

Healthcare Pioneers: Dato Joseph Lim



Dato Joseph Lim, born in 1937 is the first local pioneer in the field of ear, nose and throat surgery.

Dato Joseph Lim is the second of four siblings. His parents were pioneer teachers who established the Chung Hwa School (now Chung Hwa Middle School) in 1929 with just six students. After the Second World War, his father gave up teaching to venture into business. Dato Joseph only began his Chinese schooling in 1946 when the school reopened after the war. He completed his primary level in 1949 and the following year, went to St Thomas Boarding School, Kuching, Sarawak for English education. At that time, there was no Secondary English School in Brunei. After obtaining the Cambridge Higher School Certificate in 1958, he returned to Brunei and worked as a primary school teacher at SOAS College, while waiting to further his education. With the assistance of Mr Pearse, then Brunei Education Officer, he went Perth, Western Australia in April 1960. He competed in the local Matriculation Examination and succeeded in obtaining one of four places for overseas students to enter the Medical School in the University of Western Australia. He obtained a Brunei Government Scholarship and obtained his MBBS in 1966. In 1st March 1968, he joined the Brunei Medical Service along with Dato

Sherlock Chin, as the first local doctors. He was posted to Kuala Belait hospital as the third medical officer and assistant to Mr Dyer. The following year he was transferred to Brunei General Hospital (BGH) as assistant to Pehin Harris (*BIMJ 2011; 7 (5):249*). When Dato Samuel Yapp (*BIMJ 2013; 9 (2):80*) joined the service, Dato Lim furthered his surgical training in Melbourne (1972) where he obtained FRACS in General Surgery (1974). In response to the need for Ear, Nose and Throat services, he enrolled in the specialist training programme in Melbourne (1979) and obtained his second Fellowship (1982). He established the ENT department with his wife (Leong Siew Kai), as the audiologist when RIPAS Hospital opened in 1984.

Following his retirement from the Government service (1992), he had a stint in private practice. He and his wife now reside in Melbourne. He maintains regular contacts with his former colleagues. Colin Binns, (former classmate and prominent Professor In Public Health, Curtin University of Western Australia) fondly remembered Dato Lim as quiet, friendly and smart.

Guest editor: Dato Samuel Yapp Kai San (Senior Consultant Surgeon, RIPAS Hospital).

Source: Interview with Dato Joseph Lim, Dato Samuel Yapp, Dato Sherlock Chin and Prof. Colin Binns (* through a chance encounter during the APAME meeting in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, 2012).