

## Memorial

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*Associate Professor Chongdee Sukthomya,  
1936-2025*

On April 30, 2025, Associate Professor Chongdee Sukthomya, the first radiologist of Southern Thailand, passed away at the age of 89 years. He was born in Bangkok on August 10, 1936, graduated from Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok in 1960, and qualified by the American Board of Radiology on June 9, 1967.

### **The Founder of Radiology in Southern Thailand**

In the annals of medicine and public health in Southern Thailand, Associate Professor Chongdee Sukthomya, M.D., stands as a figure of paramount importance. A true pioneer, he was not only the founding Head of the Department of Radiology at the Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University, but is also rightfully venerated as the very first radiologist in the southern region of the nation. His contributions ushered in a new era of radiology in Southern Thailand, leaving an indelible legacy that continues to benefit countless lives.

### **The Arrival of the Pioneer**

The year 1975 marked a critical juncture for radiological sciences in Southern Thailand. The region, which was considered remote in terms of medical advancement, lacked specialized radiological services. Even in the most modern hospitals of the time, such as Hat Yai Hospital and Songkhla Hospital, radiologists were lacking. The crucial task of interpreting radiographic images fell to the attending physicians, a practice that starkly highlighted the disparity in public health services compared to other regions of the country.

This landscape began to transform when Professor Kasem Limwongse, M.D., the visionary first Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University, recognized the urgent need for specialized radiological expertise. In a pivotal move, he initiated the transfer of Dr. Sukthomya from the Faculty of Medicine at Chiang Mai University—a center of advanced medical practice at the time—to undertake the monumental task of establishing the Department of Radiology in the peninsular south.

### **A Legacy of Foundational Leadership**

Occupying the position of the first Head of the Department of Radiology from December 1974 to November 30, 1984, Dr. Sukthomya dedicated a decade to meticulously building the department from the ground up. At that time, Songklanagarind Hospital had almost no equipment. The first fluoroscopy machine was introduced in 1977. The hospital began using cobalt radiotherapy and ultrasound imaging and performed the first angiography in Southern Thailand in 1982. It is evident that this was truly a beginning from nothing. His vision and initiative were the driving forces behind nearly all of the department's foundational achievements. His leadership was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the field of medicine that was previously nonexistent in this region.



*Songklanagarind Hospital in its early years after construction.*



*Dr. Chongdee and Dr. Vimol Sukthomya, with the staff, in front of the first CT scanner room in Songklanagarind Hospital.*

Beyond his departmental duties, Dr. Sukthomya also served as the Vice Dean during the faculty's formative years. This role placed him in the part of the faculty's administration and strategic development. Consequently, Dr. Sukthomya was also one of the important people shaping the very character and trajectory of the Faculty of Medicine.

His name is a constant presence in the commemorative publications of the Faculty of Medicine, frequently referenced by various departments as a figure of inspiration and foundational importance. This recurring acknowledgment is a clear indicator of the dedication, perseverance, and profound positive influence he bestowed upon the Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University, and the entire public health system of Southern Thailand—a legacy that endures to this day.

### **An Enduring Impact**

Even after his departure from Prince of Songkla University, Dr. Sukthomya continued to serve the public with unwavering dedication. He chose to join Lampang Cancer Hospital in the Northern Thailand which lacked a radiologist on staff. There, he contributed his expertise in both diagnostic and therapeutic radiology, while also fostering academic growth within the institution.



*Dr. Sukthomya came back to visit the Department of Radiology at Songklanagarind Hospital after relocating to work at Lampang Cancer Hospital.*



One of his notable initiatives was organizing weekly academic seminars every Thursday afternoon. These sessions brought together multidisciplinary teams including doctors, nurses, radiologic technologists, and staff from various departments to discuss real patient cases and share knowledge. This collaborative and educational environment not only enhanced patient care but also strengthened interprofessional learning and camaraderie.



*The first cohort of radiologic technology students in Southern Thailand.*

He remains one of Thailand's most esteemed radiologists whose contributions have left an enduring impact on medical practice, education, and patient care across generations.

*Suthinee Teerajaruwat, M.D.  
Department of Radiology, Faculty of Medicine,  
Prince of Songkla University.*

*Wiwatana Tanomkiat, M.D.  
Head, Thoracic Imaging, Department of Radiology, Faculty of Medicine,  
Prince of Songkla University,  
President, Radiological Society of Thailand (RST),  
Immediate Past President, The Royal College of Radiologists of Thailand (RCRT).*

*Keerati Hongsakul, M.D.  
Director, Minimally Invasive Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology (MiSIR),  
Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University,  
President, Thai Society of Vascular and Interventional Radiology (TSVIR).*

*Pramot Tanutit, M.D.  
Chair, Department of Radiology, Faculty of Medicine,  
Prince of Songkla University,  
President, Thai Musculoskeletal Imaging Group (TMIG).*

*Kittipong Riabroi, M.D., M.Sc.  
Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University,  
Immediate Past President,  
The Association of Thai Interventional Radiology (ATIN).*