

# THE POWER OF POTENTIAL

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## AN EDUCATION REIMAGINED FOR THE FUTURE



Professor Pericles Lewis, President of the newly-opened Yale-NUS College.

Yale-NUS College, Singapore's first liberal arts college, opened its doors in August 2013. Professor Pericles Lewis, founding President and Professor of Humanities at Yale-NUS, talks about the College's distinctive approach to a liberal arts education, the diverse student body, the role of philanthropy in the College's success and plans for the future.

### What is a liberal arts education?

The word "liberal" refers historically to what was most important for an educated person, free of other responsibilities, to study. So, the liberal arts are closely aligned with freedom – the freedom to pursue intellectual questions wherever scholarship takes us and the freedom to debate issues of current concern. The goals of a liberal arts education have long been to teach students to analyse carefully, to communicate effectively, and to make wise and humane decisions. The word "arts" refers historically not just to the visual or performing arts but to the whole range of human knowledge, from music to physics and beyond.

### What is distinctive about a Yale-NUS liberal arts education?

Yale-NUS will offer a liberal arts and science education that is updated for the 21st century. That means giving students the breadth of knowledge to expand their minds and to be able to ask important questions in any field of endeavour, as well as the rigorous training in one field that teaches them how to pursue a subject in depth. I expect our students to master a body of knowledge and techniques,

**“The College has been fortunate to have a number of programmes established due to the generosity of individuals, foundations and corporations representing the Yale-NUS community.”**

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## TAN CHIN TUAN FOUNDATION BOOSTS LIBERAL ARTS LEARNING

The Tan Chin Tuan Foundation (TCTF), established in 1976 by the late banker and philanthropist Tan Sri (Dr) Tan Chin Tuan with the objective of sharing with society the rewards of a highly illustrious career, has been unwavering in its support of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

The Foundation most recently became a Founding Benefactor of Yale-NUS College when it made a gift to establish the Tan Chin Tuan Professorship in Chinese Studies as well as the Tan Chin Tuan Chinese Culture and Civilisation Programme for undergraduate students. One of the many elements of the Programme will be Chinese language immersion courses in China and Taiwan in 2014.

Here, Ms Chew Gek Khim ('84), Deputy Chairman of the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, talks about why the Foundation supports Yale-NUS.

### What prompted the Foundation to support Singapore's first liberal arts college?

We believe that a liberal arts education is very beneficial to the individual. In the early years, Singapore had a high unemployment rate and the key focus as a country was to ensure that there were jobs for our people. At that time, our people needed to have specific technical, vocational and professional skills in order to be employable.

Today, many other countries provide similar technical, vocational and professional skills, and in order to be internationally competitive we need to ensure that in addition to these technical, vocational and professional skills, our people must be able to offer something extra. This something extra should,

hopefully, come with the provision of a liberal arts education - the ability to think creatively and critically, to be able to solve issues when they arise and have a macro perspective of the issues, as well as to be able to grasp and handle complexity.

### Why did the Foundation feel that Yale-NUS was a suitable place for a Chinese studies programme and Professorship?

Yale University was the first US university to offer Chinese studies because of its links with Peking University. Consequently its links with China and Chinese studies go back a long way.

One of the key tenets of our gifting is that there should, ideally, be a multiplier effect. Given that TCTF has historically supported Chinese studies in Singapore and beyond, we thought that this gift would not only leverage Yale's strengths but that the Foundation might be able to create a multiplier effect by focusing on Chinese studies as the linchpin connecting the different tertiary institutions supported by the Foundation. The Foundation has gone on to link the people involved in the projects we support so that they might collaborate, mutually access and share information, thus benefitting the students and faculty in all institutions involved.

### What are the Foundation's hopes for graduates of Yale-NUS?

We hope that Yale-NUS will produce well-educated individuals who, in turn, will contribute to society to make the world a better place. We also hope that these people will be a compliment to the institution that they graduate from and that the Yale-NUS community will be one that fosters friendships and encourages our young people to be more international in their outlook. These are essential qualities because we believe that the new world will be far more international and cross-cultural skills will be a necessary skill set. ■



Ms Chew Gek Khim (front), Ms Chew Gek Hiang and Mr Chew Kwee San, Council Members of the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation.



## EMPOWERING THROUGH EDUCATION

The Kewalram Chanrai Group, a family-owned group of companies, made a gift to Yale-NUS College to establish the Kewalram Chanrai Scholarship. Here, Mr N G Chanrai, Group CEO, explains why the Group chose to support students at the College.



Mr N G Chanrai of the Kewalram Chanrai Group.

### What inspired the Kewalram Chanrai Group to make a gift to Yale-NUS?

Our gift is part of the ongoing philanthropic activities of the Kewalram Chanrai Group. We have always supported education because we believe that it is an important driver of social and economic development. Yale-NUS represents the best of the East and West educational systems, offering opportunities to students from around the world. This is an aspect of education which resonates with our policy to contribute to the nurturing of future leaders and entrepreneurs who will help to grow the societies and economies of tomorrow.

### Why support the liberal arts?

A liberal arts education is a broad-based education that cultivates intuition, inspires innovation, and deepens capacity to build and learn with the development of critical thinking and creativity. It encourages active learning and the study of culture and society, besides other related liberal arts subjects.

### The Kewalram Chanrai Scholarship gives priority to female students. Why

### did the Group decide to do this?

We hope that our contribution and preference will give women an equal opportunity in education and provide them with tools they need for self-help and empowerment. They form approximately 50 to 55 percent of the population, so engaging them is important. Shirin Ebadi, a 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner and leading campaigner for the rights of women and children has this to say: "Knowledge is a window to freedom. An educated woman will not put up with oppression."

### Please share some of the Group's thoughts on giving back through philanthropic support.

Philanthropy has always been at the core of our ethos. We have been mindful that the

benefits of our success should be shared with the local communities where our businesses operate and flourish. We have engaged in social work primarily in health care and educational programmes. Our philanthropic efforts are aimed at helping to empower the less fortunate. The initiatives must be well-thought out, targeted, measurable and evaluated to ensure the highest efficacy.

### Do you think that philanthropy is crucial to the advancement of education?

Yes, philanthropy is very important because it contributes to the financial resources to ensure continual access to education for the underprivileged in society. It facilitates the creation of more and greater opportunities for learning to meet the needs of the community.

### Do you have any advice for the recipients of the Kewalram Chanrai Scholarship?

This is the beginning of a new and exciting learning journey that will help energise and shape your life. We hope this new endeavour will stimulate your curiosity, enhance your ability to develop new skills and deepen your capacity for connectivity, to help you solve problems that humanity faces. We encourage you to seize the opportunity to make an impact on society. May you be passionate about sharing what you have learned and giving back to society what you have received. ■

## ASPIRING TO A LIFETIME LOVE OF LEARNING

Inaugural Tan Chin Tuan Professor of Chinese Studies, Professor Scott Cook, talks about his new role and his hopes and dreams for Yale-NUS College and its students.

### How did you feel about your appointment?

It was a tremendous honour. With its vast and generous contributions to the social welfare and sustained development of Singapore and Malaysia, the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation is an organisation of tremendous renown, and its establishment of a programme for Chinese studies at Yale-NUS, which will serve to promote a deeper understanding of Chinese culture around the world, is unquestionably an initiative of great significance.

### What do you think will set this experience at Yale-NUS apart?

I think it will primarily be the student body. I have long taught in a liberal arts environment, and I have had many gifted students in my classes, many of them international students.

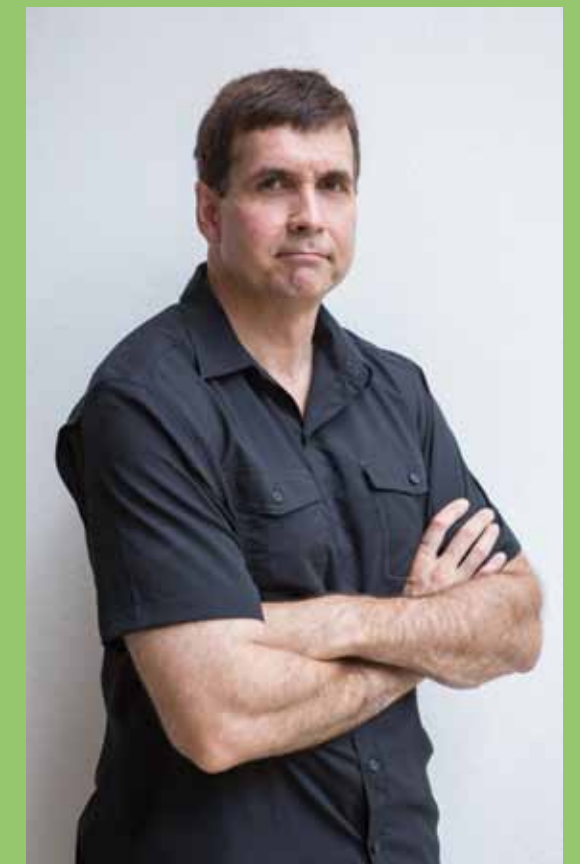
But I think the international mindset here - the commitment to explore meaningful and intellectually informed dialogues with students and faculty of other cultures - will be much stronger here than anywhere else I have taught.

### What do you hope to achieve in your capacity as the Tan Chin Tuan Professor of Chinese Studies?

I hope that Chinese studies will become an important component of the educational experience of a significant number of our students. I would also like to make Yale-NUS a focal point for academic conferences or workshops related to the fields of expertise of our Chinese studies faculty.

### If you had one great hope for your students, what would it be?

That, like Confucius himself, they be inspired to possess a lifetime love of learning. So long as they have that, everything else is possible. ■



Professor Scott Cook

## GIVING STUDENTS A HELPING HAND

Since its opening in August 2013, Yale-NUS College has offered over 20 percent of its pioneering cohort scholarships and study awards so that students can pursue their ambitions and achieve their potential with peace of mind. Four students share how these scholarships and study awards have transformed their lives and their Yale-NUS experience.



### Sheryl Foo Georgette Chen Study Award recipient

“I think I offer a unique combination of raw talent, energy and a grounded perspective in shaping the culture of my College.”

“The Georgette Chen Study Award has lifted a tremendous financial burden off me. I come from a single parent family, where my mother has to also support my younger sister’s education. By relieving my family of the expensive school fees, I do not have to worry about having to work part-time or accumulating debt.”



### Evan Asava-Aree J Y Pillay Study Award recipient

“I hope that a liberal arts education will be an enlightening experience that will inspire us to think out of the box, participate in discussions close to our hearts, and act on ideas we feel most strongly about. I also hope that it will help us see the connection between big ideas in the world, and enable us to apply what we learn in the classroom to the many things around us.”

“The J Y Pillay Study Award has made the decision making process (in choosing a college) a much easier one - it significantly decreased the costs of joining Yale-NUS. The Study Award also further motivates me to make the most of my College experience, knowing that I’ve been given the opportunity to do so.”



### Sylvia Gan Prima Scholarship recipient

“I like the idea of a residential college and a small cohort. These make for a great learning environment, where learning is intimate and transcends classroom boundaries. Also, I think a broad-based curriculum that combines ideas from both Eastern and Western societies is very interesting.”

“Before I found out that I had made it into the College, I was still deliberating whether or not to even consider Yale-NUS (although I wanted to come here) as I was not sure if my family could afford it. The Prima Scholarship really played a part in influencing my decision. I am really thankful for the opportunities that Yale-NUS and this Scholarship have given me!”



### Andrea Lee Sharon Ann Eravelly Scholarship recipient

“The three weeks I spent in New Haven were truly the time of my life. From the heated debates in seminar sessions to passionate discussions about our ideals for future student societies to arguments over the best pizza in New Haven, I knew that this College was the perfect place for me. I am constantly being drawn into intellectual exchanges between students and faculty and inspired by the great ideas that spontaneously sprout up. I have always desired a liberal arts and science education because it would finally give me the opportunity to learn for learning’s sake.”

“Coming from a family of five children, the financial burden on my parents was no small sum. This Scholarship covers my tuition fees, removing a substantial load off my parents’ backs. I do not have to worry about being burdened by hefty student loans or about not being able to secure a place in this school due to the inability to pay.”



Dr Tan Choon Kim, Chairman of the Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple

## INVESTING IN THE POTENTIAL OF A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple, one of Singapore’s oldest Buddhist temples, has given generously to Singapore’s first liberal arts college.

The Temple’s gift has enabled Yale-NUS College to establish the Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple Study Award, which will support up to eight students per Academic Year at a steady state, beginning August 2014, with preference given to Singaporean students. Study awards enable Yale-NUS to admit and provide opportunities to the best and brightest students from Singapore and around the world.

The College has also been able to recognise teaching excellence and attract some of the brightest minds from around the world to be part of its inaugural faculty through the Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple Professorship in Humanities.

Dr Tan Choon Kim (’66), Chairman, Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple, says, “The Temple shares the values behind Yale-NUS’ mission to equip young people with a form of education that will enable them to become leaders as well as engaged citizens who will be able to contribute to the advancement of society. We want to give bright, highly motivated and articulate students, regardless of financial background, a chance to benefit from a Yale-NUS education and to learn from excellent teachers who are leaders in their fields.” ■

## PHILOSOPHER JOINS YALE-NUS AS KWAN IM THONG HOOD CHO TEMPLE PROFESSOR

Professor Jay Garfield, the inaugural Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple Professor of Humanities at Yale-NUS College and a leading scholar of philosophy, found his academic calling half by chance and half by circumstance.

Trained in Western philosophical thought, Professor Jay Garfield admits having had little awareness of non-Western philosophy when he was a student. All of that changed when he became an Assistant Professor at Hampshire College, a liberal arts college in the US. On day one at work, his very first student walked into his office and wanted him to chair his senior thesis on ‘Indo-Tibetan Madhyamaka and the Social Contract Tradition.’ Seven years later, the College introduced a strong multi-cultural requirement that demanded that all teachers introduce a non-Western element to their disciplines.

Prof Garfield has not looked back since then, having devoted his career to advancing the idea that philosophy is a cross-cultural enterprise, and that it is morally and intellectually imperative to read and to work across cultural boundaries. He says, “It is a real honour to be associated with a major Buddhist temple dedicated to care

and benevolence. I am thrilled to join Yale-NUS, and am excited by the opportunity to help to build a college and a curriculum committed to academic excellence, genuine interdisciplinarity and to a truly global academic vision.”

Having both studied and worked in a liberal arts environment for most of his academic career, Prof Garfield has had the privilege of learning and teaching in an interdisciplinary environment and alongside psychologists, computer scientists, linguists, legal theorists, mathematicians, physicists, media studies scholars and others. This increased his commitment to interdisciplinary studies, to collaborative teaching and learning and to the importance of a hands-on approach to undergraduate education.

He says, “Liberal arts is essentially an education for a free person, both in the sense of personal freedom and one living in a free society. It is an education in what one should know in order to take an active part in civic life and to lead a fulfilling life, eventually passing on this knowledge to future generations. This Professorship has given me the opportunity of a lifetime - working with motivated, creative and talented students



Professor Jay Garfield

and colleagues and working in a community committed to building something entirely new, an Asian liberal arts college with a truly global curriculum.” ■

## AN EDUCATION REIMAGINED FOR THE FUTURE

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but I also want them to be able to approach and solve problems from many different angles. My vision of a liberal arts and science education for the 21st century brings the span of human knowledge together and allows students to develop their capacities to the fullest by encouraging active learning.

At Yale-NUS, we will provide a cosmopolitan education, in which students explore not only their own cultural backgrounds, but also the great contributions of cultures from around the world. The College, through its curriculum, its programmes, and its community, will contribute to deeper understanding between Singapore and the United States, and more broadly between Asia and the West, at a time when such understanding is going to be crucial to all forms of progress.

The residential model we are building at Yale-NUS will enhance the educational experience. Indeed, we are creating an extraordinary environment where the lines between learning and living blur, where the intentional learning in the seminar room or the lab will be amplified and augmented by the more serendipitous – but equally important – learning that takes place in the dining hall, or a study session, or in a club meeting. We hope that the ideas and debates sparked by their Yale-NUS education will shape their lives for many years to come.

Our students can also gain the advantage of this remarkable region, whether to study

biodiversity, the unique cultures of Southeast Asia, or patterns of global finance. We are educating citizens of the world, people who will have a broad familiarity with the great achievements of human art and science and will feel that their responsibilities extend not only to their local communities but also to the betterment of humanity at large.

The Yale-NUS education will promote a stronger sense of community and responsibility at a time in the students' lives when they are discovering themselves and reimagining their futures.

### What contribution will Yale-NUS graduates make to Singapore, and the region?

What the future holds for our graduates in 2017 excites me. I strongly believe that a Yale-NUS education will create leaders who can adapt to diverse and challenging environments and who are well-placed to embrace uncertainties. Our programmes provide students with useful tools to interpret and tackle new problems and issues and navigate the complexities of today's world. I think of liberal education as the kind of education that will allow students to find a higher calling. My hope is for students to be mindful of their environment and society and useful citizens of the world, in whatever vocation they choose, and to develop ethically and have a life of action and service.

**“Philanthropy will play an important role in the success of Yale-NUS and of our students. It will allow us to continue to develop and deliver impactful programmes for our students especially when we reach a steady state of 1,000 students.”**

### What role has private giving played, and will play, in the success of Yale-NUS?

The College has been fortunate to have a number of programmes established due to the generosity of individuals, foundations and corporations representing the Yale-NUS community. This has given us the opportunity to start programmes that have a direct impact on curriculum development, attracting talented faculty, as well as providing scholarships and study awards to ensure that no deserving students are denied an education at Yale-NUS because of financial difficulties.

Philanthropy will play an important role in the success of Yale-NUS and of our students. It will allow us to continue to develop and deliver impactful programmes for our students especially when we reach a steady state of 1,000 students.

### What are your fundraising priorities and why?

Yale-NUS is focused on raising funds for a number of priorities including academic programmes and student support, teaching excellence as well as educational programmes. These broad areas enable the College to provide support for students, support professorships and fellowships as well as educational programmes that prepare leaders of tomorrow with a global outlook and an appreciation for diversity and the ability to communicate and lead effectively. ■

## CHEN FAMILY SUPPORTS ART AT YALE-NUS

“One cannot find a better place than Singapore and Yale-NUS College to study Asian art. Yale-NUS, with its excellent resources and ideal location in a region with a burgeoning arts scene, is a solid platform for students who wish to pursue their passion, and potentially a career in art,” says Mr Tan Wee Lee, the eldest son of late Singaporean artist Mr Chen Chong Swee. And that was what prompted the Chen family to set up the Chen Chong Swee Asian Art Programme at Yale-NUS.

The Programme was set up in honour of their late father, Mr Chen Chong Swee, who was a pioneer of the Nanyang painting style that is unique to Singapore. He also co-founded the Singapore Water Colour Society as well as the Salon Art Society, now known as the Singapore Society of Chinese Artists.

The Chen Chong Swee Asian Art Programme will support various academic programmes at Yale-NUS that promote the appreciation of local and regional art among students. The Chen Chong Swee Art Scholarship has also been set up and will go towards helping a Yale-NUS graduate pursue postgraduate studies in fine arts.

And already, the Programme has benefited students through *Week 7: Learning across boundaries*, a Yale-NUS initiative that brings learning out of the classroom. From studying butterfly diversity to analysing global fashion, students chose from a wide



The Chen family: Mr Tan Wee Lee (far right), and his spouse Madam Rosalind Wee Joo Wah (not pictured), with his siblings, Mr Chen Chi Sing and his spouse Madam Ooi Kim (second and third from right), and Madam Chen Chi Wah and her spouse, Mr Chan Yen Teng (fourth and fifth from right).

range of subjects and interests both locally and abroad. At the end of Week 7, students and faculty came together to share the insights and knowledge they had gained.

Two of the projects, *Placemaking at RC4\** and *Art, Identity & the Meaning of Things*, were funded by the Chen Chong Swee Asian Art Programme.

*Placemaking at RC4* aimed to familiarise students with concepts such as the philosophy of place and neighbourliness, the social science of the neighbourhood, and urban design and community development principles of placemaking. Tiffany Sin, one of the participants, says, “One thing I learnt from

this module is that no matter how much a designer or architect plans a space, it's all about the interactions that happen when users come in and shape its 'desire lines'.”

Daniel Soo, who took part in *Art, Identity & the Meaning of Things*, says, “The module opened my mind to a whole bunch of questions that I did not even previously consider. These questions are difficult to answer and are sometimes very personal, and I am appreciative that these questions stay with me even after the course. It was a great learning experience!” ■

\*RC4 refers to Residential College 4, the temporary home of Yale-NUS College. The College's new campus will open in 2015.



Yale-NUS students taking part in a variety of different learning opportunities outside the classroom during Week 7. Photo Credit: Yale-NUS College



Prof Lewis speaking with prospective students in the College dining hall at an Experience Yale-NUS weekend. Photo Credit: Yale-NUS College

# GIVING TO HONOUR A PARENT

Parents play an integral role in shaping us into who we are today. They serve as role models and provide opportunities for their children to achieve their potential. As a way of thanking and showing appreciation to parents for their support and encouragement, many individuals make gifts to the National University of Singapore (NUS) in honour of a parent.

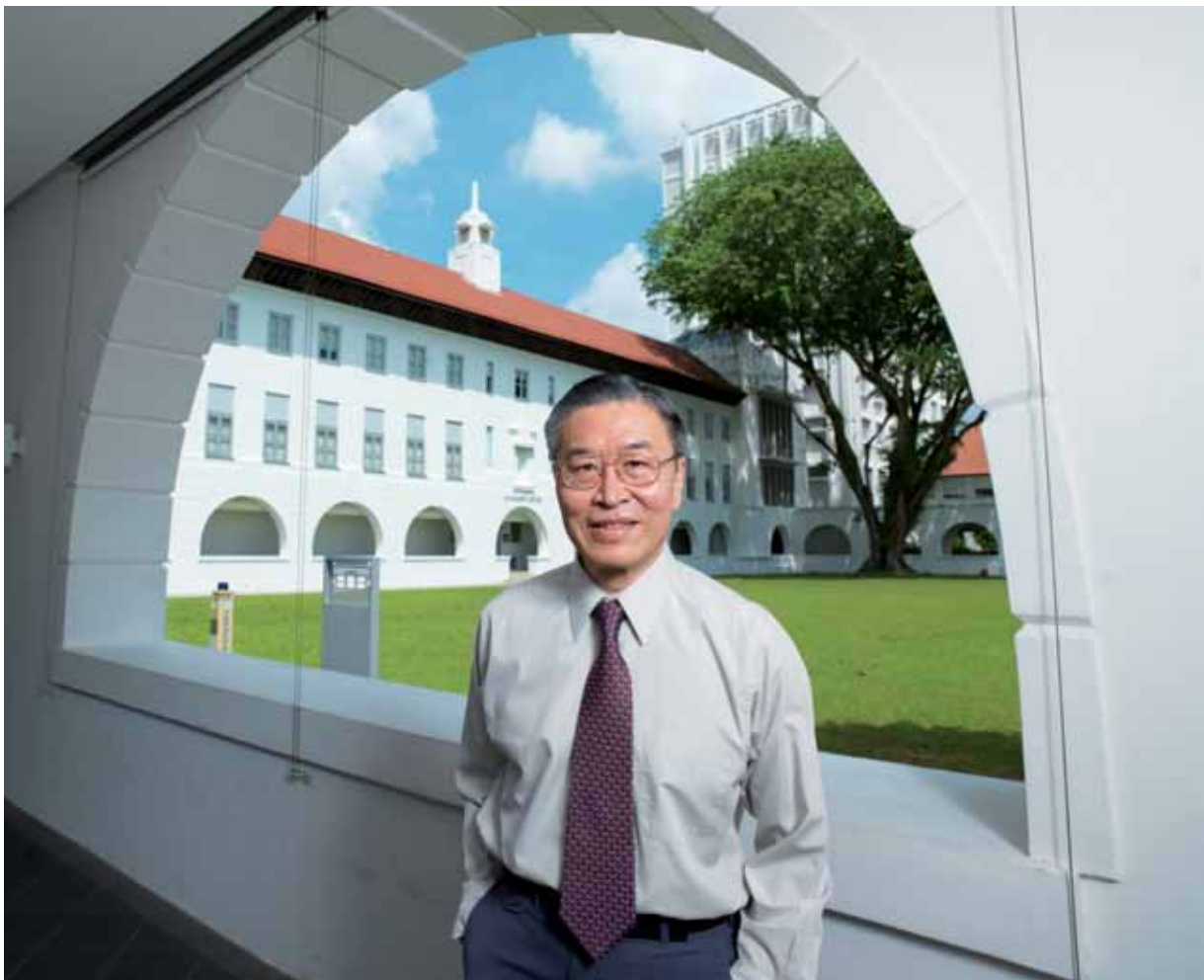
In celebration of their father Dr Chew Beng Keng's (58) 80th birthday, and to honour his strong belief in supporting deserving undergraduate students in their medical education, Ms Chew Gek Khim (84), Ms Chew Gek Hiang (86) and Mr Chew Kwee San have made a gift in their personal capacity to establish the Chew Beng Keng Medical Scholarship at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSoM).

Dr Chew is an alumnus of the University of Malaya, NUS' predecessor institution, and having received financial support himself during his university days in the form of a state scholarship, understands the financial difficulties that some students go through. The doctor has given to various causes at NUS – he established the Chew Beng Keng Bursary and also set up the Gordon Arthur Ransome Medal and Prizes in Internal Medicine in the memory of his teacher, Dr Gordon Arthur Ransome.

“Through this gift, we want to honour and remember the achievements of our father. Our father strongly believes in a good education and in the importance of showing appreciation to teachers who have made a difference. Likewise, we hope that our gift can be used as an example to inspire other individuals and children to come together to remember their parents, teachers, and mentors,” Ms Chew Gek Khim says.



(L-R): Mr Chew Kwee San, Ms Chew Gek Hiang, Dr Chew Beng Keng, Dr Tan Kheng Lian and Ms Chew Gek Khim.



Dr Sunlin Chou

Dr Sunlin Chou, who never studied at NUS, also recalls how his father, the late Professor Kai Ren Chou, often spoke fondly of the Economics students he used to lecture in the early 1960s at the University of Malaya. Professor Chou forsook business pursuits to become an educator as he believed that it was a better way to serve society. As a tribute to his father, Dr Chou established the K R Chou PhD Scholarship in Economics at the Department of Economics at NUS' Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

“I hope that recipients of this Scholarship will also help others to gain the benefits of education, by being teachers or supporters of educational institutions and students,” he says.

Many other individuals have also given to NUS to enable their parents' legacy to live on. Mrs Lee Ju Song (73) and her family set up the Lee Kiat Chew and Tan Luan Keng Bursary at YLLSoM to commemorate their parents' selflessness and humanity, while Tay brothers Mr Tay Wei Lien and Dr Tay Wei Ming (65) established the Tay Teck Eng Dental Bursary in the memory of their late father, who was a strong believer in philanthropy and giving back, particularly to education. ■