

Professor Tan Sri Guan Bee Ong 王源美教授

(MBBS 1947; DSc1979; HonDSc 1980) passed away on January 10, 2004, at the age of 82.

Professor Ong was appointed by the University to the Chair Professor of Surgery and Head of Department in 1963, and was the first ethnic Chinese to hold this distinction. He led the Department of Surgery to achieve international recognition until his retirement in 1982.

“Remember our friend - a dear friend - whose life inspired many; and saved many lives with his dedication to the art and craft of surgery.

G.B. was born in Sarawak in 1921, one of the eight children in the family. He wanted to be an electrical engineer, but his father ordered his son to take up medicine. G.B. said, ‘If I cannot be an electrical engineer, I will electrify people’s lives by becoming a doctor.’ He certainly did.

Shortly before the start of the Second World War, young G.B. Ong enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine at HKU. His first great challenge came in 1941, when the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong dispelled any hopes of completing his studies uninterrupted. Under the devoted tutelage of the late Professor Gordon King, the then Dean of the Medical Faculty, G.B. Ong and others made the hazardous three-month journey to the relative safety of Chungking to continue his studies under the most trying circumstances and where he subsequently received his medical degree. ...

Immediately after graduation, he joined the Department of Surgery, Queen Mary Hospital as a house surgeon, and took the first step in what was to be a long and distinguished career as a surgeon.

In 1957, he was appointed Surgeon-in-Charge of Kowloon Hospital, a position that he served with distinction and held until 1963, when his achievements brought him back to his alma mater as Professor of Surgery. ... For his services to the University and to the Community, he was awarded the O.B.E. in 1966. ... Many honours and medals were bestowed on him throughout his life - all around the world - they would take a long time to narrate.

G.B. always felt that there was no greater honour for him than to see his patients come out of their dreaded illness and walk home with their families... He was a man with passion for surgery and compassion for his patients. He worked tirelessly. He never tolerated second best. He expected the best from himself and from his staff.

G.B. left a resounding legacy to the surgical profession in Hong Kong. He was our graduate whose determination, dedication and discipline made us proud.”



Eulogy by

Dr George Choa 蔡永善 (MBBS 1947)



Professor Ong (3rd left) at the Hong Kong Surgical Forum in 1999