

In Memory of Father of Rehabilitation Prof Sir Harry Fang SY, GBM, OBE, JP (1923 – 2009)

Professor Sir Harry Fang was a renowned orthopaedic surgeon; his innovative surgical techniques are recognised world-wide and he was showered with honours here and abroad. *Rehabilitation: A Life's Work* – the title he gave to his autobiography neatly epitomises his formidable contribution to the welfare of the physically and mentally handicapped, locally and internationally. His legacy lives on in the institutions he founded: The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation, The John F. Kennedy Centre and the MacLehose Medical Rehabilitation Centre, as well as in the Rehabus (now a fleet of 100 buses), and in the ramps and lifts that provide the handicapped with accessibility to public facilities.

A man who felt great compassion for the disadvantaged, Sir Harry lobbied tirelessly for equal rights for the disabled. He promoted the International Charter on the Rights of the Disabled, personally meeting the heads of no fewer than twenty countries. His personal charm, his infectious smile and his selfless devotion of the welfare of a sector of the community that sometimes tends to be marginalized made him an extraordinarily successful fund-raiser. It is easy to believe his claim that he raised HK\$1.5 billion for the cause of rehabilitation.

Sir Harry's philosophy can be simply stated: for him rehabilitation meant empowering the disabled and ensuring for them as normal a life as their condition permitted. He saw participation in sports as an effective way to achieve this purpose. He was the organising chairman of the Third Far East and Pacific Games for the Disabled held in Hong Kong in 1982, and his support for the Paralympic Games earned him The Paralympics Order, conferred on him in 2001 by the International Paralympics Committee.

Just before Christmas 2000 Sir Harry suffered his first stroke and himself joined the ranks of the disabled, though still able to work and see patients. A more severe stroke in March 2003 left him bed-bound and unable to speak. From then until his death on 24 August 2009 he was confined to the MacLehose Centre, surrounded by the loving concern of his devoted wife Laura and his extended family.

In his upholding of the dignity of the disabled, no matter how diminished physically, and in his determination to integrate them as fully as possible into the community, he too aimed to add life to their days. He will remain an example to us all.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his family in their sorrow and join them in mourning the passing of a truly wonderful and well-loved man.

May he rest in peace.

Rev John Russell
Executive Committee Member
Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care