

# Conferment of SMA Honorary Membership Citation for Dr Chew Chin Hin *Delivered by Prof Chee Yam Cheng*

**D**r Chew Chin Hin, 71 years young this year, is a man for all seasons. His father, the late Dr Benjamin Chew himself, had a distinguished career and contributed much to medicine in Singapore. Anna his wife, too is a medical doctor, courted from the days in Hong Kong University where he graduated MBBS in 1955. He did his surgical house job at Queen Mary's, then returned to Singapore as House Physician before proceeding to physician training. In 1961, he passed the membership exam, climbed the local ranks through Senior Registrar to Consultant and was made foundation Head of Medical Unit IV at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (which upon restructuring in 1992, became the present Department of Rheumatology, Allergy & Immunology).

In 1979, he was appointed as Medical Superintendent of TTSH, and 3 years later, moved to the Ministry of Health Headquarters as the Deputy Director of Medical Services, a post he held till retirement in 1991 at age 60 years. For his illustrious and dedicated government service, he was conferred on National Day in 1982, the Public Administration Gold Medal for his contributions to medicine, research and medical education, and again in 1991, the Long Service Medal.

As a clinician (Cecil as he is also known to his friends) his interests were in chest diseases; very much aligned to what TTSH was all about in those years. Tuberculosis was a threat and

he contributed much to TB research conducted in Singapore in his capacity as the Chairman, TB Research Committee, which collaborated with the British Medical Research Council to produce landmark papers on short course chemotherapy regimes which are used as standard therapy today. Publishing first in the Bulletin of the Union Against TB, then Tubercle and finally the American Review of Respiratory Diseases, he authorised detailing the clinical trials and long-term follow-up of Singapore patients given 4 or 6 months of continuous regimens or intermittent regimens with 3 or more drugs. His great stature as a result made him most suited to being elected the President of the 26<sup>th</sup> World Congress on TB and Respiratory Diseases in 1986, and President and Chairman of the organising committee for the 19<sup>th</sup> Eastern Region Conference of the International Union Against TB and Lung Disease held in Singapore in 1997. He was also once the President of the Singapore Thoracic Society.

As a physician, he was elected Fellow of the Academy of Medicine in 1963, and climbed through the Council ranks to become Master in 1973 and it was he who conferred the Honorary Fellowship on Mr Lee Kuan Yew, then PM of Singapore. Respected as he still is today, he served in the Singapore Medical Council from 1972 for 21 years. From 1994 till 2000, he was Chairman of the National Medical Ethics Committee and initiated

the Advanced Medical Directive. He also served in the Civil Aviation Medical Board, as member, chairman and advisor from 1982 to 1993. Sought after as an orator, he has delivered the First Seah Cheng Siang Memorial Lecture in 1991, the First TTSH Lecture in 1997, and in 1998, the SMA Lecture.

A roving medical ambassador for Singapore, he has built strong medical relations with physicians in the UK, (especially Edinburgh), Australasian, American and Hong Kong Colleges. He was aptly conferred the college Gold Medal by both the Australians and Scots who love him dearly, and also by the Hong Kong College recently – a timely remembrance of his medical roots.

Now some 12 years post-retirement, Cecil is by no means calling it quits. His contributions to medical education, for which he was already recognised 20 years ago with the Gold Public Administration Medal, have actually increased manifold. He continues to be medical examiner for MBBS, MMed, MRCP (Ireland) and the new PACES Exam. At the Graduate School of Medical Studies, NUS, he is today its Honorary Postgraduate Advisor, having been the Deputy Director till last year. His appointments to the Specialist Accreditation Board (Ministry of Health), Specialist Training Committee in Internal Medicine and the Joint Committee on Specialist Training, run until 2004. He remains Honorary Consultant to NUH and SATA, and Emeritus Consultant to TTSH. Without his tremendous efforts in medical education these last 10 years, it is unlikely that the joint physician and paediatrician exams with the UK colleges would have materialised.

He is today a happy grandfather and golfer.

I have given you a picture of a doctor par excellence worthy of the Honorary Membership of the SMA. Mr President, I present you Dr Cecil Chew Chin Hin for conferment of this prestigious award. ■



*Prof Low Cheng Hock and Dr Chew Chin Hin.*



*Prof Chee Yam Cheng.*