

## **OFA President's Speech**

Yang Amat Berhormat, Tuan Lim Guan Eng  
The Chief Minister of Penang,

Ms Ong Lay Hong  
The speaker & producer of the documentary film "Plague Fighter Dr Wu Lien-Teh"

Dr Alex K H Ooi  
The moderator of the lecture & President of The Old Frees' Association Singapore

Mr Loke Gim Tay  
Vice-President of the Singapore-China Friendship Association

Dato' Anwar Fazal  
Director of Think City Sdn Bhd

Ms Khoo Salma Nasutin  
President of Penang Heritage Trust

Ms Ooi Geok Ling  
Managing Director of Penang Global Tourism

Wawasan Open University

Ladies and gentlemen

I am very pleased to be present here today at this public lecture to say a few words on one of Malaysia's most illustrious unsung heroes, Dr Wu Lien-Teh.

First and foremost, I wish to thank the organising committee comprising Think City Sdn Bhd, The Penang Heritage Trust, The Old Frees' Association, The Old Frees' Association Singapore, Wawasan Open University, Penang Global Tourism and other organisations who are directly or indirectly involved in making this public lecture in Penang a reality.

Dr Wu Lien Teh was an Old Free who received his early education at Penang Free School and was then awarded the Queen's scholarship in 1896 to study medicine at Emmanuel College at Cambridge University. He graduated in 1903 as a Master of Arts and Doctor of Medicine, came home to work in Malaya and eventually was offered a position with the Manchu Imperial Government in China.

During the severe winter of 1910-1911, the terrible Black Death that had erupted in northern Manchuria was threatening the world. Dr Wu was summoned by the Imperial Government to fight this plague which he crushed within four months, although it extracted a toll of 60,000 deaths.

He returned to Malaya in 1937 and set up a private medical practice in Ipoh. Dr Wu continued with his medical practice there until 1960 when he bought a house in Penang for his retirement.

But barely a week after he moved into his new home, he collapsed from a stroke on January 21, 1960, at the age of 81. In an obituary in The Times of London, the newspaper wrote: "by

his death...the world of medicine has lost a heroic and almost legendary figure and the world at large to whom it is far more indebted than it knows.”

Ladies and gentlemen,

Both the Penang Free School and The Old Frees’ Association are very proud of him. Back in the 1960s, the school honoured Dr Wu Lien Teh by naming a sport house after him.

The Old Frees’ Association has also recognised Dr Wu Lien Teh’s valuable contributions by featuring him in an article in our OFA commemorative book called FIDELIS which was launched by our Royal Patron, His Royal Highness, the Raja of Perlis, on March 31, 2012.

I shouldn’t be talking more about Dr Wu as my fellow Old Free here, Dr Alex Ooi, and Ms Ong Lay Hong will be providing us more details about Dr Wu Lien Teh’s life history and life-time achievements.

However, I would just like to mention that The Old Frees’ Association regrets that while the Chinese Government still recognises Dr Wu Lien Teh's huge contribution to medicine today, there have been little official recognition accorded to him at home.

In this respect, the OFA wishes to place on record our request that the Malaysian Government and the Penang State Government grant him fitting recognition as an illustrious and outstanding son of Malaysia.

Last but not least, the OFA is very proud to be involved in organising this talk and will continue to organise many more lectures to create awareness among Malaysians about great Malaysians.

Thank you.

M.S.Rajendren  
President  
The Old Frees’ Association