



IN MEMORY OF DR MOSES YU

Dr Jipson Quah sits down for a chat with Dr Jerry Lim, founder of Dover Park Hospice and long-time friend of Dr Moses Yu, to learn more about Dr Moses Yu's life.

- Born 31 January 1934 and passed away on 30 December 2015
- Former Head of Pathology Department, Singapore General Hospital (SGH)
- First UK-trained Diagnostic Bacteriologist in Singapore
- Former Assistant Director of Medical Services in the Ministry of Health (MOH)
- Founding Medical Director / Advisor, Dover Park Hospice
- Founding Member of the Chapter of Pathologists
- Former Chairman of the Alumni Association Southern Branch Singapore
- Former Commanding Officer of the second Combat Support Hospital and retired with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel
- Pioneer batch of medical volunteers in 1970 under COL (Ret) Vol Dr Kwa Soon Bee's leadership

Dr Moses Yu graduated from the Faculty of Medicine in Singapore and joined the Department of Pathology in the early 1960s. He was sent to Manchester by the Government, where he attained the Diploma of Bacteriology in 1965. In 1971, he was promoted to Senior Pathologist and worked in the position for 14 years. During his headship, he started the Virology lab as a separate section from Bacteriology under Dr M Doraisingham and saw this lab designated as the National Influenza Centre. He also convinced MOH to acquire the first electron microscope in Singapore, and it became essential in the diagnosis and study of renal diseases. Later, he was appointed to the position of Assistant Director of Medical Services at MOH in 1985 and was also a key medical advisor at Dover Park Hospice.

Dr Jerry, you and Dr Yu were great friends for over 50 years, worked on numerous projects and served in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) together. Could you tell us more about him?

Dr Yu was born in China, where his father worked as a water engineer and his mother delivered him by the reservoirs, hence the name Moses Yu. He received his early education in China and Malaya, and attended the Anglo-Chinese School (ACS) in Penang, which has recently honoured him for his achievements.

He later transferred to ACS in Singapore where his presence is still fondly remembered by many of his

colleagues today. Dr Yu was an ardent scout and distinguished himself in many leadership roles.

He entered the Faculty of Medicine, back then known as the University of Singapore, and was married to Mrs Ovidia Yu nee Iau Kuo Fong while pursuing his undergraduate studies. He was a devoted and loving husband and had a long and happy marriage with Mrs Ovidia Yu, who was a beloved and celebrated teacher in Methodist Girls' School.

After his housemanship, Dr Yu joined a general practice in Wisma Atria, Orchard Road. But alas, his tenure lasted exactly 24 hours! He then reapplied to the late Dr Eddie Ho, then Director of Medical Services, MOH, and his career commenced in the Pathology Department. Many years later, he was appointed as Head of Department and Consultant Bacteriologist when Dr Tan Kheng Khoo retired.

How was Dr Moses Yu as a doctor and a friend?

Dr Yu was the most humble, affable, kind and generous person I ever met and he ran a happy and efficient Pathology Department in SGH. I recently met one of his staff, Mr Ow Ah Kit, who was under Dr Yu's wing for 60 years before becoming the Chief Laboratory Technician for the whole of Singapore. He told me that Dr Yu never spoke an angry word to any of his staff and patients. He was always kind-hearted and generous in offering his money and services



to anyone who needed help. He was loved by everyone who came into contact with him.

As a doctor, he helped to look after the medical needs of many VIPs and as testimony to that, Prime Minister (PM) Lee Hsien Loong has written Dr Yu's children a most touching and kind letter of condolence, where he thanked Dr Yu for his contributions to the national healthcare landscape and described him to be "always ready with a gentle word, carefully explaining his diagnosis and what he was doing to his patients." PM Lee also mentioned Dr Yu's role in the founding of Dover Park Hospice, where he took on the role of Medical Director and Advisor on a pro bono basis. He would always promptly direct the MOH pay cheque towards the funds of Dover Park Hospice.

Are there any interesting anecdotes and memories of Dr Yu you'd like to share?

Dr Yu was an avid golf fan and was known to hit over 200 balls in his youth. His aim at billiards and golf was supreme and as he was monocular, he was a sharpshooter on the SAF rifle and pistol firing ranges as well. He often invited us to play "National Service Golf" with the late Dr Goh



Keng Swee, who was a keen golfer especially in his retirement. Dr Yu was well known for his generosity to his caddies and he enjoyed buying expensive golf clubs to present to his friends as gifts or to persuade them to take up the sport.

Dr Yu was great company when he was with his friends and related many interesting anecdotes to which he also delightfully added a multitude of his various theories that we have fondly dubbed as "YUisms".

Dr Yu was a great friend to many and he always gave himself selflessly to

help others. Nothing to him was too much trouble. His humility, kindness and generosity were his greatest virtues as a person and we shall miss this great doctor-soldier-administrator of Singapore. ♦

Dr Moses Yu is survived by his daughter, Ovidia; his son-in-law, Richard; his son, Peter; his daughter-in-law, Victoria; and his two grandchildren, Samuel and Jane.



Legend

- 1. Dr Moses Yu with his golfing buddies, Dr Jerry Lim and Dr Giam Choo Hoo
- 2. Dr Moses Yu's 80th birthday with Ovidia and Peter
- 3. Dr Moses Yu on the piano