NTU Bids Farewell To A Beloved Professor

The NTU community pays tribute to the late Professor Lee Sing Kong, a champion of education, research and alumni relations.
Professor Lee Sing Kong, a widely respected academic known for his dedication to education, passion for innovation and commitment to alumni engagement passed away on 19 May 2017 at the age of 65.

Tributes poured in from a saddened NTU community, who remembered Professor Lee as a wise and firm mentor, a passionate speaker and an inspiring yet humble leader.

"Professor Lee was an inspiring figure who left an indelible mark on Singapore’s teaching and higher education system. He was a dynamic leader who firmly believed in the importance of education,” said NTU President Professor Bertil Andersson, who extended his deepest condolences to Professor Lee’s family.

"His dedication to NTU and to NIE and his lifelong passion for education are well known. We will miss him deeply.”

A STALWART OF EDUCATION

A horticulturalist by training, Professor Lee played an instrumental role in advancing Singapore’s teaching and education system. As Director of the National Institute of Education (NIE) from 2006-2014, he rallied the teaching fraternity to take the nation’s education system to greater heights; Singapore’s success in international mathematics, science and reading rankings are a testament to this.

In 2014, Professor Lee was appointed NTU Vice President (Education Strategies). In this role, he led innovations in NTU’s curricula and teaching and assessment methods, and was instrumental in moving NTU into research on higher education learning through the establishment of the Centre for Research and Development in Learning (CRADLE).

"Professor Lee will be remembered as an exceptional leader and friend by generations of teachers and students. He was passionate about education and learning, and lived life to the fullest,” said NTU Board of Trustees Chairman Mr Koh Boon Hwee. “We have lost a very special member of the NTU community.”

AN ALUMNI ADVOCATE

In 2015, Professor Lee was concurrently appointed NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement). He initiated fresh efforts to increase NTU’s outreach to alumni and to strengthen donor engagement. Under his leadership, the NTU Alumni Affairs Office (AAO) formed the NTU Alumni Council and Executive Committee, and adopted the Three-Dimensional Engagement Model created by Professor Lee as the guiding principle for NTU alumni engagement.

In addition to these initiatives, Professor Lee favoured a hands-on approach. “He was detail-oriented and always listened to the alumni’s concerns in order to understand their needs,” said NTU Chief Alumni Affairs Officer Mr Guo Xun Nan.

"Professor Lee has left a tremendous legacy, which will continue to guide and inspire us to keep working hard, exploring new territories and ascending to new heights,” Mr Guo added.

"He inspired us to share his vision through his single-minded focus, friendly persuasion and sometimes, through the sheer force of his personality,” said NTU Board of Trustees Member and Chairman of NTU’s Alumni and Development Committee Mr Inderjit Singh in his eulogy, delivered at Professor Lee’s wake. “I bid our stalwart, our mentor and our friend farewell. We will always treasure the many memories of Professor Lee, and be thankful that he touched our lives.”

― NTU President Professor Bertil Andersson
Mr Hendri Zhang  
(EEE/2007), President, NTU EEEAA  
When I first met Professor Lee at a lunch he hosted for NTU alumni leaders, I was truly inspired by his energy and vision when it came to transforming the NTU alumni community into an even more vibrant and engaged one. His speeches were always inspiring and full of enthusiasm; his energy and voice will be dearly missed.

Ms Rasiah Baslyn Agatha  
(WKVSCI/2010), President, NTU AA (Gulf Cooperation Council)  
Professor Lee was a gregarious, dedicated, wise and firm mentor. I was privileged to have sat in his office countless times, seeking his wise counsel, and getting some of the best advice. Rest in peace, Professor Lee, for your work will be continued, your his wise council, and getting some of the best advice. Rest in peace, Professor Lee, for your work will be continued, your his wise council, and getting some of the best advice. Rest in peace, Professor Lee, for your work will be continued, your his wise council, and getting some of the best advice. Rest in peace, Professor Lee, for your work will be continued, your his wise council, and getting some of the best advice. Rest in peace, Professor Lee, for your work will be continued, your

Ms Rochelle M Razo  
(NIE/2008), Vice President (Associate Programmes), NTU AA (Philippines)  
When I first stepped into NIE, Professor Lee delivered such a powerful speech that everyone in the audience was infected by his passion. It was important, he said, for school leaders like us to prepare the next generation for a highly technological but unpredictable future. If Singapore could do it, he said, so could our country—and maybe even better. He never failed to encourage us to innovate and improve. He was truly a remarkable leader, and we will always remember him and his good example.

Mr Chris Choy  
(CSE/1986), President, NTU AA (Malaysia)  
One could never forget Professor Lee, as he always had that cheery smile and booming voice that clearly exemplified a passionate man with a mission to inspire people around him to work towards a better society. Another of Professor Lee’s strengths was his humility, which we saw when he wholeheartedly agreed to cram into a bus from Singapore to Malacca to attend our 2016 Annual General Meeting. Farewell, our friend Professor Lee; while we may have lost a loved one, your passion, voice and mission are still alive within our hearts!

Mr Roderick Chia  
(EEE/1998), former President, NTU Alumni Club  
I met Professor Lee through my involvement with the NTU Alumni Council, but only got to know him better about a month ago when I had a long coffee chat with him. He was energetic and passionate when we shared our views on education. While he was no longer NIE Director, you could tell that his heart had never left. To him, education was not a job but a mission. I’m very saddened to hear about the passing of this great man.

Mr Tan Teck Beng  
(NBS/1995), former President, NTU Alumni Club  
I had my first informal lunch meeting with Professor Lee in September 2015, just before his appointment as NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement). A down-to-earth leader who immediately put words into action, he quickly tailored an engagement strategy to support the various segments of our complex alumni community. The next 20 months were indeed the most dynamic and exciting period of alumni engagement.

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With love from the students of The John Dewey School For Children, Quezon City, The Philippines  
Professor Lee was a very good example for all of us. He was so passionate about education, and he moulded school leaders who have in turn become motivators for their students, for them to become the next generation’s leaders.

I wish I could have met Professor Lee in person. From the videos and pictures it seemed to be a very friendly person. He will be remembered by everyone who was inspired by his actions in making Singapore great in education.

I would like to express our deepest sympathies over the loss of Professor Lee. We wish his family and friends peace and comfort in these days of bereavement. His kindness will not be forgotten.

It was surprising that a small school like ours would be accommodated by a prestigious, world-class university like NTU. I’m thankful to Professor Lee for his generosity in opening NIE and NTU to us Filipino children. We indeed had a fun and memorable experience during each visit.

Dr Vinay Kalia  
(NBS/2003), President, NTU AA (Europe)  
NTU AA (Europe) stands in grief with Professor Lee’s loved ones and the alumni community around the world. Grit, determination and a sense of purpose were embedded in his personality. Our AA has greatly benefited from his vision of bringing alumni closer to our alma mater and to Singapore. He will be missed but will continue to inspire the coming generations to greater heights.