



GALLERY OF DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS INDUCTEE 2001

ALSTON CALLAHAN was born in Mississippi in 1911. He received his medical degree from Tulane Medical School in 1933 and completed his residency in Ophthalmology at Charity Hospital and Tulane Graduate School in 1936. In 1941, he had the good fortune to marry Eivor Holst of San Francisco.

During World War II, he served as Chief of the 300-bed Eye Section at Northington General Hospital in Tuscaloosa. In 1946, he and his family moved to Birmingham. He entered private practice and served as the first Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Medical College of Alabama at Birmingham. He was the Honor Alumnus of Tulane Medical School in 1977. He was inducted into the Alabama Academy of Honor in 1998 and into the Alabama Healthcare Hall of Fame in 1999.

He founded and developed the Callahan Eye Foundation Hospital and in 1997 founded the International Retinal Research Foundation, which awards grants to researchers in retinal malfunction. Other interests include travel; he has visited 94 foreign countries, some several times, and has stood on the ice at both Poles. At the age of 80, he swam across the Yazoo River at his birthplace at Vicksburg, Mississippi, and he celebrated a later birthday by swimming across the Mandraki Harbor at the Island of Rhodes (where once stood the Colossus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World).

Dr. and Mrs. Callahan were blessed with five children: Kristina, Patrick, Michael, Timothy and Karin.

He passed away at age 94 on October 28, 2005.