

Award for Life-time Distinguished Service to HKIA
Professor Patrick Yuen

Professor Patrick Yuen Man Pan is well known to colleagues and patients as a highly respected scholar, an insightful scientist, a superb teacher and a caring Paediatrician. His achievements are legendary not more so than his success in improving the cure rate of children with cancers under his care.

He was the prime mover behind the establishment of the “Hong Kong Paediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Fund” in 1988 and “The Chinese University of Hong Kong Children’s Cancer Fund” in 1989. In 1991, he successfully performed the first Paediatric bone marrow transplant in Hong Kong. Under his guidance, “The Lady Pao Children’s Cancer Centre”, the first hospital in South Asia dedicated to the treatment of childhood cancer, was established in March 1995. Professor Patrick Yuen was also instrumental in supporting families with childhood cancers to form the “Little Life Warrior Society” in March 2002. These remarkable successes are testimony of his vision and commitment.

Even at the age of 80, Professor Patrick Yuen is still coming to the hospital daily to teach medical students and see his long-surviving cancer children. It is against such enthusiasm and dedication that CUHK recently conferred Professor Patrick Yuen with the Emeritus Professorship in Paediatrics.

But today the HK Institute of Allergy (HKIA) is delighted to honour him for another of his accomplishments that may not be so well known to his legion of fans, except to a close knit group of cognoscenti, namely his long and dedicated service to our Institute to help another group of disadvantaged patients, specifically those with allergic diseases.

In the recent words of Dr. Helen Chan at HKIA’s 20th Anniversary: “In the early 1990s...The study of allergy was not regarded as a medical discipline ...Healthcare professionals had limited knowledge of allergic disease...immunotherapy ...akin to witchcraft.”

Against this background a group of colleagues decided in 1996 to create a new professional Society and HKIA was born. Its mission then and now is to promote allergy as a medical discipline and to foster a professional forum for fellowship and scientific exchange for patient benefit. Professor Yuen was one of the Founder members and he has never wavered from his passionate commitment to help grow the discipline of Allergy. He has attended and continues to attend almost all Council meetings rain or shine, for two decades, despite a very busy schedule. He has provided HKIA with his wisdom and experience through good and less good times; in short he is not only the Institute’s sage but also its conscience.

One of his former students, subsequent colleague and close friend said “The Patrick Yuen I know is happiest when he is teaching, seeing patients, and when reaching to slog a tennis ball down the line to win a shot! His heart really lies with the sick and poor and his joy comes from healing, not wealth. He is not a man yearning materialism or honour.”

His humility in greatness is an exemplar for the rest of us, but on this occasion, we are not going to let him hide his light under a bushel.

It is my privilege as President of the HKIA to present Professor Patrick Yuen with the Award for Life-time Distinguished Service to the HKIA.