

The most outstanding eye departments in the United States, to mention a few, are Harvard, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, University of California at San Francisco, Washington University of St. Louis, Western Reserve, Ohio State, and the Universities of Oregon, Miami, Emory, and Duke.

They are all separate departments in their respective medical schools. Since the separation of ophthalmology is recognized nationally by the most important medical schools, and because eye is not associated with neurological diseases in any medical school, there is every reason for the Congress to recognize this difference in the National Institutes of Health, to provide better direction to the research and training in the field of eye diseases.

I had my eye training in a division under the Department of Surgery at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco.

This division was severely handicapped because the professor of surgery was not interested in its welfare, or in developing a strong teaching department.

Finally, because of the low national status of the eye division, the dean decided to grant separate status to the ophthalmology department.

Since 1952, when autonomy was granted, this eye department has developed into one of the most outstanding in the school, as well as in the world.

It receives substantial support from our Government and private organizations. In contrast, those departments still under surgery at the same school—neurological surgery, urology, and ear, nose, and throat, have not developed into strong departments compared to eye and orthopedics, which have separate status.

It is evident that eye diseases constitute a separate entity and the needs of the school and public are best served by a separate department.

With very few exceptions, or under very special circumstances such as endowments and the like, those departments not separated from surgery have not thrived.

Since there is no example of a medical school in the world in which the eye department is integrated with neurological diseases, there seems to be no question that the eye portion should be separated from the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness.

Those new medical schools in which ophthalmology has become outstanding as a separate department from surgery include the University of Miami, University of Florida, and University of Washington.

The reason they have thrived is because they have been able to attract strong young departmental leaders with foresight, who can develop good research and training programs.

This same relation seems to exist, in my mind, in the NINDB, where, because of the failure to separate eye from neurological diseases, an ophthalmologist director has not been obtained.

I certainly would not accept the position of director of the eye program in the NINDB, if it were offered, for the reason that I do not think that eye research and training can develop under the present organizational arrangement, even if the National Advisory Council of the NINDB is changed to include more proper representation of ophthalmology.