Introduction

Afros, dreadlocks, skinheads, hippies, spikes, braids, Samson, Goldilocks, Rapunzel, and “Hair” the musical? It would be difficult to underestimate the importance of hair in our society. Despite this, however, there are relatively few physicians and scientists who devote their practice and research to the study of hair loss (alopecia). Nevertheless, in the last century enormous progress has been made in the diagnosis and treatment of many disorders that eventuate in alopecia (Fig. 1).

This issue of *Seminars in Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery* is devoted to summarizing our current state of knowledge in the diagnosis and management of hair loss.

An editor could not hope for a more talented group of contributing authors. I would like to thank them all for sharing their expertise in this forum. In addition, thanks go out to Procter and Gamble International for an unrestricted educational grant that has resulted in the publication of many of these images in color. A special thank you also is due to David Whiting, MD, whose diligence helped make the grant a reality. Lastly, thank you to Dr. Kevin McElwee (<http://www.keratin.com>), whose collection of historic alopecia advertisements could fill a very entertaining coffee table book all by itself.

Shawn E. Cowper, MD
Guest Editor

Figure 1 From the collection of Dr. Kevin McElwee.