

Citation on Dr Andrew Chew Guan Kuan for Admission to Honorary Fellowship on 19 August 2004

YC Chee, *FAMS, FRACP, FRCP (Lond)*

Your Excellency President S R Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore and Patron of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore and Mrs Nathan; Minister for Health, Mr Khaw Boon Wan; The President of the Congress and Master of the Academy of Medicine, Malaysia, Professor Dato' Mrs ST Kew; Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, Professor Low Cheng Hock; Visiting Presidents of Overseas Colleges; Council Members of both Academies; Fellow Academicians; Distinguished Guests; Friends and Colleagues.

It is indeed a great pleasure and honour to present to you Dr Andrew Chew Guan Khuan, who is already a Fellow of the Academy, for conferment of Honorary Fellowship of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore, the highest honour the Academy can bestow on any of its Fellows. Dr Chew is no stranger to public service in Singapore and today he still serves as the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, and the Pro-Chancellor of the National University of Singapore.

Dr Chew was born on 11 October 1929 in Kuching, Sarawak in Borneo. That makes him 75 years young today. He came to Singapore and studied at St Andrew's School passing with a Grade I in the 1947 Cambridge School Certificate Examination (slightly late because of World War II). I am sure if the grading system were as of today, he would have scored over 10 As with 5 special paper distinctions as well. He excelled in sports in the well-known tradition of the school and was a tough and adept rugby player. He embarked on a career in Medicine, and graduated MBBS from the University of Malaya in Singapore in 1955 and joined the Singapore Civil Service as a Medical Officer in the Ministry of Health at the tender age of 27 years. A disciple of Professor Gordon Arthur Ransome, he trained in Medical Unit I at the Singapore General Hospital. In 1959, he was awarded a scholarship to London for a course leading to the MRCP, which he passed within 6 months of arrival. He returned to Singapore in 1962 to be the Senior Registrar at the Thomson Road General Hospital, under the late Professor Seah Cheng Siang who was then the physician in charge as well as its Medical Superintendent. Dr Lee Hoe Guan and Dr Wong Kum Hoong were the Senior Registrars. At the age of 35 years Andrew was promoted to Medical Superintendent, Thomson Road General Hospital and a superscale officer

in the civil service. Three months later he moved to Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) as its Medical Superintendent and it was he who re-organised TTSH into 4 medical units from the previous 3. Three years later he was made Medical Superintendent of Kandang Kerbau Hospital and in 1968 at the age of 39 years, he was promoted to Senior Consultant grade. In 1970, he was Medical Superintendent of Singapore General Hospital and a year later he was promoted and returned to the Ministry of Health as Deputy Director of Medical Services (Hospitals). A most supportive medical administrator, he promoted joint collaborative projects between the Tuberculosis Research Committee and the British Medical Research Council, leading to the establishment of present day short course therapeutic regimens for tuberculosis.

Doing sterling work in the Ministry, he was duly recognised and awarded the Public Service Administration Gold Medal in 1975 and 2 years later was appointed to be concurrently the Acting Permanent Secretary of Health as well as the Director of Medical Services. He was then 48 years old. His meteoric rise through the superscale grades of the civil service was phenomenal and by 52 years he was Permanent Secretary Grade A. At 55 years old in 1984 he left the Ministry of Health to take up the posts concurrently of Second Permanent Secretary (Public Service), Ministry of Finance; Permanent Secretary (Special Duties), Prime Minister's Office (under Mr Lee Kuan Yew); and Deputy Head of the Civil Service – 3 important and high profile portfolios. Some 7 months later he was appointed Head of the Civil Service and Permanent Secretary (Public Services), Prime Minister's Office. He retired from service on 11 October 1994 and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

Andrew was the archetypal true, dedicated loyal civil servant who would have signed off letters Yours Obediently. He gave his whole life to the civil service such that when he retired at age 65 years, the government still required his excellent professional services. He was Chairman, Central Provident Fund from 1994 to 1998, then Chairman of the Public Service Commission, a post he holds today. He still serves as Chairman Board of Governors, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (from 1976), Member, Presidential Council for Minority Rights (from 1994), Member Legal Service Commission (from 1998) as well as

Chairman of the Lee Kuan Yew Exchange Fellowship, and Scholarship Fund, and the Dr Goh Keng Swee Scholarship Fund (from 1998). In 2002, the government conferred on him the Distinguished Service Order.

Ladies and gentlemen, you like me, must be in awe of the multitude of diverse achievements of this medical doctor whose skills have taken him far beyond the shores of medicine. Always decisive, not one to procrastinate, Andrew would grapple with any problem objectively, with an astute brilliant mind and clear vision of the needs of tiny Singapore. Who says doctors are too narrowly trained and focused? As Dr Chew has proved, there was nothing too great he

could not manage with his deft people skills. He is the administrator par excellence.

Andrew met his wife Jennifer during his student days at Singapore General Hospital. They have a son who is the chief of ophthalmology at the National University Hospital and a daughter (who is a PhD doctor) and several grandchildren.

And so today, we are proud that a Fellow Academician is to be conferred our honorary fellowship. He is more than worthy of such honour following a long and distinguished record of public service. Mr Master, I present to you Dr Andrew Chew Guan Khuan.