

Professor Sir David Todd, 1928-2017

Honorary Fellow,
Hong Kong College of Family Physicians



Professor Todd received the Honorary Fellow of the HKCFP in 1993

On 16 August 2017 Professor Sir David Todd left us peacefully for heaven, surrounded by his loved ones. Our grief from the loss of our beloved teacher and greatest physician is beyond words.

Sir David was a legend, being the first of many in medicine and medical education in Hong Kong. He was famous for being the first local professor in medicine, first clinician scientist in haematology who drew the world's attention to medical research in Hong Kong and the first President of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine. Some may not know that he was also the first Chief Censor from 1984 to 1986 and Chief examiner of the first fellowship examination in 1984 of our Hong Kong College of Family Physicians (named as the Hong Kong College of General Practitioners then), which laid the foundation for family medicine to develop into a specialty in Hong Kong. As the Founding President of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine in 1992, he convinced the interim council to admit the Hong Kong College of Family Physicians as a Founding Specialty College of the Academy. In honour of his contribution to the development of the discipline of family medicine in Hong Kong, Sir David was conferred Honorary Fellow of the Hong Kong College of Family Physicians in 1993.

Professor Todd was the Father of academic Family Medicine in Hong Kong. In 1985 he established the General Practice Unit under his wings in the Department of Medicine in the University of Hong Kong to build academic family medicine from scratch. He nurtured the first two local academic general practitioners and I had the fortune of being one of them. Through his links with the University of Glasgow, he enabled us to receive formal general practice training in the United Kingdom under the direct supervision of the late Professor Hamish Barber of the Department of General Practice, University of Glasgow. Professor Barber was the first HKCGP

visiting professor in general practice to the University of Hong Kong. From the seedling he had planted, family medicine has grown to become a significant part of the MBBS curriculum from the very first week through all six years to the final graduating examination in the University of Hong Kong. He had always been a cheer leader of family medicine. Shortly after his return to Hong Kong from Cambridge, he raised a donation to establish the Dr. P.P. Chiu Prize in Family Medicine to award a third year medical student who has the best performance in family medicine. In his speech at the HKU Medical Faculty Graduation and Prize Presentation Ceremony 2010, he said "I hope many of you will become generalists rather than specialists or super-specialists..... More Family Physicians are needed, especially with an aging population."

Professor Sir David Todd was a perfect doctor, teacher, scholar and gentleman. He was inspiring to every student and doctor who had the fortunate opportunity to learn from him. The one and only one bedside teaching that I had from him was the most memorable learning in my whole five years of medical school life. He gently led me through the discovery and understanding of the fixed splitting murmur of a patient with pulmonary stenosis. He made me experience the invaluable 'Ah ha' phenomenon, which was what education should be - leading out the most from the learner rather than stuffing in.

To quote from Hippocrates, Sir David's life was short, his art is long. His legacy will be passed on from one generation of doctors to the next. He will always be remembered as a glorious part of the history of medicine in Hong Kong.

Cindy L. K. Lam
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