Thirty-seven esteemed alumni came home to NTU to receive the prestigious Nanyang Alumni Awards for their achievements and service to their alma mater and society.

I
tention was in abundance on an evening that saw a bumper crop of 37 NTU alumni honoured with the Nanyang Alumni Awards on 14 October 2017. The Awards recognise the outstanding contributions of NTU alumni to the University and society.

Media veteran Mr Chang Long Jong (Civil Engineering/1985), together with economics don Professor Ng Yew Kwang (Commerce/1966), received the Nanyang Distinguished Alumni Award, the highest accolade bestowed upon NTU alumni. Their remarkable accomplishments, both locally and abroad, exemplify the versatility and high calibre of the NTU alumni family, bringing good repute to the University’s name.

AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Life seldom goes according to plan, and Mr Chang, CEO of MM2 Asia, knows this all too well. Despite being a Public Service Commission scholar, he found himself unable to secure a job upon graduating from NTU in 1985 with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering. It was bad timing—Singapore was deep in the throes of a recession.

Then, amidst this bleak economic landscape, a lifeline emerged—a position had become available at the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), the predecessor of today’s Mediacorp. When asked by his scholarship organisation if he would be willing to take up the job, Mr Chang decided to take a leap of faith.

“I went through the job interviews, and SBC thought it was worth trying out a rookie engineer with totally no knowledge of the media industry,” he said. “So, in a way, my entry into the media industry was totally unplanned.”

What began as an unexpected turn of events flourished into a fruitful career of 30 years. Mr Chang ascended to the ranks of Deputy CEO and Chief Customer Officer of Mediacorp, before leaving to join MM2 Asia in April this year.

While at Mediacorp, Mr Chang served as a member of the President’s Challenge Steering Committee and the Promote Mandarin Council, leveraging Mediacorp’s strong viewership, compelling storytelling and star power to promote positive values and social messages for the good of public interest.

On receiving the Nanyang Distinguished Alumni Award, Mr Chang acknowledged that he could not have done it without his support network, and had some insightful words for alumni.

“Have a good idea of what you want to pursue in terms of your career, but at the same time be open and prepared to seize unexpected opportunities, which could lead to very rewarding career adventures that may be different from what you had originally planned,” he advised.

Have a good idea of what you want to pursue in terms of your career, but at the same time be open and prepared to seize unexpected opportunities, which could lead to very rewarding career adventures that may be different from what you had originally planned.”

Mr Chang Long Jong
When you are able to help someone and make them happy, you will be rewarded with happiness in return."

Professor Ng Yew-Kwang

A BEAUTIFUL MIND

Completing his primary school education in eight years instead of six never discouraged Prof Ng. Today, he is the Albert Winsemius Chair Professor in economics at NTU, a position received for eminent scholars of distinction. Having authored and co-authored more than two dozen books and more than 250 papers in refereed periodicals like the American Economic Review, Economica and Economic Journal, Prof Ng is a treat that late bloomers can savor the heights of academic success.

Prof Ng obtained his Bachelor of Commerce degree in economics from Nanyang University in 1966. As an undergraduate, he had already published in the Journal of Political Economy, a top economic journal, which put him on the fast track to pursuing a PhD degree. He completed his graduate studies at the University of Sydney and graduated with a PhD degree in economics in 1971.

"I was very interested in doing research, and having my publications accepted by top economic journals gave me the confidence to continue on the academic track," said Prof Ng.

Although economics was Prof Ng’s intellectual darling, it was not the only subject matter that he excelled in. His diverse interests span biology, cosmology, mathematics, philosophy, psychology and informatics, and he has published refereed journal papers in all these fields of inquiry.

"I seldom work at night. Rather, I would read a book or a magazine that is not about economics. I would discover some insights, and it would inspire me to write some papers," he said.

Prof Ng also has a keen interest in preserving and promoting Chinese culture and heritage. In 2016, he and his wife donated S$100,000 to NTU’s Chinese Heritage Centre. He also gave a public lecture on Chinese couplets and poems in October 2016.

"I think that happiness is the ultimate goal for everyone," said Prof Ng, who has published a book on happiness in Chinese, with the English version in publication.

AMBITIOUS AND RESILENT PERSONIFIED

Also deserving of praise are the winners of the Nanyang Alumni Achievement Award. A total of seven Achievement Awards were given out to alumni who demonstrated service and dedication to the University. Among them was Mr Chua Chong Kheng (EEE/1985), Deputy Chief Executive (Infrastructure & Development) of the Land Transport Authority (LTA).

Part of the first cohort of NTU (then Nanyang Technological Institute, or NTI) graduates, Mr Chua felt an obligation to be an engineer who could adapt and apply his skills to innovate and help solve practical problems.

"More importantly, my stint at NTI made me realise the importance of teamwork, collaboration and communication," said Mr Chua, who led their ideals with him as he embarked on a project that matched his ambitions—the building of Singapore’s first subway system. Ever the humble leader, Mr Chua credits his successes to colleagues who have supported him over the years, even dedicating his Achievement Award to his team at LTA, "who have worked tirelessly to achieve an efficient and effective land transport system for Singapore.”

Another recipient of the Nanyang Alumni Achievement Award was Ms Rohini Aryal Dhungana, who is the Director of the Habitat Outdoor Learning Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal. After graduating from the National Institute of Education in 2014, Ms Dhungana returned to her homeland to set up the learning centre, only to see it destroyed in the 2015 earthquake. Undeterred, she persevered in her endeavour to improve education in Nepal, rebuilding the school in 2016.

"My education in NTU helped me to become more focused and confident," said the educator. "It has really pushed me towards taking leadership in designing multi-problem-solving approaches.”

MODELS OF DEDICATION AND SERVICE

Ten NTU alumni under the age of 40 were also recognised with the Nanyang Outstanding Young alumni Award for their significant achievements in their respective fields.

One such alumna was Dr Neeralip Bhai Narain (HSS/2009), whose debut novel, The Gatekeeper, was named the winner of the prestigious 2016 Epigram Books Fiction Prize, which is the only literary prize in Singapore for unpublished English language novels.

Her novel, which she wrote while studying for her PhD degree in English Literature and Creative Writing at NTU, revolves around a young girl with Medusa-like powers and deals with different forms of marginality in society. It was lauded as "confident and effortless” by Mr Harish Sharma, the resident playwright of local theatre company The Necessary Stage.

Dr Narain credits the education she received at NTU for making her “more resilient and sharper in discerning the issues that affect the larger society”. Her graduate education also groomed her into a creative problem solver, a skill she finds useful as a research associate with the Centre for Research on Islamic and Malay Affairs, which conducts strategic research aimed at providing thought leadership in contemporary Malay and Muslim affairs.

Yet another 18 individuals received the Nanyang Alumni Service Award in acknowledgement of their continued service in NTU.

Among them was Ms Jayalakshmy Aarthi Ananthanarayanan (SSM/2013), who is the founding president of the NTU Sport Science and Management Alumni Association. Ms Jayalakshmy has helped organise career talks and sporting events for NTU alumni and sourced for alumni sponsorship for the Sport Science and Management freshman orientation camp.

"I am pleasantly surprised and very honoured to receive this award,” said Ms Jayalakshmy. “Even today I am still in touch with my lecturers. They continue to inspire me, and I am very proud to call myself an alumna of NTU.”

"..."
This is the highest honour bestowed upon the alumni of the University, to recognise the truly remarkable accomplishments of alumni who have gained national, regional or international distinction as outstanding exponents of their chosen fields or professions, and whose endeavours reflect admirably on or bring honour to the University.

NANYANG DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

A VISIONARY OF SINGAPORE’S MEDIA INDUSTRY

Mr Chang Long Jong
School of Civil and Structural Engineering
B. Eng.(Civil) / Class of 1985

“I’ve always believed that one will succeed when one comes with that passion, energy and openness of wanting to discover and learn new things.”

Mr Chang joined entertainment company MM2 Asia as its Group CEO in April this year, having previously spent over three decades with local broadcaster MediaCorp. His last-held position there was as its Deputy CEO and Chief Customer Officer, overseeing its major media assets including television, radio, newspaper, magazines and streaming service Toggle.

He helped create the Star Search programme in 1988, was involved in the building of MediaCorp’s Chinese drama production capability, and helped launch new MediaCorp channels, including Singapore’s first free-to-air HD channel. In addition, he was responsible for MediaCorp Raintree Pictures, which is behind top-grossing movies like ‘I Not Stupid’, and ‘I Not Stupid Too’.

Now, as Group CEO of the Singapore-headquartered MM2 Asia, Mr Chang oversees and manages the Group’s business operations across the region. He also manages the development of new business opportunities for the mainboard-listed company, especially in the area of content production.

Mr Chang has expressed his aim of helping to lead the group into its next phase of growth “towards becoming a media and entertainment powerhouse in Asia as the leading producer and distributor of films, TV and online content”.

Always looking to pay it forward, Mr Chang has contributed to the NTU Class of 1985 Pioneer Fund and volunteered his time as a guest speaker at the NTU 2007 Convocation.

ECONOMIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

Professor Ng Yew-Kwang
Commerce
B.Comm. / Class of 1966

“Even if a person has failed many times before, he or she may still achieve excellence in the future.”

Professor Ng is the Albert Winsemius Chair Professor in the Division of Economics at NTU’s School of Social Sciences, as well as emeritus professor in the Department of Economics at Monash University.

To date, he has authored and co-authored more than 30 books, over 40 chapters in academic books, and 250 or so articles in refereed periodicals like the American Economic Review, Economica and Economic Journal, as well as in non-refereed publications.

The economics don is internationally renowned for his work in welfare economics, with most of his 250 refereed papers in this field. His first book on the topic, Welfare Economics: Introduction and Development of Basic Concepts, is considered a seminal publication.

Prof Ng also developed an original economic analysis model called mesoeconomics that combines microeconomics and macroeconomics analysis, and co-developed inframarginal analysis—a new framework studying the division of labour—with the late Yang Xiaokai, a highly regarded economist.

In addition, Prof Ng has made important contributions to studying the economics of happiness, with his findings published in the likes of the UK’s Royal Economic Society newsletter.

Prof Ng spoke at the Nanyang University Alumni Association gathering in Penang in 2011 and at the Distinguished Alumni Forum in 2014, as well as at countless College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences seminars. Together with his wife, he has donated S$100,000 to the University’s Chinese Heritage Centre and also given generously to the iGave programme.
NANYANG ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

To recognise alumni who have gained national standing due to the significant contributions made to their chosen fields or professions that are worthy of recognition and have brought honour to the University, and to recognise alumni who have demonstrated extraordinary service, commitment and dedication for the advancement of the University.

A SUCCESSFUL GLOBAL INVESTOR
Tan Sri Dato’ Chua Ma Yu
B.Commerce
Class of 1975

Tan Sri Chua Ma Yu is the Chairman of CMY Capital Group, whose principal activities include global equity investments, hotel and real estate developments. Its stable includes The St. Regis Kuala Lumpur. Tan Sri Chua was instrumental in Malaysia’s securities companies’ computerisation of trading systems and back office systems.

Tan Sri Chua is active in community service with a core focus on education. He is a Founding Member and Permanent Trustee of the Community Chest of Malaysia. As Chairman of the Community Chest’s Board of Trustees, he has paid an accumulated RM135 million in aid to 330 Chinese, Tamil and missionary schools. He is a Director on the Yayasan Chest’s Board of Trustees, he has paid an accumulated RM135 million in aid to 330 Chinese, Tamil and missionary schools. He is a Director on the Yayasan Chest’s Board of Trustees, he has paid an accumulated RM135 million in aid to 330 Chinese, Tamil and missionary schools.

LEADING BUSINESSWOMAN AND ENTREPRENEUR
Dr Hoan Beng Mui Dora
Arts
B.A. / Class of 1975

Dr Hoan made the bold move to strike out on her own in 1990. She was a marketing manager for a direct-selling business when she made the decision to partner her distributor, Ms Doreen Tan, to set up Best World International as its Group CEO and Managing Director, Dr Hoan has helped the company—which specialises in the development, manufacture and distribution of premium skincare, personal care, nutritional and wellness products—to become the first public-listed direct-selling company in Singapore. Today, Best World has an established network of more than 461,000 members.

Ms Reshu Aryan Dhungana
National Institute of Education
M.A. / Class of 2014

Ms Dhungana is the Director of the Habeli Outdoor Learning Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal. The Nepalese founded the school in 2014 upon returning from her studies in Singapore, where she had completed the Master of Arts in Leadership and Educational Change programme offered jointly by the National Institute of Education and Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

When most of the Centre was destroyed in April 2015 by an earthquake, Ms Dhungana showed great resilience and resolve to rebuild it. The school was reopened in 2016.

For her contributions to education in Nepal, she was invited to be a fellow of the New York Academy of Sciences, which brings together extraordinary people to find solutions to society’s challenges by advancing research, education and policy.

PASSIONATE EDUCATOR COMMITTED TO ENDING EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY IN NEPAL
Ms Reshu Aryan Dhungana
National Institute of Education
M.A. / Class of 2014

Mr Han Kwee Juan
Nanyang Business School
M.B.A. / Class of 1996

Mr Han has consistently given back to NTU over the years. He has served as a member of the Nanyang Business School (NBS) Alumni Advisory Board and helped establish closer ties between NBS and Citi.

PIONEER OF SINGAPORE’S RAIL NETWORKS
Mr Chua Chong Kheng
School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
B.Eng(Elect.) / Class of 1985

Mr Chua is Deputy Chief Executive (Infrastructure & Development) of the Land Transport Authority, a position he has held since 2012. He manages the planning, design and implementation of all road and rail projects.

Dr Sun Xia
Nanyang Business School
M.B.A(Nanyang EMBA)
Class of 2006

Dr Sun is the Chairman of Dongyu Energy Holdings Co., Ltd and a keen investor in the education and tourism industries. Her achievements include being named China Economy Woman of the Year in 2011 and being selected as a torch bearer at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. She also received the Nanyang Alumni Service Award in 2012 and the People of the Year award in Western China in 2013.

In 2016, Dr Sun played a key role in launching the Nanyang International Club (NIC) as its founding president. Under her leadership, the NIC produced its first product, a high-quality white liquor called Nanyang Spirit. RM850,000 was raised from sales of the liquor and channelled towards the setting up of the Nanyang International Club Scholarship to support financially needy NTU students.

Mr Han is the CEO and Country Business Manager of Citibank Singapore Limited. He assumed the role in February 2012, having started his career with the company as a summer intern back in 1990.

He has launched numerous products and services which are market firsts, including regional account management for corporate banking and multi-currency liquidity management for companies. He also pioneered the Citibank Ultima Card for the private banking customer segment and devised a value-at-risk approach on investments for retail customers. Most recently, he defined the concept of ‘Open Banking’ and deployed Citibank’s first chat bot, ‘Citi Bot’.

Over the last three decades, Mr Chua has accumulated vast experience in urban land transport infrastructure development and management, beginning his career at the then Mass Rapid Transit Corporation in 1985.

He worked on Singapore’s first Light Rapid Transit system and managed the Electrical and Mechanical (E&M) Systems project team for the North-East Line, the world’s first driverless and fully-automated heavy metro system. For his outstanding public service, he has received four awards at the National Day Awards: the Long Service Award in 2008, the Public Service Medal in 2011, the Public Administration Medal (Gold) in 2015, and the Public Service Star in 2016.
To recognise alumni, under the ages of 40, whose endeavours in their chosen fields or professions are worthy of recognition and have brought honour to the University.

2. Mr Li Jie (NBS/2008)
3. Dr Sim Siang Tee Victor (CEE/2015)
6. Dr Tan Say Hwa (MAE/2008, 2011)
7. Mr Tam Kwan Yuen (ADM/2012)
8. Mr Wah Ziyuan Steve (MAE/2007; NTC/2009)
9. Mr Lau Koon Tuck Vincent (MSE/2009)

Hone your skillsets to create your own niche, but remain flexible to apply your skills across different fields.”

— Dr Sim Siang Tze Victor
SPOTLIGHT

NANYANG ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD

To recognise alumni whose dedication and volunteer commitments, through alumni clubs and associations or the University's programmes and activities, have significantly enriched the University.

1. Mr Teh Kai Feng (HSS/2011)
2. Mr Zeng Renchun (SBS/2008)
3. Ms Jayalakshmy Aarthi Ananthanarayanan (SSM/2013)
4. Mr Tan Hui Lim William (MPE/1997)
5. Ms Siripattananukulchai Chonnikan (SCSE/2005)
6. Mr Zhang Yinjun (NBS/2005)
7. Mr Wang Xiaogang (NBS/2011)
8. Mr Veerappa Rajan (MAE/2012)
9. Mr Cheah Wai Soon (EEE/2008)
10. Mr Chong Kwang Cheong Robert (NBS/1995)
11. Mr Zhang Yu (EEE/2004)
12. Mr Tan Peng Hoe (CEE/2009)
14. Mr Ong Kok Seng Chris (CEE/1986)
15. Mr Teoh Tham Kim Raymond (EEE/1993)
16. Mr Fong Cheng Ek (Arts/1970)
17. Mr Ruan Yonggang (NBS/2007)
18. Mr Maung Myo Thu (MPE/2004)