Leading the Charge

NTU President Prof Subra Suresh and Vice President (Alumni and Advancement) Prof Alan Chan outline the ethos of Paying It Forward

Decoding Dementia Via Research

Give: A Multi-Faceted Approach to Giving
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Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU) is on the cusp of exciting changes. This year, the University welcomed Professor Subra Suresh as its fourth President. An eminent scientist, engineer, entrepreneur and a highly-regarded leader in higher education, he was the ninth President of Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) from 2013 to 2017 before joining NTU. Continuum speaks with Professor Suresh, and Professor Alan Chan — Vice President of Alumni and Advancement since the start of 2018, and former Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences — on their plans for NTU, and the importance of philanthropy to the University.

In this second issue, we also shine the spotlight on dementia, in particular Alzheimer’s disease which affects 60 to 80 per cent of dementia patients. Singapore has one of the fastest-ageing populations in the Asia-Pacific region, and the number of people living with dementia is expected to double by 2030. With no cure for the condition yet, we take a closer look at what researchers at LKCMedicine are doing to fight this modern scourge.

With intractable problems confronting the world, support for research in NTU is gaining ground with foundations, corporations and individuals globally. In recent months, the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation made an endowed gift of S$7.6 million to NTU. Co-founder and former CEO of Infosys Mr Kris Gopalakrishnan also pledged S$2 million in establishment of the Gopalakrishnan-NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship. These vital fellowships will equip top early-career researchers with the resources they need to transform their research into potentially life-changing discoveries and inventions.

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We continue to feature more heart-warming stories: individuals with a sense of gratitude and a concomitant compulsion to pay it forward because they were personally touched by the kindness, compassion and generosity of others. A group of Catholic High School alumni who set up a scholarship in loving memory of their teacher. The head honcho of an accounting firm who became hooked to philanthropy after a serendipitous encounter. A newly-joined staff member of NTU who ardently champions the giving cause.

We would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mrs Wee Kim Wee who passed away on 7 July this year. The former First Lady was a devoted wife and mother, a culinary whizz and a philanthropist. NTU reminisces fondly the visits she made to the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, renamed in 2006 in honour of the late Mr Wee Kim Wee. A big supporter of the Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund, she will always be remembered as a paragon of compassion, generosity and grace.

Enjoy the issue.
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ALL FOR ONE
Prof Alan Chan (left) and Prof Ling San (right) marshalling faculty and staff giving efforts

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Mr Henry Tan hopes to help young people uplift themselves through education

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BOOSTING TIES WITH INDIA

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi witnessed the exchange of agreements between NTU and Indian partners.

NTU strengthened its academic and industry partnerships with India, when the Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Narendra Modi visited the University on 1 June 2018. In his first visit to NTU, PM Modi, along with Singapore Education Minister Ong Ye Kung, witnessed the exchange of six agreements and statements of intent between NTU and leading Indian universities, institutions and industry players on education and research to advance innovation for the digital age.

PM Modi also toured an exhibition of NTU’s latest research projects and innovations, and planted a Neem tree on the NTU grounds as a symbol of the strong bilateral ties and the flourishing of new ideas and partnerships between India and Singapore. He was accompanied by Mr Ong and NTU President, Professor Subra Suresh. “In our knowledge-based economy, Singapore and India rely on the free flow of talent and ideas into their countries and through their universities. Both countries recognise that this is key to prosperity in the globalised world and it is even more essential in our digital age today,” said Prof Suresh. “The agreements that we sealed today build on this great momentum of partnerships that we have had in India.”

A GIFT TO FURTHER RESEARCH

On the same day, Mr Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman of Axilor Ventures, and co-founder and former CEO of Indian IT giant Infosys, presented a historic gift of S$4 million to support postdoctoral and student research activities at NTU.

Of this, S$2 million goes towards creating the Gopalakrishnan-NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship that will enable some of the world’s most promising postdoctoral candidates to carry out their research at NTU. Mr Gopalakrishnan, who was appointed as NTU’s Nanyang Visiting Professor of Practice, will be visiting NTU several times in a year to give lectures and mentor students and faculties. The other S$2 million is set aside for the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Indian Institute of Technology Madras — each receives about S$1 million to fund research collaborations for their students at NTU.
EXPLORING BIG IDEAS

Alumni speakers shared their entrepreneurial experiences with participants at the Distinguished Alumni Forum.

Being a successful business owner takes grit and hard work. But hardship has never deterred Dr Tommy Ong (MAE/2005), Ms Esther Wang (ADM/2011) and Mr Jeremy Lim (WKWSCI/2017) from realising their entrepreneurial ambitions. The three speakers shared their experiences in entrepreneurship with 80 alumni at the NTU Distinguished Alumni Forum held on 12 April 2018 at the NTU Alumni House at one-north.

INSPIRED TO ACT
Kicking off the informal session was Dr Ong, Founder and CEO of Resvenus Laboratories, an online retailer of cosmetic and skincare products. In 2013, he launched a health product with Japanese partners, which became the best-selling online premium beauty supplement in Singapore within six months. Having come from a humble family background, Mr Ong said it was the overwhelming desire to change his circumstances that motivated him to strike out on his own.

Igniting change was also what spurred Ms Wang to establish her social enterprise start-up JoyTingle. While volunteering at a children’s hospital, she noticed how anxious the children were when receiving treatment. She then designed and produced Rabbit Ray, a toy-like medical aid used to calm children in a hospital setting and teach them about procedures such as vaccinations and intravenous drips. Rabbit Ray is now used in hospitals in 10 countries, and Ms Wang has made the Forbes’ 30 Under 30 Asia Healthcare and Science list. Even so, she does not look to others for validation, but is anchored by her own beliefs in pushing ahead with her mission.

While ideas and inspiration drove Mr Lim to found five start-ups (he has been involved in 11 start-ups to date), he noted that execution was the key determinant of success or failure. “Ideas are easy to come by, but what makes the difference in this day and age is the execution of ideas,” he said. After defining the problem that needs solving, Mr Lim encouraged budding entrepreneurs to “Do first, think later.” All three speakers acknowledged the importance of having family and mentor support, as well as savouring the process of entrepreneurship.

NTU alumni left the talk feeling inspired. Having gained several takeaways from the speakers, Mr Lye Rong Fang (NBS/2009) shared, “I learnt that if you see something important that needs to be changed, you should take the initiative to make it happen. It takes courage to take the first leap, but as these distinguished alumni have shown, there is a payoff.”
A NEW CHAPTER
IN THE LAND OF
THE RISING SUN

NTU established its 50th overseas Alumni Association in Japan.

On 31 March 2018, a diverse group of NTU alumni gathered in Tokyo, Japan, to establish the NTU Alumni Association (AA) (Japan), the University’s 50th overseas alumni chapter. Mr Soon Min Yam, Director of NTU Alumni Affairs, led the meeting and election of committee members for the inaugural management committee.

The meeting was held at the Hyatt Regency in Shinjuku. The alumni were brought up to speed on activities of other alumni associations and opportunities to connect going forward. Mr Tomoyuki Suzuki (NBS/2008) was elected president and Mr Mukai Hideaki (NBS/2012) was elected secretary-general. The other elected committee members currently work in various roles, from data scientists and CEOs to university professors, across Japan. One member even travelled from Ishikawa Prefecture on the Sea of Japan coast just to attend the meeting. Members look forward to strengthening the NTU network in Japan by bringing the alumni together.

ESTABLISHING NEW CONNECTIONS IN BRUNEI

NTU Alumni Association (Brunei) officially formed to provide a community for alumni to stay connected with their alma mater.

A new chapter was added to NTU’s growing overseas alumni presence with the formation of the NTU Alumni Association (AA) (Brunei). On 10 February 2018, a group of NTU alumni in Brunei Darussalam met Director of NTU Alumni Affairs Mr Soon Min Yam in the heart of the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, for a dinner and short presentation. An election was also held to appoint NTU AA (Brunei)’s inaugural management committee.

Dr Salbrina binti Haji Sharbawi (NIE/2010) was elected as president, Dr Aliamat bin Omar Ali (NIE/2017) as secretary-general, and Ms Zhang Jingjing (TIP/2013) and Mr Md Kamarredzwan bin Kamarudin (WKWSCI/2015) as vice presidents. The group also elected Mrs Hajah Noorhadini Haji Saini (CCE/2014) as treasurer, Mr Lee Kah Howe (TIP/2002) as assistant treasurer, Ms Lim Guat Wen (NBS/2014) and Ms Siti Nurazimah binti Haji M Suhaili (NIE/2011) as assistant secretaries-generals.

Upon the conclusion of the election, the alumni discussed plans for the AA’s official launch event to be held in the middle of the year, and plans to gather and connect more NTU alumni in the country.
The Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation, the largest private financier of research in Sweden, made a S$7.6 million endowed gift to NTU on 3 July 2018 to establish the Wallenberg-NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship (PPF). This prestigious programme enables some of the world’s most promising postdoctoral candidates to carry out their research at NTU. The recipients also get to spend a year in Sweden to be involved in the country’s largest research programme, the Wallenberg Artificial Intelligence (AI), Autonomous Systems and Software Programme.

The donation is the largest single gift in perpetuity by a foreign entity to the University. With matching by the Singapore government, the total endowment raised for the programme was S$11.4 million. An additional S$5 million has been set aside by the Wallenberg Foundation, through its AI, Autonomous Systems and Software Programme, in support of the Postdoctoral Fellows. This brought the total donation to S$16.4 million.

The Wallenberg-NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowships will provide valuable opportunities for early-career researchers to develop their specialised expertise and widen their global networks that will translate their ideas into real-world influence and impact in Singapore, Sweden and beyond.

Mr Marcus Wallenberg, Vice Chairman of the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation

NTU received S$16.4 million for its Wallenberg-NTU Fellowship.
NTU President Professor Subra Suresh believes the new Wallenberg-NTU PPF will play a key role in driving discovery, expanding knowledge and advancing innovation beyond Singapore’s borders. “The Wallenberg name will attract to NTU highly-trained and experienced researchers, who will promote and encourage vital partnerships between academia and industry with potential benefits for Singapore and the rest of the world. The University and the community will benefit in perpetuity from the Wallenbergs’ immense generosity,” he said.

Mr Marcus Wallenberg, Vice Chairman of the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation, agreed. “The Wallenberg-NTU PPF will provide valuable opportunities for early-career researchers to develop their specialised expertise and widen their global networks that will translate their ideas into real-world influence and impact in Singapore, Sweden and beyond,” he said.

With the aim of nurturing an engaged and supportive parent community in order to build a holistic learning environment for undergraduates, NTU’s annual Parents’ Engagement Day was held on 24 March at the School of Biological Sciences. “We see parents as important partners in helping our students make a smooth transition from school to university, and to make the most of the many learning opportunities that we offer,” said Professor Alan Chan, Vice President (Alumni and Advancement) at the event.

The engagement session covered various aspects of the University such as NTU’s future plans and key developments, student exchange programmes and their significance, and student life on campus. In particular, the Student Affairs Office introduced parents to the Campus Community Approach to student health and well-being. With a range of services such as managing student welfare matters, providing counselling services, advising student organisations and building cross-cultural understanding through social integration programmes, NTU empowers students to take positive action and responsibility for their personal growth by equipping them with life skills to better cope with challenges.

Additionally, counsellors from NTU’s Student Well-being Centre provided insights and advice on the support parents can provide to their children through the initial years. The counsellors also encouraged parents to take advantage of opportunities that maximise their children’s full potential. “We all share the same objective of ensuring that your sons and daughters succeed in their studies and future careers,” said Prof Chan. Through this event, the University gave parents the opportunity to know more about the programmes at NTU, and the University’s plans and commitment to support the learning and development of every undergraduate.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

A BOOST TO EFFORTS

Each Wallenberg-NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow will receive an additional support of S$200,000 to pursue their research at Swedish universities or with industry partners in their second year.
Asst Prof Anna Barron - Nanyang Assistant Professor at the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine), NTU, and Researcher at the Department of Functional Brain Imaging Research, the National Institutes for Quantum and Radiological Science and Technology, Japan, and Asst Prof Foo Jia Nee - Nanyang Assistant Professor at LKCMedicine, NTU, and Senior Research Scientist (Principal Investigator) at the Genome Institute of Singapore (GIS), A*STAR.
Among its other labels, this disease is sometimes referred to as a thief that steals the very core of our humanity — our identity, our sense of being. Its exact cause unknown, it is fast reaching epidemic proportions, and has become the leading cause of death for certain demographics in some countries.

Dementia — an umbrella term for a group of age-related neurodegenerative diseases associated with progressive memory loss, and the decline in intellectual abilities that reduces a person’s capacity to perform daily activities — now affects one in 10 people aged 60 and above in Singapore.

Singapore has one of the fastest-ageing populations in the Asia-Pacific region, and the number of people living with dementia is expected to double by 2030. What is even more distressing is that the number of people with Young Onset Dementia (YOD), which refers to the onset of dementia before the age of 65, has grown by more than 300% in Singapore in the last five years.

There is currently no cure for the condition; an early diagnosis and treatment may slow the symptoms but will not halt the degeneration of the parts of the brain that enable a person to think and function independently. While early diagnosis before the age of 70 may help patients to live longer, the average survival time for people diagnosed with dementia is about four and a half years.

Thank you to technology, two laboratories in Singapore are slowly closing in on the modus operandi of one of the most menacing scourges of our time.

Hidden Threats
The causes of dementia are influenced by a combination of genetic, lifestyle and environmental factors, and come about when specific neurons in the brain become abnormal and die. The death of neurons important in memory and cognitive functions lead to dementia — the most common form being Alzheimer’s disease — while the death of neurons that control movement lead to movement disorders like Parkinson’s disease.

Alzheimer’s disease affects 60 to 80 per cent of dementia patients. It brings about irreversible, progressive degeneration of brain cells that causes thinking ability and memory to deteriorate. It was first observed and documented more than a century ago in 1906 by German physician Alois Alzheimer, and until now there is no cure —
existing drugs on the market alleviate the symptoms of memory loss but cannot arrest the ailment at its core biological level.

Several factors make it especially challenging to develop effective drugs against Alzheimer’s disease. Firstly, it is asymptomatic for the first 20 years; neurological symptoms only begin to show when the disease has progressed to the point where the brain is irreversibly damaged and the condition has become almost impossible to treat.

The solution to this, obviously, would be to find ways to detect the disease earlier, but currently, definitive diagnostic tools for Alzheimer’s can only catch the disease in the late stages. Even then, Alzheimer’s disease cannot be conclusively determined until the patient has died and the brain is surgically removed to locate the hallmark of Alzheimer’s disease — an abnormal build-up of the protein, amyloid, in the brain. This hurdle hampers not only the identification of individuals at risk but also the efforts of conducting effective clinical trials for drug development.

TOWARDS EARLY DETECTION AND TARGETED TREATMENT

And yet, exponential advances in technology bring the promise of a breakthrough that scientists could only have dreamt of less than a generation ago. Among those at the frontline of the war against dementia here in Singapore are Assistant Professors Foo Jia Nee and Anna Barron, both from the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine), a joint medical school by NTU and Imperial College London.

Asst Prof Foo, who is also a senior research scientist of human genetics at the Genome Institute of Singapore, A*STAR, is currently leading her team in the collaboration with clinicians and scientists from Singapore and other East Asian countries
THE NUMBERS STACK UP

A study conducted in 2015 by the WELL-BEING OF THE SINGAPORE ELDERLY (WISE) found that the number of people affected by DEMENTIA is set to increase from 40,000 to 53,000 by 2020.

The economic cost of DEMENTIA also puts an enormous strain on the country, setting the government back by $1.4 BILLION – a figure that is projected to double by 2050.

OUR APPROACH IN FINDING OUT WHY SOME PEOPLE HAVE INCREASED SUSCEPTIBILITY TO DEMENTIA IS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENS IN THE AGEING BODY AND BRAIN THAT PROMOTES THIS SUSCEPTIBILITY.

Asst Prof Anna Barron

THE MIND-KILLER

SYMPTOMS OF ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Alzheimer’s disease is an insidious condition, with initial symptoms being very subtle. It often begins with instances of ‘absent-mindedness’ with lapses in memory and difficulty in finding the right words for everyday items. Other symptoms may include:

- Persistent and frequent memory difficulties, especially of recent events
- Vagueness in everyday conversations
- Apparent loss of enthusiasm for previously enjoyed activities
- Longer time needed to do routine tasks
- Being forgetful of well-known people or places
- An inability to process questions and instructions
- Deterioration of social skills
- Emotional unpredictability

Symptoms vary among patients, and the disease progresses at a different pace according to the individual and the areas of the brain affected. It is even possible that a person’s level of ability fluctuates from day to day, or even within a single day. It is exacerbated by stress, fatigue or ill-health.

The disease eventually leads to complete dependence on others and finally death, usually due to another illness such as pneumonia. A person may live from three to 20 years with Alzheimer’s disease, with the average being seven to 10 years.

to identify new genetic factors that influence age-related neurodegenerative diseases, some of which may be specific to Asians. Her laboratory is studying the genomes of patients affected by neurodegenerative diseases, with the aim of identifying heritable DNA changes that may cause some individuals to be more susceptible to certain diseases than others. This is done by sequencing DNA (or reading the DNA code) isolated from the blood of these individuals, and comparing it with that of healthy controls. “We are especially interested in changes in the DNA code which alter or disrupt biological pathways which we can target with drugs, and that provide new insight into how the diseases arise. These DNA coding changes will be evaluated further against the population as genetic factors that allow early prediction of neurodegenerative diseases,” she explains.

By getting a better understanding of specific genes and pathways that contribute to or protect against the disease, Asst Prof Foo hopes to identify new drug targets that aid the treatment or prevention of the disease. “Additionally, by determining genetic factors that are relevant to the Asian population, we can identify at-risk individuals early, long before they develop symptoms,” she adds.

“Similar research has been done in other countries, especially in the U.S. and Europe, but those were done on European/Caucasian populations that cannot represent our local population since there are clear genetic differences between Asians and Europeans,” she says.

Although there is currently no way to prevent the disease, the insights from her research could help to advance precision
IT IS THE DRAMATIC LEAP IN TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS THAT MAY JUST PROVIDE THE NEXT BIG PUSH IN DECODING THE MYSTERIOUS MODUS OPERANDI OF DEMENTIA AND NEURODEGENERATION.

medicine if a neuroprotective drug or method becomes available in the future — by tailoring the right treatment early to each individual patient.

Besides genetics, there is the age factor — and this is the research area which Asst Prof Barron is focusing on. “Our approach in finding out why some people have increased susceptibility to dementia is to understand what happens in the ageing body and brain that promotes this susceptibility.”

AN “OLD” PROBLEM
Old age is the greatest known risk factor of Alzheimer’s disease. Even in people with genetic risk factors or mutations for Alzheimer’s, the disease does not develop until mid to late in life. Asst Prof Barron is working to understand the changes in the ageing brain that make people vulnerable to Alzheimer’s disease, focusing on the role of chronic inflammation. Chronic inflammation is closely associated with ageing and has been identified as a key driving factor of Alzheimer’s disease. While chronic inflammation is commonly seen as detrimental to health, as in the case of diabetes, inflammation in the brain plays a multifaceted role. One aspect of this role is to perform essential functions such as cleaning up cellular ‘rubbish’, while another aspect hastens the disease process by killing healthy brain cells. As people age, the balance between these two aspects of inflammation shifts as inflammatory cells gradually lose their ability to carry out essential functions while the effects of damaging inflammation are amplified. Treatments that simply ‘switch off’ inflammation altogether have failed because, apart from blocking damaging inflammation, these block essential inflammatory functions that are needed to maintain a healthy brain and combat the disease.

Using neuroimaging approaches such as positron emission tomography, commonly known as PET, that enable researchers to follow individual molecules that have been tagged with a tracer in the living brain, Asst Prof Barron and her team of investigators seek to identify biomarkers that can distinguish between these two types of inflammation. “This would allow us to track how well therapeutics are working, what the prognosis is, and what type of intervention may be suitable for individual patients,” says Asst Prof Barron, whose team is also using this knowledge to develop a potential treatment that can inhibit the bad inflammation while promoting the beneficial.

PROGRESS AND HOPE
The dramatic leap in technological advancements over the last few years may provide the next big push in decoding the mysterious modus operandi of dementia and neurodegeneration. The cost of human genome sequencing has dropped dramatically, down from the millions of dollars to sequence one person’s DNA 20 years ago to a few thousand dollars today, and the process has become faster too. “The roles of most of the genes in the human genome and their contribution to human diseases are still unknown; there are many hidden secrets that we have yet to uncover, but the decreased costs and time will enable more robust studies to be done,” says Asst Prof Foo.

Although fraught with multiple concerns about ethics and challenges of data interpretation, there is reason to believe that one day, whole genome sequencing may enable everyone to develop a personalised treatment plan that is guided by an individual’s unique genetic make-up.

In addition, the field of neuroimaging has advanced rapidly over the years due to breakthroughs in technology and computational methods. With Alzheimer’s disease in particular, PET scanning offers the holy grail of observing a living brain at a molecular level and, from there, the development of clinical interventions for earlier and more accurate treatments.

With the impending silver tsunami, the race is on to understand and identify the exact causes of dementia. Thanks to technology, it is likely that science is on the edge of discoveries that will change the lives of millions of would-be dementia sufferers — and that of their caregivers, who often struggle under the financial and emotional burden of looking after family members or relatives with dementia. Although ongoing work will take time to reach the bedside, early detection, accurate diagnosis and effective treatment for neurodegenerative diseases are no longer the medical pies in the sky that they once were.

TO MAKE A DONATION TO SUPPORT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN DEMENTIA, PLEASE VISIT http://bit.ly/LKCMedicine
Illuminating figures on neurological as well as psychiatric conditions

**States of Mind**

As of 2010, 1 in 10 are affected by mental disorders

Top three mental disorders
1. Major depressive disorder (MDD)
2. Alcohol abuse
3. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

1 in 4 adults are affected by mental disorders worldwide

Depression
300 million people

Anxiety
264 million people

Parkinson’s disease
10 million people

Schizophrenia
21 million people

Dementia
47.5 million people (Highest in Asia at 22.9 million)

Bipolar affective disorder
60 million people

1 in 10 people above 60 suffers from dementia

Singapore

1 in 10 people above 60 suffers from dementia

Cost of healthcare for dementia
$1.4 billion/year

**Government initiatives in Singapore**

- Caregiver support centre
- Mental health services at polyclinics
- Dementia-friendly communities

**DID YOU KNOW?** The majority of those with mental disorders are not seeking professional help.
With new leadership at the helm, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU) is embarking on a number of major projects that promise handsome returns for the betterment of society. In so doing, NTU will further solidify its place among the very best universities in the world. We speak to NTU President Professor Subra Suresh and Vice President (Alumni and Advancement) Professor Alan Chan on their vision for NTU.

BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY requires the commitment and concerted efforts of all its stakeholders. Leading the next wave of NTU’s development is Professor Subra Suresh, NTU’s 4th President, who assumed the role on 1 January 2018. An eminent scientist, engineer and entrepreneur, the Indian-born American has carved out a distinguished career in academia, industry and government. Prior to moving to Singapore, he held a string of high-profile roles in the United States, including President of Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) (2013–17), Director of the National Science Foundation (2010–13), and Dean of the School of Engineering and Vannevar Bush Professor of Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (2007–10).

Supporting Prof Suresh in alumni affairs, university advancement and global engagement is Professor Alan Chan, who began his tenure as Vice President of NTU at the start of this year. Formerly the Dean of NTU’s College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences — a position which he has occupied since 2009 — Prof Chan is now tasked with overseeing the University’s engagement of its 230,000-strong alumni from over 150 countries, cultivating support for NTU both within and outside the University, as well as coordinating and spearheading NTU’s global initiatives.

Continuum speaks to the leadership duo on their vision for NTU and what this means for the University in the era that has come to be called the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0.
The journey to excellence in education, research and service never ceases, and this remains the priority for NTU. “We want NTU to play not just an important role locally, but also on a global scale, because the grand challenges facing society today are inherently global in nature,” says Prof Suresh. “The University has many strengths. It is young and dynamic, well-respected worldwide, and it is blessed with a beautiful and sizeable campus, which makes NTU ideally suited as a testbed for new technological solutions that would bring benefit to society,” he adds.
The NTU Smart Campus initiative was announced by Prof Suresh during his inauguration earlier this year. “Through our Smart Campus initiative — which includes campus-wide features like an NTU Smart Pass to enable cash-free payment and security access, as well as pollution-free autonomous vehicles and eco-friendly buildings to improve energy efficiency — we see NTU as a testbed for Singapore’s Smart Nation vision,” explains Prof Suresh.

To harness the power of technology, whether in artificial intelligence (AI), big data, the Internet of Things, self-driving vehicles, robotics, personalised medicine or other fields, and also to mitigate the potentially adverse effects of technological change on society, NTU is leading the way in a number of areas. For example:

- A new undergraduate degree programme in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, as well as mandatory core modules on digital literacy for undergraduate students, will be offered from AY2018/2019 onwards.
- The continued development of technology-enhanced learning: from the use of 3D-printed cadavers and virtual reality for surgical simulation training at NTU’s Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, to the rollout of Massive Open Online Courses that can be taken by thousands of students internationally.
- NTU and Chinese technology giant Alibaba Group are working together to develop AI technologies at the Alibaba–NTU Singapore Joint Research Institute that was set up in February 2018.
- Drone testing at Changi Airport by the Air Traffic Management Research Institute, which was established in 2013 by NTU and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore.
- NTU’s Asian School of the Environment and the Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering are leading research and developing solutions for sustainability challenges such as climate change, air quality and access to clean water.
- The newly-opened NTU Institute of Science and Technology for Humanity (NISTH), the brainchild of Prof Suresh, aims to carry out cutting-edge research and shape public discourse on responsible innovation, governance and leadership in the age of the 4th industrial revolution, and new urban Asia.

Likewise, Prof Chan is confident that NTU will continue to grow as a world-class university, especially with the support of alumni. “A strong alumni community is the hallmark of a great university. Although our alumni community is very diverse, there is a strong sense of pride, regardless of whether we are Nantah, NTI or NTU alumni. As the alumni family grows, we must redouble our efforts in engaging them, and going forward, we will be doing a lot more in encouraging and supporting our alumni in lifelong learning,” he notes. “As society contends with forces of disruption and uncertainty, our alumni will have to be nimble, dig deep, and find the resilience and resources to prosper by embracing change and seizing new opportunities. Through our quality education system at NTU, we can help them to succeed and navigate the socioeconomic complexities associated with Industry 4.0.”

To support alumni in their lifelong learning journey and upskilling efforts, the NTU Alumni Course Credit scheme was launched in 2017. All NTU alumni will each receive $1,600 worth of course credits to pursue a wide variety of modules offered by NTU’s College of Professional and Continuing Education. The modules — comprising short courses lasting from one day to a week, semester-long undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and part-time degree programmes — cover industry-relevant topics, such as data analytics and cloud computing.

**ADVANCING THE UNIVERSITY**

Without sufficient funding support, it would be difficult for any university to deliver quality education and research, or remain at the top of the league of global universities. That is why fundraising campaigns are so crucial. As a public and autonomous university, NTU does receive government funding, which will allow it to maintain its basic programmes, but it requires the support of all its stakeholders to remain a leading global university. Philanthropic support is therefore critical to the University’s continued success and growth.
FROM THE GIVER’S PERSPECTIVE, DONATING MONEY IS AN EXPRESSION OF COMMITMENT, PASSION TO A CAUSE, COMPASSION AND EMPATHY.

THESE ARE VALUED HUMAN QUALITIES.
Prof Suresh cites the late Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish-American business magnate, philanthropist and founder of Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), who gave almost his entire wealth to charity before his death in 1919. “Carnegie once said, ‘The man who dies rich dies disgraced,’” he says. “From the giver’s perspective, donating money is an expression of commitment, passion to a cause, compassion and empathy. These are valued human qualities.”

Donors make financial contributions to NTU’s development for a variety of causes, based on their personal interests. These causes include building new facilities and amenities, setting up scholarships and bursaries to assist needy students, getting research ideas off the ground, supporting local and international community service projects, creating or sustaining international student exchange programmes, internships and other academic initiatives, and attracting top global talent to teach or conduct research at NTU.

Regardless of the cause that NTU stakeholders choose to support, they share a unified vision and sense of pride in being a part of the NTU community. As Prof Chan elaborates, “Every one of us in the NTU community plays a vital part in advancing NTU’s growth as a world-class university. Advancement is not about raising as much money as possible, and still less, a vanity project. It is about coming together as a like-minded community to support the University’s journey to excellence in education, research and service to society.”

**A LASTING BOND**

There are 230,000 NTU alumni spread out across the globe — and the University views each and every alumnus as a valuable member of the NTU family. “Alumni engagement is critical as it connects our alumni community to one another and to the University,” says Prof Suresh. Seen in this light, he notes, “Alumni fundraising is not merely about raising money, but
Creating an engaged and supportive alumni network is crucial to an institution’s success and this brings many benefits to both the institution and alumni. Several metrics exist to measure alumni engagement, including the number of people on NTU’s alumni mailing list who open their emails, the level of alumni traffic to NTU’s website, and the number of returning alumni who are enrolled in NTU’s courses. The level of alumni donations to the University is another evident measure. The University organises an array of events and activities for the alumni community, ranging from educational programmes and professional networking sessions to social gatherings. Many local and overseas alumni are actively involved in their respective alumni associations, and these connections to their alma mater help them to keep up with new and upcoming developments at NTU. “In the process, NTU alumni can identify opportunities for giving that fit their personal aspirations,” says Prof Suresh.

For Prof Chan, one aspect of his job that he finds very fulfilling is attending alumni events — whether in Singapore or in countries like China — and chatting with alumni about various issues, such as how they feel about the University, how they see themselves playing an integral role in the University’s development, or about the role of education and research in addressing the problems that society faces. “Our alumni are making meaningful impact in many different ways. They are also passionate about NTU’s continued success,” he observes.

Giving back to the University can take many different forms. Prof Chan points out that besides making monetary contributions, many alumni serve as mentors to existing students and share their life experiences and insights, or offer internship opportunities. They also volunteer to organise NTU events and activities, or simply turn up at NTU functions as a show of support. “All the different forms of support are equally important and appreciated,” Prof Chan says.

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**RESEARCH THAT MATTERS**

As a leading research-intensive university, NTU strives to provide an optimal environment for research to flourish, which in turn fosters economic growth and job creation. A sizeable chunk of its fundraising efforts is thus geared towards making sure that adequate research infrastructure and other forms of support are in place. But while donors are free to contribute to any area of research, NTU is at the same time focusing on those areas that hold particular relevance to benefiting society. “We are one of the top universities in the world for AI research,” says Prof Suresh, adding that NTU is also strong in related fields such as data science, robotics and advanced manufacturing. Now that NISTH is up and running, Prof Chan is similarly excited about its prospects for ground-breaking discoveries in the future: “Technology is such a big part of everyday life, yet not enough attention is being paid to finding out how technology is impacting human relationships and the wider social fabric of society. Through NISTH, we believe NTU can be a world leader in this.”

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**I BELIEVE IN LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE, AND GIVING AT ALL LEVELS.**

**AS PRESIDENT OF NTU, I HAVE PERSONALLY MADE GIFTS TO THE UNIVERSITY, WHILE GALVANISING OTHERS IN MY NETWORK TO MAKE INVESTMENTS IN NTU EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS.**
**THE SPIRIT OF GIVING**

The University is also fortunate to receive generous support from prominent philanthropists, foundations, corporations and business partners. "Philanthropic support from private individuals and institutions are very important to the University," says Prof Suresh. "Many endowments have been created at NTU in the last 10 to 15 years. For example, LKCMedicine was set up with a S$150 million gift from the Lee Foundation in 2011. The School is named after its founder, the late Tan Sri Dato’ Lee Kong Chian."

In June this year, a gift of S$4 million was made by Mr Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman of early-stage venture capital firm Axilor Ventures, and co-founder and former CEO of leading IT services and consulting company Infosys. This is the largest gift by an individual from India to NTU and it will create the Gopalakrishnan–NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship to attract promising early-career scientists to NTU. It will also be used to fund cutting-edge research collaborations between NTU students and their counterparts at two renowned Indian universities.

Mr Gopalakrishnan’s gift was announced in conjunction with the visit to NTU by the Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Narendra Modi — the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister and the highest-level official visit to date by a foreign leader to the University. Both historic happenings were due in large part to Prof Suresh’s global connections and friendships, which evidently reflect his drive and commitment to NTU’s culture of giving.

In the same month, the University received another major endowed gift of S$7.6 million by the Wallenberg Foundation of Sweden, which will be used to establish the Wallenberg-NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowships in Artificial Intelligence, Autonomous Systems and Software. This is the single largest donation that NTU has received from a foreign entity, and it shows how NTU is now sought after by global institutions in forging knowledge partnerships to address the grand challenges facing the world today. "I believe in leadership by example, and giving at all levels. As President of NTU, I have personally made gifts to the University, while galvanising others in my network to make investments in NTU education, research and the next generation of leaders," says Prof Suresh. "I hope that this will inspire and encourage more to make contributions to the University."

Financial contributions are not the only way of demonstrating one’s generosity. For instance, people can volunteer their time by helping at NTU events, or signing

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**THE ESSENCE OF GIVING IS ABOUT LENDING YOUR SUPPORT TO THE CAUSE. IT HAS LESS TO DO WITH HOW MUCH YOU GIVE THAN WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN.**
up as Phonathon callers to contact alumni and encourage them to take part in the University’s Annual Giving campaign. No matter how one decides to give back, any level of involvement — big or small — is appreciated. “We understand that it is not always easy for people to donate money or volunteer their time, because they may be busy with work or family obligations,” Prof Chan sums up. “The essence of giving is about lending your support to the cause. It has less to do with how much you give than what you believe in. In this case, it is about believing in the vision of NTU, the remarkable NTU story that is pushing new frontiers in research and education, and shaping our collective future.”

SUPPORT THE UNIVERSITY’S JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND SERVICE TO SOCIETY.
TO MAKE A GIFT ONLINE, PLEASE VISIT http://bit.ly/givetontu
I still remember my Freshman Orientation Camp as if it was yesterday. Those nights of laughing with friends over supper, poring over my readings and organising hall activities... There wasn’t one moment of regret. Every day was a lesson learnt and a memory made.

Amid the fun and joy of staying in a hall and being an NTU student, it was not easy to balance between school work, hall activities, family and personal time.

Looking back, my four years in NTU passed by in a flash. The first year is when you get your bearings, fumble your way through classes and identify the people whom you can get along with. It’s the time to be involved in school activities and pursue your interests. The first summer is the best — time with new friends, full of energy and excitement as you transition into a senior. The second summer is usually spent on an internship, and the third summer on an exchange programme. Before you know it, you’re rushing out your Final Year Paper and getting yourself ready for graduation!

On a bittersweet note, I’m proud to say that I’m finally an NTU graduate! I’m thankful for all the opportunities that NTU has given me, which allowed me to make new friends, meet inspiring role models, gain new experiences and push my limits. Through various activities such as the hall events, the GEM explorer 6-month exchange, the internship programme, the overseas community involvement project, the PPGA (Public Policy and Global Affairs) society and the UOC (Union Orientation Camp), I’ve laughed, cried, grown and learned a lot. And this is why I gave back, because NTU took me to places which I would not have reached on my own.

Despite the heavy school workload, I believe in co-curricular activities and hall events because these shape and enrich our campus and undergraduate life. Unfortunately, not everyone is so lucky. There are students who have to juggle school and jobs. It breaks my heart that there are fellow schoolmates who have to forgo exchange programmes, co-curricular and campus activities due to financial difficulties.

I gave because I believe every student at NTU deserves to experience a wholesome undergraduate life. I gave because I know NTU gave me a lot and this is my small way of saying “thank you”. I believe that a little goes a long way, and together, we can help to fulfil the dreams of our juniors.

Thank you NTU for all the memories, lessons and love that you’ve shown me. To my Class of 2018, we’ve made it!
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TO THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH THEM, the heads of successful companies can often come across as intimidating. But despite the description on his namecard that reads “Co-founder and Managing Director” of successful accounting firm Nexia TS, Mr Henry Tan, 54, is down-to-earth and self-effacing. He may strike one as a regular guy, but Mr Tan’s work and philanthropy prove that he is anything but. Having graduated at the top of his class with a First Class Honours in Accountancy at NTU in 1988, Mr Tan started his career with audit and tax firm KPMG before setting up his own company Tan & Sitoh Associates with his then-colleague, now-partner Mr Sitoh Yih Pin, who is its Chairman.

A firm believer in the adage that giving someone a fish feeds them for a day but teaching them to fish feeds them for life, Mr Tan’s firm sponsors several scholarships at various institutions. His main message? “Just be nice.” This simple philosophy has helped him in his relationships with his peers, his clients and the community. Indeed, his belief in ‘standing up for the little guy’ was actually one of the reasons that he left his steady KPMG job 25 years ago and started his own firm. It is also what makes this father of two sons in their 20s a great colleague, mentor and citizen.

25 years later, Mr Tan and Mr Sitoh are still going strong — their company is now part of the Nexia Group — proving that doing good and doing well is not just possible; it makes for smart business.

What motivated you to start out on your own?
I realised that small-and-medium enterprises need a lot of hand-holding in accounting matters, particularly in issues dealing with Initial Public Offerings (IPOs). But big accounting firms tend to bulldoze them through, even though they are not ready to be listed, because they seem to have enough resources to do so. So, the company would get listed — and then delisted. I thought, “I want to go out there and help such companies, by helping to build a solid foundation, by hand-holding them, getting them to a stage where they are ready and then getting the big guns — the investment bankers and lawyers — to provide sustainable support.”

Has this approach paid off?
We helped our first [client] company, by practically camping out there for a few months, tidying up their accounts and so on, until the company eventually got listed with great success. The owner was so happy that he recommended another client, and then other services were demanded: secretarial, accounting, audit. Of course, as a young man you say, “Yeah, I can do everything.” And that’s how we grew, one step at a time.

How do you pass this philosophy on to younger people?
I treasure our young people. I make it a point to have a “lunch with the MD” session at least three times a year, with the junior staff members. We sit in the training room and choose a topic that they are concerned with: work-life balance, motivating people, dealing with difficult colleagues, non-technical areas. I also try to change the mindset of entitlement they may have. I try to make sure that they have a different experience from my days at KPMG. That they
don’t feel so far removed from senior staff and that others are also having doubts about their careers and abilities like them.

The second thing I do is meet with interns who come to our firm, especially the NTU interns (we take a lot of them!), towards the end of their internships and they can ask me any question. Usually it’s the same thing: “What do I do when I work?” “What will make me successful?” I say “Look, whatever I answer, it may not be true for you. Just because I said it doesn’t make it right. We are all different. You may be better at meeting people or better at writing. You can’t just rely on what I say and tell yourself ‘This must be good for me, too.’ You must go and explore all this for yourself.”

Do you feel that elitism is a growing problem in Singapore? What can be done to address it?

In any developed country the rich and poor divide continues to grow. We need to continue to offer opportunities through education. This is the best levelling mechanism. At Nexia TS, we continue to help by offering financial scholarships to those who are in need to give them an equal chance.
Focus

How did you get started in philanthropy?
It was during National Service. We were given a choice: Saturday was a working day, so you either went back to camp or you volunteered at a children’s home. I was trying to avoid going back to camp so I volunteered! The children there were of different ages and different races and it opened my eyes to the fact that there were people who didn’t have the time or means to have tuition or any of the other perks that so many kids in this country had. We went there to help them with their homework, give guitar lessons or clean the premises. I wouldn’t say I fell in love with it immediately, but over time I did, especially after developing relationships with the children and seeing how much they appreciated me. That really touched my heart. By giving, I felt more blessed.

Has philanthropy always been a part of Nexia TS?
When we started the firm, I felt we had to share the right values with our people. Everything starts from the top. But sometimes it’s not so easy. Originally, I was clear that to help people, education would be our focus. We didn’t have a lot to give at first so we said we would just focus on scholarships. And these had to be for the financially-needy, and not awarded based on academic success. We started with NTU: it was a small annual gift of $3,500. As we grew, we expanded to different universities, different polytechnics, different junior colleges. To this day, whenever one of the beneficiaries sends us a ‘thank you’ card, I can see that whatever was done did help. The amount may not have been great but they still appreciate that someone out there was interested in helping them. That the world isn’t so bad after all, and someone actually cares enough to help.

How do you pass that on to the rest of the firm?
Every December, we participate in the Boys’ Brigade “Share-a-Gift” project. We start a collection throughout the company, because it’s one thing for the company to give but that doesn’t help nurture the instinct for doing good within the individual employee. We want to teach them to give. So, when a staff member gives a dollar, the company will match it. If you give $3,000, I’ll put in $3,000. And then we’ll go and buy groceries for the families through the Boys’ Brigade. When we reached our 20th anniversary, we thought at first “Let’s have a big party.” But I felt that that wasn’t the best way to celebrate, so we decided to organise our first Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) day for the firm where we set aside a whole day to do something for others. We got everybody to bring in a few items from home: oil, milk powder, whatever. Then the firm bought other items and we packed them into bags and distributed these to lower-income HDB flat-dwellers.

Do you feel that there are certain ‘wrong approaches’ to giving?
Yes, if giving is only about money and not knowing why, what and for whom. For me, it has to be clear why we give. Otherwise, we overstretch ourselves and become ineffective.

What would you say to the cynics who sneer at CSR as publicity stunts?
I would say that every dollar that is given is a dollar that is benefiting someone. It doesn’t matter how much the giver has. The fact that he gives means that he is helping someone. We don’t focus on the giver but on the person receiving. If you have little, you give little. If you have a lot and you give a little, someone is still benefiting. It’s not for us to say “give more!” We focus on the beneficiary — that’s what’s important.

Organisations currently supported by Nexia TS
- The Hiding Place
- Alpha Singapore
- ZOE International
- Chen Su Lan Methodist Children’s Home
- The Boys’ Brigade
THE ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL SERVICES LANDSCAPES ARE EVOLVING

CAN YOU KEEP UP?

Young and research intensive, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) is ranked 12th globally. It is also placed first among the world’s best young universities.

The changing landscapes in accounting and financial services call for specialised skills such as business valuation and risk management, two high-growth practice areas identified by the Working Group on Legal and Accounting Services, established under the Committee on the Future Economy (CFE).†

To empower you for the future, NTU’s Nanyang Executive Education offers cutting-edge programmes to expand and sharpen your skills in these areas - so you always stay relevant and ahead.

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- 30 - 31 August 2018

Chartered Valuer & Appraiser Programme

- Self-study registration
- 1 August 2018 - 1 October 2018

Mergers & Acquisitions Programme

- Next intake
- 12 - 14 September 2018

For more information, please visit our website www.execed.ntu.edu.sg or email us at nep@ntu.edu.sg

*Up to 90% funding. Terms and conditions apply

† Based on April 2017 report by the Working Group on Legal & Accounting Services, established under a sub-committee of the CFE.
In early 2018, Mr John Lee and his nine siblings collectively donated $100,000 to NTU in memory of their beloved parents, Mr and Mrs Lee Kheng Hwa. Though they did not study at the University, the 68-year-old engineer-turned-trainer and his siblings believed that NTU would resonate well with their parents and made the decision to set up a bursary at NTU.

In 1928, Mr Lee Kheng Hwa came to Singapore from China when he was just 13 years old. Then, Mr Lee was young, and full of ambition and gumption. His first job off the boat was working as a kitchen assistant and he eventually joined an import-export company, where he took part in the entrepôt trade that was Singapore’s lifeblood. After he learned the ropes, Mr Lee set up his own establishment: Kian Fah Trading Company at 38 Hokkien Street.

The company imported items such as clothing and gas for lighters from Japan and Korea, which were re-exported to Indonesia. In addition to his business, Mr Lee’s pride and joy were the 10 children whom he was blessed with following his marriage to Mdm Chong Siew Neo.
WE ARE PROUD TO HONOUR OUR PARENTS BY SETTING UP A FUND, A MEMORIAL IN PERPETUITY, IN THEIR NAMES, TO RENDER, ASSIST, AND FACILITATE THE ACADEMICALLY ABLE AS WELL AS THE LESS FINANCIALLY ABLE, TO HAVE ACCESS TO AN EDUCATION IN NTU AND THEREAFTER, SOCIETY.

The Lee siblings

THE LOVE OF LEARNING
In the Lee household, books and education were seen as sacrosanct. “My parents believed in giving us the best education possible,” says Ms Claire Lee, a real estate broker, who at 52, is the youngest of the 10 siblings. Growing up, she was taught to treat books and magazines respectfully. If she did anything like throw her school books on the table, she would get a serious spanking.

Their parents placed a strong emphasis on education despite — or perhaps because of — the fact that neither was well educated. Back in China, Mr Lee had to leave school early, and Mrs Lee had to stop schooling at the primary school level in Malaya. Despite this, Mrs Lee prided herself on her ability to read the Chinese newspapers as well as help her husband with his business.

With a shared belief in education, Mr Lee and Mrs Lee were determined to send all their children to school, as far as they could achieve. Eight out of their 10 children (five boys and five girls) eventually made it to university, either in Singapore or abroad.

AN EASY DECISION
The idea for the donation was conceived after the siblings decided to sell off the family home following their mother’s death in 2012. When they were clearing the old correspondences, they found old receipts for donations that were made by their parents. The receipts reminded the siblings of their parents’ active support for the less fortunate. “As we went through the papers, we could see that through all these years, my parents had been making donations to build roads and schools in China,” said Ms Lee. “When we discovered those donation receipts, we were reminded that our parents were passionate about education and helping the poor and the needy.” Mr John Lee said his father believed that education was a way of transforming someone’s destiny. “My father donated more to education than to any other cause.”

As their parents had placed such a high premium on education, the siblings were naturally inclined to donate to an educational cause. Initially, one question arose — which educational cause or institution to pick? After some discussion, the siblings decided to donate to NTU because of its historical links to Nanyang University, and their father’s belief in Chinese education.

Though their father spent all his adult life in Singapore, he did not speak much English. The senior Mr Lee spoke Hakka, Hokkien, Cantonese and Mandarin instead, and the family home and business were steeped in Chinese culture. Mr Lee was very much a product of his times, and like many other Chinese people in Singapore, he was thrilled when Nanyang University opened its doors in 1956.

Mr John Lee recalled how his father had brought him to the opening ceremony of Nanyang University in 1958, when he was a young boy. “We walked for miles,” he said. Traffic was badly aggravated by the immense crowd, and people resorted to leaving their cars and walking instead.

With these memories of their parents, the Lee siblings went ahead with the decision to donate, even though none of them had studied at NTU. They also hope that their contribution will encourage others to donate.

In a note to NTU on the donation, the siblings wrote: “We are proud to honour our parents by setting up a fund, a memorial in perpetuity, in their names, to render, assist and facilitate the academically able and less financially able, to have access to an education in NTU and thereafter, contribute to society.”

THE MR AND MRS LEE KHENG HWA BURSARY
THE MONEY DONATED BY THE FAMILY WILL BE USED TO SET UP A BURSARY TO HELP NEEDY UNDERGRADUATES IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AT NTU. THE LEE SIBLINGS FEEL THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO STUDY THE HUMANITIES BECAUSE OF ITS POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE DESTINY OF THE NATION IN THE LONG TERM.

PHOTO Mark Lee
A UNIVERSITY’S STRENGTH is not just demonstrated in the international standings it achieves or the success of its graduates. It is also made evident through the fervent support of all who believe in its mission, vision and culture, and are willing to stand committed to its contributions towards higher education, research and the wider community.

NTU is a renowned institution in the hearts of many — and given its wide base of support, a more holistic approach is emphasised with regard to giving. The University has various campaigns under its iGave programme that are targeted at different people — alumni, graduating students, faculty and staff, and even parents. All these campaigns fall under NTU’S “Annual Giving” umbrella.

For instance, the Alumni Giving campaign allows its 230,000-strong alumni to stay connected with their alma mater and support NTU’s mission of delivering world-class education. In giving back, donors build on the University’s mission of nurturing the next generation and help NTU to grow from strength to strength. NTU’s graduating students can also help by supporting their juniors in financial need through the Graduation Giving campaign. Graduates make a symbolic class gift in a time-honoured legacy to help other students reach graduation. Then there is the Faculty & Staff Giving campaign, which offers members of the NTU family the opportunity to pay it forward. Their support goes a long way in helping NTU to thrive and drive positive social change by aiding and nurturing financially-disadvantaged undergraduates. Finally, the Parents Giving campaign allows parents to enrich student experience through philanthropy. Their generosity empowers students to pursue a more meaningful and fulfilling university education. These different campaigns help to advance the University’s development and student education.

There are other benefits of giving to NTU too. Be it from parents, alumni, staff or graduating students, contributions to the University receive government matching and a 250-per-cent tax deduction. Donors can also decide on the use of their contributions — either in the form of bursaries for underprivileged students, gifts to education and student life for campus vibrancy, or support for school advancement through meaningful activities such as educational trips and student projects. We find out more from two people who have taken part in the different iGave campaigns.

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES OF giving

WHETHER YOU ARE A GRADUATING STUDENT, PARENT OR STAFF MEMBER, THERE’S A HOST OF DIFFERENT AVENUES FOR YOU TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO NTU.
UNLIKE MANY PARENTS who organised birthday parties for their children with friends and family, Alvin Chin’s parents took him to visit orphanages as a child on his birthday. Bearing gifts of food and drinks, it was the Chins’ small way of doing good for the less-fortunate. When Alvin was working in Shanghai, his former boss took his team to a school for the intellectually-disabled in order to spend time with the students by playing table tennis and basketball together. The students put on a performance to express their gratitude, which left Alvin feeling incredibly moved.

These memories of giving back in small ways have stayed with Alvin. Based in Shanghai and Taipei for 10 years, he returned to Singapore last year to spend time with his father and to raise his 5 year-old twin daughters. “It’s the small, emotional things that remind us how very fortunate we are,” he says. “Seeing my dad and mum visit the children’s homes was really meaningful. They were helping to nurture the next generation. Learning from my ex-boss in Shanghai is also a reminder that it’s time for me to give back.”

Today, Alvin is paying it forward in his new job at NTU. As the Head of Housing & Auxiliary Services since January, Alvin aims to provide best-in-class campus services, such as campus security and transport solutions, to support the University’s priorities and projects for the wider NTU community. The Office of Housing & Auxiliary Services spearheads changes on campus for a better future and living environment.

To encourage more colleagues to give to the University, Alvin launched a team challenge: to triple the department’s iGave participation rate to 100 per cent and, in turn, grow their monetary contributions. “It struck me. If you want to tell
ANSWERING

AS A TEENAGER BOY growing up in Medan, Raymond Harris took extra lessons in English, his second language. When his father ran into financial difficulties, Raymond told his tutor that he could not afford her classes. To his surprise, his tutor offered to give him a “scholarship”. She told Raymond that he could continue their lessons without paying fees. Having gone through a similar experience in the past, his tutor saw it as her way of giving back to the community.

Today, it is no wonder that Raymond is an active volunteer. The recent NTU graduate, who recently started his first job in a civil engineering consultancy firm in August, has been giving free tuition to secondary school kids. He has also mentored junior students in NTU’s Phonathon programme, where he worked part-time for four years. The University’s Phonathon programme is a Development Office initiative in which current students call graduates and alumni to inform them about fundraising activities and ask if they would like to make a contribution.

“I have personally received a lot of help from people like my English teacher. She told me not to worry about paying her back and to focus on passing down good deeds instead. I have also benefited from studying at this reputable institution and gained knowledge in my field. So I see helping my juniors as a way of passing it on,” says Raymond, who still visits his tutor every time he returns to Medan.

He joined the Phonathon programme as a student caller in his first year at NTU, after a friend recommended it to him. Raymond worked three-hour shifts twice a week and on busy days, he could call up to 30 prospects, from graduating students to alumni. He was promoted to be a student supervisor and mentored a total of 15 juniors. As a student supervisor, he looked after the team on shift duty and helped them if there were difficulties. He was also the go-between for the Development Office and prospects. “The paramount thing that I learnt is communication skills,” he says. “Having made calls continuously for four years, I think I have a sense of

YOU MUST HAVE AN AFFILIATION TO YOUR ORGANISATION. IF YOU DON’T FEEL THAT, THEN YOU WON’T FEEL THE NEED TO GIVE BACK. IT’S ABOUT BUILDING CONNECTIONS AND COLLABORATING AS A COMMUNITY. Mr Alvin Chin

people you are an agent of change, then you have to let the numbers tell the story.” He also suggested a new shared ratio for their contributions — half would be for the iGave programme and the other half for the Housing & Auxiliary Services department. “This way, it would go beyond charity to encourage team engagements and bring the team together. Other managers in my team would then be able to say, ‘hey, I’m doing something for both my team and organisation.’

Besides having a big heart, Alvin is a boss who leads by example. He refuses to “arrow” people to contribute, as he wants them to volunteer on their own accord. He hopes people can realise the significance of giving, such as providing bursaries to needy students. He also matches his staff’s highest contributions and volunteers as an iGave Ambassador to drive this giving culture in NTU. “If I don’t even show I’m supporting my organisation, then why would others in my team want to do so?” he remarks.

Alvin believes these ideas will go a long way towards fostering a culture of giving in NTU, and his efforts have indeed paid off. In the six months since he started these initiatives, the department’s participation rate in iGave has risen from 30 to 68 per cent.

The department has also started more team-building activities. “These bring people together as they get to know one another and feel they are part of a community, versus knocking off at 5:15pm and going home.”

Alvin hopes to see more people in NTU give back. He says: “You must have an affiliation to your organisation. If you don’t feel that, then you won’t feel the need to give back. It’s about building connections and collaborating as a community.”
people and have learnt to deal with different people. From their subtle tone of voice, I can tell if someone is interested to donate or not.”

Apart from the pocket money earned as a part-timer, Raymond enjoyed getting to know his fellow student callers and has made very good friends. Most importantly, taking part in the Phonathon programme, to him, was a way of giving back to his University. “There are some who come only for the pay, but the ones who stay have a spirit of giving in their heart and know they are doing something meaningful.”

“The idea of giving others a second chance resonates with me, that we can help them better themselves. If a financial reason is holding students back from continuing their education, then the various bursaries and funds that we contribute to will help them.” He puts it this way: “NTU was founded on the culture of giving back, from the early Nantah days. Even pedicab drivers supported the University. Knowing that we have this culture is very heart-warming and it should be preserved.”

What would be his message to graduating students and alumni who may be hesitant to make a contribution? “Giving back to school doesn’t mean a large amount of money to make a difference. The ocean is a multitude of water drops. Similarly, it’s more about the contributions which the alumni make together. You don’t have to give a large amount; it can just be what you are comfortable with.”

(LEFT) RAYMOND AND OTHER STUDENT VOLUNTEERS MANNING THE LINES AT A PHONATHON SESSION.
**Help**

**BEING THE SOLE BREADWINNER** of the family, my mother struggles with our household and medical bills as my father is severely ill. Despite her financial responsibilities, my mother has always tried her best to provide for my undergraduate needs. However, as my parents are getting old, I felt that I should do my part to ease their financial burdens. To pay for my university expenses, I took up several part-time jobs such as private tutoring. I also decided against summer and semester exchange programmes and other school activities that required a lot of money.

Fortunately, I received much-needed support through a bursary which covered my tuition and hostel fees. I was able to purchase a laptop for my academic needs as well. With the bursary, I could reduce my part-time workload and get by with tutoring just one student. This granted me more time with my parents, who were very happy as I was able to manage my school finances on my own.

The ease from financial worries also allowed me to take part in faculty club activities, a summer exchange programme, overseas expeditions and local community involvement projects (LCIP). Through these opportunities, I realised there were many other people with much financial and emotional struggles. I learnt that what mattered was not how much we could give; as long as you could put a smile on their faces and impart to them a new skill or knowledge, you would have passed on a good deed. Now, as a student, I am not able to give back as much, but I hope to keep working hard so that I can help others like how I have received help today. I am very thankful for the bursary. It helped lighten the financial burdens of my parents, and enabled me to attain my degree.”

**NEARLY 20%** of students who face financial difficulty have lost a parent to death or divorce.

**NEARLY 1 IN 5 STUDENTS NEEDS FINANCIAL HELP**

**ALMOST 1 IN 5 STUDENTS NEEDS FINANCIAL HELP**

**SHARAVANA THEVAN S/O POTHIYA PILLAY**

**ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING**

**CLASS OF 2018**

**NTU BURSARY RECIPIENTS SHARE WHAT IT IS LIKE TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL HELP FROM DONORS.**

**DID YOU KNOW?**
LONG WAY

HEALTH PROBLEMS in York Sun’s family made it difficult for her father and aunt — who has been a mother to her after her parents’ divorce — to continue working. She struggled to find a sense of independence amid these transitions. At one point, she considered quitting university education to start work to alleviate her financial burdens. Her own health issues also made it difficult for her to cope. Thankfully, she pressed on, and her determination put her on the Dean’s List in her second year of study at NTU.

The NTU bursary which York Sun received was a huge relief for her, allowing her to worry less about money. It also encouraged her to invest time and energy in an Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus (URECA) research project, which opened up more opportunities.

When asked about the future, she is hopeful and inspired. She says, “Social research is where I see myself. I would like to advocate for mental health issues and advance social consciousness through innovative writing, and I will always aim to do better. I’ve already been exploring.”

With a bright future ahead, York Sun will always remember her benefactors who stepped in when she needed help. “I am extremely grateful to all the bursary donors. Thank you for your kindness. I hope to pay it forward with all my ability and heart in the future.”

WHEN HER FATHER was retrenched in 2015, Jia Wen’s family had to tide over the difficult period by surviving on their savings. As the sole breadwinner of the family of six, including Jia Wen’s grandmother, Jia Wen’s father struggled to meet the family’s financial needs. Her family was overburdened by daily expenses and bills on top of the cost of education for the three children. Being the eldest child, Jia Wen felt a heavy responsibility to relieve the financial situation at home. Hence, she took on two part-time jobs that greatly affected her studies and social life as she would skip lectures to work and compensate by studying in her own time.

Jia Wen is extremely grateful for the peace of mind that the bursary gave her. She intends to further her studies and give back to society in the future. “Receiving this bursary greatly reduced the financial burdens of my family and served as an inspiration as I continued with my studies. This bursary allowed me to focus on my studies and I could participate in more campus activities. Again, thank you for your giving and I feel extremely grateful for your generosity.”
Make a Gift, Change a Life

Mail the completed pledge to
Development Office, 76 Nanyang Drive, Blk N2.1 Level B4, Singapore 637331


Yes, I’d like to support NTU through one of these causes (please tick one)

☐ NTU Bursaries
☐ NTU Education & Student Life
☐ School/Centre Advancement

☐ A ONE-TIME GIFT OF $100 ☐ $50 ☐ $25 ☐ $10 ☐ Other amount $__________
☐ A MONTHLY GIFT OF* ☐ $50 ☐ $25 ☐ $10 ☐ $5 ☐ Other amount $__________

* I hereby authorise the University to continue to deduct a monthly contribution from the credit/debit card indicated below, until written termination is received from me.

1 GIFT METHOD

☐ Credit Card / Debit Card
☐ Cheque (Payable to “NTU”)

Card Type ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Name on Card

Card No Expiry Date (month / year)

2 DONOR PARTICULARS

Full Name Mr/Mrs/Mdm/Ms/Dr

NRIC/FIN No. (for auto-inclusion in your next IRAS assessment) Email

Contact (mobile) (home/office)

Address


Signature / Date

The Singapore Government matches each gift, substantially increasing the value and impact of donors’ contributions. Singapore tax residents will also enjoy tax deductions based on prevailing government policies.
The generosity of NTU’s faculty and staff empowers needy students to fulfil their potential.

Each year, NTU holds a kick-off ceremony to celebrate a fresh start to its iGave Faculty & Staff Giving campaign that supports the University’s development through philanthropy. Under the initiative, gifts from the University’s faculty and staff are used to help students pursue a meaningful and fulfilling university education, and have gone towards:

- **Bursaries for underprivileged students**
- **Academic/extra-curricular/campus enhancements** that add value to the overall student experience
- **Funding for student activities** that develop students’ life skills and character.

Held on 28 March at the Nanyang Auditorium in NTU, the 2018 launch saw strong support from the faculty and staff community. Welcoming the audience was Professor Alan Chan, NTU Vice President (Alumni and Advancement), who thanked the community for their continuous generosity.

“This [Faculty & Staff Giving campaign] is a truly wonderful NTU tradition. There is something truly magical in being able to make a positive difference to the lives of our students. In doing so, we also make a meaningful contribution to Singapore and the society at large,” said Prof Chan, “One in five students receives financial assistance from the University. Our committed effort will make sure that no needy student is left behind.”

Agreeing with Prof Chan, the event’s Guest of Honour Professor Ling San, NTU Provost and Vice President (Academic), cited Year 2 Mechanical Engineering student Darren Sim as an example of someone who has benefited from the kind acts of donors. Darren has an autistic younger brother and an elderly mother. To support his family, the young man had to work part-time while juggling academic studies. Fortunately, when he joined the University, he received the NTU bursary, which enabled him to focus on his studies and have an enriching student life. “That is how your gifts can change the lives of others,” reiterated Prof Ling.
PNEUMONIA is an all-too-common illness, affecting 450 million people worldwide. In the United States, it was the eighth leading cause of death as of 2009. In Singapore, it ranked third, and in 2016, accounted for an alarming 19.3% of all deaths recorded here. Unfortunately, the awareness of this fact — and pneumonia prevention — is low, as evidenced by a study conducted by students of the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI) in NTU.

The survey, conducted with 200 elderly people, found that most (69.2%) realised their age group to be at risk, but more than half (of the 69.2%) believed that they were unlikely to contract the disease. The survey was part of the cleverly-named A Pneu Choice campaign by the aforementioned undergraduates from WKWSCI, namely Nerissa Lee Zhi Ying, Lim Ching Ying, Gayle Lim Jia Ying, and Tong Pui Jeng. The team reported that one key challenge in running their campaign was having to overcome the prevailing belief among the group of elderly surveyed that they were not likely to get pneumonia, although they acknowledged that they were part of the at-risk group.
PREACHING PROTECTION
The students’ interest in pneumonia prevention was first piqued when they heard about the National Adult Immunisation Schedule (NAIS) announced in October 2017. The initiative aims to increase the awareness and uptake of an effective pneumonia vaccine and other important but non-mandatory vaccines. It prompted them to conduct further research in the area and to carry out their own survey: the uptake of the pneumococcal vaccines by the target group (those over 65 years of age) was woefully low at just 7.14%. The streptococcus pneumoniae bacteria is the most common cause of bacterial pneumonia. Pneumococcal vaccines designed to combat this bacteria can therefore have a powerful preventive impact.

These survey findings inspired the four undergraduates to launch a pilot programme to increase the awareness of pneumococcal vaccination for the elderly aged 65 and above. It rolled out in January this year in senior activity centres in Queenstown and Bukit Merah, in partnership with various doctors, including those from the Tzu Chi Free Clinic. Brochures containing information on pneumonia was also made available to the public.

A SHOT IN THE ARM
One of the many supporters of A Pneu Choice was the Tan Ean Kiam Foundation, which funded the project with a $23,320 sponsorship. Vice Chairman Tan Keng Leck tells us that the foundation supports up to 50 worthy projects a year, in the vein of A Pneu Choice. He also shared his personal take on this particular project by the WKWSCI undergraduates.

“It was a meaningful project because pneumonia is a killer… I had a friend who died of pneumonia. I didn’t even know that pneumonia vaccination existed until A Pneu Choice campaign, so spreading this awareness is a worthy cause to support,” says Mr Tan.

The team behind A Pneu Choice had raised some $10,000 before the Tan Ean Kiam Foundation’s funds came...
“We wanted to do something meaningful, something that could potentially save lives,” says Gayle. “We chose this project because we found that a lot of our peers were focusing on youths, or young children — we did not find anyone working on anything relating to the elderly.”

Of the 200 participants in the initial survey, half of them signed up for vaccination immediately after answering the questionnaire. In total, after the initial outreach programmes in Queenstown and Bukit Merah, 295 elderly people received immunisations. The cost of these immunisations were fully borne by the Tzu Chi Free Clinic, which has a long-standing practice of providing free medical care for low-income patients.

One interesting finding the team reported was that some of the elderly who signed up for the immunisation had previously received the vaccine, and simply did not recall this fact. According to the team, this highlighted a related challenge — the elderly might over-report their risk because they had not updated their immunisation status.

The WKWSCI undergraduates also revealed that of the elderly people they had interacted with, many needed more time to consider the vaccination and to consult their own doctors.

Given its encouraging results and noteworthy findings, a campaign such as A Pneu Choice shows that a small team of dedicated individuals can make a difference, even when it comes down to tackling persistent large-scale issues such as pneumonia.
SOLVING GLOBAL CHALLENGES, THE INTERDISCIPLINARY WAY

INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE SCHOOL
GRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Young and research-intensive, Nanyang Technological University (NTU Singapore) is ranked 12th globally. It is also placed 1st among the world’s best young universities.

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SECURE COMMUNITY
PREVENTING | ADAPTING | RESILIENCE
- Active Living for the Elderly
- Institute for Media Innovation
- Multi-platform Game Innovation Centre
- Rapid-Rich Object Search (ROSE) Lab

HEALTHY SOCIETY
HEALTHY LIVING | ACTIVE AGEING
- Ageing Research Institute for Society and Education
- NTU Institute for Health Technologies
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They might have already graduated from NTU for a few years then. But the days of volunteering with the University’s Welfare Services Club (WSC) were so gratifying that it compelled WSC’s former executive members, Christopher Sia and Chia Min How, to set up the NTU WSC Alumni Association in 2011. “We wanted to maintain the great connections made through our co-curricular activity in the University,” says 36 year-old Min How, Vice President of the WSC Alumni Association and an alumnus of the School of Materials Science and Engineering. “WSC was a big part of our university life. As members, we worked on many different projects together. When we graduated, something felt strangely amiss.”

Christopher, 38, President of the association, agrees. “Time spent as members of the WSC was truly memorable and meaningful. Many of us can still talk about any one particular event that we organised in great detail,” says the computer engineering graduate who went on to pursue an MBA at Nanyang Business School.

Comprising about 400 registered members, NTU WSC Alumni Association serves as a platform for its members to continue volunteering. Apart from mentoring members from WSC, it has started to raise funds for the club’s various special projects this year — it aims to raise $50,000 over the next three years.

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“These funds go towards supporting special projects (see sidebar) such as Camp OutReach where members take the local deaf community overseas to serve communities in need,” explains Director of Membership, Billy Ng. He joined the alumni association soon after he graduated in 2017 from the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Another project that the funds support is Challenge ur Limits, an annual event that showcases the roles people with disabilities can play in society.

Founded in 1985, the Welfare Services Club (WSC) is a non-academic constituent club in NTU that provides students with a variety of volunteering activities. The club has about 1,000 members and is constantly seeking to extend its reach to the underprivileged in society.
Save The Date!
Saturday, 13th October
The Wave, NTU Singapore

NTU ALUMNI
HOMECOMING 2018
LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES FESTIVAL

Highlights:
- Campus Tour
- Forum
- Live Performances
- Micro - Seminars
- Learning Solutions Showcase
- Official Launch of PaCE College
- Nanyang Alumni Awards Presentation
- Oktoberfest
- Movie Screening for Children

* Subject to change without prior notice.
By stepping in to help raise funds for the special projects, the alumni association hopes to relieve the stress of project funding among the current student members. “We can’t claim to solve all their problems, but we can rally for more sponsorship so the current students can focus on other aspects of each event,” says Min How.

This, however, is not to say the responsibility of fundraising is taken away from the students completely. “Fundraising is an important element to experience and a good skill to hone, so we still want the students to learn to do so. We come in as an additional resource which they can tap to boost their programme budget and also to advise them should they have any questions,” Chris explains. “Through this, we hope that the quality of the programmes can keep on improving.”

Canvassing support from other alumni to part with their money, although challenging, is not the biggest hurdle for them — finding time is. This is especially so for Christopher, a father of two children aged three and five. “Time can certainly be an issue but the association’s executive committee members nudge one another along in our WhatsApp chat group,” Chris lets on. “My commitment as the president, and also good feedback from programme participants, beneficiaries and volunteers are where I derive my motivation from.”

Time is also an issue for younger members like Billy, who readily admits that working, as opposed to studying, comes with added responsibilities and thus, a shift in priorities. That said, he and the other members of the association remain undeterred. “You don’t really have to sacrifice too much of your time, effort or money, to make a difference to the lives of those in need,” enthuses Billy. “The joy I feel from volunteering in programmes which serve others is indescribable. I liken these commitments to ‘stress relief pills’.”

Echoing similar sentiments, Min How says, “You don’t stand to lose anything if you give — whether in time, effort or money — to those who are less fortunate. I daresay you will feel rewarded instead.” For Chris, giving is a sign of gratitude. “I’ve learnt so much in my time at NTU, so I think it’s only right that I pay it forward,” says Chris. “I hope that the support we are rendering to the WSC members will inspire them to do the same when they graduate, thus keeping the momentum going and making this association a sustainable one.”
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Leading Change

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Learning Differently, Leading Change
We have all encountered someone who has had a significant impact on our lives. It could be a family member, a mentor, a teacher, a friend. Someone who helped shape us into who we are today, who instilled in us values that we carry in everything we do, who showed us the path towards the light at the end of the tunnel. Everyone has a story to tell.

Such stories manifest in different ways around us. Within the NTU campus, we have travelled on roads and passed by buildings named after someone. We have read about or even benefited from scholarships and bursaries that begin with someone’s name. We have sat in lecture theatres and rooms that have names instead of numbers. At times we may have wondered — Who is this “someone”? What is their story? How did these named examples of infrastructures or awards come about? Often, it is because someone wished to remember a special person — for his or her contributions, generosity, or simply being there.

The Tan Lam San Scholarship in Chinese Language and Culture is one such story. The story of a much respected and beloved teacher, who had touched the lives of his students and shaped promising boys into upstanding men. Many of these students have gone on to achieve success in their lives, and decades on, they still remember their teacher and his teachings.

Mr Tan Lam San was an alumnus of Nanyang University (Nantah). He studied in the department of Chinese Language and Literature, and in 1960, was among the second cohort of Nantah students to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Chinese Studies.

After his graduation, Mr Tan returned to his secondary school, Catholic High, to teach. For the next 30 years, he passionately and tirelessly educated, nurtured and inspired his students until his death from cancer in 1991 at the age of 55. Mr Tan gave the best 30 years of his life to Catholic High. Many years have passed since Mr Tan’s passing, but he is still dearly missed by his students.

A group of Mr Tan’s former students from Catholic High came together to establish the Tan Lam San Scholarship in Chinese Language and Culture — to remember their teacher, to show their gratitude and most importantly, to carry on Mr Tan’s spirit and legacy.
Thank you, Teacher

“We are immensely fortunate and privileged to have had Mr Tan as our teacher from Secondary Two to Four, from 1962 to 1964. He was a very enthusiastic teacher, full of vigour and vitality, and sincerely concerned about his students. Mr Tan was our form teacher and taught us Chinese as well as the history of Chinese literature. During those memorable three years, under Mr Tan’s guidance, our eyes were opened to the richness and beauty of Chinese culture and literature. His lessons transported us into the captivating world of ancient China — through the beautiful poems and verses of Tang and Song dynasties, the literary treasures of Ming-Qing fiction, and many other examples of classical Chinese literature.

We were inspired by Mr Tan’s love for Chinese culture and his enthusiasm to share this passion with his students. He was an exemplary and well-loved teacher, fully committed to education and a great model for his students. Beyond the textbooks, Mr Tan also inculcated in us values and beliefs that shaped our lives.

In memory and in gratitude of Mr Tan, we established the Tan Lam San Scholarship in Chinese Language and Culture. It is a meaningful way to remember this great and beloved teacher, whose passion, humility and contributions have touched and left an indelible mark in our lives. Just as Mr Tan believed, we also firmly believe that it is important to ignite the passion for Chinese culture and to keep this passion alive for generations to come.”

— Prof Yow Cheun Hoe, Head of the Chinese Division in NTU’s College of Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences.

It is a meaningful way to remember this great and beloved teacher, whose passion, humility and contributions have touched and left an indelible mark in our lives.

MR TAN LAM SAN

THE TAN LAM SAN SCHOLARSHIP IN CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE PROVIDES ONE AWARD OF $10,000 ANNUALLY TO A CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE UNDERGRADUATE WHO DISPLAYS GOOD ACADEMIC RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTES TO SOCIAL WORK AND THE COMMUNITY.
Devoted wife and mother, former First Lady, culinary whizz, passionate philanthropist, treasured friend of NTU — Mrs Wee Kim Wee, who passed away on 7 July 2018 at the age of 102, played many roles throughout her life. As Singapore President Halimah Yacob said in a Facebook post on 8 July, Mrs Wee was truly “an unsung heroine in Singapore’s history”.

Born Koh Sok Hiong, Mrs Wee was married to the late President Wee Kim Wee for 69 years, until his death in 2005. Together, they raised one son and six daughters. Mrs Wee was a loyal presence by her husband’s side as he rose to prominence, from his early career as a journalist, then a diplomat before serving as the President of Singapore between 1985 and 1993.

During Mr Wee’s presidency, the couple developed a reputation among high-ranking dignitaries and ordinary Singaporeans alike as gracious hosts at the Istana. Mrs Wee — whose mother was a Nyonya — would often personally prepare food for dinner parties and receptions, thus becoming famous for her Peranakan fare. More than 200 of her recipes are featured in the cookbook, *Cooking For The President: Reflections & Recipes of Mrs Wee Kim Wee*, written and published by her daughter Ms Wee Eng Hwa in 2011. The book, which took 21 years to complete, is widely used by home chefs and lauded for helping to preserve the heritage of Peranakan cooking.

Another cause that was close to Mrs Wee’s heart was her decades-long involvement in charity work. As First Lady, she served as a steadfast advocate of education and provided opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth — an area she continued to champion in later years. Mrs Wee made several visits to NTU’s Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information renamed in 2006 in honour of her late husband. She was also a big supporter of the Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund, which was established that same year to raise funds for the School’s scholarships, bursaries, and other programmes and activities.

Mrs Wee is survived by six children, 13 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. Alongside her late husband, she will remain an inspiration for generations to come.
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