

**SPEECH BY DR WONG CHIANG YIN, MASTER, ACADEMY OF
MEDICINE, SINGAPORE AT INDUCTION COMITIA 2025**

SATURDAY, 12 July 2025, 2:00 PM

Ong Tiong Tat & Irene Tan Auditorium

Clinical Sciences Building

Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (Novena Campus)

11 Mandalay Road

Singapore 308232

1. Guest-of-Honour, Senior Minister of State for Ministry of Health and Ministry of Manpower, Dr Koh Poh Koon, Fellows, Friends, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.
2. The Comitia formally inducts a specialist into the Academy's Rolls as a Fellow. This is not a casual event but one that is steeped in tradition and meaning. Let me congratulate all of you today, the Fellows as well as the **graduates of the Master of Science in Health Professions Education Singapore (MHPE-S), Graduate Diploma in Hospital Practice and winners of the Annals' Reviewer Awards 2024** for reaching important milestones in your professional lives. And you are now ready to take on fresh responsibilities and challenges for which you have been well-prepared for.
3. **What does it mean to be a Fellow?** Some have mischievously trivialised this to simply paying money to wear a gown today and add a four-letter word to your name. But as is often the case, behind humour lies important issues and questions that need to be answered.

4. Many specialists have questioned the relevance of the Academy - **Why should they even join it? What is the role of the Academy now that we have the Specialist Accreditation Board to recognise and license specialists? “What is in it for me to be a Fellow of AMS?”. What can AMS do for me”?** There are the common and valid questions I hear not infrequently.
5. As I have said or written before on other occasions as Master, the medical profession has its roots in professional guilds even before there were medical schools in universities. And this is a tradition worth keeping, for professional interaction, promoting apprenticeship, mentoring and advancing education and standards and so on. AMS is such a professional guild, dedicated to the collective promotion of professional development of specialists in the medical and dental professions.
6. But today, I want to look at this from another angle. It is also about ownership. Most of the newly-minted fellows today are young specialists in their thirties. The point I would like to make is that instead of asking what the AMS and its Colleges and Chapters can do for you to deserve your membership fees, and this is undoubtedly a valid question indeed, is that maybe we should also ask “ What are you going to do with AMS, now that you are also a Fellow and a co-owner of AMS?
7. AMS is a rare type of company that doesn’t have shares. It is legally speaking, a company limited by guarantee. But in reality, even though there are no shares and shareholders, it is in essence, owned by all the Fellows of AMS who can vote for their leaders in the Colleges, Chapters and AMS itself. You may

not feel this or think it is so, but let me assure you, **we own AMS, you own AMS**. The logical follow-up question therefore is **“What are you going to do with AMS”?**

8. Most of us holding leadership positions in AMS and its Colleges and Chapters are probably in our fifties; some of us are a bit older and some of us are a bit younger. But make no mistake, the baton will be passed on eventually to the specialists of your generation, now mostly in your thirties. What are you going to do with AMS?
9. Are you going to let it fade and disappear quietly into the shadows? The specialist community will be the worse for it if that happens.
10. Each specialty and subspecialty is different and have their unique characteristics and aspirations. It is therefore not so difficult to have people come together to form chapters and colleges or standalone societies. But for different specialties and subspecialties to somehow come together to form the Academy is something special. In diversity and in unity, we have strength, and with numbers, we have a credible voice. When we say we speak for >3900 Fellows, the chance of being ignored or dismissed is pretty low. And because we are independent, nobody else but ourselves tell us what to say or write. That is something we ought to cherish and protect.
11. Many of you would have heard of this famous poem “Invictus” written by the English Poet William Ernest Henley in 1875. The poem was immortalized by Nelson Mandela because it was a source of inspiration to him when he was imprisoned

for many years for his anti-apartheid struggles. The last two lines are particularly well-known,

**“I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul”.**

12. While the specialist community in Singapore is existing rather harmoniously with the community at large and the government of the day and not subject to segregation and discrimination like what Nelson Mandela and the black community was subjected to in South Africa, these two lines nonetheless capture what AMS embodies as a platform and as a collective of specialists:

**“I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul”.**

13. If we can properly and skillfully use and steer this ship called AMS, then we have a much better chance of being masters of our professional fates and the captains of our professional souls.

14. AMS is a ship, a platform, for us to be captain and master of our professional development. And this all begins with answering the question, **“what are you going to do with AMS?”** when you become a Fellow.

15. Once again, let me congratulate all of you present today as you are conferred the FAMS, graduates of the Master of Science in Health Professions Education, Singapore, Graduate Diploma in Hospital Practice and winners of the Annals’ Reviewer Awards 2024. Thank you.