

# Eye operation fails to restore vision

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Ron Milliman's efforts to regain his sight have taken a turn for the worse.

First he couldn't see and then he could. Now he is blind again.

The associate professor of business will regain his vision in November, doctors promise, but no one knows how long it will last.

In December a plastic 'button' was planted in Milliman's eye which duplicated his iris, pupil, cornea and lens.

The operation was successful and he was able to see fairly well for a time.

However, scar tissue formed, causing him to lose his sight again.

"This was one problem we didn't expect," Milliman said. "It is very frustrating to know that although the transplant took and the eye is internally sound, scar tissue keeps me from being able to see."

Three weeks ago another operation was performed in which tissue taken from the inside of his mouth was grafted to the eye.

"They used the skin from my mouth because it is closest to that which is in the eye," Milliman said, "and they hope it will not scar."

All that is left now is the waiting.

"I plan to go to Houston the Thursday before Thanksgiving," he said, "and I will be able to see after that. I don't know for how long."

Milliman was blinded at the age of 17 in a wrestling accident and has undergone seven operations to correct the condition.

Although he never gave up hope of seeing again, he hasn't allowed his lack of vision to handicap him.

He graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a 3.8 grade-point average on a 4.0 system and has completed much of his graduate work at Arizona State.

Milliman doesn't seem bitter about his blindness but the transition from sighted to sightless isn't easy.

"The memory of how things look is very fresh," he said. "I went to get the mail the other day and I couldn't find the mailbox. I was used to just looking at the name. Now I have to count the other boxes to find mine."

"If the operation proves unsuccessful, I don't know what I will do. But I'm not willing to stop trying."