

HKIA Outstanding Contributions to Clinical Allergy Award

Dr. Helen Chan

HKIA would not have existed in the first place without Dr Helen Chan. The collaboration with the American College of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology would not have been secured. We would not be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the HKIA and the Hong Kong Allergy Convention would not be held for the 9th time. Dr. Helen Chan firmly believes Clinical Allergy is a specialty which deserves the attention of the medical community and wittingly brought together experts from all relevant disciplines to chart a way forward for Clinical Allergy in HK. She is just simply the heart of the HKIA.

I came to know Dr. Helen Chan in 1995-1996 before the HKIA was born. She asked me if I would join the council of a new entity called the Hong Kong Institute of Allergy. I told her that I was very busy with hospital work at Queen Mary Hospital/HKU and I would join if the commitment was not too heavy. When I attended the first meeting of the HKIA Council, I saw that all preparatory work had been completed and the Institute had become a functioning organization with a full working agenda! Members of the first HKIA Council included some heavy weights in medicine in HK, who had joined the HKIA upon the invitation of Dr. Helen Chan, not only out of good will as in my case, but more importantly out of longtime friendship and cordial collegial association. The gathering of such talents was a feat in itself and reflected how determined Helen was in getting the HKIA started.

In 1997, when the HKIA was still in its infancy as a professional organization, Dr. Helen Chan put forth a proposal for the HKIA to co-organize an international meeting on Allergy in collaboration with the American College of Asthma Allergy and Immunology. It was a rather daunting task for a young organization. Nonetheless through Dr. Helen Chan's skilful organisation, the Hong Kong Allergy Convention was held at the Convention Centre with stellar success and unexpected revenue for the HKIA. Since then, the HKIA has been organizing this international convention on Allergy every two years non-stop, and has become a key avenue in education of our medical community on topics related to allergy.

HKIA has never faltered in taking up the role of an educational leader in Allergy. This spirit largely reflects the tenacity of Dr. Helen Chan and her belief that together we could make a difference in the promotion and development of Allergy as a multi-disciplinary specialty.