular Biology and Genetics, Neuroscience, and Ophthalmology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; an investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute; and the chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board for End Blindness.

“Suddenly, blindness becomes like polio or landing on the moon—that is, not an impossibility but a challenge to humanity. Today, with this prize, we accept that challenge.”

End Blindness is rooted in a promise made by its originator, Sanford Greenberg. In 1961, at age 19, Dr. Greenberg lost his ability to see. While still in a hospital bed in Detroit, newly blinded, Dr. Greenberg made a solemn, if audacious, oath: That *no one else should have to go blind*. In that moment, ending blindness became a personal mission for him.

Over the following years, Dr. Greenberg went on to achieve extraordinary success, earning a PhD from Harvard, becoming a White House Fellow in the Johnson Administration, and innovating important new technologies that have impact to this day.

Despite his success, and the intellectually rich life he created for himself, Dr. Greenberg never forgot his promise.

On the contrary, he was further inspired by two key events: one was President Kennedy's 1961 promise to put a man on the moon before the decade was out, followed eight years later by astronaut Neil Armstrong's historic "one giant leap for mankind."

A second moment of inspiration came when Dr. Greenberg had a personal meeting with Dr. Jonas Salk, the scientist who cured polio, a disease once thought incurable. When Dr. Greenberg asked Dr. Salk how someone might do the same with blindness, the renowned scientist's response was thunderous: Forget the symptoms and various conditions, Salk advised. *Just end it!*

Those three words became a clarion call for Dr. Greenberg, who used them to rally support for his mission. Dr. Greenberg eventually became Chairman of the Board of Governors of The Johns Hopkins University's Wilmer Eye Institute. And in 2012, he and his wife, Susan, formally launched the End Blindness movement with the creation and announcement of the prizes to be awarded on December 14.