

SSHSPH AlumNite 2017

Speech by Prof Tan Eng Chye,
Dy President and Provost

6 July 2017, 6.50 pm
Seminar Room 1, MD1

Colleagues

Deserving Graduands, your family and friends,

1. Good evening to everyone. I am very pleased to join you this evening at this special occasion, and I thank the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health for inviting me.
2. The Chinese tradition believes that good things come in pairs - 好事成双. The School's AlumNite this year is particularly meaningful as we are coming together for a double celebration, to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduating students, and to confer the first NUS Emeritus Professorship of Public Health to a special, esteemed and inspiring individual.
3. To the Class of 2017, my heartiest congratulations! Like many of your peers, families and academic supervisors who are among the audience, I share your pride and joy in reaching this milestone. With the public health education, skills and network opportunities you have received at the School, the playing field is wide open for you to become a change-maker; to make a positive and enduring impact on the health of populations around the world. The world is your oyster.
4. Likewise, you will encounter challenges along the way. There will always be a time when you aren't going to be sure of yourself or prefer to stay in your comfort zones. You have ideas and aspirations to make a difference to our world – perhaps you have even presented and deliberated on these ideas during your time at NUS. Don't let challenges or fear hinder you from taking the next step forward. Look at new ways to listen, understand problems and then collaborate to bring solutions to the table. May your NUS

journey serve to remind and encourage you, on how have overcome many challenges and more, to reach where you are tonight. Never lose your passion and drive for public health that has led you to your success today.

5. Speaking of passion, the next person I am going to introduce exemplifies passion for public health and its advancement.
6. Professor Lee Hin Peng has spent over 40 years at NUS. He is an excellent academic, practitioner and administrator. He has won numerous accolades for teaching and research excellence as well as service to Singapore and the wider international community.
7. As an academic, Hin Peng is known for his intellectual and academic vigour. He authored 163-peer reviewed articles, and has received more than 5000 citations over the course of his illustrious career.
8. The impact of Hin Peng's work is far-reaching. Hin Peng was the co-founder of the Singapore Cohort Study, a defining study that was launched in 1993 in collaboration with the University of Southern California, and later to include University of Minnesota and University of Pittsburgh. To date, more than 100 papers in high-impact journals have been published.
9. Hin Peng was also instrumental in championing the control of tobacco smoking in Singapore since the early 1980s. He was subsequently invited to be a member of the World Health Organisation Expert Advisory Panel on Smoking and Health from 1981-1993.
10. Always known for his quiet and collegial nature, and particularly, for his devoted mentorship which he generously extends to younger academics, Hin Peng has nurtured and inspired many of the School's faculty members, who have moved on to contribute significantly to the scientific community. Some of his mentees include the inaugural Dean of the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, Professor Chia Kee Seng, Professor David Koh, Professor Saw Seang Mei, Associate Professor Chia Sin Eng, Associate

Professor Adeline Seow, Professor Koh Woon Puay, Associate Prof Gerald Koh and Assistant Professor Luo Nan.

11. As an administrator, he skilfully raised the level of achievement and visibility of the former Department of Community, Occupational & Family Medicine to new heights, when he served as Head of Department from 1987 to 2001. He established the Department's reputation for quality research.
12. Hin Peng was visionary in anticipating the healthcare needs of an ageing population and the elderly. In 1995, he led a group of professionals to set up the St Luke's hospital, which was Singapore's first community based hospital, to look after the health needs of the elderly. From 1999 to 2006, he served as Chairman of St Luke's hospital, and from 2006 till 2014, he served as Chairman of St Luke's Eldercare.
13. As Master of King Edward VII Hall for 10 years, he was well loved and left his legacy on many hall residents. He introduced changes in the hall and took residents through the trying period of SARS in 2003.
14. Hin Peng was also tasked with setting up the NUS Institutional Review Board (IRB) in 2003. This was the first IRB in Singapore for research. The NUS IRB became the model setup for other institutions in Singapore.
15. Needless to say, Hin Peng's stellar accomplishments and contributions have earned him a long string of awards including the Faculty Teaching Award, National Day Long Service Award and the Lee Foundation NHG-NUHS Lifetime Achievement Award.
16. Of course, I could go on, but I don't wish to stand in the way of dinner! Perhaps, let me conclude with this one point – what's most noteworthy is that Hin Peng is like a gentle giant of public health. In spite of his accomplishments, Hin Peng remains genuinely humble, unassuming and modest, often eschewing the limelight. Hin Peng officially retired from NUS on 30 June 2017 but his legacy lives on; we see his influences in many parts of the School and the work it does; he is part of warm memories among his many colleagues and friends.

17. Ladies and gentlemen, NUS is proud to confer the inaugural Emeritus Professorship of Public Health to Professor Lee Hin Peng.