

Physician Duo Marks 60 Years of Marriage With \$60,000 Donation to Cutting Edge Campaign

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Dr. W.M. Pan and Dr. A.Y. Eng are legends in the medical community for their almost 60 years of dedication to their patients and to numerous important causes. No matter what country or town they were in, Dr. Pan and Dr. Eng challenged the status quo and made significant positive changes for its citizens. On August 17th, as they celebrate 60 years of marriage they are marking the milestone with a \$60,000 donation to the Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation's Cutting Edge Campaign.

Although Dr. Pan and Dr. Eng are humbled and truly grateful for everything this community has given them since their arrival in the seventies, it is the residents of Pembroke and the Ottawa Valley who have been lucky to have such a dedicated, philanthropic and community-focused couple in their midst.

After graduating from medical school in 1959 at Taiwan University and obtaining their license to practice medicine across Canada a year later, they embarked on an one-year internship at Sarnia General Hospital that ended in 1962. They held several positions in both Canada and the US and spent four years at Indian River Hospital in Hodgson, Manitoba, where they were able to reduce infant and maternal mortality rates to less than the provincial average.

With a shortage of rural doctors in Ontario, Dr. Pan and Dr. Eng arrived in Pembroke in 1970 and were greeted with open arms. It was our community's good fortune that they decided to settle and open practice here in Pembroke, first in the downtown core and then on Esther Street. Dr. Eng was in family medicine from 1971-2011 and while he had a busy practice, his passion for Public Health fueled many local accomplishments: he and Dr. Pan were pioneers in their stance against public smoking and in 1978, the City passed a bylaw to control smoking in public places, followed by an amendment in 1989 to include all places of work. This action was 30 years ahead of the Province of Ontario.

They were also vigilant in their fight against AIDS, as well as their determination to provide young adults with sex education. In their first 10 years they delivered about 50 babies a year, did minor surgeries and took turns running the emergency departments at both hospitals, seeing close to 100 patients per day during the summer season. They organized a Planned Parenthood Association, a Non-Smokers Association and local sex education classes. Dr. Pan and Dr. Eng also found the time to sponsor three Indo Chinese refugee families (16 members) with the Renfrew County Chinese Cultural Society, as part of Project 4000.

Being foreign-trained doctors themselves, Dr. Pan and Dr. Eng started a personal campaign to push the government into increasing training spots for international medical students from 90 to 200, to alleviate the shortage of doctors in rural communities.

“A.Y. Eng has been a tiger in local Public Health issues in the valley that has positively elevated our medical professional reputation. Behind every man's success and legacy is a remarkable woman. Mei Pan is a gracious humble embodiment of this axiom,” remarked Dr. Scott Murray

During their early years in Pembroke Dr. Pan studied and passed her anaesthesia examination. In 1973, Dr. Pan became the first anesthesiologist in Renfrew County with both a Canadian and American fellowship in her speciality. Today, Dr. Pan continues to provide pain control treatments at her Pembroke Regional Hospital clinic .

“The combined expertise of Dr. Eng and Dr. Pan and their commitment to health care advancements over the years is a true testament to their legacy in our region and beyond,” said PRH President and CEO Pierre Noel. “This latest gift they have made to our hospital represents their continued commitment to quality care close to home and we are very appreciative of their generosity,” Mr. Noel said.

Dr. Eng closed his practice in 2011 after 40 years of service to his community. They moved to Cotnam's Island but kept their home on Esther Street until they donated it to the Pembroke Regional Hospital Foundation in 2013 to be sold to support the MRI Campaign.

Dr. Eng and Dr. Pan were blessed with children early on: just three weeks before graduating from medical school, their first child, Susan, was born in Taipei, while their second child, David, was born there a year later in 1960. Helen was born in Ohio in 1964 and their youngest son, Arthur, was born in Winnipeg in 1965. Presently the eldest lives in Sweden and the other children reside in Ontario and British Columbia but they will all be home to celebrate their parents' 60 years of marriage.

Dr. Pan often comments on how thankful they both are for all the years they have been able to practice medicine and that is what motivates them to pay it forward.

“I was overcome with emotion when they donated their Esther Street property in 2013 and as they celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary and gift our community with another \$60,000, I am speechless,” said Nancy Warren, Executive Director of the PRH Foundation.

“Since they arrived in Pembroke in 1970, they have been relentless in their mission to provide regional families with sound and progressive health care and they are just as committed today as they were back then. Their donation will support the modernization of the surgical in-patient space and a patient room will have a dedicated plaque to celebrate this occasion,” she said. “Thank you and Happy 60th Wedding Anniversary Dr. Eng and Dr. Pan!”

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