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# Citation

## FOR

## PROF HO LAI YUN

Text by Clinical Asst Prof Benny Loo Kai Guo



I am deeply honoured to deliver this citation for Prof Ho Lai Yun for his conferment of the SMA Honorary Membership 2025. I shall speak on his leadership and contributions to neonatology and developmental paediatrics, medical fraternity and advocacy of child's rights.

### Neonatology and developmental paediatrics

Prof Ho Lai Yun graduated from the University of Singapore in 1973, obtained his Master of Medicine (Paediatrics) in 1977, and became a Fellow of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore (AMS) in 1981. He was awarded the Commonwealth Scholarship for training in neonatology at The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada in 1981. He was the Founding Head of the Department of Neonatology in Singapore General Hospital (SGH) from 1986 to 2004 and the Department of Child Development at KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) from 1997 to 2007. In 2013, Prof Ho was conferred Emeritus Consultant of SGH, Singapore Health Services (SingHealth). He established many perinatal programmes

which have become routine practices in Singapore; these include the universal newborn hearing and cord blood thyroid screening programmes. Under the recommendations of the Advisory Council on the Disabled, he was appointed Director of the Child Development Programme (CDP), Ministry of Health (MOH) in 1991. In this role, he started the Development Assessment Clinic (DAC) with humble beginnings at a small space along the corridor of Bowyer Block at SGH and formed a multidisciplinary team. By 1995, DAC was approved by the MOH as an established programme in public health service. He continued to expand DAC and developed a comprehensive early childhood intervention ecosystem linking the Ministries of Health, Education, Social and Family Development, and Law.

Prof Ho has also shaped the medical training in paediatric medicine and neonatology. He is responsible for establishing neonatology as the first paediatric subspecialty to be recognised by the Specialist Accreditation Board in Singapore. This led to the accreditation of five other paediatric subspecialty

trainings in subsequent years to meet the needs and challenges of child life and health in Singapore. He was Co-Chairman of the Joint Committee on Specialist Training, MOH from 2006 to 2008, and Chairman of the Residency Advisory Committee (Paediatrics) from 2013 to 2021 and the Paediatric Subspecialties Training Committee from 2016 to 2021. Prof Ho has been Clinical Professor at Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS) since 2005 and was Associate Dean of SGH and Outram Campus from 2004 to 2013. He has also been Professor at Duke-NUS Medical School since 2006. In 2022, he was inducted into the Hall of Master Academic Clinicians of the medical school. He received the National Outstanding Clinician Mentor Award from MOH in 2010, and the SingHealth Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019. In 2023, he was conferred Professor Emeritus, NUS.

### Medical fraternity

Prof Ho joined the SMA in 1973 after graduating from the University of Singapore and received the SMA Merit Award in 2017. He was the President of Singapore Paediatric Society from 1987 to 1991 and the Perinatal Society of Singapore for three terms. He was also elected as Master of AMS from 2006 to 2008. He has been appointed Senior Consultant, MOH with the Manpower Standards and Development Division since 2006. He was Chairman of the Sale of Infant Foods Ethics Committee, Singapore, MOH from 1994 to 2018. He was appointed member of the



Singapore Medical Council (SMC) from 2005 to 2011, and he has chaired the SMC's Schools Committee from 2007 to 2011, Aesthetic Practice Oversight Committee from 2008 to 2021, and continues to be in the Continuing Medical Education Coordinating Committee and the Panel of Chairmen of the Disciplinary Tribunal since 2003 and 2012, respectively. In 2018, he delivered the 16th Haridas Memorial Lecture for the Singapore Paediatric Society. Prof Ho is also well recognised regionally and internationally. In 2003, the Asia-Pacific Paediatric Association awarded him the Outstanding Paediatrician in Asia Award.

Prof Ho has published widely and serves as the scientific reviewer of many medical journals of high impact factors. He has been a member of the Centre for Holistic Initiatives for Learning and Development under NUS since 2022. He is on the Grant Review Panel of A\*STAR and the National Medical Research Council. He currently serves as clinician-mentor at SGH and KKH. He chairs the SingHealth Pharmacy and Therapeutics Council, Centralised Institutional Review Board A, and is an advisor of the Research Ethics Compliance Council. He is also on the Clinical Ethics Committee and Transplant Ethics Committee of SGH under the Human Organ Transplant Act, Singapore.

### Advocacy of child's rights

Prof Ho has more than forty years of voluntary social and community service contributions to children's welfare and protection, education and development, and the disability sector. He joined the Singapore Children's Society (SCS) in 1988 and has been its Vice-Chairman since 2002. He received the Ruth Wong Award in 2002, SCS's highest voluntary service award. He was a Services Committee member of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) from 2002 to 2018 and was on the NCSS Board from 2004 to 2010. He chaired the Voluntary Welfare Organisations Capability Fund Panel from 2008 to 2022. In 2008, he was appointed Justice of the Peace. He has been a board member of SPD (formerly Society for the Physically Disabled) since 2012, chairing its Services Committee and was appointed its Vice-President in 2022. He has also volunteered with Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), contributing to the Inter-Ministry Child Abuse and Neglect Management Networks in setting the national standards for child protection, the Standing Committee on Disability, and chairs the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children. He also sought support to establish the Early Childhood Development

Agency and was appointed as a board member of the National Institute of Early Childhood Development since 2019, ensuring provision of high quality of early preschool and special education for children in need.

For his contributions, he was awarded the Henry C. Kempe Distinguished Career Award by the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in 2008. In 2015, he received his 35-year Long Service Award from the NCSS and the Outstanding Volunteer Award from the MSF. He was honoured with the National Day Public Service Medal in 2006, Public Service Star Award in 2010, and the Public Service Star (Bar) Award in 2021 for services to Singapore's social service sector.

### Conclusion

For more than three decades, Prof Ho has been the driving force in building an inclusive early childhood intervention ecosystem involving the collaborations of the health, education and social services in partnership with families, a model uniquely Singapore. Prof Ho is an unassuming gentleman, an inspiring mentor, a visionary trailblazer and a beacon with a holy aura. It is my honour to present to you Prof Ho Lai Yun for the SMA Honorary Membership 2025. ♦

### Legend

1. Clinical Asst Prof B Loo delivering the citation at the SMA Annual Dinner
2. Prof Ho LY receiving his award from Ms Lai Wei Lin

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