

23rd Gordon Arthur Ransome Oration: Law and Medicine: Professions of Honour, Service and Excellence*

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Abstract

Amidst dramatic global change, there is a greater need than ever for principled and committed professionals. The sibling professions of law and medicine, in particular, serve crucial functions in contemporary society. To meet the challenges of the future, members of both professions must appreciate and commit to their shared calling to public service, and ensure that it is not overridden by the profit motive. Three further commitments follow from this: first, to nurture and mentor new entrants to the professions to ensure the continuance of that mission of public service; second, to improve accessibility and affordability through pro bono work and by other means, so that all who need professional assistance can receive it; and, thirdly, to serve with excellence in ethics as well as competence, so as not to betray the trust of the laypersons who rely on professionals to safeguard their interests and welfare. The medical and legal professions have much to learn and gain from working with each other toward those shared goals.

Ann Acad Med Singapore 2017;46:356-63

Key words: Professional ethics, Professional standards, Mentorship, Pro bono

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*Delivered on 21 July 2017, by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, at the Opening Ceremony of the 51st Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine.