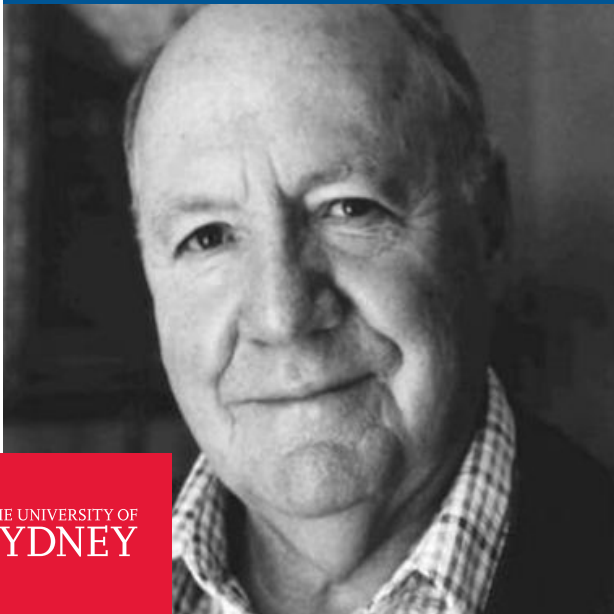


# THE MITCHELL J NOTARAS COLORECTAL SCHOLARSHIP IMPACT AND LEGACY



“Sydney is immensely fortunate to have a large and growing number of supporters who believe in our vision and purpose. It gives me great pleasure to be able to thank all our donors, on behalf of those who have benefited from your support. Your generosity and foresight are core to our University and its achievement.”

- Dr Michael Spence  
Vice-Chancellor and Principal,  
University of Sydney



Dr Mitchell Notaras

## NEED FOR COLORECTAL RESEARCH AND SUPPORT

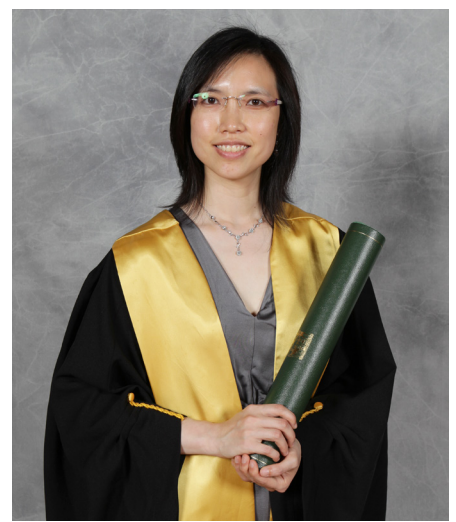
Nowhere is the need to support young surgeons and developments in Colorectal research more vital than in Australia today. Along with New Zealand, Australia has the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world but the need to drive research in the field is universal. Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in men and the second in women internationally (WHO Globocan, 2012). Supporting further research in the field along with the brightest Colorectal surgical talent is the best way to improve patient outcomes and understanding of this widespread disease.

## THE MITCHELL J NOTARAS COLORECTAL SCHOLARSHIP

The University depends on the generosity of philanthropists such as Dr Mitchell Notaras so that future scholars are able to pursue research that will make a difference to society.

Established in 2003, the Mitchell J Notaras Colorectal Scholarship encompasses clinical training in academic Colorectal surgery in Australia and abroad as well as supporting further expert training and research - including enrolment in a higher degree in the field. Aimed at young surgeons pursuing an academic Colorectal surgical career, the scholarship is three years in duration and offered every second year.

The scholarship is administered through the University of Sydney under the supervision of the Training Board in Colon and Rectal Surgery. In years one and two the scholarship is run in-conjunction with the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Colorectal Research Department and the Surgical Outcomes Research Centre (SouRCe) - where fellows carry out vital research and clinical training. In year three, named recipients – supported by a scholarship contribution and travel grant, are able to take up a surgical position at internationally recognised academic Colorectal surgical units to help refine their further Colorectal research specialism, knowledge and surgical skills.



From left to right: Dr Nabila Ansari, Dr Jonathan Hong and his family, and Dr Cherry Koh

## FUNDING

The funding for the Mitchell J Notaras Colorectal Scholarship is derived from a generous \$1 million endowment made by esteemed Colorectal surgeon and University of Sydney alumnus Dr Mitchell Notaras. Notaras scholarship recipients receive an estimated maximum \$70,000 a year for research – including \$50,000 salary and \$20,000 (on-costs to research unit), along with an additional \$35,000 to support their international clinical placement.

Typical post-fellowship training in Colorectal Surgery is usually a two-year clinical training program, but the Mitchell J Notaras Colorectal Scholarship supports an innovative three year program. By the end of the program, the scholar is very well educated having undergone clinical training in two premier institutions and also partaken in research both independently and collaboratively.

## SCHOLARSHIP OUTCOMES

To date there have been six recipients of the Mitchell J Notaras Colorectal Scholarship:

- 2014 - Dr Nabila Ansari
- 2012 - Dr Jonathan Hong
- 2010 - Dr Cherry Koh
- 2008 - Dr Toufic El-Khoury
- 2006 - Dr Catherine Turner
- 2004 - Dr Christopher Byrne

### Dr Nabila Ansari

"I completed surgical training at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPAH) and obtained my fellowship from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons in 2012. I have always had a keen interest to pursue subspecialty training in colorectal surgery and commenced a PhD investigating decision-making in colorectal cancer within the multidisciplinary team setting. I hope my PhD

will help me better understand decision-making in the multidisciplinary team environment and develop ways to improve decision-making in patients with Colorectal cancer.

Receiving the Mitchell J Notaras Colorectal Scholarship has given me financial support during my research year and enabled me to pursue training that will allow me to practice as both an academic and clinical Colorectal surgeon in the future.

This scholarship also allows me to travel for an overseas clinical fellowship year which I will be commencing in Basingstoke in the United Kingdom later this year. I look forward to working in the UK as it will give me the opportunity to observe different practices, to attain skills that I can bring back to Australia and to also foster future links between the UK and Australia".

### Dr Jonathan Hong

"I am honoured to be a recipient of the Mitchell J Notaras Colorectal Scholarship. I have a very strong bond with the University of Sydney, where I have completed all my higher education: B. Med. Sci (Hons) 1998, MBBS 2001, and Masters of Surgery 2011. Thanks to the scholarship, I look forward to undertaking further research at this institution.

When I applied for the scholarship I had just completed my Masters of Surgery (Colorectal) at the University. In view of this, I applied to complete the clinical component of the scholarship first. In 2012, I undertook my first clinical year of post-fellowship training in Colorectal surgery at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. This was a highly rewarding year that gave me a wide exposure assessment and treatment of diseases of the colon, rectum and anus, particularly primary and recurrent Colorectal cancer.

My second clinical year in Colorectal surgery, commenced in July 2013. This was undertaken through



Dr Cherry Koh meeting the Notaras family at the Founders' Circle Society ceremony and dinner on 9 August 2014

the University of Toronto in Canada, at Mount Sinai and St Michael's Hospitals. Mount Sinai Hospital, in particular, is the main referral centre for inflammatory bowel disease in Ontario. This opportunity has exponentially increased my clinical and operative knowledge of the management of inflammatory bowel disease.

Since completing my clinical year in June of this year I have embarked on a year of research in surgical education, specifically looking at judgment and decision making in rectal cancer surgery. The University of Toronto has a highly regarded history in surgical education. The time in Canada has already been a unique and privileged opportunity for my family and I. I look forward to returning to Australia in July 2015, where I plan to use this year to lay the groundwork for the research year of the Notaras scholarship.

I am exceedingly grateful for the generous support that the Mitchell J Notaras Colorectal Scholarship has provided me. I aim to continue research in surgical education throughout my career and hope that this will enhance the field of Colorectal surgery and indirectly help to provide the best possible patient care”.

#### Dr Cherry Koh

“As I have previously completed a Masters of Surgery, I chose to undertake a PhD for the research component of my Notaras Fellowship. I studied at Oxford University for my second year of clinical training and learned a great deal which I am using in my current exploration of Colorectal issues.

My research surrounds decision making for patients with locally recurrent rectal cancer - which is a very difficult condition to manage. Patients with this condition typically experience severe symptoms and the only option that may offer cure is radical surgery, which can result in considerable adverse effects. Patients and surgeons therefore have to make clinical decisions

juggling trade-offs. I am currently into the second year of my PhD and while research is interesting, there are challenges. Juggling clinical practice as a surgeon and research is demanding. Progress is satisfactory but this (it) requires ongoing commitment to finish the research.

My plans in the medium term are to complete my PhD, to then apply to the University for an Academic Title and to continue supervising trainees in research while continuing clinical practice as a Colorectal Surgeon.

The Mitchell J Notaras Colorectal Scholarship has transformed my educational experience and opened doors for me that would not have been possible otherwise”.

#### THANK YOU

There have been six Notaras Scholarship recipients and all six have been granted the opportunity to pursue research in their areas of interest to become local experts in their surgical specialisations and trained in their desired overseas institutions.

The University is grateful and honoured that Dr Mitchell Notaras - whose long career in Colorectal research and treatment is world-renowned - chose to partner with the University of Sydney. His foresight to set up this unique and vitally important scholarship is deeply appreciated by the recipients as well as the infinite number of patients and families that directly benefit from the life-saving skills these young surgeons acquire.

The University of Sydney wishes to acknowledge and thank the Notaras family for their ongoing interest and the generosity that made this highly successful scholarship possible.

Posthumously through this scholarship program Dr Notaras continues to guide and support the next generation of best and brightest Colorectal surgical talent.

## CONTACT

### **Meghan Knox**

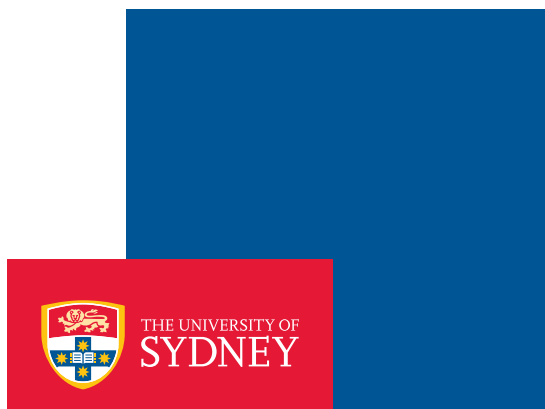
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