

Citation for President, Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam

By Dr Wong Tien Hua

THE SMA Honorary Membership is the highest honour that the Association confers to individuals who have made significant contributions to the medical profession or the nation. It is a great privilege and honour for me to read the citation for Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam, the Honorary Member elected into SMA this year.

Dr Tan graduated from the University of Singapore with first class honours in physics in 1962 and went on to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he received a Master of Science degree. He later obtained a PhD in applied mathematics at the University of Adelaide.

Dr Tan was elected as a Member of Parliament in 1979, and was appointed Senior Minister of State in the Ministry of Education. From October 1983 to January 1985, Dr Tan served concurrently as the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Trade and Industry. From January 1985 to December 1991, he served as the Minister for Education. Dr Tan was also the Minister-in-charge for the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological Institute between 1981 and 1983. As Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Tan oversaw higher education in Singapore between 1995 and 2005.

As Minister for Education and Deputy Prime Minister overseeing higher education, Dr Tan championed the development of higher education in Singapore, including medical education. Under Dr Tan's leadership, our universities became more globalised, but at the same time, they were also made more accessible to Singaporeans regardless of their family or financial background.

Dr Tan was a strong advocate for scientific and medical research. As chairman of the Life Sciences Ministerial Committee set up in 2000, Dr Tan played a major role in Singapore's push into the biomedical sciences sector.

When Dr Tan was Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence, his active

engagement with healthcare institutions locally and abroad significantly advanced medical education and research in Singapore. He also played a pivotal role in forging a strategic alliance between NUS and Duke University for the establishment of Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School in 2005.

Dr Tan later served as the chairman of the National Research Foundation from 2006 to 2011, during which various measures to enhance Singapore's intellectual and human capital for research and development were initiated. By encouraging stronger linkages between healthcare delivery and medical teaching and research, Dr Tan contributed to the advancement of clinically related research capabilities in Singapore.

Since being sworn in as the seventh President of the Republic of Singapore in 2011, Dr Tan has continued to champion the development of the research sector as Patron of the Global Young Scientist Summit (GYSS@one-north). As President, he also supported fundraising efforts by healthcare institutions, graced numerous healthcare events, and always sought to show appreciation to our medical, research and allied health professionals and encourage them to further their pursuits.

Dr Tony Tan is an extraordinary leader with great foresight, who played a major role in the development of Singapore as a biomedical hub and a centre of excellence in medical education and research. It is because of the support and vision of leaders such as Dr Tan that Singapore could build up a dynamic and diverse medical education and research system that serves to advance and improve medical care for current and future generations of Singaporeans.

Fellow SMA Members, guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is my honour to present to you, SMA Honorary Member, Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam. ■



SMA
Annual Dinner

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