

The CMC Alumni Association Award of Distinction to

Dr. FRANK HENDER GARLICK

at the Annual Alumni Reunion, August 10, 2002

CITATION

Dr. Frank Hender Garlick, joined the Christian Medical College and Hospital, in 1962; initially as Acting Head of General Surgery Unit III and later in 1963 as that of General Surgery Unit II when the respective heads of the units Dr. L.B.M. Joseph and Dr. A.S. Fenn were away on study leave. He was appointed as the Professor and Head of General Surgery Unit I in 1963, when the Department of Urology separated and Dr. H.S. Bhat moved over as its Head.

Dr. Garlick is a committed Christian, who translates his faith into action in all facets of life. A caring and compassionate surgeon and a teacher of Surgery par excellence, Dr. Garlick during his stay in our institution influenced all who came in contact with him in the finer and higher values of life. His surgical skill and techniques were much appreciated and admired by his colleagues and trainees. Many of us who were his students do remember how during free time between cases we used to walk over to the theatre where Dr. Garlick was operating just to watch his meticulous dissection and the gentle handling of tissues which were the hall mark of his surgical skill. He had a special commitment to teaching basic surgical skills, which reflected in the many innovative training protocols he evolved for the junior doctors. The concept of Surgical Skills Laboratory was introduced by Dr. Garlick who insisted that before the junior doctors were allowed to operate on patients they should first practice incision, suturing and knotting and bowel anastomoses in a laboratory set up. This further illustrates his care and concern for surgical training as well as the welfare of the patients. The interne's manual that is being used in all three units of the Department of General Surgery today was first written by Dr. Garlick and some of the former internes of his unit still have the original copies with them.

Another unique thing which touched all of us was that having taught us surgery all through the year, Dr. Garlick would arrive in Men's Hostel on the eve of University examinations to spend time with us, say words of encouragement and pray with us as individuals and as groups. Dr. Garlick had a special burden for student nurture and his house was always open to students and anyone who needed counseling.

Towards the end of 1970, Dr. Garlick felt challenged to help young doctors who were working in remote areas and were under compulsion to undertake operating responsibilities with limited expertise and facilities and this prompted him to leave Vellore. For the next 7 years he was an itinerant surgeon working with and encouraging many of our alumni working in such situations in different parts of India and Nepal.

Even after he left Vellore, Dr. Garlick remained committed to student nurture activities. From 1971 to 1976 he was on the staff of the Union of Evangelical Students of India, visiting medical students all over the country. In 1976 he returned to Australia and worked as the Director of the Emergency Department at the Royal Brisbane Hospital till 1989. In spite of his commitments in Australia, Dr. Garlick continued to visit India and Nepal periodically, identifying himself with those unsung junior doctors working in remote areas, as their friend, philosopher and guide.

In 1989 after he retired from service in Royal Brisbane Hospital, he went back to Nepal as the Medical Director of Patan Hospital, Kathmandu. Within the next 5 years, he established a well organized postgraduate resident training programme for surgeons in this 130 bed General Hospital located in the capital of one of the world's poorest nations. In recognition of his work he received the Gorkha Dakshin Bahu (IV) medal from the King of Nepal in 1994. After his retirement from Patan Hospital, he returned to Australia in 1995. However, his commitment to teaching surgical skills to doctors working in remote areas, keeps bringing him back to India and Nepal at least once a year for shorter periods of 2 to 3 months. His vast experience in this context was published recently in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Surgery under the title "Surgical Training of Doctors in their own isolated Hospitals".

In recognition of his long service to the poor and needy in India and Nepal, Dr. Garlick was honoured with the inaugural award of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons International Medal in February 2000. This was instituted by the College to honour "a Fellow who has provided a lasting contribution of an exceptional nature over a long period of time in the delivery or development of surgery for underprivileged communities overseas."

The Alumni Association of Christian Medical College is proud and pleased to present the Alumni Award of Distinction for the year 2002 to Dr. Frank Hender Garlick in recognition of his outstanding contribution and selfless service to the cause of surgical training for the benefit of the needy and underprivileged and as an expression of our appreciation for his unique contribution to the training, nurture and welfare of our alumni for more than 40 years.

Dr. S.R. Banerjee Jesudason  
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