



**Robert Machemer, MD (1933-2009)** earned his medical degree in 1959 from the University of Freiburg, Germany. In 1966 Dr. Machemer joined the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, FL as a Research Fellow. After one year, he was made a full-time faculty member. In 1978, Dr. Machemer was recruited to the Department of Ophthalmology at Duke University where he served as its Chairman until 1991. He retired as a Professor of Ophthalmology at Duke University in 1998.

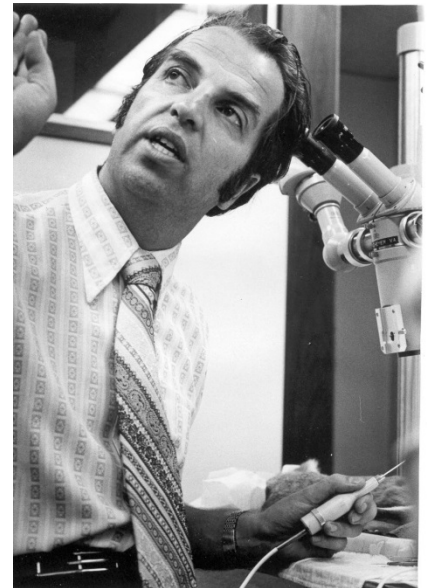
During his professional career Dr. Machemer focused on retinal detachment and proliferative vitreoretinal diseases. His work led to innovations in surgical technique and instrumentation.

Dr. Machemer was the first to establish an experimental model of retinal detachment. He used this model to analyze a major complication of retinal detachment called proliferative vitreoretinopathy (PVR). His work in this area is the basis of understanding of the disease today.

Dr. Machemer is best known for his development of the pars plana vitrectomy (1970). For this procedure, he created the [vitreous infusion suction cutter \(VISC\)](#) to remove diseased vitreous and intraocular scar tissue from the eye. His techniques are now the most commonly performed procedure in vitreoretinal surgery.

Dr. Machemer's creative work and leadership in vitreoretinal surgery was recognized throughout the world with a long list of professional awards and special recognitions including the 2003 American Academy of Ophthalmology Laureate Award, membership in the Jules Gonin Club, [the G.B. Bietti Award Medal](#) and more.

[In 2009 Dr. Machemer sat down to talk about his life and career in for the Museum of Vision Oral History Project.](#)



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