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Chinese respiratory expert named first Being Edinburgh Award winner

One of China's leading experts on COVID-19, epidemiologist Zhong Nanshan has been named the winner of the University's first Being Edinburgh Award with over 90% of the student, staff and alumni vote.

A shortlist of three candidates - social justice activist and author Barbara Becnel, music researcher and ethnographer, Tom Western and respiratory expert and epidemiologist Zhong Nanshan - was chosen by our selection committee from more than 100 nominated alumni.

The relevance of Zhong Nanshan's achievements and his ongoing work as part of the Chinese response to COVID-19 resonated with our community, especially alumni living and working in China, and students whose families and friends were caught up in the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic.

During the peak time of the COVID-19 outbreak in China, the nomination made many Chinese alumni immensely proud; it united and uplifted alumni and students across the world. The win will mean a great deal to our current Chinese students, alumni, and prospective students, for Dr Zhong represents not only academic and professional excellence, but also dedication and integrity, which is ever important in our collective efforts in addressing today and tomorrow's greatest challenges.

Grace Guan, Regional Director, East Asia

Dr Zhong was the first person to identify the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus during the 2003 outbreak. As head of the Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Diseases, Nanshan and his team offered to admit all the critical SARS cases in Guangdong province into his Institute. He drew up the procedures for the proper management and prevention of SARS that were adopted by the Chinese Ministry of Health. This pioneering work earned him the national labour medal from the government.

Still at the forefront of respiratory medicine, Nanshan is currently leading the Chinese National Health Commission's expert panel investigating the COVID-19 outbreak.

In an email to the University, Dr Zhong said it was an honour to receive the first Being Edinburgh Award and took time to thank those who voted and to share information about his current activities, including a planned lecture series to colleagues in Europe and the US about the transmission route, infectivity, diagnosis, and management of the COVID-19 infection.

During this time of international crisis, the Being Edinburgh Award allows us to highlight positive news in our global alumni community. Dr Zhong is an inspiration to students, staff and alumni alike, and embodies important values that the University aims to uphold: drive, passion, and sustained hard work. His win is well-deserved, and we wish him the best of luck in his research on COVID-19.

Niamh Martin-McGarrigle, Linguistics and French student and member of the Being Edinburgh selection committee

The Being Edinburgh award was created by the Alumni Relations team at the University as a response to conversations with students, alumni and staff about how to increase knowledge and appreciation of Edinburgh's diverse community of former students. It aims to highlight the lives and

achievements of Edinburgh alumni who are not universally well known, but whose stories should be shared and celebrated.

The name *Being Edinburgh* refers to the idea that there is a shared set of values, memories and experiences that make our community of students, staff and alumni unique. Each winner of the award is nominated and chosen by this community as a representative of these shared values and as someone whose drive, passion and brilliance is both inspirational and relatable.

Related links

Being Edinburgh - www.ed.ac.uk/alumni/being-edinburgh-award