

## **Donald Gunn Lecturer 2018**

### CITATION ON DR TAN SEANG BENG - Inderjeet Singh Rikhranj

It is my honour and privilege to read the citation for this year's Donald Gunn lecturer, my good friend and colleague, Dr Tan Seang Beng.

Tan Seang Beng was born on August 21, 1957, in Penang. He did his primary and secondary education in Penang achieving distinctions in all his subjects in the O and A level exams. He then moved to Singapore to study medicine at the National University of Singapore in 1976, having been awarded the Singapore Government Merit Scholarship.

He went on to do his Masters of Medicine and the Fellowship exams of Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1985. He was one of the first to do a Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Spine Surgery between 1989 to 1990 at the Baylor Medical College, Houston, Texas. He was promoted to Consultant at the Department on Orthopaedic Surgery in 1992 and then Senior Consultant in 1997.

He went on to become Head of Department of Orthopaedics at the KK Women's and Children's Hospital between 2001 to 2003 and was Head, Department of Orthopaedics, Singapore General Hospital for 10 years from Oct 2003.

It was at SGH Department of Orthopaedics, that SB, as he is fondly known, had his most impact. He had the vision of turning the department he was Head of, into one of the leading Orthopaedic centers in the region, if not the world. He encouraged subspecialisation, building on the work of the previous Heads of Department. He was instrumental in setting up the Orthopaedic Diagnostic Center at SGH, where patient outcomes are tracked using validated instruments. From the ODC, many of the department's presentations and publications have arisen. He expanded the department and the services that it offered, by encouraging and guiding the service directors of the various subspecialties to go further in developing their subspecialties.

SB started on research projects and showed the way to his younger colleagues to have their research projects presented at International meetings like the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Annual Scientific Meeting. For his research, he was awarded the prestigious Russell-Hibbs award by the Scoliosis Research Society for his work - "Allograft Vertebral Disc Transplantation in a Porcine Model." in 1996. His other awards of note, amongst the many others, is the "Special Friend Award" awarded to him by the Handicaps Welfare Association in 1997.

SB has close to 60 publications in peer reviewed journals and more than 250 lectures and presentations at local, regional and international meetings.

After he stepped down as Head of Department, he continued to lend his expertise in managing the department and went on become Vice Chairman for Clinical Services, when the Musculoskeletal Academic Program was set up.

SB left for private practice in Feb 2018, having spent more than 35 years in the public sector. For this, he was awarded the Long Service Medal by both Singapore General Hospital and the Singapore Government.

He has kept up with the developments in his field and is very knowledgeable and an excellent clinician and surgeon. This is attested to by him being awarded the Singhealth GCEO award for Outstanding Clinician, in 2013. He is indeed a giant on whose shoulders many of us stand on, so that we can see far.

SB has always been a humble, gentle and kind person, always willing to give helping hand. He is one person who is always calm and collected. I remember one particular incident when an abusive patient was shouting vulgarities and gesticulating wildly at him, he stood calmly and after the patient had had her say, he calmly told the patient that her behaviour was unbecoming.

On a lighter note, Seang Beng loves his food. He does not mind waiting 2 hours for a plate of Char Kway Tiow from his favourite stall rather than go somewhere else to eat. He is a gourmet guide to the best places to eat in Singapore. One anecdote about him, I am told, is that during one of his surgeries, one of his patient lost 3 liters of blood during surgery, he said it was no problem. However, when 15 cc of blood was drawn from him, Seang Beng promptly fainted.

SB is a loving husband and father. He is married to Dr Lesley-Ann Goh and has 2 children. He dotes on both his wife and children. He is widely read and can discuss many topics out of the field of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Ladies and Gentleman, I hereby present to you, the SOA Donald Gunn Lecturer of 2018, my good friend, Dr Tan Seang Beng.