

# Citation for Prof Tan Cheng Lim

By Prof Ivy Ng

Prof Tan Cheng Lim is a well-respected paediatrician who has had a distinguished career, heading the largest Paediatric Department in Singapore for more than two decades and shaping the paediatric landscape as one of the early pioneers in the field.

Prof Tan graduated in Medicine from the University of Singapore in 1964. He was awarded the Colombo Plan Fellowship to Australia to train in Paediatrics and obtained his postgraduate qualifications at the Royal Australasian College for Physicians in 1969. He received subspecialty training in paediatric haematology and oncology at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, Australia. Soon after his return to Singapore in 1974, he was appointed Head of the Department of Paediatrics at Alexandra Hospital. In 1977, he assumed headship of the Government Department of Paediatrics at Singapore General Hospital. He played a critical role in transforming this Department to be the foundation for a Children's Hospital when in 1997, the new KK Women's and Children's Hospital opened. He served as the first Head of the considerably expanded Department and galvanised the development of subspecialty paediatric services in the Hospital. He was appointed Chairman of the Division of Medicine from 1999 till 2002 and since 2004, has been Emeritus Consultant and Associate Dean in KK Women's and Children's Hospital. He is also Clinical Professor at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore.

He has led and served on numerous committees, including as Chairman of the Expert Committee on Immunisation, Ministry of Health Singapore, President of the Singapore Paediatric Society, Chairman of the Chapter of Paediatricians, Academy of Medicine, member of the Complaints Panel, Singapore Medical Council and the KK Hospital Ethics Committee. He continues to serve as member of the SingHealth Institutional Review Board since 2009.

His awards have included the Albert Lim Award, College of General Practitioners Award 1983, Public Administration Medal (Silver) in 1984 and Ruth Wong Award in 1987. His active role in community service was recognised by the Kim Seng Community Clinic Long Service Awards in 1996 and 2003, and by the Singapore Children's Society Long Service Awards, Ministry of Community Development in 1998, 2001, 2003, 2008. The Healthcare Humanity Award was conferred on him in 2004 for his sustained selfless service to patients in public healthcare. His heart for the poor and underprivileged went beyond the shores of Singapore and he participated on numerous mission trips to the region.

Prof Tan has certainly left his mark in the field of Paediatrics in Singapore. He is known to be a dedicated educator, who has tirelessly trained generations of medical students and paediatricians. Those, like myself, who have had the good fortune to be mentored by him, testify to his calm and patient approach to students and trainees and his legendary gentle guidance through the years.

Above all, Prof Tan serves as a role model of a fine clinician, who demonstrates all the attributes needed to provide excellent medical care with empathy and compassion. He has numerous patients who are deeply indebted to the care he has given them and I quote one such patient who, together with her brother, were treated by him from infancy and who are now in their thirties. She writes, *"I do hope Prof Tan and his family are fine and blessed, given the infinite number of lives he has touched. To me, he has touched my life incredibly and our family is forever grateful to him. Although I used to fear him as a young child, just like any other young child would fear doctors, he was like a father to me as I grew up. My brother and I are doing well in our own professions now. Our quality of life has been really good and all this has been made possible, simply because we were blessed with a great doctor like him."* This is the simple testimony of one of the many lives that he has touched with his practice that now spans five decades.

It is with great pleasure that I present to you Professor Tan Cheng Lim for the conferment of the Honorary Membership of the Singapore Medical Association. **SMA**



► Prof Ivy Ng delivering the citation for Prof Tan Cheng Lim



► Prof Tan Cheng Lim and Dr Chong Yeh Woei