

# Outstanding women in different fields honoured

FROM A15

from the start of her writing career to break free of the perceived limitations regarding what female authors should write about.

“I didn’t want to confine the subject of writing to only women. I wanted to talk about greater things, about humanity in general.”

The emeritus associate professor at the National Institute of Education (NIE) later moved into leadership and headed the Asian Languages and Cultures Academic

Group in NIE, promoting cross-cultural research.

She also pushed for the introduction of the first bachelor’s degree programme in Malay language at NIE in 2000.

Dr Mary Ann Tsao, chairwoman of the Singapore-based Tsao Foundation, was inducted into the hall of fame in the advocacy and activism category.

She said the honour should be shared with all the women who made her who she is, and with the people in the foundation, which is

a champion of eldercare and ageing issues.

“Older women really suffered an accumulation of whatever disadvantages they might have,” said Dr Tsao, 69.

“As caregivers, when they leave the workplace, it’s very hard for them to get a job again. They don’t earn as much as men, but they live longer with disabilities.”

Dr Tsao, whose grandmother founded the foundation, added: “My grandmother told me this story 30 years ago and it really reso-

nated with me. And 30 years later, we’re still looking at the same situation.”

She also said women tend to have self-doubt, but she hopes the self-doubt will reduce with successive generations of women.

Humour writer Sylvia Toh was inducted into the hall of fame in the arts and culture category, with the citation calling her the “Grandmother of Singlish”.

The 77-year-old said the literary field recognised her for her ability and talent, not gender.

Advertising industry trailblazer Linda Locke was inducted in the business and enterprise category, and founding executive director of the Singapore Environment Council Kirtida Mekani in the environment and conservation category.

wlthian@sph.com.sg