



NEWS RELEASE

Singapore, 13 Aug 2018

NTU receives \$11 million gift to further medical education and healthcare research

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) will be receiving an \$11 million gift from the Estate of Irene Tan Liang Kheng to set up an endowment fund to further medical education and research in healthcare.

The gift to NTU is the largest by the Estate to a single beneficiary. With matching by the Singapore government, the total endowment raised is \$22 million.

The gift was formalised at a signing ceremony today between NTU President Subra Suresh and the Trustee of the Estate and nephew of Irene Tan Liang Kheng, Mr Tan Hsuan Heng.

The Irene Tan Liang Kheng Memorial Fund will be established at NTU to support the university's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine). The Fund will further help LKCMedicine in its efforts to ensure that deserving Singaporean students will not be deprived of the opportunity to pursue a quality medical education due to financial difficulties. Starting from the next academic year in August 2019, one scholarship will be awarded for each year's cohort.

The gift will also go into establishing two endowed chair professorships at LKCMedicine to support faculty performing research into major diseases such as diabetes and mental health, as well as research into serious games, a genre of games that is not designed for fun or entertainment, that aim to improve population health and provide patient-centric care.

In recognition of this generous gift, Professor Suresh unveiled the Ong Tiong Tat and Irene Tan Liang Kheng Auditorium at the school's Clinical Sciences Building on its Novena Campus. The 500-seat Auditorium is named in honour of the late philanthropic couple. (Refer to Annex A for more information on Ong Tiong Tat and Irene Tan Liang Kheng and the Auditorium)

Professor Suresh said, "NTU deeply appreciates this gift from the Estate of Irene Tan Liang Kheng. This gift will further propel LKCMedicine to advance medical research and education. This is an investment in the future of young minds and the betterment of the human condition that will see ever-growing returns for years to come."

Mr Tan Hsuan Heng said, "My aunt and uncle, Irene Tan Liang Kheng and Ong Tiong Tat, strongly believed in the value of education and hence, they have chosen to donate to this worthy cause." He added that the two chair professorships at LKCMedicine revolve around causes close to his heart.

"My uncle had health problems, including diabetes. Mental health is important to me; my mother had dementia. I would like the two chair professorships to concentrate on medical research."

LKCMedicine Dean Professor James Best noted the gift would contribute greatly to the school's thrusts to produce impactful research and ensuring academic excellence. He said, "LKCMedicine, as a world-class medical school, places great importance on research as well as education. We strive to transform healthcare through excellent translational research and this funding for two of our major research areas will significantly extend our capability."

New Chair Professorships and Undergraduate Scholarship

The gift will fund the newly set-up Irene Tan Liang Kheng Scholarship to be awarded to academically bright but needy Singaporean students for the full five years of the LKCMedicine MBBS programme.

The scholarship aims to allow outstanding students to join the medical profession and serve the community. "I hope the scholars will have a heart for the community and give back to society when they become doctors," said Mr Tan.

The Irene Tan Liang Kheng Chair Professorship in Neuroscience will support LKCMedicine's current research into neurodegenerative and psychiatric disorders.

LKCMedicine Professor of Neuroscience and Mental Health George Augustine has been appointed the inaugural Irene Tan Liang Kheng Chair Professor in Neuroscience. He recently secured an MOE Tier 3 Grant of over \$19 Million for dementia research. This project forms part of the Ministry of Health's push to address the needs of Singapore's rapidly ageing population.

The Chair Professorship in Neuroscience will be a boost to the School's research thrusts in neuroscience and mental health that seek a better understanding of the causes so that more effective treatments could be developed. (Refer Annex B for more information on Professor George Augustine)

The Ong Tiong Tat Chair Professorship in Diabetes Research will help further the efforts of LKCMedicine in strengthening its research into diabetes and other metabolic disorders, in line with the Singapore government's call for a war on diabetes.

According to the Ministry of Health, one in nine Singaporeans have diabetes while one in three have a lifetime risk of getting it. At this rate, the number of Singaporeans with diabetes will reach a million by 2050.

LKCMedicine is currently conducting research on the roles that genetics, lifestyle and the environment play in the rising trend of diabetes. The search for the inaugural Ong Tiong Tat Chair Professorship in Diabetes Research is underway.

gAmeS for heaLth InnoVations cEntre (ALIVE)

The gift will also support a Serious Games Grant at the gAmeS for heaLth InnoVations cEntre (ALIVE) over five years.

The Centre promotes collaborative research into serious games that aim to benefit public healthcare in Singapore and the region. It is a joint centre by NTU and the National Healthcare Group (NHG), which is LKCMedicine's primary clinical training partner. (Refer to Annex C for more information on the Centre)

(Refer to Annex D for a list of Chinese translations for key terms)

END

Media contact:

Shireen Yeo (Ms)
Manager
Corporate Communications Office
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Email: shireen_yeo@ntu.edu.sg

About Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Engineering, Business, Science, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and Graduate colleges. It also has a medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, set up jointly with Imperial College London.

NTU is also home to world-class autonomous institutes – the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering – and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N).

Ranked 12th in the world, NTU has been placed the world's top young university for the past five years. The University's main campus is frequently listed among the Top 15 most beautiful university campuses in the world and it has 57 Green Mark-certified (equivalent to LEED-certified) building projects comprising more than 230 buildings, of which 95% are certified Green Mark Platinum. Apart from its main campus, NTU also has a campus in Singapore's healthcare district.

For more information, visit www.ntu.edu.sg.

Annex A

About Ong Tiong Tat and Irene Tan Liang Kheng: A life of philanthropy

When investment trader Mr Ong Tiong Tat met lawyer Mr Koh Choon Joo in 1957, they became firm friends due to their many shared values, even though Mr Koh was almost four decades older. This friendship lasted four decades, seeing Mr Ong and his wife Madam Irene Tan Liang Kheng, an investor, contributing to various causes together with Mr Koh. This common spirit of philanthropy, as well as shared conviction in the importance of education, informed their philanthropic giving. As Mr Koh had no children, he left his two-storey bungalow, 16 King Albert Park, to the Ongs. It is the sale of this inherited bungalow that has enabled the current gift to LKCMedicine.

After Mr Koh's death at 96 years old in 1997, Mr Ong, as the executor of his estate, continued to give more than \$16 million in his friend's name to various educational institutions.

Upon meeting the late National Institute of Education director Professor Lee Sing Kong in the 1990s, the Ongs supported not only his horticultural research but became close to the staff and faculty there as well.

Even when Mr and Mrs Ong were both diagnosed with Stage 4 stomach cancer and Stage 4 pancreatic cancer respectively in 2010, both continued to give generously. Mr Ong passed away in 2013 and Mrs Ong in early 2016. Mrs Ong appointed her nephew Mr Tan Hsuan Heng as trustee of her Estate, to distribute her bequests.

Ong Tiong Tat and Irene Tan Liang Kheng Auditorium

Situated on the fourth floor of the 20-storey Clinical Sciences Building on the Novena Campus, the Ong Tiong Tat and Irene Tan Liang Kheng Auditorium seats 500 and is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities.

The Auditorium hosts major events and conferences by NTU, LKCMedicine and partner institutions. In April this year, the annual student-led Anatomy Challenge was held, attended by more than 200 participants from over 19 schools. International conferences such as FutureHealth 2017 and also the inaugural Transform MedEd 2018 (9-10 November) where leading medical educators from around the world will converge, are also held in the Auditorium.

Annex B

About Professor George Augustine, the Inaugural Irene Tan Liang Kheng Chair Professor in Neuroscience

Professor George J. Augustine will be appointed the Inaugural Irene Tan Liang Kheng Chair Professor in Neuroscience. He is currently Professor of Neuroscience and Mental Health at LKCMedicine.

He founded the Center for Functional Connectomics at KIST (Seoul, Korea), where he currently serves as Director. He is also a member of the Programme in Neuroscience and Behavioral Disorders at the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School and is a former member of the Department of Neurobiology at the Duke Medical School in the USA, where he was the G.B. Geller Professor of Neurobiology.

Prof Augustine is well-known for his studies of brain synaptic mechanisms. His lab has shown that neurotransmitter release is triggered by a remarkably local calcium signal; have identified the roles of many proteins involved in neurotransmitter release; and have identified the role of calcium ions and other chemical signals in transducing brief neuronal activity into long-lasting change in brain function. His group also has developed novel optogenetic technologies and is applying these to study brain circuit function.

He has published more than 200 articles and has served on the editorial boards of numerous scientific journals, including *Neuron*, the *Journal of Neuroscience*, the *Journal of Physiology*, *Frontiers in Neural Circuits*, as well as serving as the founding editor of *Brain Cell Biology*. He also is well-known as a co-author of the highly popular Neuroscience textbook (Sinauer Associates).

Annex C

About gAmes for heaLth InnoVations cEntre (ALIVE)

The gAmes for heaLth InnoVations cEntre (ALIVE) is a collaborative centre jointly by Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and the National Healthcare Group, LKCMedicine's primary clinical training partner, that aims to bring together healthcare providers, academic institutions, industry, government agencies and community organisations for a collective impact through the research, scientific validation and implementation of healthcare serious games initiatives.

Serious Games:

A serious game is designed for a primary purpose other than pure entertainment. Examples include games designed to improve the competency of health professionals, and change eating and exercise behaviours among patients with diabetes.

Gift Purpose:

The Centre has established a Serious Games Grant (SGG) to promote collaborative research in serious games to help improve healthcare for the local and/or Asian population. The grant aims to foster a concerted effort to improve the potential of serious games in improving population health, provide patient-centric care, as well as bolster the areas of healthcare education, productivity, and clinical outcomes.

Annex D

Chinese Translations of Key Terms

Terms in English	Chinese Translations
Professor Subra Suresh NTU President	新加坡南洋理工大学校长 苏布拉·苏雷什 教授
Professor James Best LKCMedicine Dean	李光前医学院院长 詹姆斯·贝斯特教授
Tan Hsuan Heng	陈炫兴
Ong Tiong Tat	王仲达
Irene Tan Liang Kheng	陈联卿

Ong Tiong Tat and Irene Tan Liang Kheng Auditorium	王仲达与陈联卿礼堂
Irene Tan Liang Kheng Memorial Fund	陈联卿纪念基金
Irene Tan Liang Kheng Chair Professorship in Neuroscience	陈联卿神经科学讲座教授
Ong Tiong Tat Chair Professorship in Diabetes Research	王仲达糖尿病研究讲座教授
Professor George Augustine	乔治·奥古斯丁教授
Irene Tan Liang Kheng Scholarship	陈联卿奖学金
Koh Choon Joo	许春裕
Professor Lee Sing Kong	李盛光教授
gAmes for heaLth InnoVations cEntre (ALIVE)	医疗游戏创新中心