The Lambie Dew Oration has been delivered annually since its inauguration in 1958. There have been a total of 57 Orations and both this and last year have been very special indeed. The orator for 2015 was Professor Fran Baum, a distinguished researcher on the social and economic determinants of health. Professor Baum spoke passionately about Creating Healthy and Fair Communities.

In 2014, it was Dr John Yu, a University of Sydney Medical Alumni and distinguished paediatrician, who has been recognised for his dedication to Medicine and the Arts by the award of Australian of the Year in 1996. This was Dr Yu’s second oration (the only other repeat orator has been Professor Gustav Nossal 1972/1986 and on this occasion he chose to speak on Community values and the challenges of change.

THE TWO PROFESSORS, SO ADMIRABLY HONOURED BY THIS ORATION, WERE CHARLES LAMBIE (MEDICINE) AND SIR HAROLD DEW (SURGERY).

Dew was born in Melbourne and graduated from the University of Melbourne M.B. B.S. in 1914. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and served in France, Egypt and Palestine before returning to Melbourne, and for a time acting Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. In 1927 he published the work Hydatid Disease for which he became known internationally. He was appointed as the first full time Bosch Professor of Surgery at the University of Sydney in 1930 and retained this position until his retirement in 1956. Both he and Lambie set about restructuring the curriculum; encouraging research and taking the Medical School forward in the brand new Rockefeller (later Blackburn) building.

Lambie was a graduate of Edinburgh University, also graduating in 1914. He served with distinction in WW1. In 1921, he visited North America, where he spent time at the University of Toronto, Canada where Frederick Banting and Charles Best had just produced the first insulin. Lambie was the first person to introduce Insulin for the treatment of diabetes in Europe when he returned to Edinburgh with some vials of the precious substance. He published several papers on the topic of carbohydrate metabolism and in 1927 he was awarded an M.D. from Edinburgh University for his thesis entitled On the locus of insulin action. He was the successful applicant for the first full time Bosch chair of Medicine at the University of
In 1937, John Yu with his mother and sister arrived in Sydney, refugees from the murderous conflict in Nanking in the lead up to World War II. In his 2014 Lambie Dew address, Emeritus Professor Yu spoke of his own experience, the need for challenges facing Australia to be addressed with humanity, and critically, the need for leadership.

“I think of myself when in 1937 I arrived in Sydney with my mother and sister, refugees from the Japanese rape of Nanking. I arrived by boat albeit a passenger liner. Australia gave me refuge, Australia gave me free education from primary school through to Medicine at this University. I have always felt the obligation to give something back to this country, my country. I like to think that the investment by Australia all that time ago was worth it. Let us hope we can keep investing in people."

The Centenary book of the Sydney University Medical Society. 1992

Sydney and took up the position in 1931.

Lambie was also an accomplished pianist and composer, composing his first piece at the age of seven and having given several public performances by the age of eight. Music remained a life-long passion.

How fitting it was therefore that Lambie stood in spirit in the form of his old Edinburgh University MD gown, overseeing the oration. The resplendent scarlet gown and hood have been kindly donated to the Sydney Medical School Heritage Collection by the Lambie family and will form the focal point of a display highlighting the history of the oration in this collection.

The 2014 oration was preceded by the playing on the Great Hall organ of the recently sourced score – Intermezzo in E major – one of Lambie’s own compositions. A very fitting introduction for our 2014 orator, Dr John Yu who has done so much to integrate the Sydney medical scene with the Arts.

The Sydney Medical School Heritage Collection is taking shape in the old Burkitt-Ford Library in Edward Ford Building, and will open in February 2016.

LAMBIE DEW ORATION 2015
FRAN BAUM

Professor Fran Baum delivered the Lambie-Dew Oration in 2015. Professor Baum is a Matthew Flinders Distinguished Professor of Public Health and is one of Australia’s leading researchers on the social and economic determinants of health. Professor Baum’s numerous publications relate to social determinants of health, including Aboriginal people’s health, health inequities, primary health care, health promotion, Healthy Cities, and social capital. Her text book ‘The New Public Health’ is widely used as a core public health text.

Professor Baum’s significant contributions to the field of Public Health led her to being appointed as a Commissioner on the World Health Organisation’s Commission on the Social Determinants of Health from 2005-08.

LAMBIE DEW ORATION 2014
JOHN YU

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