

# Citation for Dr Feng Pao Hsii

By A/Prof Bernard Thong



**DR FENG** Pao Hsii obtained his MBBS from the University of Malaya, Singapore Division in 1960. In 1964, he was awarded the Singapore Government Colombo Plan Scholarship to the University of Glasgow in Scotland, where he passed the membership examination of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow within six months. In 1969, he was awarded the World Health Organization Research Fellowship to Israel.

By the early 1970s, Dr Feng's passion had gradually switched from Nephrology to Rheumatology, and in particular, lupus. His career as a high flyer was reflected in his promotion to Senior Registrar, followed by Physician Grade G in 1971, and then Senior Physician Grade D by 1985. During this time, he had worked at Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and Toa Payoh Hospital before taking over from Prof Chew Chin Hin in 1979 as Head of Department of Medicine IV, Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), the predecessor of the present Department of Rheumatology, Allergy and Immunology.

In July 1986, Dr Feng proposed to Prof Chew, who was then Deputy Director of Medical Services at the Ministry of Health, to develop Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology further as "it had advanced from 'aches and pains' to one dealing with the 'diverse nature of autoimmunity' like lupus". The document concluded, "As the traditional and more lucrative specialties like cardiology are being filled, bright and young doctors will be looking for new and challenging options. The specialties of rheumatology and clinical immunology offer them such a choice as the new medical

wave of the future. Enthusiasm of the many doctors has been fired; it is now left to the Ministry to bring this to fruition. Signed Prof Feng as Head of Medical Unit IV TTSH; Dr Chee Yam Cheng, Senior Registrar MU III; Dr Jimmy Sng, Senior Immunologist, Pathology Department; and Dr Daniel Leong, Medical Director, TTSH."

Thus the specialty of Rheumatology was born 28 years ago with a Head of Department, two consultants and two registrars in the department at TTSH. We now have 52 accredited rheumatologists working in the two Rheumatology departments at TTSH and SGH; the Rheumatology division at National University Hospital; the medical departments at Alexandra Hospital/Jurong Health Services, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Changi General Hospital; and the private sector. However, our numbers remain a far cry from the number of cardiologists island-wide.

During his career, Dr Feng held appointments as Chairman, Medical Board and Chairman of the Division of Medicine at TTSH. In 1996, TTSH awarded him the title of Emeritus Consultant in recognition of his achievements. He has led the Rheumatology fraternity in Singapore and the region, in his roles as President of the Singapore Society of Immunology, Allergy and Rheumatology; Chairman of the National Arthritis Foundation; and President of the Asia Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology (APLAR). In 1997, Singapore was placed on the world map of Rheumatology when the World Congress of Rheumatology was hosted here, with Dr Feng serving as Chairman of the organising committee. He has also been Editor of the *Singapore Medical*



**Main** Dr Ng Swee Cheng receiving the SMA Honorary Membership from Minister Ng Eng Hen on Dr Feng Pao Hsii's behalf, as A/Prof Chin Jing Jih looks on

**Inset** Dr Feng speaking during the SMA National Medical Convention: Breaking Barriers in Pain Management in May 2007

*Journal, Annals of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore, Journal of Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology, Lupus, and Editor-in-Chief of the APLAR Journal of Rheumatology.*

Dr Feng has contributed much to undergraduate and postgraduate medical training, and specifically to the development of postgraduate training programmes run by the Academy of Medicine, Singapore (AMS) and the School of Postgraduate Studies of the National University of Singapore (NUS). His academic achievements include giving the Galloway Memorial Lecture in 1983; Seah Cheng Siang Memorial Lecture in 2000; and producing over 150 publications in international, regional and local journals. In 1986, the National University of Singapore awarded him an MD on completion of his thesis, "Systemic Lupus Erythematosus in Singapore - A Clinical Study". NUS appointed him associate clinical professor in the Faculty of Medicine in July 1981 and a full clinical professor in June 1992.

He was past Chairman of the Chapter of Physicians, and was actively involved with AMS, having held the posts of Censor, Bedel, Scribe and Assistant Master. For his

numerous contributions, dedication to service and country, Dr Feng was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Silver) in 1986, the Public Administration Medal (Gold) in 1997, and the National Healthcare Group Lee Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002.

In 2000, Dr Feng was the SMA Lecturer and the title of his talk was "Medicine in the Digital Era - Opportunities and Challenges". He said, "Someday, doctors will be measured not by the number of patients we see, but by the quality of care we provide; patients will gain ownership over their health and healthcare, with unlimited access to medical information and their records, all current medical information will be available immediately as we decipher our patients' problems. And when that day comes, we will be our patients' consultants, advisers, confidantes and caregivers - their true personal physicians."

Visionary, mentor, administrator, academic and friend. It is with immense pride and honour that the Rheumatology community celebrates the conferment of SMA Honorary Membership to Dr Feng Pao Hsii, our Father of Rheumatology. ■