



A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean

# Citation for A/Prof Lim Lean Huat

By A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean

the nation as a generalist physician, a leader of the profession and a passionate teacher.

## A COMPLETE PHYSICIAN

In 1970, four years after graduation, Lean Huat joined a group practice, Trythall Hoy Davies (Trythall). Trythall occupied a niche as a multi-specialty private practice that included surgeons, obstetricians, anaesthetists and even a pathologist with practices in the business districts and Jurong industrial estate.

As a generalist, he helped to plan and manage the original 60-bed Jurong Hospital which opened its doors in 1972 to serve factory workers. He treated injured workers in the fledging industries there and vividly remembers the Spyros oil tanker, which exploded while being repaired in 1978, killing 76 workers and severely injuring scores of others. He was a true family physician: seeing children and adults as outpatients and inpatients, and even delivering babies in hospitals.

For three decades, Lean Huat served Trythall as a senior partner and rotated as chairman before leaving to set up his own practice in Robinson Road in 1998.

## A LEADER OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

His engagement with the FM fraternity started in 1974 when he was awarded the diplomate membership of the then College of General Practitioners. From 1976, he served in six councils of the FM College in various capacities before assuming the mantle of president in 1999. In recognition of his contributions, Lean Huat

## PHYSICIAN, LEADER AND TEACHER

When the President of the SMA, Dr Wong Tien Hua, asked me to deliver this citation to honour A/Prof Lim Lean Huat with the SMA Honorary Membership, I thought I was well equipped. I have known Lean Huat for three decades and he is a doyen of the family medicine (FM) fraternity. I soon felt inadequate as I learnt about his many involvements beyond FM.

Lean Huat studied medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Singapore in Sepoy Lines and graduated in 1966 with an MBBS. However, he was often found in the other university campus at Bukit Timah as well. He found time to play rugby and was the president of the University of Singapore

Athletics Union. He found student politics challenging too and was the vice president of the University of Singapore Students' Union. And, more than all the above, he found love in the law faculty.

Soon after graduation, this Ipoh boy married Singaporean girl Doreen and took up Singapore citizenship. This union bore fruits for the medical profession. Their three children, Tracey, Darryl and Jeffrey, as well as their respective spouses, are all doctors. The union bore fruits for the nation too. Together, Doreen and Lean Huat's professional careers followed the Singapore trajectory from third world to first. Doreen, a lawyer, did pioneering legal work for Jurong Town Corporation and then helmed Singapore Airlines as vice president (Legal – Singapore Airlines Group). Lean Huat served



**From left:** A/Prof Lim Lean Huat, Minister Vivian Balakrishnan and Dr Wong Tien Hua during the presentation of SMA Honorary Membership

was awarded the fellowship of the College in 1992 and the Albert and Mary Lim medal in 2009. When the Academy of Medicine admitted physicians practising the specialty of FM in 2014, Lean Huat was in the pioneering group admitted as Fellows of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore (FAMS).

As a leader of the profession, he was called to serve our medical institutions. He was in the Singapore Medical Council for 11 years from 1994 to 2005, a board member of the Singapore Health Services Pte Ltd for six years from 2003 to 2009, a trustee of the SingHealth Foundation since 2010 and has served in many national committees convened by the Ministry of Health. He was also an ambassador for the medical profession to the Law Society of Singapore and served in the Inquiry and Disciplinary Committee from 1994 to 2005.

Despite these commitments, Lean Huat also found time to offer his services pro bono at

the Kim Seng Community Centre free night clinic from 1981 to 2003 and at St Luke's Hospital Medical Advisory Committee since 2005. He also started an orphanage called "Shadrach Home" in Tamil Nadu in 2012.

### **A PASSIONATE FM TEACHER**

It is being a teacher of FM that Lean Huat is most passionate about. Lean Huat became an undergraduate teacher when FM was first introduced in our medical school and has been a tutor to doctors at various levels since the respective FM programmes were inaugurated. He was appointed adjunct associate professor of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine in 1995 and continues with his teaching appointments today. From 2000 to 2012, Lean Huat also taught in the School of Pharmacy at the bachelor and doctorate levels.

Lean Huat has contributed to the medical literature in the domain of FM. His latest publication in collaboration with Dr Philip

Eng, a respiratory physician, on pneumococcal vaccination in Singapore, was published in 2014 in the *International Journal of General Medicine*.

I give this citation with pride as a member of the FM fraternity. However, on a personal level, I have some trepidation. At 75 years of age, Lean Huat is still as energetic as ever, running a busy solo practice and still very committed to teaching. Though I am ten years younger, it is challenging to emulate him! Lean Huat is a good role model, an amiable colleague and a trustworthy friend to many of us. President of the SMA and colleagues, I present A/Prof Lim Lean Huat as worthy of being conferred the SMA Honorary Membership, in recognition of his stellar contributions as a physician, a leader and a teacher of our honourable profession. ♦

# Citation for Prof Ong Yong Yau

By A/Prof Chow Wan Cheng



A/Prof Chow Wan Cheng

Prof Ong Yong Yau completed his undergraduate medical education in Adelaide, Australia in 1966 and his Master of Medicine training in Internal Medicine in Singapore in 1972. He was later conferred the Fellowship of both the Royal Australian College of Physicians and the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh). He has also been appointed as the Clinical Professor of Medicine, National University of Singapore, since 1998.

Prof Ong's illustrious career that spans almost 50 years has seen him through the ranks of the public healthcare service. Starting off as

a medical officer in the Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Prof Ong joined Medical Unit III in the Singapore General Hospital (SGH) in 1979 as a consultant, under the leadership of the late Prof Seah Cheng Siang.

Prof Ong received his specialty training in respiratory medicine in the UK, initially under the Colombo Plan in thoracic medicine and later supported by the Health Manpower Development Plan in 1978 and 1986, respectively. He later formed and became the founding head of the Department of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine (RCCM) in SGH. After serving as the head of RCCM Department for more than ten years (1987 to 1998), he went on to become the chairman of the Division of Medicine; the chairman of Medical Board; and the chief executive officer (CEO) of SGH, in succession.

After relinquishing from his role as CEO of SGH, Prof Ong continues to serve in different capacities in the

public healthcare system. Among many of his other contributions, he served as the chair of the Medical Training Committee and the National Medical Ethics Committee in the Ministry of Health. Prof Ong was the recipient of the Public Service (Gold) Award. He is currently the emeritus consultant as well as the chair of the Bioethics Committee in SGH. He is also the senior advisor to the Singapore Health Services (SingHealth). Most of all, Prof Ong remains a caring clinician to his patients and a passionate teacher to many of the young doctors. It is in recognition of these great qualities of Prof Ong that, in April 2016, the Medicine Academic Clinical Programme, under the framework of SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre, named him as the Master Physician for Internal Medicine. It is therefore most befitting for Prof Ong Yong Yau to be conferred the SMA Honorary Membership, as he is certainly the pride of our fraternity. ◆



From left: Prof Ong Yong Yau, Minister Vivian Balakrishnan and Dr Wong Tien Hua during the presentation of SMA Honorary Membership



Prof Wong Hee Kit

Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Wong Tien Hua, President of the SMA, distinguished guests, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great privilege and honour for me to deliver this citation for Professor P Balasubramaniam in honour of his election to Honorary Membership of SMA. I am one of the lucky few who have gone through his tutelage and mentorship, and have benefitted immensely from my years with him at the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, National University of Singapore (NUS) and the National University Hospital (NUH).

Born in Malaysia, "Prof Bala", as he is fondly called, studied medicine in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He did his surgical training in the UK and joined the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur where he became the professor and head of Orthopaedic Surgery. In 1981, he joined the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at NUS and NUH. He also served as the vice dean of the Faculty of

# Citation for Prof P Balasubramaniam

By Prof Wong Hee Kit

Medicine at NUS, founding head of the Spine Surgery at NUH, and deputy chairman of the Medical Board and director of Medical Affairs at NUH. He retired in 1994 at the age of 65.

Prof Bala is known to all of us in the orthopaedic community as a great teacher, mentor and role model. He has passionately taught and nurtured three generations of orthopaedic surgeons. In a recent interview in *SMA News* titled "On the Shoulders of Giants" (<https://goo.gl/VoeGEJ>), he spoke of his belief in imparting three things to his trainees. These are knowledge, skills and attitude. He emphasised that although knowledge and clinical skills at the bedside and in the operating theatre are important, "orthopaedics is not just about cutting and doing".

Having worked under him before as a junior member of the faculty, I shall give you a glimpse of Prof Bala's style

in teaching and mentoring. If you are operating with Prof Bala, you cannot be in the operating theatre without first reviewing the patient in detail. You need to write a summary in the case notes, in your own hand, on the results of your review; the indications for surgery; the surgical options and recommended procedure.

This is not just any summary, but a summary that meets Prof Bala's standard. Only then are you allowed to scrub to assist – and very often be rewarded by being asked to perform the surgery. After the surgery, you will need to stay behind until the patient returns to the ward; a review is done; a note entry completed; followed by a telephone call made to Prof Bala about the patient. No SMS or WhatsApp messages will do! With the long duration of spine surgeries, this usually means it is late at night. I soon realised that this is not just about training a young surgeon – it is for the safety of the patients too!

As you get your own cases as a consultant and progress with cases of greater complexity, Prof Bala will always be there with clinical and moral support. He will say, "Don't worry, I am here." He was sticking his neck out for me! He was not just teaching what he already knew, but supporting junior faculty in developing and reaching higher levels of surgical expertise.

Prof Bala is a great clinician, always stressing and demonstrating the importance of a good history and physical examination, without the overemphasis on investigations associated with high costs that we see so much of today. There are just too many examples of grateful patients who have shown their gratitude in so many different



*Minister Vivian Balakrishnan presenting the SMA Honorary Membership to Prof P Balasubramaniam*

ways, but I would like to indulge you with one particular act of gratitude I observed that will remain in my mind forever. A young man in his 20s from overseas had been having constant severe pain in his left foot for as long as he could remember. Prof Bala diagnosed an osteoid osteoma in his metatarsal bone and excised it. When we did the ward round the next morning, the patient asked Prof Bala to sit down on a chair and he knelt down, removed Prof Bala's socks and shoes, and kissed his foot! Can you beat that? For the first time in years, this patient no longer felt any pain and he was just so grateful.

Life has not been all plain sailing and Prof Bala has had his share of setbacks. It was a sad day in 1984 when Mrs Bala passed away. However, he soon picked himself up and had very ably balanced the responsibilities of a demanding academic practice and being both father and mother to his three children. His children have gone on to pursue successful careers in the medical and education fields, and he is now a proud grandfather of nine grandchildren.

These days, having successfully battled cancer and a serious heart ailment, he continues to teach

orthopaedic residents at his home once a week. Like all those before them, the residents will approach each of the teaching sessions with some anxiety and trepidation, given the high standards Prof Bala expects of them. However, they all know that they will be duly rewarded with the master's guidance to prepare them for their future.

Congratulations, Prof Bala, for a well-deserved SMA Honorary Membership Award! ◆