

Citation on Mr Shaw Vee King for Admission to Honorary Fellowship on 1 August 2002

My association with the Shaw Family goes back to the time three and a half decades ago when, as the Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, I had the privilege to treat Vee King's mother for an odontoid fracture sustained when she was thrown out from a car in an accident. Subsequently a decade later, I was fortunate to have diagnosed an aortic aneurysm and a common iliac artery stenosis that was affecting Vee King's father. I accompanied the late Tan Sri Dr Runme Shaw to Houston to have DeBakey resect the aneurysm and relieve the stenosis. The flowering of that close relationship enabled me as Master of this Academy from 1978 to 1980 to obtain from Tan Sri Dr Runme Shaw a donation of S\$2 million towards our building fund, a sum that was matched by the Lee Foundation. If some fellow academicians of that time had not thwarted my attempt, we would have a magnificent building as an edifice to honour these two great Foundations, for a lovely plot of land in Swiss Club Road was available to us at a special price. At that time the College of Medicine Building was becoming vacant and we were offered a place in it. Many Academicians felt that it would be most appropriate for the Academy to be housed in that monumental building. Subsequently, we could not afford the market rental and had to find a place for ourselves.

However, owing to the generosity of the Shaw Foundation that had donated \$1.5 million by 1982, from which we earned a large interest for nearly 20 years, their final payment of \$0.5 million as soon as we were about to purchase a building, together with the \$2 million from the Lee Foundation we now have the Runme Shaw Building close to the Singapore General Hospital as our Headquarters. This stately building though small is in the old part of Singapore's famed Chinatown and is one of our historical buildings.

Twenty-seven years ago I had the honour to deliver the citation on Tan Sri Dr Runme Shaw when in October 1975 he was admitted as an Honorary Fellow of this Academy. At that time, I highlighted his contributions to Singapore and, particularly, from my view point to International Orthopaedics. He was the Patron of the World Orthopaedic Concern which among many other things it has achieved, initiated the Tan Sri Dr Runme Shaw and the Lee Foundation Fellowships in Orthopaedic Surgery enabling, up till now, 98 young Orthopaedic Surgeons from the region to receive 6 months training in the University and Government run hospitals. Vee King Shaw is now the Patron of the World Orthopaedic Concern.

Vee King is the elder son of Tan Sri Dr Runme Shaw. He is not so young a man in spite of his youthful appearance and on his broad shoulders has fallen the mantle of his illustrious father, a legendary figure of Singaporean society. Vee King is an extremely modest man who tries very hard to avoid the lime light. When I asked him for a CV, he sent me just about four lines. I had first of all to plead with him to accept the honour we wished to confer on him and then having with reluctance accepted the honour, partly not to upset a family friend, he did not provide me enough information to let me say a few meaningful words about him though it is well known that he continues the great philanthropic work of his father and supports our Academy generously.

Vee King did his primary schooling from 1951 to 1957 at the Anglo-Chinese School Singapore. He did his A-levels in the UK and obtained a double degree in production engineering and economics from Trinity College, Dublin where he studied from 1962 to 1966. In 1967, he obtained a Master's Degree in Computer Applications and soon after joined his famous father. After two years in Singapore, Tan Sri Dr Runme Shaw sent him to Hongkong to work with his distinguished uncle Sir Run Run Shaw from 1967 to 1981. I remember Tan Sri telling me it was better to have his sons under the tutelage of his brother and he in turn had Run Run's two sons, Vee Meng and Harold under him. It was only in 1981 that Vee King returned to the Shaw Organisation in Singapore.

Vee King is a happy family man. He married Linda in 1968 and they have two sons and a daughter. His older son, Mark works with him and his younger son, William, is with the National Environmental Council. From them, he has 3 granddaughters and a grandson. His only daughter works for the Henderson Investment Trust in the UK. Though Tan Sri Runme Shaw enjoyed horse-racing and was for a great many years the Chairman of the Singapore Turf Club, Vee King has no great love for this sport. He is an outdoor man and enjoys fishing, scuba-diving and boating. He spends most weekends in his boat cruising to Tioman and Aur in Malaysia. In addition to being Chairman of the Cinematographic Film Distributors Association, he is Chairman of the National Fire Prevention Council.

In conclusion, I would like to quote from Khalil Gibran whose book, *The Prophet*, gives us all the guidance that we need to lead a good and noble life. He has described in beautiful prose our relationship with the Shaws.

On friendship Gibran said,

“Your friend is your needs answered. He is your field which you sow with love and reap with thanksgiving and he is your board and your fire-side. For you come to him with your hunger and seek him for peace.”

On giving he said,

“They give as in yonder valley the myrtle breathes its fragrance into space. Through the hands of such as these God speaks and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the Earth.”

Mr Master, I present to you Vee King Shaw, a scion of the great Shaw family, friend and benefactor of our Academy, as one most worthy of being admitted as an Honorary Fellow of the Academy of Medicine Singapore.

V K Pillay, FAMS
