

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR HONOREES!



Dr. Channie Duhn and Optician Sharon Segal of Marin Optometry will celebrate being named Business of the Year by the Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Marin Optometry

It is a rarity for any business to remain in one location for over 70 years, let alone continue to be successful, but that is just what has happened at 158 Throckmorton Avenue in Mill Valley. It was at this location in 1937 that Dr. John Hoag established Marin Optometry. Though he carried on a thriving business there for a over a quarter of a century, it is unlikely Dr. Hoag would have imagined that his successors would continue his legacy of service and involvement for another 45+ years AND that Marin Optometry would become a Mill Valley Business of the Year honoree in 2008. Yet, this is what has come to pass, and Marin Optometry will be recognized at the Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Dinner on February 8.

"The Chamber of Commerce is very pleased to honor Marin Optometry with a Business of the Year Award," said Chamber CEO Kathy Severson. "It is an award that has been deserved for quite some time given the incredible history of this business and its service to the community. Marin Optometry has the distinction of being the oldest business in the same location in Mill Valley, not to mention it is the oldest continual optometry office north of the Golden Gate Bridge up to the Oregon border. That, in itself, is amazing and worthy of recognition, but beyond that the Chamber is honoring Marin Optometry for its decades of giving back to community through volunteerism and philanthropy."

Back in 1937, Dr. Hoag set a standard for the type of service oriented and community focused business Marin Optometry would be. When Dr. Jerry Belanger took over the business in 1963, he carried on the legacy of being an exceptional optometry practice and being active in the community for another 35 years. In 1991, Dr. Belanger brought

a new optician in to Marin Optometry, Sharon Segal, who ultimately became a dedicated associate and friend. In 1999, after Dr. Belanger succumbed to a hard fought battle with cancer, Sharon took over the practice in partnership with Dr. Channie Duhn, a graduate of the University of California Berkeley School of Optometry, (also Dr. Belanger's alma mater.) Out of deep respect for "Jerry" as everyone knew him, both Segal and Duhn have remained dedicated to continuing Marin Optometry's personalized service and a its high level of civic involvement.

"Dr. Belanger was an incredible Optometrist and a great person," said Dr. Duhn. "He instilled in us the importance of running a high quality practice with exceptional client care. He also helped us to understand how important it is as a business to be active in the community. We are proud that Marin Optometry carries on his reputation."

As one of the oldest members of the Mill Valley Chamber of Commerce, Marin Optometry has been a leader in the business community for 45 years. Dr. Belanger was an active member, as is Sharon Segal, who has served on the Board of Directors and cochaired the Downtown Business Alliance, while Dr. Duhn has been involved in Women in Business activities. Marin Optometry also has a long history with Rotary, and has given support to numerous non-profits including: Kiddo, the Tam High Foundation, Mill Valley Little League, Susan G. Komen, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Spectrum to name but a few.

"By honoring Marin Optometry as a Business of the Year, we honor an outstanding history of service and business leadership past to present," said Severson. "We look forward to presenting this award."