

TRIBUTE TO PROF CYNTHIA GOH

Text by Dr Yeo Sow Nam, Chairman, Chapter of Pain Medicine Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore
Photos by National Cancer Centre Singapore and 8th ASEAPS Congress Committee

Losing a great teacher leaves an indescribable gap in one's heart, but to lose one who is a comrade and great friend at the same time makes it an even bigger gaping hole on all levels. That was how I felt when I heard about Prof Cynthia Goh's departure from this world on 13 February 2022.

She was respected by doctors in Singapore and overseas. Our world truly lost a shining star, a global leader in palliative care.

I had known her for 22 years, ever since I started the project of building Singapore General Hospital's Pain Management Centre. I learnt that she was as inspirational and passionate about palliative care as I am passionate about pain management, and our shared vision to alleviate suffering brought us to work closely together.

With Prof Goh as the forerunner, I went on to succeed her as the president

of the Pain Association of Singapore (PAS). We journeyed together and went on to start the Association of Southeast Asian Pain Societies (ASEAPS) together. Her passion and drive were inspirational.

In September 2021, she called to share with me that she was battling cancer. We prayed for each other and I told her she could reach out to me any time that I could be of help. At that time, she still had the energy and, despite her own battle against cancer, was concerned about the health issues of another palliative care physician, whom we both knew well.

In January 2022, she and several palliative care colleagues called me to assist with her pain management. I was humbled and privileged to have the opportunity to ensure that she was provided with adequate and the best possible pain management intervention. With her pain relieved,



the shine on her face returned, and she went on to share her endearing spirit with all around her. Standing on the shoulder of this giant, I shared the long-term vision she had in pain management. It is truly my privilege to have known her.

She has pressed on and run a good race, leaving us a great legacy. We have benefited from her work that was driven by her vision, compassion and conviction.

I have no doubt she is in a much better place, devoid of pain and suffering, with greater joy. My colleagues and I in the Chapter of Pain Medicine Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore; PAS and ASEAPS will dearly miss our respected teacher and friend, Prof Cynthia Goh. ♦

Legend

1. Prof Goh (top row, third from left) at the 8th ASEAPS Congress Pain Camp 2019

