

Introductory Speech for Prof Stuart Campbell, Annual Oration 23 March 2004

SC Chew

Annual Oration & Congress Banquet Dinner on 23 March 2004, Tuesday The Pavilion Shangri-La's Rasa Sentosa Resort
Oration by Prof Stuart Campbell, Founding President of ISUOG Topic: "The Future of 3D/4D Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynaecology"

It is a great honour to have been invited by the President of the Obstetrical and Gynecological Society of Singapore to introduce tonight's Orator- Prof Stuart Campbell. My only qualification for this is that I was the first obstetrician in Singapore to meet him on his arrival here.

The highest point of my speaking career was in 1981 when I was awarded the Benjamin Henry Sheares Lecture - it was no big deal as I was the only applicant. For my effort I was invited to dinner, and 6 months later I received an inscribed plaque - unfortunately it was spelt - PLAGUE. Thereafter being plague afflicted my speaking opportunities dwindled and I ended up speaking at family weddings and gatherings for the last few years. I knew the end was nigh when my last invitation was to speak at a funeral.

I have been reminded sternly by George Yeo that tonight's Orator is Stuart and not myself so I will keep this short.

The true fathers of Obstetric Ultrasound in Singapore were 2 men - Dr Sivasambo conceived the idea and he recruited Prof SS Ratnam (my old boss) - making it an "immaculate conception" of sorts. The vital co culture medium Vitamin M was provided through Prof Ratnam's good relations with the Singapore Turf Club. The year was 1972.

The gestation period followed Naegele's Rule and nine months later the baby was delivered. As the donation was only 60,000 Singapore dollars and the exchange rate was then 6.5 Sing dollars to the pound, we could only afford the Siemen's Vidoson instead of the Nuclear Enterprise Disonograph that we really wanted.

As our Minister for Health would say, we got a Perodua Kanchil instead of a Rolls Royce.

Stuart Campbell was then and still remains, the leading light in ultrasound. He was invited to be our

guru. I was asked to look after him and to learn from the master. He arrived in February 1973 just before the Chinese New Year.

I did not know what to expect. All I knew was that he was the senior lecturer at Queen Charlotte's. The only encouraging thing was that we both shared the same initials.

I was greatly surprised when we met - I expected someone middle aged and intimidating like the heads of "A" and "B" units of KK at that time.

Instead he was very young, handsome, intelligent, articulate, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and likeable.

In contrast, I was just young.

We got to know each other during the Chinese New Year period. I took him on a Harbour cruise. Then I drove him and Prof Arnold Klopfer from Aberdeen who was then a visiting fellow at KK to Johor Baru for a sightseeing tour. They even swam in the Johor Straits.

There was no sewage pollution, AIDS, SARS or bird flu in those days. We were clean people then.

We exchanged cultural information: He was curious as to why in Singapore many cars are named using numbers eg Mazda 323, Fiat 124, Fiat 131. I had to explain that names in our dialects could cause misunderstanding and embarrassment - eg a very popular car at that time was the Datsun Bluebird - which in my native Hokkien dialect sounded like a male anatomical description - the Japanese later renamed the car the Sunny.

Also the Lancia Lambda was never sold here for the same reason. I am glad to have ancestors with special interests in male anatomy.

In return he told me about Scottish customs,

including the Highland dance and the historical clash between the Campbells and the McDonalds in 1692, also called the Massacre at Glenn Coe.

Perhaps I was not listening properly, as I had the distinct impression that it was his ancestors who had been massacred and was sorry for his clan, but shortly after when I tried to show off my knowledge in Scotland I was told that it was the Campbells that slaughtered the McDonalds. That would account for his drive, determination and dedication.

Whatever the historical truths, I am glad that enough Campbells survived to give us this illustrious son and enough McDonalds survived to give us the well known hamburger chain without which we would be in serious trouble whenever we go abroad for ultrasound training.

As it was the Chinese New Year he was co-opted into my family and joined in our traditional New Year reunion dinner.

He more than repaid my hospitality as he invited me to a Chinese dinner and a play when I went to London for the MRCOG examination in December that year. He also invited me home for dinner cooked by Lady Campbell herself to celebrate New Year's Eve or Hogmanay as they call it.

Alas our efforts with the Vidoson were not as successful. That machine had a water bag suspended from a heavy gantry and movements were only allowed when buttons were depressed -1 for each plane of movement. Those who use the present real time machines will appreciate that as we scan we have to slide the transducer up and down and tilt it to get the correct plane of interest. Imagine what would happen if only 1 plane was allowed at any position and the other 2 are fixed. Furthermore all instructions and labels were in German.

So Stuart left with the German secrets still unsolved.

Dr Sivasambo managed to get the Siemens Company to send a German gynecologist from Munich a month later. The German secret weapon was a piece of wood with 2 protrusions on it and a large strong "mother of all" rubber bands which was fastened to the gantry and by using this, one could depress two of the 3 knobs at any time allowing the gantry to be moved freely in two planes.

I was able at last to make headway and we got results. The other 2 doctors soon quit perhaps because of the small 10 cm x 10 cm image which flickered at 16 Hertz creating a possible risk of photic epilepsy. Also the room was a converted store room

with a musty smell and malfunctioning air conditioner. Having spent years at boarding school I endured all this and by 1974 the machine was used regularly. Its main function was to diagnose molar pregnancy (of which we had a large number then) and to locate placenta previas allowing those with upper segment placentas to go home. The measurement capability was poor as there were no calipers available. Measurements were taken off the screen by guesswork or by measurement off a Polaroid photo but we couldn't really afford this.

By late 1974 we had enough results to justify buying the Diasonograph. Prof Ratnam asked me to draw up a proposal to the Turf Club. A Turf Club Board Member who had a friend in my department asked him about this project. My friend told me that he was so ashamed that we had asked for money that he denied all knowledge of my existence, the project and of ultrasound in general - thus quicker than one could say "Passion for ultrasound" twice, he had denied me thrice. Despite this Judas factor, the Turf Club approved the quarter million and we finally got the Diasonograph.

So in 1975, I was at Queen Charlotte's where Stuart was now the Professor and Head. In those days there was no HMDP so I was on a PM scholarship for 10 days. (PM does not stand for "Prime Minister" but for "Papa & Mama")

HMDP is government funded so I think it stands for "Has many deep pockets".

I saw Stuart at last in action with his own machine which had a prototype scan converter (ours was a bistable machine).

I was struck by his attention to detail, his meticulous approach and his sense of humour. He told me that if he was asked what a certain structure in the brain was and he did not know (this was in 1975) he would put on a serious tone and say: "That is the hippocampus".

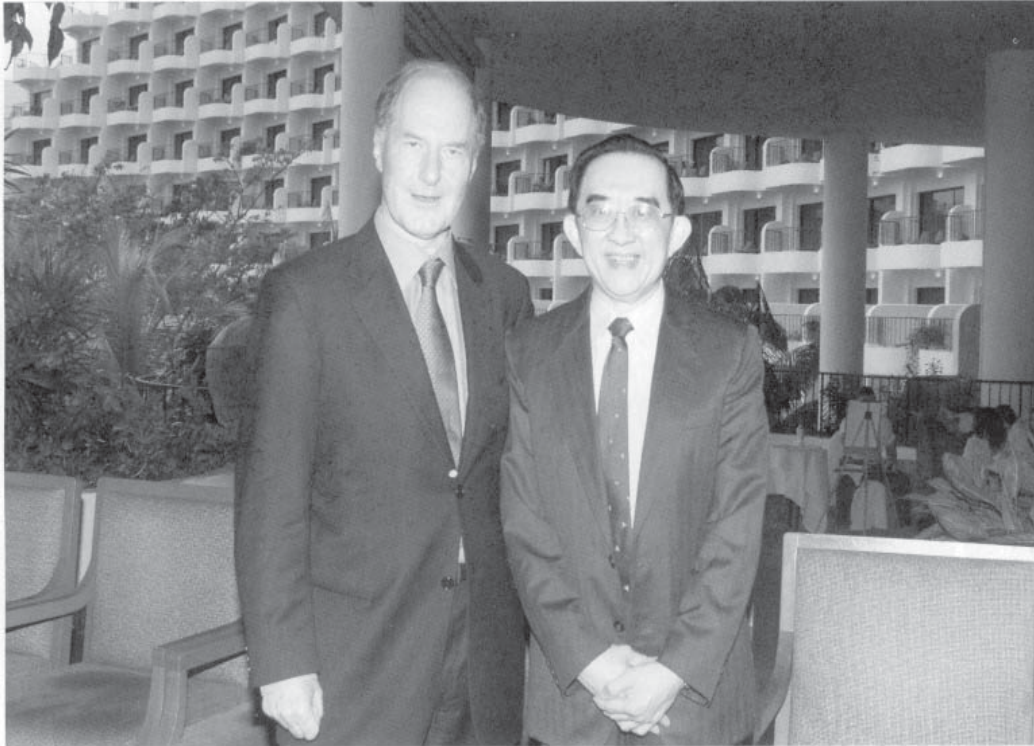
Since then many of our local doctors have been trained by him properly and for long periods under HMDP scholarships.

We in Singapore are grateful to Stuart Campbell who has taught so many of us, inspired us and continues tirelessly to pursue the frontiers of his beloved discipline.

While I continue to gaze at the hippocampus, Stuart has graciously consented to speak tonight on "the future of 3D and 4D ultrasound".

I hope I have given you an insight into the man behind the legend and to me the man is even greater than the legend associated with him.

I have taken you to the past, please welcome Prof Stuart Campbell who takes us to the future.



Prof Stuart Campbell giving the 2004 OGSS Annual Oration, 23 March 2004



Prof Stuart Campbell and Dr SC Chew, 23 March 2004