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TO NEWS EDITORS
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EMINENT BIOCHEMIST TO BOOST RESEARCH ON EYE DISEASES AT CUHK

A distinguished biochemist known for his contributions to basic research on eye diseases, Prof. Lam Kwok-wai, has been appointed Professor of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences by the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

For more than three decades, Prof. Lam has been actively involved in the quest for the better understanding of diseases of the eyes, which gives rise to new treatment models. Before joining the CUHK, he held various important positions in the Retina Foundation and a number of leading medical schools in the United States.

The Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences of the CUHK provides comprehensive educational programmes for medical students of both CUHK and the University of Hong Kong, medical officers, as well as practising physicians and allied health care personnel.

In his new post at the CUHK, Prof. Lam will promote basic research on eye diseases and initiate a visual science teaching curriculum at the graduate and post-graduate levels to train research-oriented medical scientists.

Born and educated in Hong Kong, Prof. Lam received his higher education in the United States. He received his B. Sc. in Chemistry from the East Texas Baptist College in 1957 and a Ph. D. in Biochemistry from the University of Pittsburgh in 1963.

He held key research posts with the National Institute of Health, the Retina Foundation and the Boston University before joining the Albany Medical College as Research Associate Professor in 1973.

In 1980, the Albany Medical College appointed him Research Professor and Director of Ophthalmic Biochemistry Laboratory. In 1982, Prof. Lam joined the University of Texas Health

Science Centre at San Antonio as Professor and Director of Ophthalmic Biochemistry Laboratory, a post which he held for 14 years before joining CUHK.

Prof. Lam's studies focus on the biochemical changes in age-dependent degenerative eye diseases such as glaucoma, retinal detachment and corneal ulceration, and the use of "antioxidants" to counter the aging process.

"Antioxidants such as Vitamin A and Vitamin E are the subjects of study for medical scientists around the world. At the CUHK, we are conducting animal studies using rats to test if the administration of Vitamin A could protect the retina from photic injury," said Prof. Lam. "Studies are also under way to explore how Vitamin E could be more effectively used to inhibit the aging process which underlies crippling eye diseases such as glaucoma and cataract," he added.

To train research-oriented medical scientists, a graduate programme under the direction of Prof. Lam will offer graduates of both medical schools and basic science departments a chance to apply their basic science knowledge to ophthalmic diseases through a medical research project.

In an effort to promote multi-disciplinary collaboration between the ophthalmology and basic science departments, Prof. Lam will organize workshops and symposia of common interest to these departments. Academic exchange and linkages with the outside world will also be strengthened.

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Note to Editors:

A photo of Prof. Lam will be distributed via the GIS press boxes today. For press enquiries, please contact Mrs Shirley Kwok of the University's Information and PR Office at 2609-8897.