

BOOK CEMENTS BARKER'S SPORTS LEGACY

Four bursaries a year for those in sport management, exercise science



E.W. Barker Scholarship Awards recipients Ckrystal Chin (taekwondo, 2021) and Ryan Tan (football, 2020) at yesterday's presentation at NTU. The event also saw the launch of a book to commemorate the late minister and SNOC chief's dedication to sport. The book will be available in most libraries. ST PHOTOS: NG SOR LUAN

Laura Chia

To commemorate former minister E.W. Barker's legacy, his family and the Physical Education and Sports Science (PESS) Academic Group yesterday launched a book that chronicles significant milestones in his life.

The E.W. Barker Commemorative Book shows the impact of his dedication to sport in Singapore and of the E.W. Barker professorship and scholarship. It will also provide insights into the sports environment in the nation through the eyes of 10 former E.W. Barker professors and scholarship holders.

Associate Professor Koh Koon Teck, head of the PESS, which is part of the National Institute of Education (NIE), said: "We hope this book will inspire readers to see how one person's dedication can have a lasting legacy and impact on sports development and advancement in Singapore."

The late Mr Barker was Singapore's first law minister in 1964 and the longest-serving president of the Singapore National Olympic Council (1970 to 1990) among other portfolios. He was also known as an avid sportsman, and took part in many sports including

hockey, cricket, football, rugby, tennis and athletics.

For his contributions to sport, he received the Distinguished Service Award by the United States Sports Academy in 1983, and was also the first Singaporean to be awarded the Olympic Order (Silver) by the International Olympic Committee.

The E.W. Barker Professorship and Scholarship Fund was established in 2002, a year after his death at age 80.

At a ceremony to celebrate the launch of the book at the Nanyang Technological University, guest of honour Teo Chee Hean, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security, paid tribute to Mr Barker, calling the book a fitting tribute to a man who had always put his nation before self and who firmly believed in the power of sports to shape a brighter future for his nation.

"May Mr Barker's legacy continue, through these programmes, to inspire all of us to use our talents and abilities to do good, to be a positive influence on others and to always do our best for Singapore," he added.

Mr Barker's daughters, Carla and Deborah, were also present at the event. Ms Deborah Barker recalled playing hockey and badminton with her family in their garden,

watching her father play cricket at the Padang and the stories her father used to tell her about competing for Raffles College.

She said: "Sport was one of my father's great loves so it's truly wonderful and apt that NTU and NIE chose to honour his memory and distinguish him by setting up a sports professorship and scholarship in his name."

Ms Carla Barker added: "I would like to thank all the people who have believed in my father's legacy and directed it in this way to contribute to and hopefully inspire the development of sport science in Singapore."

The book is not for sale but will be available in most libraries and universities. An online version will also be available on the NIE website.

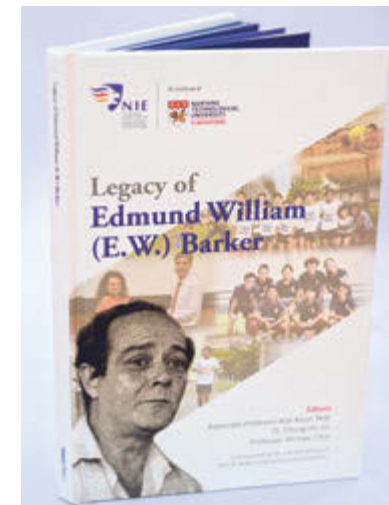
The E.W. Barker Bursary was also launched at the same event and aims to nurture talented and committed undergraduates in the areas of sport management as well as sport and exercise science. Up to four bond-free bursaries will be awarded each year to deserving students in these fields of study.

The 2019, 2020 and 2021 E.W. Barker Scholarship Awards recipients also received their awards yesterday. The presentation was not held in the past two years because of the coronavirus pandemic.

One of the recipients was taekwondo exponent Ckrystal Chin, who joined the national team in 2019 and hopes to represent Singapore at the SEA Games.

The 22-year-old, first-year sports science and management student, who also hopes to represent NTU at the World University Games, said: "For the past few years when I was in polytechnic, money has always been a distraction. With the scholarship, I don't feel like I'm putting a burden on my parents (any more).

"I feel more motivated... and I feel very grateful. I want to pay (the school and society) back in any way possible but for now, my way of giving back is to study hard and bring glory to the school."



SPORTS GOOD FOR SOCIETY

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MR TEO CHEE HEAN, Senior Minister, who calls the book a fitting tribute to a man who firmly believed in the power of sport to shape a brighter future for Singapore.