

## ALUMNI/DONORS

### NUS alumni couple sets up bursary at Faculty of Science

Two bursary recipients met, studied and courted on campus in the '60s. Thankful for the bursaries they received, they have made a gift to their alma mater to help the next generation.



Science alumni can do their part to help the next generation of students by making a gift to the Faculty of Science.

The year was 1963. He sat behind her in Lecture Theatre 1 in the NUS Bukit Timah campus for their very first lecture. They were both studying Zoology at what was then the University of Singapore (NUS' predecessor institution), she the daughter of a clerk, and he, the son of a missionary.

Both of them were receiving bursaries.

Forty-eight years later, Mr and Mrs Ewing-Chow have set up a bursary at the Faculty of Science to help students who are facing challenges similar to the ones they had once faced. The John & Lydia Ewing-Chow Bursary will be

awarded to Life Sciences students over approximately the next 10 years.

In the Academic Year 2011/2012, five students benefit from their gift.

The John & Lydia Ewing-Chow Bursary gift will also attract the matching government grant\*, which will be channelled to the Science Student Overseas Exposure Fund (SSOEF), enabling more students who are financially strapped to take advantage of the many overseas opportunities that NUS offers.

"The bursary I received gave me the opportunity to study at university and if I can give someone else the same, I will be very happy," says Mrs Ewing-Chow, a retired biology teacher.

"Our families were poor then. My brother and I were entering university at the same time and my father could only afford to send one – the son. I wanted so much to go to university, so my father saved for my education by carrying a packed lunch to work instead of eating out. I am very grateful to my late father as well as for the bursary, which helped pay for my fees and pulled me through."

Mrs Ewing-Chow went on to win the Fulbright Scholarship to study at Columbia University, USA, graduating with a Master's degree in Education.

During his university days, Mr Ewing-Chow supplemented his bursary money by stacking books every night at the university library, which enabled him to contribute to his family's monthly expenses.

After graduation, he started working as a school teacher and then went on to be Acting Zoo Director and Director of the Civil Service Institute before joining the private sector. He retired as Vice-President, Training, OCBC Bank.

While at the Civil Service Institute, he was awarded the Colombo Plan Scholarship to study for a Masters in Administration at Monash University, Australia. "We were both doubly blessed," says Mr Ewing-Chow. "The bursaries helped us to go to university and that led to other opportunities."

The Ewing-Chows recently visited the Department of Biological Sciences (DBS) and the laboratories at the Kent Ridge campus.

"As students, we used to sit side by side in the lab in the Bukit Timah campus and we were looking forward to reliving those memories," says Mr Ewing-Chow.

"But what we saw was a different world. We were astounded by the curriculum, the equipment and the vision of the department. We came away feeling very excited by the future as painted to us by Head of DBS, Professor Paul Matsudaira. We feel confident that the bursary will nurture students who will make a contribution to society."

In talking about their life, Mr and Mrs Ewing Chow says, "Looking back to where we came from, we are thankful and very happy to be able to give to NUS."

\*All eligible gifts to NUS attract the prevailing 1:1 matching government grant and endowed gifts for undergraduate studies receive the enhanced 1.5:1 matching.

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## In memory of Professor (Mrs) Tan Sau Fun

The Faculty of Science and Department of Chemistry honour Professor Tan Sau Fun, an outstanding lecturer who is fondly remembered by students and colleagues alike.

Prof (Mrs) Tan Sau Fun passed away peacefully, at the age of 80, on 28 February 2011.

In an interview published to mark the 80th anniversary of the Department of Chemistry ('80 Years of Chemistry in Singapore: Making a Difference 1929-2009'), Prof Tan summed up her 35 years in NUS with "I had an enjoyable time!"

She joined the Chemistry Department of the then University of Singapore in 1960, and had the distinguished honour of being the first woman full Professor in Chemistry ever appointed in NUS in 1986.

Despite her many achievements as one of the pioneers in the department, she remained simple and modest in her attitudes and actions, words and ways. She advised students to cherish their youth and that they should not only take their studies seriously, but they must also set aside time to enjoy other aspects of their life.

Even 15 years after her retirement, she could still recall many of her students. Her satisfaction came from her knowledge of their success in their individual lives.

Prof Tan was outstanding as an academic and research supervisor. Acknowledging the helpfulness of non-academic staff, she said, "Without them, I wouldn't have been able to do any research work!"

She particularly treasured the comradeship with her colleagues – the encouragement, advice and discussions.

She readily credited her family as her pillar of strength, especially her husband. She was supportive of her husband, Col (V) Tan Wee Kian, PPA, in both his civil service career and his contributions to the nation. She saw her children through their successful student days and as they launched into their careers, social and family life.

Towards the later years of her life, much of her time and energy were channelled towards their six grandchildren, and in expressing her creative talent through painting.



#### Tan Sau Fun Bursary

The Faculty of Science has set up the *Science Students Fund-Tan Sau Fun Bursary* to support needy Chemistry students, with annual bursaries of S\$2,500 each.

Donors who are Singapore tax residents will receive a 250 per cent tax deduction, and donations are matched by government.

For more information on the Tan Sau Fun Bursary, [email](mailto:email) or call Chan Siew Ing on 65166318.

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