

William Chan *MBBS, FAMS, FRFPS, FRCP (Glas), TDD (Wales)*
(1920-2005)

Dr William Chan, formerly Senior Physician and Head, Department of Medicine I, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore, died on 26 October 2005. He was born on 16 July 1920, in Labuan, now East Malaysia.

Bill, as he was affectionately known to his friends, had a remarkable life of four score and five, a life that graced his family and friends, the medical profession and the Anglican Church. He was educated in St Andrew's School. He commenced his medical studies at the King Edward VII College of Medicine in 1941 but, with the rude interruption of the Second World War he graduated MBBS in 1951. His classmates included many luminaries such as Yeoh Seang Aun, James Supramaniam, and the late Ho Guan Lim and Seah Cheng Siang. All were staunch and faithful members of our Alumni Association.

Following general and chest medicine training at the Singapore General and Tan Tock Seng Hospitals (SGH, TTSH), he proceeded to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Wales on a governmental scholarship securing successfully FRFPS Glasgow and TDD Wales in 1959. On returning to Singapore he trained under Drs Clarence Smith and Wong Hin Sun and with promotions was appointed to Consultancy and Headship, Medical Unit I, TTSH which he led successfully for many years. He retired in 1975 as Senior Physician and was succeeded by Dr Francis Jayaratnam. The department is today the centre for Geriatric Medicine. Bill continued to provide excellent specialist services for internal and respiratory medicine at the Peace and Specialist Centres for many years. He had always been soft spoken but as head of department he instilled his high ideals, deep concern and compassion for patients in the many students and doctors he had taught and trained throughout the years.

Bill was one of the family of close knit doctors who warmly welcomed me when I was posted to TTSH almost 50 years ago. I shall always cherish his friendship and support. Several decades ago, I paid a tribute to physician members of the Singapore Tuberculosis Research Committee. I spoke of their notable contributions to research breakthroughs on chemotherapy of tuberculosis. "Through well controlled and meticulous coordinated studies, we now have highly effective short course regimens, delivered daily or intermittently under full supervision, and used routinely in our primary healthcare clinics. These regimens have now been internationally accepted for routine use in many countries." Today, they remain standard treatment worldwide for tuberculosis.

Bill was an active member and in his quiet and unobtrusive, albeit, insightful way, played an immense role in our long and successful collaboration with the UK Medical Research Council led by Professor Wallace Fox. For his contributions to respiratory medicine and tuberculosis, he was elected an honorary member by the Singapore Thoracic Society. He had a passion for life-long learning and even in his last months he was seen attending medical meetings. In 1961, he was elected FAMS and in 1972 FRCP Glasgow. He was a life member of the Singapore Medical Association.

His non-judgemental values and compassion for his patients and fellowmen clearly reflected his strong commitment to his Christian faith. He was a devoted family man and is survived by his wife Tsok Fah, four children and a grandson. He will be greatly missed by all his friends.

Chew Chin Hin, *FAMS*