

Obituary

Professor Kai Yim (Stephen) Lee (1948-2023)



With sadness we report the recent passing of Professor Lee in Sydney, Australia. Born in 1948, he grew up in Hong Kong in difficult circumstances, his mother having died suddenly when he was only four. Nevertheless, he excelled at school and subsequently received sponsorship to undertake his medical training in Sydney, graduating in 1974. Dermatology was his chosen vocation, and he went on to become a consultant dermatologist at both the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Concord Hospital, and Head of the Department of Dermatology at the latter. Professor Lee served the Australian dermatology community with distinction, becoming Honorary Secretary of the Australasian College of Dermatologists and representing his discipline on the Federal Council of the Australian Medical Association. He received many awards, most notably being appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2009, the citation reading "For service to medicine in the field of dermatology as a clinician, mentor and educator and through roles with professional organisations".

Although he was Sydney-based and became a Clinical Professor at the University of Sydney, Professor Lee developed and maintained close life-long associations with colleagues in Hong Kong and with the Hong Kong Journal of Dermatology and Venereology. His great passion was teaching and mentoring the next generation of dermatologists. He visited Hong Kong frequently to teach and was awarded the title of Clinical Associate Professor by the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Professor Lee's rapport with both trainees and patients was legendary and his ever-ebullient spirit was greatly appreciated by them. His sense of humour was keen, but many of his jokes were at his own expense.

As Professor Lee's early years had been difficult, so too were his latter years as he battled a series of serious medical problems. Despite his failing health he remained cheerful to the end, still making jokes and drawing strength from the friends who rallied round him, from his faithful dog Rex, and from Theresa, his much-loved wife. He passed away peacefully on 5th March 2023 at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, where he had trained and worked for his entire medical career. He is survived by his wife Theresa, to whom we offer condolences, and mourned by a multitude of grateful patients and by his professional colleagues and friends in both Australia and Hong Kong.

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