

NUS ALUMNI AWARDS 2017 RECIPIENTS

NUS Eminent Alumni Award

Mr Wong Ngit Liong Engineering '65

Mr Wong Ngit Liong helmed the National University of Singapore as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for 12 years, from 2004 to 2016. Under his steadfast leadership and bold vision, NUS was transformed during that period from a respected local teaching institution, dedicated to manpower development into a leading global university, regarded for its scholarship and research.

Mr Wong's appointment was also during a turning point when NUS took bold steps in becoming an autonomous university. Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister and Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam who was the Minister for Education then, invited Mr Wong to be the Chair of NUS Council to steer NUS through the process of institutional autonomy. Mr Wong was noticed by Singapore's leaders because of his leadership abilities, international perspective, entrepreneurial zeal and ability to transform large organisations. Following corporatisation, Mr Wong worked hard with the NUS management team to establish a robust governance framework, appoint a Board of Trustees, and establish a new culture of collaboration between NUS management and the new Board.

The greater autonomy afforded by corporatisation enabled NUS to excel and differentiate herself. It was, however, a complex and difficult journey which included substantial restructuring of NUS' administrative, financial and corporate functions and processes. Mr Wong also strengthened key capabilities such as strategic planning and built fresh competencies in development and investment. The hard work and successful corporatisation of NUS was a major enabler in the University's steep trajectory of growth. In the subsequent years after corporatisation under Mr Wong's careful, forward-looking and conscientious oversight, he developed NUS from "a good to a great University", with emphasis on raising NUS' reputation and performance in Education, Research and Enterprise.

NUS achieved many milestones, including the development of the University Town with Singapore's first residential colleges, as well as the establishment of new schools – Duke-NUS Medical School, Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, Yale-NUS College and most recently the School of Continuing and Lifelong Education in support of the national SkillsFuture initiative. In education, NUS improved its offerings by implementing a grade-free first year, a wide range of overseas programmes including the highly successful NUS Overseas Colleges and the Centre for Future-ready Graduate's Roots & Wings programme. Top researchers in their fields sought to call Singapore home, and created an intellectual buzz on campus. Today, NUS scientists are amongst the most cited in the world. These outcomes are reflected in NUS' strong global standing, and truly, Mr Wong's efforts have made NUS stronger and more respected both locally and globally.

Having studied in the USA and Canada, Mr Wong saw the value of a global education. He began his career in the USA with Hewlett-Packard (HP) Company, where he held a series of management positions. He returned from Silicon Valley in the late 1970s and set up HP's office in Singapore. He was noticed for his deep insights into the workings between top levels of business and governments and that he was able to deepen these collaborations for the mutual benefit of industry and community. When Mr Wong left HP, he successfully built Venture Corporation in 1984 and is now its Chairman and CEO. By 1989, the Singapore-grown company that designs and manufactures electronic and engineering products reported a turnover of \$25.4 million. By 2016, revenue reached \$2.87 billion, and the Venture Group

has grown to comprise 40 companies operating globally, employing 12,000 people. Among its many accolades, Venture Group was voted one of the 100 Best Managed Companies in the world by Forbes Magazine in 1994, 1996 and 1998. It was also named a Top Performing Global Growth Company from East Asia by the World Economic Forum in 1997.

Mr Wong himself has received many awards including the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year and Master Entrepreneur Awards in 2002, as well as the Businessman of the Year awarded by DHL Worldwide Express and The Business Times in 1998. In 2012, Mr Wong was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal by the Singapore Government in his capacity as Chairperson of the NUS Board of Trustees.

Mr Wong had a deep interest in the NUS community. He attended countless NUS events and arranged Board visits to the faculties and schools. He and his fellow NUS Board of Trustees members met regularly with alumni, students and faculty which strengthened the bonds between the NUS Board and the NUS community. Even as NUS became increasingly successful as a leading global university, Mr Wong constantly reminded NUS about the need to create even greater value and impact for Singapore. He stressed that NUS should always uphold the spirit of service and community.

Mr Wong also contributed his insights, expertise and time to Singapore's education scene. He was part of a high-level committee to look into the establishment of the Nanyang Technological Institute (NTI) in 1981 to address the shortage of engineers. A major figure in our community – Mr Wong has served on the boards of several key agencies including the Economic Development Board, the Singapore Trade Development Board (predecessor to IE Singapore), DBS Bank and the Singapore Exchange. He was also on several high-profile committees such as the Committee to Review the Salaries of the President, Prime Minister and political appointment holders, the Constitutional Commission to review the Elected Presidency, and the 2002 Economic Review Committee.

NUS President, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan has said that Mr Wong is a “proven, world-class global business leader with a sharp, perceptive intellect, great wisdom, deeply held values, and excellent judgement. He is also remarkably modest, quiet, very patient and kind.” At an appreciation dinner organised by NUS for Mr Wong's tenure as NUS Board of Trustee Chairman, Mr Wong encouraged everyone to contribute to the advancement of NUS. He retold the story about how Mr Tan Jiah Kim raised \$87,000 to start a medical school which would become a leading global research university. “No matter how small we may think our contribution is, seemingly small deeds can lead to very impactful outcomes,” Mr Wong said.

Mr Wong was top in his cohort in school in Malaysia. He graduated with a First Class Honours degree in Electrical Engineering in 1965 from the University of Malaya and went on to obtain a Master in Electronics Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley, where he was a Fulbright Scholar. Mr Wong also holds a Master of Business Administration (with distinction) from McGill University under the Canadian Commonwealth Fellowship.

NUS Distinguished Alumni Service Award

Mr Peter Seah Lim Huat Business '68

Chairman of DBS Group Holdings and DBS Bank, Mr Seah is a veteran banker and celebrated industry leader who has played a key role in transforming Singapore's financial sector and the stock market, as well as making Singapore a premium hub for funds management. He has led the banks he helmed through intense competition and breakneck technological change and has been credited with injecting renewed interest, vibrancy and innovation into the banking and financial industry.

Through his service in various senior positions and on the boards of both private and public organisations, Mr Seah continues to extend transformative leadership and create lasting impact. He is the present Chairman of Singapore Airlines, Singapore Health Services and LaSalle College of the Arts. He also serves as the Chairman of the National Wages Council and sits on the boards of GIC, Fullerton Financial Holdings, and STT Communications.

Mr Seah has led many outstanding Singapore companies and helped build strong brand names such as DBS and Singapore Airlines. He is a well-respected leader who is very meticulous, immensely knowledgeable, and possesses exceptional macro and micro insights.

Mr Seah's contributions are widely acknowledged and recognised. He received the prestigious William "Bill" Seidman Award for Lifetime Achievements in Leadership in the Financial Services Industry in 2013. The Award recognises individuals who reshaped not only the institutions that they worked for but the entire financial services industry in their respective countries and regions. Winners are typically giants in the industry because of their lifetime contributions and leadership. The Singapore government conferred upon him the Distinguished Service Order Award in 2012 and the Public Service Star Award in 1999.

Even with his many appointments and commitments, Mr Seah continues to play an active role in his alma mater, especially at the NUS Business School. In addition to being a trusted advisor, he has been serving as the Chairman of the NUS Business School Eminent Business Alumni Awards Committee since 2008, and has graced many of the School's major events as guest speaker.

Mr Seah graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) in 1968.

NUS Distinguished Alumni Service Award

Ms Chew Gek Khim Law '84

Respected and admired for her strong business acumen, sense of accountability and moral values, Ms Chew has transformed the age-old The Straits Trading Company Limited (founded in 1887) from a company with high-quality but low-yield assets to a highly successful diversified investment company with key interests in real estate, hospitality, resources and investments that span the Asia Pacific region.

Ms Chew exemplifies visionary leadership and her meaningful contributions to society has benefitted many. In 2015, she was named Singapore Businessman of the Year, the first woman in 10 years and only the second woman in the awards' history to be so bestowed.

For her service as former chairperson of the National Environment Agency, she received the Meritorious Service Medal awarded by the Singapore government. Ms Chew has also been listed in Forbes Asia list of 50 power businesswomen for five consecutive years since 2012. For her significant contributions to Singapore through her charitable work with the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation (TCTF), Ms Chew was awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite by the French government.

A kind-hearted visionary much like her grandfather (the late banker and philanthropist Tan Sri (Dr) Tan Chin Tuan), Ms Chew in both her personal capacity and as the Deputy Chairman of the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, has made a significant impact on various worthy causes, in particular in education and community development through philanthropy as well as her deeds.

Ms Chew has extended generous, sustained support towards her alma mater. She has shared her time and expertise by serving as a board member on the Advisory Board of the NUS Faculty of Law. Ms Chew and the TCTF have supported NUS through gifts towards a bursary to support financially needy law undergraduates at NUS, professorships, and various student and academic programmes. The TCTF is also one of the founding benefactors of Yale-NUS College, Singapore's first liberal arts college.

Ms Chew graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Law (Honours) in 1984.

NUS Distinguished Alumni Service Award

Professor Chua Nam-Hai Science '65

A world-renowned scientist and biotechnology expert, Prof Chua has made important and significant contributions to Plant Biology and Biotechnology, in particular, the discovery of the 35S promoter which is commonly used in basic plant biology research and to express trait genes in many transgenic crops.

Prof Chua was a recipient of the prestigious National Research Foundation Singapore's Returning Singaporean Scientists Scheme. His research aims to create innovative strategies for designing crop plants with enhanced stress tolerance, which are essential for strengthening Singapore's food security as it helps to create sustainability in food supply resilience.

One of a very select group of scientists who excels in and is recognised for both science and scientific commercialisation, Prof Chua is a co-inventor of more than 25 issued patents and patent applications. He has received numerous awards including the National Science and Technology Award for his contributions and guidance in promoting biotechnology in Singapore, the International Prize in Biology by the Japan Society for Promotion of Science, and the Lawrence Bogorad Award for Excellence in Plant Biology Research by the American Society for Plant Biologists.

Prof Chua is passionate about nurturing young scientists and has a unique ability to inspire and develop them. He has trained more than 200 post-doctoral fellows from 24 countries, many of whom are now leaders in their respective fields making significant contributions in science.

Prof Chua is currently a Andrew W. Mellon Professor and the Head of Laboratory of Plant Molecular Biology at The Rockefeller University. He is also a Fellow of The Royal Society, UK; an academician of Academia Sinica, Taiwan; and a Foreign Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Prof Chua is also the Deputy Chairman of Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory, formerly known as the Institute of Molecular Agrobiolgy (IMA) at NUS, which he is instrumental in its formation. He has served as the Chairman of the Management Board and Scientific Advisory Board with IMA, and played a crucial role in attracting top researchers to Singapore and in charting research directions for Singapore's biotechnology sector.

Prof Chua graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Science in 1965. He received his A.M. and Ph.D. in Biology from Harvard University in 1967 and 1969 respectively, on a Fulbright Scholarship

NUS Distinguished Alumni Service Award

Ms Lim Hai Yen Arts and Social Sciences '92

Driven by deep passion and possessing immense talent, Ms Lim, an accomplished veteran theatre practitioner, has helped to raise the stature of local theatre performance and promote an appreciation for the arts.

In her 30 years of an illustrious career as a playwright and director, Ms Lim has created more than 30 original theatrical works. Under her leadership as its Artistic Director, The ETCeteras has grown to be the longest-running non-professional theatre company in Singapore, which stages original plays with distinct local zest.

Ms Lim's sharp observations and in-depth contemplation are manifested in her satirical approach, often resulting in multi-lingual comedies with a winning combination of wit and humour. Her acclaimed works have been credited with raising awareness of important issues such as social behaviour and trends, and have received recognition at the inaugural Singapore Dramatist Award and Life! Theatre Awards.

Ms Lim generously devotes time and resources to conduct writing and acting workshops for aspiring playwrights and actors. She also served as a councillor on the Central Singapore Community Development Council, and currently sits on the cultural committee of the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Association.

A former journalist, Ms Lim's articles and interviews have won news-writing awards. She now writes regularly as a columnist and feature writer for the Chinese press and literary publications. Ms Lim was recently awarded the Cultural Exchange Grant by China Cultural Centre and Capability Development Grant by the National Arts Council to pursue a theatre programme at the prestigious National Theatre of China.

During her student days, Ms Lim was a very active resident at King Edward VII Hall. As an alumnus, Ms Lim continues to support the Hall. Since 2012, Ms Lim has been serving as the Hall's Non-Resident Fellow, and actively supports most of the Hall's annual productions by providing guidance and mentorship. She also offers valuable opportunities for students to participate in her theatre productions.

Ms Lim graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Arts in 1992, and received her Masters of Arts in Directing at Goldsmiths College, University of London in 2002.

NUS Distinguished Alumni Service Award

Emeritus Professor Chen Hsiao Yun Louis Science '64

Prof Chen's seminal paper published in 1975 on a new method for calculating the probabilities of occurrences of rare events laid the foundation of the Chen-Stein method. This much-cited paper has inspired much follow-up research work, which has grown into one of the most important areas of discrete probability, with wide applications and lasting impact in many areas ranging from molecular biology to computer science.

For his outstanding research work, Prof Chen has received many accolades and honours. He was the first Asian to be elected as the President of the Bernoulli Society for Mathematical Statistics and Probability. Prof Chen received one of the highest honours when he became the President of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, joining the ranks of the Institute's past Presidents who are among the world's finest researchers in probability and statistics.

Prof Chen is a pioneer who laid strong foundations critical to the development of the Department of Mathematics as well as the Department of Statistics and Applied Probability in NUS. As its Founding Director, Prof Chen has developed the Institute for Mathematical Sciences into one of the finest in the world. The Institute has helped create a research vibrancy at a level unseen before in Singapore.

For his service to NUS, Prof Chen was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Silver) by the Singapore government. He was also conferred the title of Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the French government for his service to education.

Despite his extraordinary level of administrative responsibility, Prof Chen continues to be active in his research and make impactful contributions to science and education.

Prof Chen graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Mathematics in 1964. He received his Master of Science and Ph.D. in Statistics from Stanford University in 1969 and 1971 respectively.

NUS Outstanding Young Alumni Award

Dr Azariah Tan Peng Chay Music '11

Through sheer hard work fired by a deep passion for music, Dr Tan overcame a hearing impairment that was diagnosed at age four to become a multi-award winning pianist. He has developed a rare ability to analyse and play music, without needing a reference pitch.

Throughout his study and career, Dr Tan has won multiple scholarships and prizes, both in Singapore and overseas. He is the recipient of The American Prize in 2012, a prestigious award for performing arts. Most recently, Dr Tan received the Paul Abisheganaden Grant for Artistic Excellence, for his significant achievements and contributions to the performing arts and the community.

Always humble despite his tremendous achievements, Dr Tan credits his success to those who have helped him, especially his parents and teachers for their guidance and patience. Dr Tan is always generous with his talents and time – performing pro bono for numerous outreach programmes and charitable events, and raising funds for worthy causes.

Dr Tan is also enthusiastic about giving back to NUS by sharing his music and knowledge. He has also been appointed as one of Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music's piano accompanists on a part-time basis.

Dr Tan graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Music (Honours) in 2011. He was awarded an overseas scholarship to study for a Masters in Piano Performance and has since completed two master's degrees in music and a doctorate in piano performance from the University of Michigan.

NUS Outstanding Young Alumni Award

Ms Betty Tsai
Engineering '12
University Scholars Programme '12

A strong belief in experiential learning and interest in problem-solving have led Ms Tsai to pursue a career as a research scientist at Procter & Gamble International Operations.

Ms Tsai has demonstrated originality of ideas, made significant and impactful achievements with disruptive innovations – in the multidisciplinary areas of biochemistry, environmental science, novel medical devices and nanotechnology – and has a number of pending patents in her end-to-end innovations from ideation, formulation to product scale-up. Her research and contributions to the science and technology landscape have been recognised by prestigious organisations and publications such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE), the Institute of Chemical Engineers (IChemE), and The Asian Scientist.

Ms Tsai has been very active in the University's outreach events since her undergraduate days and has served as a mentor to inspire and encourage younger engineers to sharpen their skills and to make a difference in the world. In particular, Ms Tsai is an advocate for young women in engineering.

Ms Tsai sets aside time to volunteer as a career coach for teenagers to nurture the next generation of leaders to have strong convictions in their chosen vocations, and to make positive contributions to their communities. She was also on the Leadership Development Committee at the Young Women's Leadership Connection.

Ms Tsai graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical Engineering) (Honours) and the University Scholars Programme in 2012. She is concurrently pursuing her PhD (Chemical Engineering) in NUS.

NUS Outstanding Young Alumni Award

Mr Jeffrey Tiong Jee Hui Engineering '07

A passion for innovation and the ability to see problems as opportunities seeded an idea that grew into one of the world's fastest-growing intellectual property search and analysis platform – PatSnap.

While undergoing an internship at a medical device start-up in Bio Valley on the NUS Overseas Colleges (NOC) programme, Mr Tiong observed that world-class engineers and scientists were spending an inordinate amount of time going through legal data due to a lack of efficient tools for patent analytics. Discovering an opportunity to develop a solution that will provide easy navigation in the complex patent landscape, Mr Tiong set up PatSnap upon his graduation.

Using artificial intelligence and big data technology, PatSnap provides an effective and intuitive platform for intellectual property analytics. PatSnap has helped to accelerate the speed of technology commercialisation and discovery for inventors, research institutes and businesses, including NUS. With offices in Singapore, London, Suzhou, Beijing, Shanghai and Los Angeles, PatSnap services a large and global clientele – from corporations such as Xiaomi, Ferrari and Starbucks to government and academic agencies such as NASA, Yale University and the UK International Patent Office.

While he spends most of his time overseas, Mr Tiong continues to mentor undergraduates and share his professional experiences and journeys at talks and events. He encourages his fellow engineers to break boundaries, to develop useful and innovative solutions, and provides internships to NOC and NUS students at PatSnap.

Mr Tiong graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Engineering (Biomedical Engineering) in 2007.

NUS Outstanding Young Alumni Award

Mr Mohamed Fairoz Bin Ahmad
Arts and Social Sciences '06 '10
University Scholars Programme '06

Mr Fairoz's passion for social impact was first ignited when he visited the tsunami-devastated Aceh whilst he was an NUS undergraduate and was struck by the unsuitable and unsustainable aid provided. At the same time, he was impressed by the entrepreneurial spirit and tenacity shown by the Acehnese.

When he was a Master's student at NUS, Mr Fairoz founded Chapter W, a non-profit social enterprise that provides innovative, suitable and sustainable solutions to help and empower the poor in Indonesia. The award-winning organisation is recognised for its work and innovative model of empowering rural women and bringing solar energy to rural areas, which has benefitted more than 24,000 people. Chapter W was featured as one of the '50 ideas to change the world' by The Straits Times' Impact Journalism Day special edition in 2014.

As a lecturer in community development and sociology at Temasek Polytechnic, Mr Fairoz seeks to empower the younger generation to create positive change in society through education. He is currently on sabbatical and pursuing a Master of Public Policy with the Blavatnik School of Government (BSG) at the University of Oxford, on a Chevening award and BSG scholarship.

As an alumnus, Mr Fairoz continues to raise awareness of social entrepreneurship amongst NUS students and alumni, through talks and sharing sessions. Chapter W also provides fellowship opportunities for students, and is working with NUS' University Scholars Programme to develop possible field research projects for students.

Mr Fairoz graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) and the University Scholars Programme in 2006 and a Master of Social Sciences in 2010.

NUS Outstanding Young Alumni Award

Dr Neo Mei Lin Science '09 '13

A marine biologist and conservationist, Dr Neo's dedication to her work on giant clams has earned her the recognition as one of 15 global change-makers in 2017 by TED, a non-profit media organisation which hosts a series of influential TED Talks.

Dr Neo's research and efforts to save and cultivate endangered giant clams have led to the genesis of two restocking programmes in Singapore. She aims to combine research and science communication to promote the conservation of marine biodiversity, both locally and regionally. Dr Neo also continually engages and collaborates with researchers, private and government organisations, and the public in meaningful environmental outreach work.

The quality and extent of Dr Neo's research have earned her numerous awards and honours, including the World Future Foundation Ph.D. Prize in Environmental and Sustainability Research, L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science National Fellowship and Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia (Healthcare and Science). Notably, Dr Neo's work has also received attention from international media such as NewScientist, Science, Thomson Reuters and WIRED.

As a Research Fellow at NUS, Dr Neo mentors undergraduate and postgraduate students. She represented NUS at the Meeting of the New Champions by the World Economic Forum and was invited in the following year as a Young Scientist. Outside of work, Dr Neo is an active volunteer promoting public awareness for marine conservation.

Dr Neo graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Life Sciences in 2009 and a Ph.D. in Marine Ecology in 2013.

NUS Outstanding Young Alumni Award

Dr Sin Yong Medicine '12

Dr Sin heals with science and inspires with magic. Equally accomplished in both professions, Dr Sin's motivation stems from his compassion for the sick and needy.

To him, magic is not only for entertainment, but also to spread the message of love and hope to patients and their families. Through his performances, Dr Sin helps to raise funds for the underprivileged including beneficiaries from the Singapore Cancer Society and World Vision.

In 2012, Dr Sin staged a fundraising magic show Remembrance to help his class establish a bursary to commemorate their classmate, Ms Christine Chong, who passed away from brain lymphoma. The Class of 2012 hopes that recipients of this meaningful bursary will endeavour to be the doctor Ms Chong would have been – one filled with courage and an unflagging positive spirit. In 2016, a follow up fundraising magic show Imagine was staged to raise awareness of the bursary and to inspire the audience to imagine the many ways they can impact the community with small acts of love.

Always striving to improve his medical knowledge to provide the best care for patients, Dr Sin went on to obtain his postgraduate degree at the Royal College of Surgeons. Currently with the Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Dr Sin is always willing to guide and mentor his juniors attached to the hospital. For this, he was awarded the 'Junior Doctor Teaching Award' by the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine.

Dr Sin is an ambassador for the Singapore Kindness Movement where he started the 'Magic of Kindness' to inspire more initiatives to benefit those in need.

Dr Sin graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery in 2012.

NUS Outstanding Young Alumni Award

Mr Quek Siu Rui, Business '12

Mr Marcus Tan Yi Wei, Business '11

Mr Lucas Ngoo Cheng Han, Engineering '13

While on the NUS Overseas Colleges programme, three undergraduates became inspired by the strong entrepreneurial spirit and passion for technology they witnessed in Silicon Valley. The experience marked a turning point for them to pursue their dreams of becoming entrepreneurs in earnest.

The result was Carousell – a mobile classifieds marketplace application that combines engaging social media experience with the convenience of mobile commerce – which was launched in 2012. Within three years of inception, Carousell had received US\$41.8 million in funding. It is currently one of the world's largest and fastest growing marketplaces, ranked as the top lifestyle and shopping app in Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

The team has come a long way from when they first started out with scarce financial resources. As a team, they complement and motivate each other, and are deeply involved in product strategy and international expansion. The visionary Mr Quek sets the overall strategy and direction; self-taught designer Mr Tan oversees the design and operations; and passionate data science engineer Mr Ngoo focuses on building a team of world-class engineers.

The three alumni keep their connection with their alma mater strong. They are generous in sharing their time and expertise with students through talks and events and offer internships to NUS students.

Mr Quek and Mr Tan graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Business Administration in 2012 and 2011, respectively. Mr Ngoo graduated from NUS with a Bachelor of Engineering (Computing Engineering) in 2013.