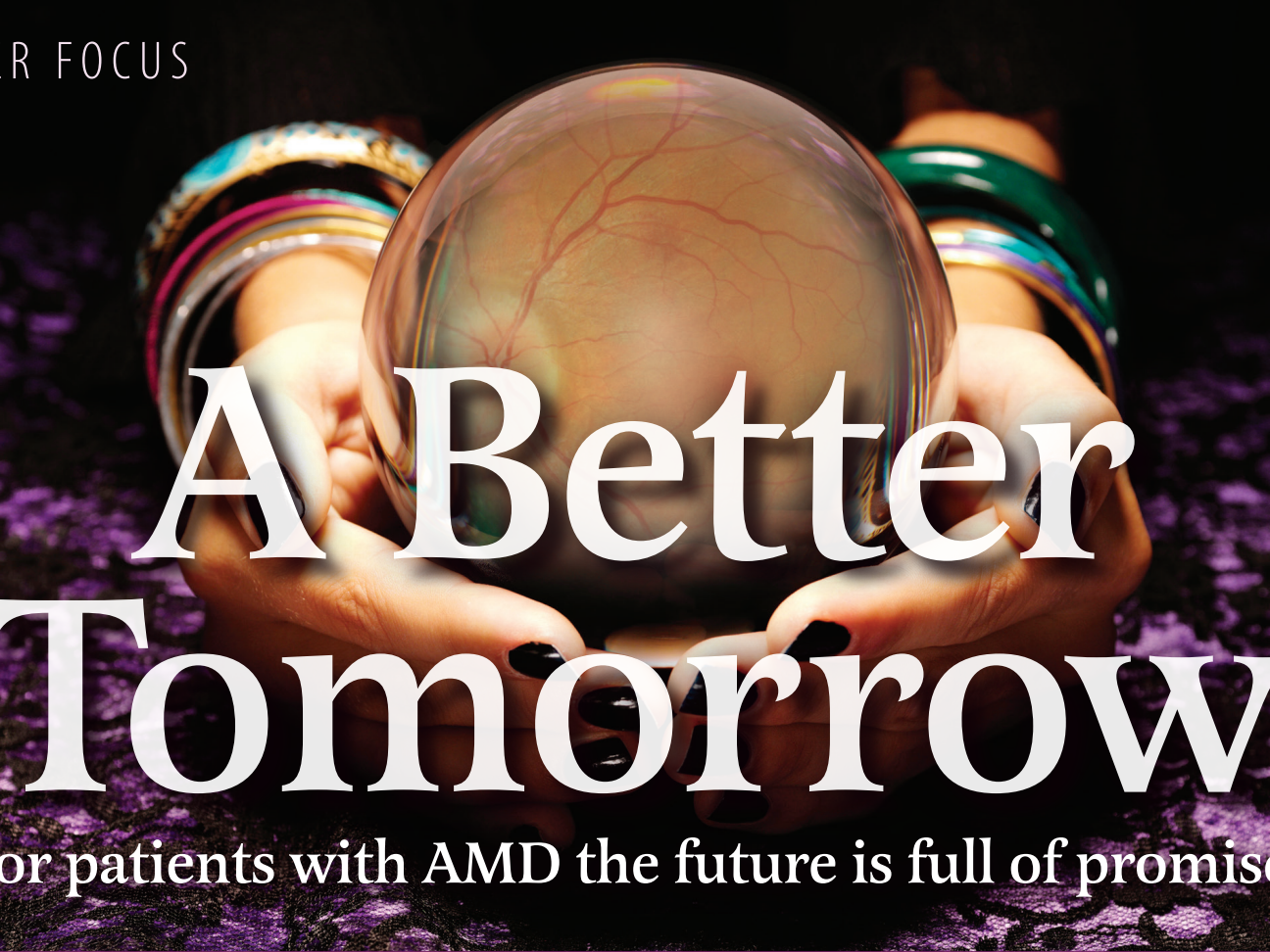




A Better Tomorrow

For patients with AMD the future is full of promise.

Before my debut into this world, my mother's parents divorced and each later remarried. For me, having three sets of grandparents was normal, but I was no fool—I knew I had hit the jackpot with Nan and Peapop, Nana and Pappy, and Grandmom and Grandpop. I was showered with that much more love and attention—and I also benefited from an extra dose of presents on birthdays and holidays.

Fast forward to today, and I am happy to report that two of my six grandparents are still alive and going strong. Perhaps not surprisingly, age-related macular degeneration (AMD) plays a big part in both of their lives.

Nana was a nurse, which is fitting, given her thoughtful and loving nature. She took me to see Annie On Ice and to my first play (*City of Angels* starring Barry Williams). Now in her 90s, she has dry AMD in one eye, resulting in rather poor vision. Not to be outdone, her fellow eye has a cataract. Unfortunately, her ophthalmologist doesn't want to remove the cataract for fear of something going wrong, thus leaving her with only the suboptimal vision of her AMD eye. She doesn't go out to see movies much anymore, but with family and friends constantly around she keeps a positive attitude.

Peapop served in the US Air Force military police, and after his service he became a plumber. He built a sandbox for me in his yard, made forts out of snow for me and my friends in the winter, and is the reason I love to garden. Now in his late 80s he has wet AMD in both eyes and has been receiving intravitreal anti-VEGF injections for more than a year. His memory isn't what it used to be, and he sometimes forgets his appointments, but the treatment seems to be doing its job holding off progression of the disease. One thing is certain: It's going to take more than AMD to stop him.

It may be too late to expect any meaningful difference in my grandparents' lives, but recent developments in the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of both wet and dry AMD are cause enough for optimism. For future generations dealing with the manifestations of this disease, the promise of a better tomorrow is within reach. ■

— Karen Roman, Editor-in-Chief