

**NATIONAL MEDICAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2009
THE AWARDEES**

**NATIONAL OUTSTANDING CLINICIAN MENTOR AWARD 2009
PROFESSOR CHEW CHONG LIN**

**Director, Division of Graduate Dental Studies, NUS Faculty of Dentistry, National University Health System
Senior Consultant, Department of Restorative Dentistry, University Dental Cluster, National University Hospital, National University Health System**

Professor Chew Chong Lin may well be called the Champion of Singapore Dentistry.

Dental surgeon, teacher, mentor and researcher – his 35-year-career comprises multiple milestones in teaching, clinical work and research, all of which have seen him collaborating with engineers to develop new, innovative biomaterials for use in clinical treatment.

A talent and passion for bringing out the best in others has also seen him take on significant appointments, such as being the Dean, Faculty of Dentistry, Head of Prosthetic Dentistry, Head and Chief of Department of Restorative Dentistry, Deputy Director of Medical Services (Dental) and Chief Dental Officer. Through his singular dedication and ceaseless effort, Professor Chew has raised the standard of dentistry in Singapore and the reputation of the NUS Faculty of Dentistry, National University Health System (NUHS).

Instrumental in the development of dentistry in Singapore, Professor Chew oversaw the set-up of the National Dental Centre (NDC) as the Chair of the Planning Committee from 1989-1995. He remained as its advisor until 2000. Appointed Chief Dental Officer from 2001 to 2006, Professor Chew introduced important policies to align the practice of dentistry for all graduates, including the groundwork for the Specialist Register, a new Dental Act and Continuing Dental Education. An advocate of continuing dental education, Professor Chew set an example by being the first dentist in Singapore to be awarded a PhD degree in Dentistry by NUS.

As Director of the NUS Faculty of Dentistry Graduate School of Dental Studies since 1986, he introduced five structured Dental Specialist training programmes that included a thesis component. Four of these have conjoint examination status with the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

Appointed Dean of Dentistry in 1995, Professor Chew established international recognition of the faculty through a new competency-based curriculum, increased the quantity and quality of research and embarked on a community dental project, providing professional dental care to the elderly poor.

During his tenure, Professor Chew introduced a compulsory research programme for all undergraduates, further enhancing the research culture in the Faculty of Dentistry. A number of students' projects have won local and regional awards, some of which have translated into publications in peer-reviewed international journals.

Professor Chew is also the first Director of the Centre for Advanced Dental Education, set up in 2007 to formalize Graduate Diploma and continuing dental education programmes, which enjoy a strong following from the profession, including dentists in the private sector.

Through the years, Professor Chew has nurtured and mentored a number of students, many of whom are now established dentists and leaders in the profession. He continues to supervise the research work of graduate students. A dedicated mentor, Professor Chew always strives to amalgamate students' knowledge in the management of the patients' dental conditions – to the extent of conducting weekly classes after office hours on his own time for final year dental students.

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Clinically, Professor Chew is one of Singapore's leading specialists in Prosthodontics and is much sought after by patients both locally and regionally. Recounted Dr Marlene Teo, a periodontist who is an adjunct staff of the Faculty:

"As a student, I remember being in awe of our Dean, Professor Chew who is known to be a perfectionist in the clinics. My hands would sweat and turn clammy whenever he called my name. He would look steadily at us and ask questions which I could never answer to his complete satisfaction! Upon graduating from dental school though, I started to see Professor Chew for who he really is; a self-deprecating, kind and humble clinician with an unmatched dedication to his patients and students. When I first joined NUS as a periodontist, Prof Chew was one of the first specialists to consult me on cases relating to periodontology, despite his vast experience in dentistry.

"Prof Chew has great clinical acumen and always has his patients' best interests at heart. As his mentee, I have learnt that "less is more". His treatment plans are always simple yet functional and the patients are invariably satisfied with the outcome. On one particular occasion, I was amazed by his dedication, when despite having undergone minor surgery, he insisted on coming back to school to treat a mutual patient of ours. He finally agreed to rest at home when I assured him that I could take care of the entire treatment plan for our patient until he had recovered fully.

"I am grateful that Prof Chew has taken me under his wing and given me many opportunities to prove myself."

Apart from his focus on dental education and clinical care, Professor Chew is also an innovative researcher, having initiated and worked with collaborators from the engineering sector to develop biomaterials to improve the properties of dental resins and extend their usage in dentistry. This venture has been highly successful and has resulted in a number of patents. Since 2001, he has been an active member of the Faculty Research Committee.

And despite Professor Chew's heavy workload, he makes himself available to students and colleagues.

"Professor Chew has served the university selflessly for the past 35 years. A great leader, mentor and team player, he has a gift of building teams of people who work well together under his leadership and stewardship. He capitalizes on each individual's strengths and motivates each person to give of one's best. Professor Chew leads by example and he has no qualms in rolling up his sleeves and working alongside his subordinates. To this day, Prof Chew's long working hours are a testimony to his dedication for the vision he has for the students, the patients, the faculty and the profession. He conducts weekly after office and out of timetable clinical seminars just because he believes that it is important to share his vast clinical experience with the final year students. Despite his long waiting lists, Prof Chew treats each patient with a strong service oriented approach and as Dr Teo says "great clinical acumen". In his lifetime, Prof must have attended the most functions, talks and activities for the faculty as he walks his talk – by being there physically to support the school. His whole career has been one of total commitment to the faculty, the students and the University, his patients and the profession. Professor Chew is indeed a living example of the core values of the University and the hospital!" said Associate Professor Jennifer Neo, Head and Senior Consultant, Department of Restorative Dentistry, University Dental Cluster, National University Hospital, National University Health System. She has known Professor Chew for over 30 years.