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LOCAL

# Doctor's quick thinking helps save some vision for man who woke up blind in one eye

A thankful Loretto man urged people to seek emergency care for sudden blindness.

By Zoë Jackson (<https://www.startribune.com/zoe-jackson/6370408/>) Star Tribune |

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When a former photographer woke up one February morning unable to see out of his right eye, he panicked. He had always been a visual person, thinking in images instead of words long after his career as a food photographer ended.

"I was terrified. ... Everything about my life was visual," said Jerry Robb of Loretto. "Going blind has always been my nightmare."

Robb's vision in his right eye was completely black. He had visited his eye doctor the day before, when his vision began to go dark at the corners. But the optometrist saw nothing wrong with his eye and told him it might go away.

The next morning, with Robb blind in one eye, his wife jumped into action and searched for ophthalmologists online. It was a Saturday, so many offices were closed.

Then someone directed them to a doctor at Hennepin Healthcare who was on vacation. Even on the ski slopes, Dr. Anne Abel, a faculty member in ophthalmology, arranged for a team to see Robb.

When he arrived at the hospital later that morning, Robb, 73, was wheeled to a team of doctors that made him feel like the president of a small country, he said. Then, third-year ophthalmology resident Dr. Laurence Ducker walked into his exam room with a cart full of expensive eye exam equipment stuffed inside hardware store tool boxes, making Robb laugh.

Ducker examined Robb's eyes and came to the conclusion that it was probably giant cell arteritis, or GCA, a rare autoimmune disease that affects older adults and is seen most commonly in women.



SHARI L. GROSS, STAR TRIBUNE

Jerry Robb had a follow-up visit with Dr. Laurence Ducker, whose quick thinking saved Robb from going completely blind, at Hennepin

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