

DUKE-NUS

GRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL LAUNCHES ADVISORY COLLEGES

By Gracia Ong



Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School is proud to mark 19 May 2010 as the occasion its four advisory colleges each took on new names, and meaningful personifications befitting their stature. What used to be known as Colleges 1 to 4 are now known as Gordon Arthur Ransome College, Seah Cheng Siang College, Benjamin Sheares College, and Eugene Stead College.

Each name was carefully chosen by students and the faculty at Duke-NUS and Duke in Durham, to honour both the individual and its corresponding college: Dr Benjamin Sheares, Sir Datuk Gordon Arthur Ransome, Prof Seah Cheng Siang and Prof Eugene Stead are all giants in their own right, and each has left an indelible footprint in the landscape of local and American medicine for their accomplishments and how they lived.

It was a proud moment for the family members of the four medical luminaries who were able to attend the ceremony. These included the daughters of the late Prof Seah Cheng Siang, Ms Joanna Seah and Dr Marianne Seah, and children of the late Dr Benjamin Sheares, Ms Constance Sheares and Dr Joseph Sheares (in main picture, seated on extreme left, named from left to right).

BENJAMIN SHEARES COLLEGE

Dr Benjamin Henry Sheares (1907-1981) was most notably the second President of Singapore. Beginning his career in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in 1931, he was later the first Singapore-born doctor to be appointed Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the King Edward VII College of Medicine. He was also the first Singaporean obstetrician to qualify as a member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in England. Dr Sheares also pioneered the Lower Segment Caesarean Section, which is now the gold standard, and used extensively today. He also created the vaginoplasty surgical procedure, which was named after him, and became internationally recognised after he published a paper on it in 1960.

GORDON ARTHUR RANSOME COLLEGE

The late Emeritus Professor Sir Datuk Gordon Arthur Ransome (1910–1978), a legendary figure in Singapore medicine, is remembered fondly as an esteemed physician, teacher, and friend. He was a pioneer, founding the Singapore Academy of Medicine and was its first Master. His innovative use of Ryle's tube – then used largely in gastric aspirations – for the care of unconscious cerebral malaria patients saved lives and is still widely seen in use till this day.

SEAH CHENG SIANG COLLEGE

Professor Datuk Seah Cheng Siang (1922–1990) was Clinical Professor at the University of Singapore, and headed medical units at Singapore General Hospital and the then-Toa Payoh Hospital. Widely recognised as the founder of Gastroenterology in Singapore, he was also extolled by his peers and students as a consummate master clinician whose flair in diagnosis was matched unerringly by his excellent bedside manner. His interest in undergraduate and postgraduate medical training in Singapore led him to set up the MRACP courses for internal medicine, and he often encouraged students to specialise and obtain higher degrees.

EUGENE STEAD COLLEGE

Prof Eugene Anson Stead, Jr. (1908–2005) was a visionary leader at Duke who saw the potential in computers and medicine very early on. Serving as Chairman of the Department of Medicine at Duke University School of Medicine (Duke SOM) after serving as Dean of the School of Medicine at Emory University, he helped shape the Duke SOM to its present-day success. He is widely recognised as an outstanding medical educator, believing strongly that a faculty has to join its students as fellow learners, with responsibilities of aspiring them to be engaged, motivating their curiosity, and helping to maintain their compassion and idealism. Prof Stead was a strong influence on Duke-NUS' development of an instructional strategy, TeamLEAD.

A celebration three years in the making, the colleges have chosen their names well. Taking on the noble ideals of committing to exemplify their sources of inspiration, the colleges look to these beacons for guidance and direction in moving forth, in growing and developing excellent clinician-scientists and guiding them to life-long learning and service to society.

DUKE-NUS ADVISORY COLLEGES

These colleges are a local adaptation of the Advisory Dean System instituted by Dr Doyle Graham in 1987, then Dean of Medical Education at Duke University's School of Medicine. The Colleges at Duke-NUS focus on nurturing the students' professional and personal development.

Each member of the Duke-NUS entering class is assigned to an Advisory College. Students meet regularly with their College Master in small groups as well as individually. College Masters are deeply involved not just in role modeling, but also helping to engage students throughout their academic life, and to prepare and recommend them for subsequent training.