



50 YEARS OF
EUSOFFFIANS

EUSOFF COLLEGE . EUSOFF HALL

1958–2008



Eusoff Hall Anthem

Eusoff to the Fore

Lyrics by Lai Jiunn Ning,
Joshua Tan and Wong Peck Piaw



Eu - soff our great hall thee we praise, swell - ing
Eu - soff in years to come our best, still we'll

forth our migh - ty - cho - rus. We will
keep thee on - ward - fight - ing. True to

strive through all our days, fight to keep the torch a - blaze, lit by
thee through ev' ry test win - ning neath thy badge and crest, thus our

those who went be - fore us. Now we
love for thee ex - press - ing. Time will

know thou art de - ser - ving, as our
show thou art de - ser - ving, as the

se - niors knew of yore, of our
years roll by still more, with our

lo - yal - ty un - swer - ving
lo - yal - ty un - swer - ving

Eu - soff to the fore.
EU - SOFF! to the fore!

50 YEARS OF EUSOFFIANS

50 Years of Eusoffians, 1958-2008

Produced by Eusoff Hall, National University of Singapore

10 Kent Ridge Drive, Singapore 119242

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Edited by Mark Emmanuel

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50 YEARS OF EUSOFFFIANS

EUSOFF COLLEGE . EUSOFF HALL
1958-2008

A PREMIER PUBLICATION OF EUSOFF HALL

To Eusoffians

We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants.

We see more, and things that are more distant, than they did,
not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they,
but because they raise us up,
and by their great stature add to ours.

John Salisbury

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Dr Tony Tan Keng
Yam, Chairman of
National Research
Foundation

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Chairman of the 50th Anniversary
Book Committee

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Professor Tan Tin Wee,
Master of Eusoff Hall

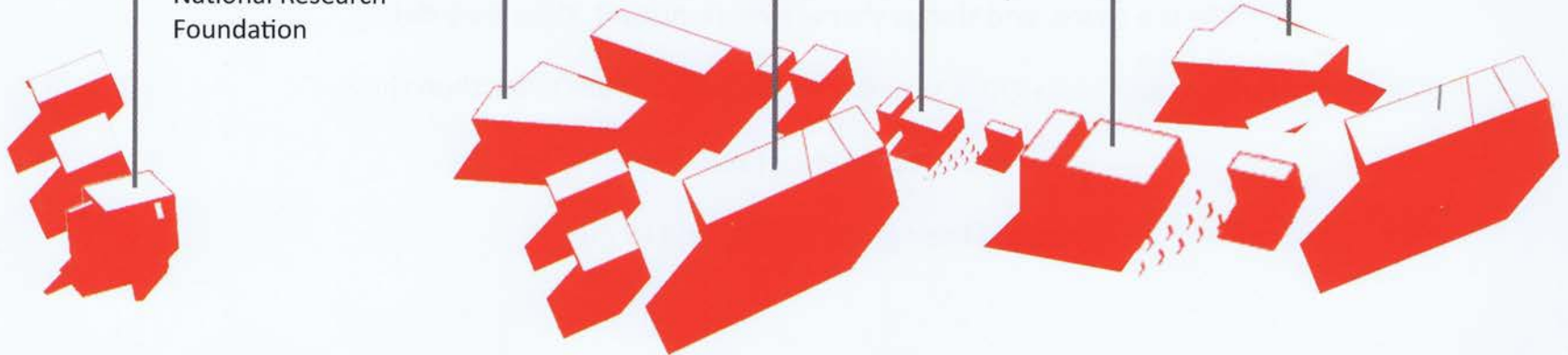
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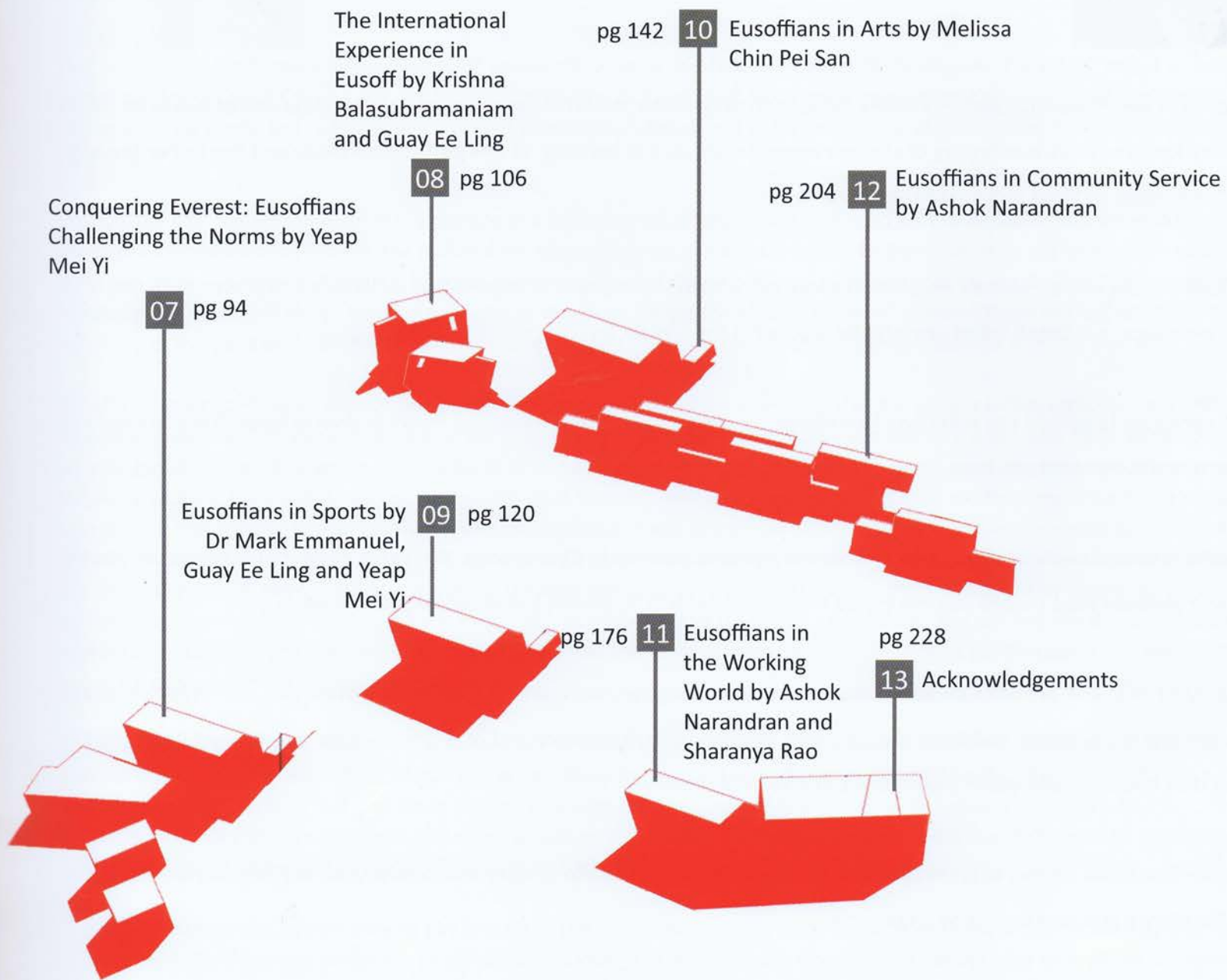
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MESSAGE FROM

Dr TONY TAN KENG YAM

CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Anniversary Commemorative Book is a timely publication to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Eusoff College and its successor Eusoff Hall. With the long and illustrious history of this institution before us, it is befitting, at this juncture, to pause and remember the past, reflect on the present and look forward to the future.

Eusoff College was the only all-women residential college in the then University of Singapore. The dynamism and grace emanating from the institution meant that Eusoff ladies consistently excelled at the highest level.

Eusoff Hall continues to uphold this tradition of excellence, as is demonstrated by its achievements in diverse fields, from arts and culture to sports and overseas expeditions.

Many Eusoffians have served our community and contributed to our nation in diverse ways. The pages of this publication testify to the myriad ways Eusoffians have shaped and influenced the various fields in Singapore and other parts of the world.

Residential living in Eusoff provided an added dimension to academic pursuits, offering residents vibrant and rich experiences and lifelong bonds and relationships. Hall living also develops independence, innovation and confidence. These qualities will be of value to students as they take on challenges in their lifelong journey of discovery.

I congratulate Eusoff Hall on this auspicious occasion. I wish the Master, Hall Committee and residents all the best as you continue to strive for 'Excellence and Harmony' in years to come.



MESSAGE FROM

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TAN TIN WEE

MASTER OF EUSOFF HALL

This year marks a milestone in the history of residential Halls at the National University Singapore. We are all proud to celebrate the golden jubilee of Eusoff College, the predecessor institution to Eusoff Hall. Both these institutions have had a long and illustrious history and this is truly a time to celebrate the culture of excellence in Eusoff and to contemplate and plan for the future, which promises to be very bright.

The College was the first all-women's residence at a tertiary level institute, and produced very remarkable women who have made tremendous contributions to society, the Hall and the university over these many years. To them, we offer our thanks and congratulations for laying down what have ultimately become the foundations of time-honoured traditions that we continue to live by, and to have set a high bar for all Eusoffians to follow. The pages of this book reflect the achievements of some of these spirited ladies, and their lives reflect all of the unnamed Eusoffians who have contributed to the success of the College and the Hall over the years.

Eusoff Hall is a testimony to the success of the College. Over the last 20 years, the Hall has sought to live up to these traditions and to its eminent alumni. Every year, the Hall moves from strength to strength. Today, we are one of the premier Halls on campus attracting an ever growing pool of talented young people who want to become part of the Eusoff experience. We have become the Hall to beat at sports and are the current holders of the Inter-Hall Games Overall Championship; and our students continue to be recognised for sporting achievement both at the national and international levels. On the cultural front, we have been winning accolades since 1990. Our Annual Dance Production is an eagerly anticipated event in the university calendar and earns rave reviews both within and outside the university. Our students continue to uphold the very best traditions of social service, first established by the ladies of Eusoff College and now carried on in the Hall through the Eusoff Voluntary Corps and the Eusoff Expeditions. You will find the details of these points of excellence in the pages that follow. These successes are in the final reckoning a measure of the Eusoffian spirit and the constant quest to live up to our motto, 'Excellence and Harmony'.

As we go forward into the future, we will continue to build on our already strong alumni networks. It is this link with the past that enables our future. The mentoring of our young Eusoffians by their esteemed alumni establishes the platform for future success. Our ambitions are to become a Hall that fits in comfortably with the ambitions of the university as a global leader in education. Through the provision of quality education, the sustained emphasis on excellence, the nurturing of the great Eusoffian spirit of adventure, and the continued support of the Hall to our students in their plans, we will together achieve future success.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the people behind this Commemorative Book, led by Dr Mark Emmanuel and his tireless team of writers and designers, all residents of Eusoff Hall, and to those who were so patient with us in giving us interviews, digging out material and contributing in whatever way possible. They exemplify the kind of excellence and harmony which Eusoffians are known for, and will continue to be known for in the years to come.



MESSAGE FROM

Dr MARK EMMANUEL

CHAIRMAN OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY BOOK COMMITTEE

When I was first asked to produce this book, I was well aware of the heavy responsibility involved in representing 50 years of Eusoffians, their experiences and achievements, and most of all, their spirit.

For me, as the newest resident fellow in the Hall, working on this book together with an excellent team of student writers, designers, and non-resident SCRC members has made me appreciate even more the history within these walls and the rich vein of tradition that has come to shape this great institution. Ultimately, this book is about Eusoff, the institution. Collectively, the chapters that follow reflect our shared history, our mutual traditions and values, and the immense pride that we all have in being Eusoffian. Knitted together in these chapters is the Eusoffian experience and spirit—what it means to be a Eusoffian, our time living in the College/Hall, and how that life-changing experience continues to shape us years after having moved on.

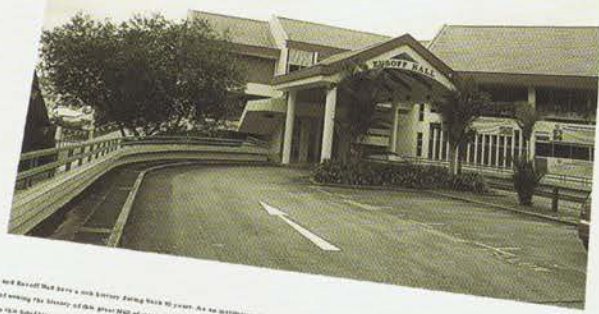
Yet this commemorative book is not intended to be a complete history of Eusoff. Our goal was never to make this into a list of prominent alumni: our numerous alumni and the obvious space limitations meant that we were not able to include everyone in this book. Under these constraints, we could only feature some Eusoff alumni but they embody the very best values, traditions, ideals and ambitions that are present in all our lives. This book is a collection of different voices, and we hope they are all captured within these pages. To any Eusoffians who may not appear here in text or image, my sincerest apologies. We hope to update this book in the near future as part of our efforts to build on the immense heritage that is Eusoff Hall.

Putting this book together was a challenge, and I had to rely on the immense efforts of a team of Eusoffian student researchers, writers and designers, as well as key members of the SCRC such as the erudite Professor Kirpal Singh, the multi-talented Ms Ovidia Yu, the indefatigable Ms Lim Bee Lum; and one of our inspirational alumni, Mr Stefen Chow, conqueror of Everest. I am also very deeply indebted to the incomparable efforts of Ms Yeap Mei Yi and Ms Guay Ee Ling. Mei Yi, the very deserving Eusoff College Medal winner for 2008, was instrumental in researching, writing and managing the project. Likewise, Ee Ling was with the project from the start and shared all of Mei Yi's tasks with tremendous patience and enthusiasm. This book would not have been possible without these two outstanding young Eusoffians. I also owe a great debt to Lim Hong Wei for his superlative efforts in working around the clock to oversee and contribute to the design of this book. Without him, too, this book would not have been possible. Ying Ke Sin and the cohort of designers who worked on individual chapters are an extraordinarily talented group of young people. To them, the Hall owes a great debt of gratitude for helping to bring our rich past alive again.

The team was very moved by the kindness of our alumni in providing interviews, photos and memorabilia. We were always struck by the willingness of alumni to give up their time for interviews. Their patience with our constant demands and our mistakes knew no bounds, and for this we express our utmost respect and gratitude.

As Eusoff marks a successful and accomplished half-century, this commemorative book captures the indomitable spirit and shared experiences of fifty golden years that bind all Eusoffians, past and present. It is our hope that you will find some part of yourself in these pages.





The History of Eusoff College and Eusoff Hall

by Dr Mark Emmanuel

Eusoff College which became Eusoff Hall has a rich history dating back 50 years. As an institution, it is older than the modern nation of Singapore, and its contributions to the success of the nation immeasurable. There are different ways of writing the history of this great Hall of residence. One might consider its numerous achievements, many of which are recorded in the chapters that follow. However, here in this brief history of the Grand Old Dame, as an alumna described it, we celebrate Eusoff's culture of excellence rather than its excellent moments because this is a history of Eusoff, the institution; its traditions and virtues and, ultimately, the Eusoffian spirit. It is these traditions, shared experiences and ideals, and belief in the Eusoffian spirit that connect all Eusoffians—the past with the present, and to those who will follow in our footsteps through the gates of our great Hall.

Eusoff College



When Eusoff College was officially opened in 1958, Singapore was not yet an independent nation. However, a modern Singapore nationalism was already taking root. There was a growing sense that this was a nation in the making, and plans were made to ensure that with independence—whether as part of Malaysia or on its own—Singapore would have enough educated and talented women and men to help this island state stand on its own. The opening of Eusoff College as the first and only university residence for women signalled the importance of women to the nation, to its fight for survival and eventually its progress as an independent nation.

The expansion of university education in Singapore also meant the need to provide more residential places for students. Then Vice Chancellor of University Malaya in Singapore, A. Oppenheim, announced in March 1958 that two new halls of residence would be established at the Bukit Timah campus—Raffles Hall for men and Eusoff College for women. Eusoff was built as the larger of the two halls in order to accommodate the large number of women undergraduates enrolled at university. However, this plan was not without controversy. While women students welcomed new accommodation on campus, the women medical students billeted at the Women's Hostel in College Road refused to move into Eusoff at Nassim Road because the College was located too far away from the hospital. University authorities were sympathetic and responded with solutions such as a shuttle bus, which helped the medical students' transition into Eusoff College.



The Quadrangle of Eusoff College

Others complained about the name 'Eusoff' itself. The College was named after Datuk Panglima Kinta Dr Haji Mohammad Eusoff, who was Pro-Chancellor of the then University of Malaya in Singapore and Chairman of the University Council from 1955 until his death in July 1957. As a member of the Carr-Saunders committee, he played a substantial role in the foundation of the then University of Malaya, and the College was named after him as a mark of respect. The objection to the name, however, stemmed in part from a strong belief that the women's college should be named after a woman and not a man. "We would prefer it to be named Lady Caines College", opined one female student. In an era of growing liberalisation in women's affairs, these ladies held strong opinions about decisions made for them, often without consultation, both within and outside the University. However, the university newspaper, *The Malayan Undergrad*, wrote in support of the Eusoff name, suggesting that while the name was 'alien to the advocates of more appropriate and honeyed titles', the gesture was a generous tribute to a man who had provided selfless and immeasurable service in the field of education in Singapore. There was no better choice of name for the College than Eusoff.

Mrs Maude Scott officially declared Eusoff College open on 1 November 1958. Mrs Scott was a meaningful and symbolic choice because she was one of the earliest woman graduates of Raffles College, which was the precursor tertiary institution that was eventually absorbed into University of Malaya in Singapore. The first principal was Dr Ruth Wong, whose tenure helped establish the Eusoffian values that we celebrate even today; and the first president of the Junior Common Room Committee (JCRC) was Ms Ng Kim Lan.



Datuk Panglima Kinta Dr. Haji Mohammad Eusoff, Pro-Chancellor of the University of Malaya in Singapore



The College was to house 208 students including women medical students. Applications were open to all female undergraduates but a residential stay was compulsory for all senior women. This was part of a policy to provide all women students with some experience of residential life at university. The hostel experience aimed to give students from different faculties a chance to interact and, through these social interactions, to make some meaningful contribution to university life.

The first students paid \$33 a week for living in the College, which was a princely sum then. Professor Chan Heng Chee, a College Resident in 1961 who later became a leading academic and Singapore's first woman ambassador, funded her college fees by giving private tuition and working as a journalist for various newspapers.

The College had single and double rooms. Senior ladies were given priority in the allocation of single rooms because they needed a quiet place to study. The rooms themselves were the envy of the university community. They were equipped with bookshelves so large that some students found difficulty in filling them; *dhoby* (laundry service) baskets, towel racks and decent curtains, according to *The Malayan Undergrad*. Common facilities included a music room and a games room. There was also a lounge where Eusoff ladies could entertain their guests and any male visitors that came calling. The lounge was lavishly furnished for its time. Rather than the ubiquitous heavy furniture found elsewhere, the Eusoff College Lounge featured lightweight bamboo furniture with colourful cushions. To add to the air of gaiety and clear opulence by university standards, pots of ferns and flowers decorated the lounge. There was a small library filled with light reading materials; kitchenettes for late night suppers; and the all-important laundry areas for the washing of 'dainties'. Mindful that this was a ladies' college, the architects built walls between and adjoining hostel blocks in order to deter the boisterous boys from Raffles. However, as many a Eusoff lady would later find out, these walls did not deter the most determined Romeos of the day.



Within months of opening, Eusoff was the life of the university social scene. It gained a reputation for excellent food that was better than anything elsewhere on campus, thanks in no small part to the excellent catering team that worked in the College, many of whom stayed on till their retirement. Guests looked forward to the in-house Formal dinners and Exchange dinners with Raffles Hall. Formal dinners on Wednesdays began as high table affairs but quickly took on a more informal atmosphere. Students enjoyed the more relaxed setting where guests were invited to dine with them. Rather than a formal sit-down dinner, guests and students alike queued for their food and sat down together afterwards. Guests to the College quickly realised that if they arrived later than 7 pm, they might end up sitting alone and began turning up earlier so as to enjoy the company of this vibrant group of ladies. Exchange dinners with Raffles Hall also became part of the Eusoff tradition.

Eusoff's reputation as a social beehive was aided in no small part by the good press it received in the campus newspaper. There was even a Eusoff College Gossip column in *The Malayan Undergrad* of September 1958, which reported that the Eusoff ladies knew how to throw parties. The Eusoff Annual Ball became *de rigeur* in the 1960s and the College was famous for its Grand Annual Open House, where family and friends were invited to the College to take part in celebrations. The Going Down Tea was a well-known tradition where College ladies would invite their lecturers and tutors to attend a tea party at Eusoff College at the close of semester. Social events like hops were anticipated throughout the academic year and the Hen Party was the talk of the campus community. *The Malayan Undergrad* called it 'the most successful social event' on campus. The night was filled with great food and entertainment, and featured games, dancing, and the ladies' performances of sketches and songs. As the newspaper wistfully noted, 'not a gentlemen was to be seen and they (the ladies) had the greatest time of their lives'.

LIFE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Eusoff College was an incredibly close-knit community, in part because it was distinctive as the only women's college in Singapore. Everyone, including the Senior Common Room Committee (SCRC), worked actively to build the Eusoffian spirit. Fellows often threw supper feasts, pancake parties and even champagne parties, funded from their own pockets, to help students feel at home in Eusoff. Ms Lim Bee Lum, who joined the college in 1960 as a student and eventually became its longest serving SCRC member (1972–2000), both as a fellow and now as a non-resident fellow, used to give her students ice-cream treats before their exams. Professor Wong Hee Aik, resident fellow from 1972–1991, kept her door open to students who often dropped by for a chat or to browse her bookshelves.





Apart from a healthy social life on campus, the Eusoff ladies were also active in promoting social causes and raising funds for the needy. Social events were often organised with the aim of raising money for charitable causes. There are too many to enumerate but in 1969, for instance, 'An Evening of Food, Fun and Wine' raised \$1,800. Perhaps the most lasting legacy of this drive to help the less fortunate was the decision to establish a formal committee to serve the larger Singapore community. Together with Raffles Hall, a joint Voluntary Corps was formed in AY 1968/69. The Raffles-Eusoff Voluntary Corps (REVC) brought the best out of both Halls as they worked hard to bring some relief to the sick, the poor, and the disadvantaged. This tradition is capably carried on today by the Eusoff Voluntary Corps (EVC).

Politically, the ladies of the College were also swept up by international events. The world was in turmoil in the 1960s. Southeast Asia was in the grip of the Cold War and the Communist threat continued to loom large over Singapore after the end of the Second World War. The two key issues of the 1960s were the American war in Vietnam and, closer to home, the more emotional issue of the merger of Singapore and Malaysia. Eusoff ladies participated in many of the talks and marches on campus on these two issues. Alice Lee, who lived in the College between 1965–1967, recalled attending many of these talks, in particular the memorable 1967 debate between Singapore's then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and Malaysia's future Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed about communalism in Malaysia and Singapore.

Campus life was a hive of political activity and debate, and it was not surprising that half of Eusoff College marched in support of academic freedom at the University Autonomy March in October 1966. At other times, Eusoff College joined or was joined by other halls of residence in protesting against campus authorities. For instance, in the 1970s, the Housecoat Affair, which saw a College resident punished for what was perceived by the student body as a minor infraction, prompted a show of strength, with other halls of residence pledging to march together with College residents to show their displeasure at university authorities.

The Eusoff ladies found that some of the men on campus and in society at large felt that a woman's place was in the home as a dutiful wife. By participating actively in campus life and involving themselves in political and social causes, these ladies were fighting against accusations of social inactivity and apathy and, more importantly, they were carving out a space for themselves and future generations of Singapore women.

Boys and Eusoff College

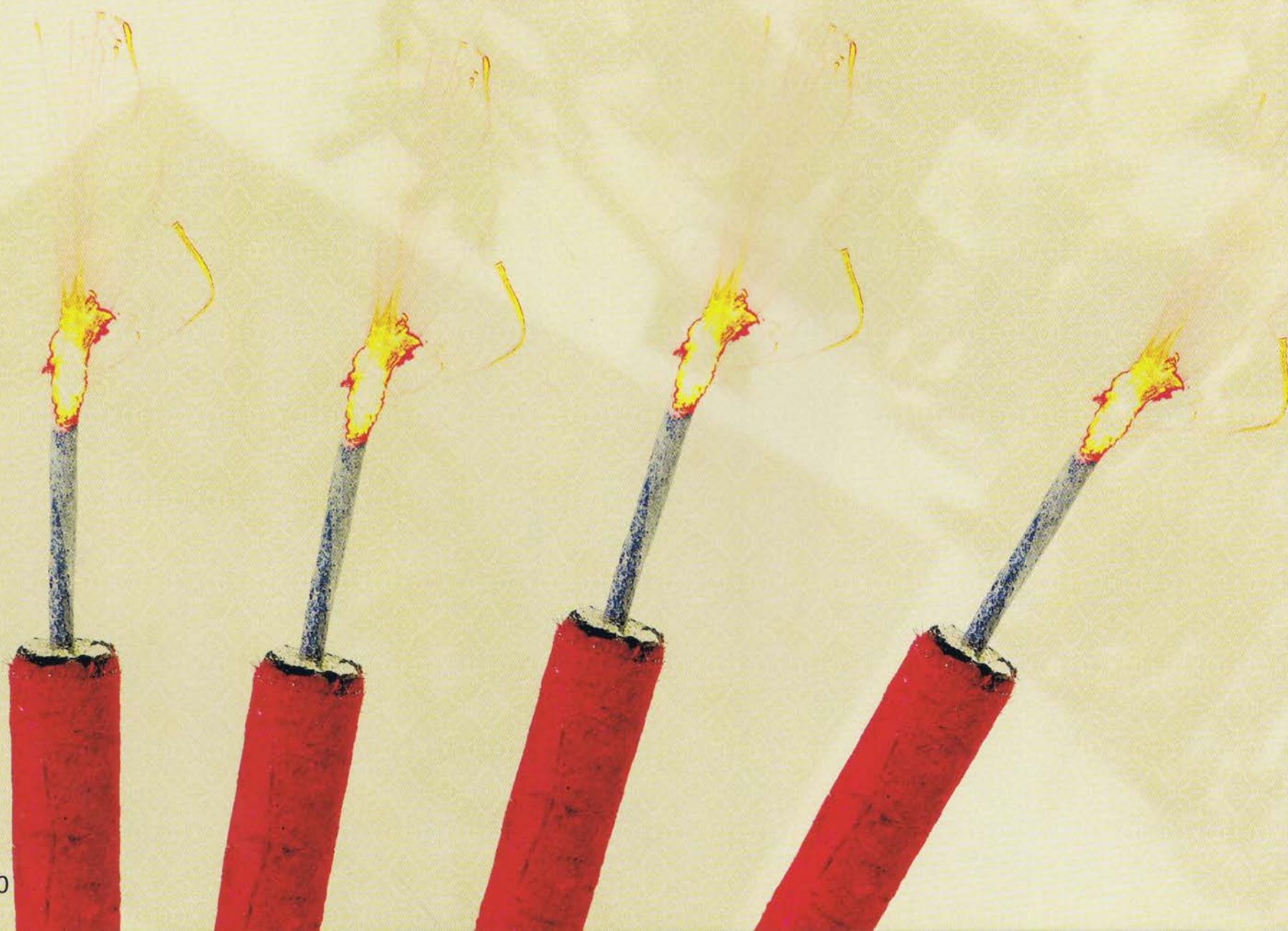


As a ladies' college, Eusoff was a magnet for the boys. If there is one thing that Eusoff College ladies remember well, it is the public phone ringing incessantly. Boys were always on the phone calling the darlings of the university, and the quadrangle rang out with shrieks of 'Telephone!'. Molly Leow, a staff member at Eusoff, was so driven to distraction by these male callers that she used to bellow over the PA system for her charges to report promptly to receive their male callers. She terrified these female students so much that one demand for a student to 'Come down now!' made the poor girl rush down in a towel because she had been in the shower!

It was inevitable that the College would be a great attraction for the men on and off campus. A regular male intruder to the College's grounds was dubbed The Prowler, and over the years there were many others who took on this unsavoury mantle. The ladies, however, were no wilting daisies. Police whistles were bought and liberally used; barbed wire was wound around pipes to prevent these men from climbing into rooms, and a fence was even constructed at the back of the building.

On a happier note, all the hostels on campus competed enthusiastically with each other, and this often included good-natured taunting, ribbing and pranks. Perhaps none was more famous than the 'Duke of Dunearn Road Hostels'. On the occasion of Duke of Edinburgh Prince Phillip's visit to Singapore, the ladies from Eusoff were dispatched to the main road with a banner in an effort to waylay the handsome, young consort of Elizabeth II. However, a younger upstart from the Dunearn Road Hostels (DRH) dressed as the Duke and standing in a Morris Minor as a carriage, proceeded to wave at the real Duke passing by on Dunearn Road. The faux Duke's party then proceeded to Eusoff College to woo the ladies, who spilled out of the College mistakenly believing that Prince Philip was arriving. Unfortunately, the horrors from DRH were the only ones to be found, and such a resounding chorus of boos had never before been heard from Eusoff College.

There was a happy rivalry between Eusoff College and Raffles Hall students during their years at Bukit Timah that was played out as a battle of the sexes. The Raffles boys were often the bane of the Eusoff ladies, who ran the gauntlet and suffered many catcalls from these cheeky fellows as they walked by Raffles. However, the ladies could give as good as they got. Nothing personified this better than the Cracker War. In February 1959, Dr Ruth Wong, first principal of the College, set off firecrackers on Chinese New Year as part of the Chinese tradition to ward off evil spirits and welcome good luck. The Eusoff ladies took the opportunity to raid Raffles Hall and hurl firecrackers at the boys, who had denigrated women as 'just things to get married to' in a recent debate. What became known as the Cracker War eventually transformed into a more formalised annual battle between Raffles and Eusoff. The men from Raffles launched panty raids, stealing into Eusoff for the sole purpose of liberating lingerie from the College clotheslines. Their hard-won loot of silken dainties was then strung up on a flag post, as much to mark their victory as to mock and embarrass the ladies next door.



There were occasions when mild-mannered fun went awry. On Christmas Eve 1965, the boys from DRH launched their own Cracker War against the College but a few over-enthusiastic boys damaged College property in the process. In what became known as the Eusoff Affair, DRH was caught up in a storm that attracted the wrath of university administration, and which drew comment in the national newspaper and even from the prime minister himself.

Grapple as they did with this inter-Hall rivalry, there was also a mutual warmth between Eusoff College and the other Halls both at the institutional and at the personal level. There were exchange dinners, high teas, joint talentimes, campfires and hops that brought both Halls together. The REVC founded in AY 1968/69 was just one example of the joint efforts by Halls of residence in working together as a university community. Beyond the inter-Hall affection between Eusoff College and Raffles, there were also warm and cordial relationships with DRH and King Edward Hall (KE) at Sepoy Lines, adjacent to the Singapore General Hospital. Nothing illustrated this friendly relationship better than the incident of AY 1963/64, when 15 Dunearn residents were expelled for catcalls aimed at the Eusoff ladies as they passed by DRH after the varsity carnival. The Eusoff JCRC immediately jumped to their defence on the basis that these poor men had been treated unjustly by their Hall. The poor fellows from KE who boldly raided Eusoff College in AY 1966/67 also fell afoul of the university authorities and needed the Eusoff JCRC to intervene and plead for leniency on their behalf.

On a personal level, Raffles, DRH and KE men were often guests at the Eusoff College lounge, and once separated from the herd, they were easy prey for the 'lionesses' at Eusoff. Boys were not allowed past the guest lounge and many of them were subjected to the probing gaze and the questioning of many a Eusoff lady while waiting for their dates to appear. This was part of the happy but often merciless taunting both male and female residents engaged in that made university life all the more interesting and exhilarating.



Cracker War in progress

Printed by Lin Lin Relation Industry Co., Ltd.

1983/84 was the last academic year in which Eusoff remained an all-girls college as the university announced a policy change that Eusoff would go co-ed the following year. The announcement was abrupt. A note from the College principal informed the ladies that the university had decided that Eusoff would become co-educational in AY 1984/85 and that it was a 'policy decision', meaning that it was irreversible. At the same time, Eusoff College would be expanded to take over the previous Raffles Hall building at Nassim Road, which would be renamed the Nassim Wing, while the existing buildings at Evans Road were called the Evans Wing. The university had begun to move in stages to the newer and larger Kent Ridge campus in 1981, and with Raffles Hall's move to Kent Ridge in 1984, Eusoff College became the last student residence to remain at the Bukit Timah campus.

While the change in policy and the absorption of another building were relatively easy to manage, attitudinal change was far more difficult. This necessary change in mindsets was the foremost issue on the minds of all Eusoffians, such that even the cover of the yearbook featured a NUSSU news article on the decision to turn Eusoff College into a co-ed hostel. Naturally, there was much initial resistance to the idea as habits and traditions would have to be altered to accommodate the boys. The policy change meant the passing of the 'Eusoff girls are the best!' cheer and the 'No male visitors beyond this point' sign. Most of all, there would be an end to the lively hen parties. The resistance was understandable: the College had been an all-women's college for 26 years, a mantle that it had worn with comfort and great pride. More than that, the ladies saw it as a 'loss of uniqueness'. For almost three decades, the College and its denizens had fought the good fight, demonstrating that women were equal to men, and that there was no task these women could not handle. Eusoff College's conversion to a co-ed residence certainly signalled the passing of an exceptional era.





LEGACY OF EUSOFF COLLEGE



Eusoff College was not merely a hall of residence for women. It represented the aspirations of a young nation for its women. On the 10th Anniversary of the Hall's founding, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and Mrs Lee accepted an invitation to be the Guests of Honour because he believed in the potential of these young women graduates and recognised their important role in society as professionals. The Prime Minister used the occasion to make the point that Singapore stood out from the rest of Asia in its positive regard for women, stressing that women should embrace the equal opportunities in education and in the workforce.

Eusoff College represents all that is good in Singapore womanhood, and its rich history is a testament to the signal achievement of the women who graced its corridors. Dr Nalla Tan, who was principal of the college from 1967–1972, captured the essence of Eusoff College on the occasion of its 25th anniversary when she wrote:

I've not been long in Eusoff College as its Principal, but I have seen within its walls, along its corridors, at every meeting place, in every stance, movement and attitude, the qualities of young womanhood which are required for the kinds of traditions that we want Eusoff to be associated with. These are the intangible qualities of honour, integrity, courage, humility and truth—truth and humility above all.

The ladies of Eusoff College became an inspiration to all Eusoffians—male and female alike—and it is their traditions that we emulate and celebrate. 1983 and the move to becoming a co-ed hall was the beginning of a new era. While some feared that this marked the end of Eusoffian values and spirit, these fears never materialised. Rather, most traditions were retained and some were modified but in the end it would be a continuation of the original Eusoffian spirit of endeavour, excellence and harmony.

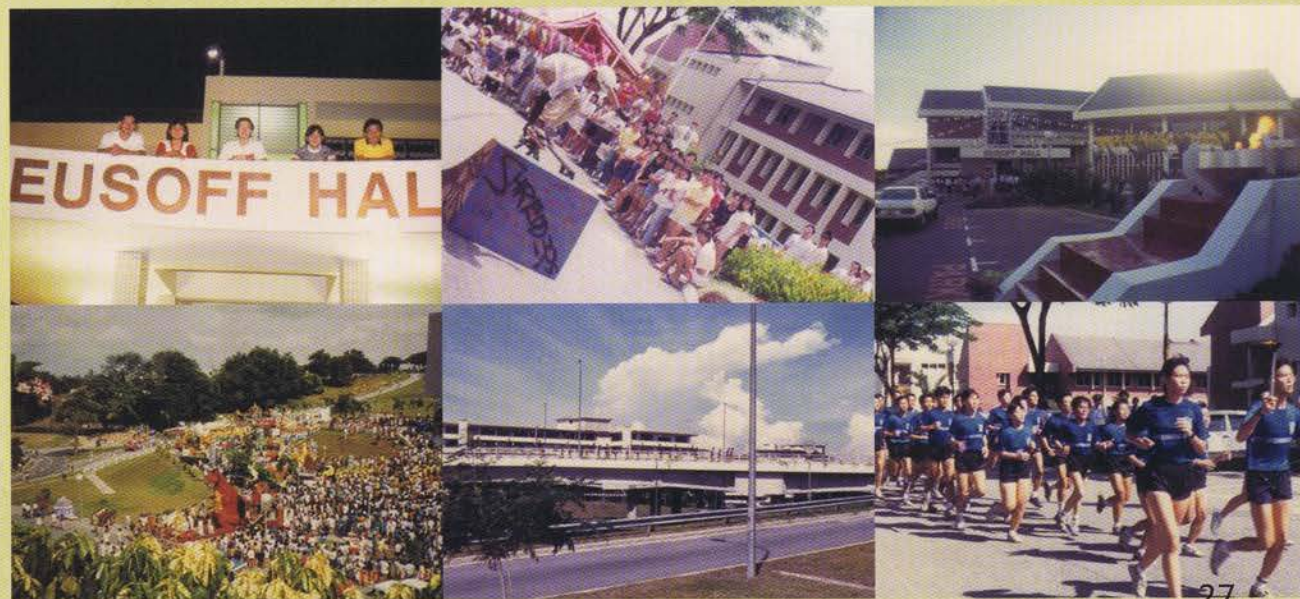


A New Era

National University of Singapore
and Eusoff Hall

While the College was going co-ed, other changes in the University were to have dramatic implications for Eusoff. In AY 1980/81, the university shifted from its Bukit Timah campus to a new and larger campus at Kent Ridge. College residents found themselves having to commute to Kent Ridge to attend classes. The move to Kent Ridge created uncertainty over whether Eusoff College would move, leading to speculation that AY 1980/81 would be the last year of Eusoff's existence. The level of anxiety was such that the AY 1980/81 JCRC, thinking that the end was nigh for the College, even considered spending its remaining funds. In the end, the move to Kent Ridge and the transition to Eusoff Hall only took place in June 1988.

The evolution was successful because in its remaining years at Bukit Timah, the College found new ways to integrate its residents into a mixed hall. In 1984, Professor Andrew Tay was appointed vice-principal of the College to assist the principal, Dr Lim Kiat Boey (1976–1996). Professor Tay recalled some initial resistance to the change but felt that it was quite understandable because it had been an all-women's hostel for a long time. The other problem with integration was the distance of a few hundred metres between the Nassim Wing and the Evans Wing, which the College successfully overcame by holding numerous activities in the field between the two wings to foster as much interaction as possible. When it came time to move into Eusoff Hall at the Kent Ridge campus, the tensions about a co-ed hall of residence had all but disappeared.



BUILDING EUSOFF HALL

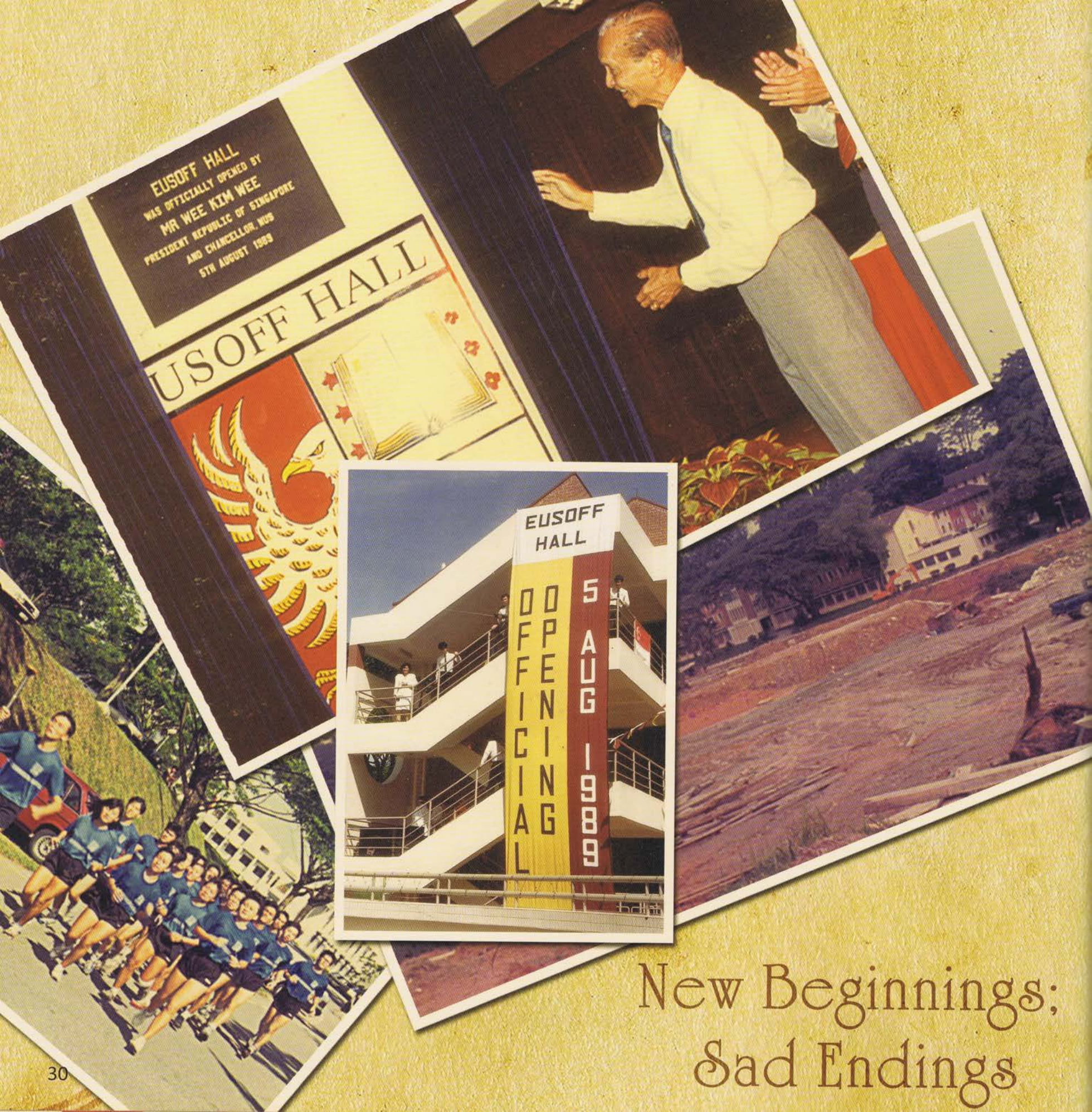
By December 1985, university administration had decided to build two new halls of residence at the Kent Ridge campus: one was to house Eusoff College residents, while the other was to become Temasek Hall. The construction of the new hall at its current site along Kent Ridge Drive began in earnest in January 1987. Costing \$10 million, the new hall was designed with modern finishes and could host up to 485 students. Professor Andrew Tay was appointed Founding Master of Eusoff Hall in 1988. He played a big part in helping the architects to design the spaces needed in the hall. As a result, the new hall had facilities for Rag and Flag construction; a Band Room for practice sessions; a stage for hall performances; and meeting rooms for the JCRC and SCRC, to name but a few.

The new hall had 345 single rooms and 70 double rooms spread over five residential blocks. At the time of its opening, each block held 97 students and had common facilities like laundry rooms, a water fountain and telephones as well as two spacious and well-furnished common rooms cum kitchenettes. Residents were also mightily impressed with the in-house sports and recreational facilities located in the additional Communal Block, which housed the Hall Office, Dining Hall, Function Hall and the Master's Lodge. Students had access to two squash courts in the basement; two outdoor tennis courts, one adjacent to the Hall and the other along Heng Mui Keng Road; as well as an all-weather, multi-purpose court where students could play everything from basketball and volleyball to *sepak takraw* and badminton. The Hall also boasted a large Games Room where residents could indulge in billiards, carrom, darts, aerobics and board games. In what was considered a luxury at the time, the Hall also had a lounge room with a colour television, video recorder, and a hi-fi set; as well as a fully air-conditioned computer room equipped with 20 personal computers.

Moving to the Kent Ridge campus also meant adopting a new name—Eusoff Hall. The word 'college' was dropped in order to bring it in line with the naming convention that was standard for all the other residences at the Kent Ridge campus. There was also some discussion at the university administration level that the appellation 'college' created the incorrect impression that Eusoff was a degree-awarding body similar to Raffles College, a predecessor institution of the university, which had been a degree-awarding body. Owing to the strong demand for student accommodation, the university had decided that Eusoff College would continue to run as a hostel in Bukit Timah. Hence adopting the new name Eusoff Hall for the 'new' hall at Kent Ridge was convenient as the hostel at Bukit Timah could continue operations under its current name Eusoff College.

The two halls built along Kent Ridge Drive were originally designated Halls 5 and 6 on the building plans. To decide which would become Eusoff Hall, then Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Hwang Hsing Hua tossed a coin, and Hall 6, which was closer to the bus depot and the *nasi lemak* stall, was designated Eusoff Hall.





EUSOFF HALL
WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED BY
MR WEE KIM WEE
PRESIDENT REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE
AND CHANCELLOR, NUS
5TH AUGUST 1989

EUSOFF HALL

EUSOFF
HALL

OFFICIAL
OPENING
5 AUG 1989

New Beginnings;
Sad Endings



Eusoff Hall began operations in June 1988 and was officially opened by President Wee Kim Wee on 5 August 1989. Despite the new name, residents who moved from Eusoff College to Eusoff Hall were determined to carry on with the best traditions of the former. As far as the residents and the university administration were concerned, Eusoff Hall was merely the continuation of Eusoff College at a new location. The entire JCRC from the College moved over to the Hall and carried on with their duties, and all College residents were treated as returning seniors in the admission exercise for Eusoff. Since an SCRC was still required at Eusoff College at Bukit Timah, about one-quarter of the SCRC volunteered to remain at Eusoff College while the rest of the SCRC volunteered to continue their tenure with Eusoff Hall at Kent Ridge. Dr Lim Kiat Boey was asked to continue as principal of the College while Professor Tay became Master of Eusoff Hall, where he would champion a number of initiatives until his departure in 2003.

Eusoff College continued to operate at Evans Road until 2001. After Dr Lim Kiat Boey stood down as principal, Professor Lee Kok Onn took over as principal until its closing on the evening of 24 March 2001. In a solemn ceremony, Professor Lee, surrounded by hundreds of Eusoffians, symbolically locked the gates and handed the key to Vice Chancellor Shih Choon Fong. The tiled crest that lay in the lobby of Eusoff College, crisscrossed by hostelites for more than a generation, was moved in its entirety to the entrance of Eusoff Hall, where it stands today as a symbol of a shared past. Each day, Eusoff Hall students pass by this icon much in the same way as the hostelites of old.

With the closing of Eusoff College in March 2001, several alumna of Eusoff College set up a fund to establish the Eusoff College Medal to honour a Eusoffian for his/her overall outstanding academic performance and contributions to Hall activities. A gold medal is awarded annually using proceeds from the capital of \$30,000 raised from donations and from an amount received from the Eusoff Hall Reserves. The NUS Senate approved the establishment of the Eusoff College Medal in February 2004, and the first recipient in July 2004 was Ms Angeline Lam Mingli. The Eusoff College Medal is the only medal of its kind associated with a hall of residence in NUS.

Despite becoming Eusoff Hall, the Eusoff College 'cultural DNA' was well embedded in the Hall because of the JCRC, the returning seniors and the SCRC who crossed over to Kent Ridge. The Hall also recognised that it was important to keep our alumni engaged with the Eusoffian community because they were the bonds with the past. It was in the interaction between the past and the present that the Eusoffian spirit was renewed. The Hall reached out to our alumni in 1988, and it was formally registered as a legal entity in 1989 with the key help of a pro tem committee consisting of several Eusoff College and Eusoff Hall alumni and chaired by Mrs Tan Chee Kiow, an alumna and former Deputy Director of the NUS Computer Centre. On 8 January 1994, Vice-Chancellor Professor Lim Pin opened the Eusoff Heritage Corner. In his speech, Professor Lim Pin congratulated the Hall for its strong relationship with its alumni and said that the university would soon set up its own alumni association. The Heritage Corner was a tangible sign of the determination of the Hall to celebrate its continuity with the College. Its purpose was to educate current residents about Eusoff College, the move to Kent Ridge campus and the evolution of Eusoff Hall. It was meant to be a way for residents to reconnect with the past and to take pride in the heritage of Eusoff College and Eusoff Hall while at the same time, become a focus for the alumni to maintain their links to the Hall.

EUSOFF TRADITIONS

This connection with the past helped maintain some of the most prized and time-worn traditions like Orientation, high table dinners, social activities like the Annual Ball, social service functions, and cultural productions became a part of the Hall tradition. The Grand Annual Open House was still a great event in the year's calendar but invariably traditions were modified and new ones added. Cultural Week, which was introduced during the co-ed phase of the College was reintroduced but changed slightly. Rather than courses on grooming and folk dancing, the existing template of talks on culture like music and literature were enhanced. In 1990, for example, Cultural Week emphasised different aspects of culture, ranging from dance to drama to choir. Under the sponsorship of Shell Singapore, the JCRC was able to invite the woodwind quintet from the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, and organise a talk on Chinese geomancy and Swedish culture. The latter reflected the new realities of a strong international student presence in the Hall. The week was rounded off with an international night in which all the international students performed an item from their culture.

There were new traditions to reinforce the Eusoff sense of identity. The Hall inaugurated its first ever JCRC Investiture ceremony in 1988 and began a new tradition of giving each JCRC member a maroon jacket with the Hall Crest emblazoned on its breast pocket. Rather than the Going Down Tea, the Hall began the Public Forum where lecturers were invited to engage with Eusoffians about the burning issues of the day. Another new tradition was the Kent Ridge Hill run held at the end of Orientation in which the entire hall including the Master, resident fellows, seniors and freshmen all jog from the hall to the top of Kent Ridge Hill around dawn in a show of unity and as a symbol of achievement. There are other traditions that were kept and some others changed and others yet created. In the final assessment, all these traditions still reflected the Eusoff spirit, which was necessary to see the Hall through some difficult times.

While Eusoff College operated in Bukit Timah, it was difficult to attract the most talented students in sports and the arts as student applicants inevitably preferred the on-campus halls because of the convenience and their newer facilities. The situation began to change dramatically with the establishment of Eusoff Hall on the Kent Ridge campus. For all the years since 1988, admissions data has consistently shown that the most number of freshmen and new seniors chose Eusoff Hall as their first choice hall. The main reasons for this were the Hall's proximity to many large faculties and its unmatched in-house recreational and sports facilities. With the continual infusion of fresh talent and the inculcation of the Eusoff spirit every year, Eusoff Hall quickly rose in prominence in all areas of endeavour. The Eusoff spirit was indomitable. Students would go out onto the field and battle for honours because that was the Eusoffian spirit of competition. It was this remarkable quest for excellence and an enduring belief in the Eusoff spirit that quickly helped the Hall gain recognition for its cultural and sporting excellence, and for its unswerving commitment to social service.



Since 1990, Eusoff Hall has become one of the powerhouses of cultural excellence on campus. The ladies of the College were well known for their sketches and their performances but going co-ed saw a shift toward sports. However, the move to the Hall in 1988 saw an influx of talented performers and arts oriented students. In 1990, the Eusoff Choir bagged the Championship in the Youth Section of Cantata 1990, and in that same year, a small group of dedicated students staged a rock musical at Lecture Theatre 13, the first of many celebrated performances. In 1991, the Hall would be the first cultural group from the university to stage a performance at the 1,745 seat Kallang Theatre. *KOJIKI*, a dance-drama, earned rave reviews in the press including *The Straits Times* and the *Asahi Shimbun*. In the following year, an even more ambitious production, a dance-drama called *Shadows of Kul* based on an original script and choreography was staged for an unprecedented two nights at the Kallang Theatre. The guests of honour were President and Mrs Wee Kim Wee. Since then, the Hall has been similarly praised for its annual cultural productions, and this has created a rich tradition carried on in recent years by the annual Eusoff Hall Dance Production. The Dance Production involves almost half the hall or about 200 or more students in a fantastic extravaganza of acting, dance and song with its lavish sets and strong support from the community, all of which attracted high praise both from within the university and from outside it.

In other ways too, this cultural excellence has gone beyond singing, acting and dancing groups in the Hall. Encouraging student innovation, Professor Andrew Tay helped Eusoffians achieve their dreams of making a film. In 2000, Eusoff Hall pioneered student filmmaking in NUS with the release of *Clocks and Cockroaches*. The compilation of four short films involved more than a hundred Eusoffians who were engaged in everything from the acting to the propwork, and debuted in front of an audience that included Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Education and Eric Khoo, the well known film director of *12 Storeys* and *Mee Pok Man*. Subsequently in 2001, Eusoffians embarked on the ambitious project to produce a full-length feature film, *Jack's Car*, which they did with financial support from the Singapore Film Commission and the National Youth Council. The most recent film production, *The Forgotten*, completed filming in 2008.



Eusoff Hall has also emerged as one of the leading centres for sporting excellence in the university in recent years. Many years in the making, Eusoff Hall was finally crowned the Inter-Hall Games (IHG) champions for the first time in 1998. Since then, we have been IHG champions in 2006 and 2008. The women's Team won their first championship in 2000, and have subsequently been Champions in 2001, 2005 and 2006. The Men's team have been Champions in 1998, 2006, 2007 and 2008. Individual Eusoffians have won sporting awards and have represented Eusoff, the university, and Singapore in overseas events; most notably, national sprinter, UK Shyam, duathlon specialist Sikhander Singh who represented Singapore at the SEA Games 2007, and Chen Huifen, a national netball player who played for Singapore at the 2006 Commonwealth Games. Our athletes have also been honoured at the 2006 TeamNUS Sports Awards, with 56 Eusoffians receiving awards out of a total of 481 awardees. Vijay Liew (JCRC President 2006/07), Andrew Boey and Pan Jiahe were also part of the NUS President Sports Team Award (Dragon Boat). Eusoff has also been at the forefront of sporting innovation; having introducing synchronised swimming in 1997—a first in the university, and only the second educational institution in Singapore to have the sport.

Perhaps our greatest achievement is the unfailing generosity of our students in social service. Community service and action has had a long tradition in Eusoff and in the Hall; and students have played their part in tending to the needs of others. The regular Christmas Dinner, through what became known as the Adopt a Brother/Sister and Adopt a Granny schemes, was an opportunity to share the festive joy with the less privileged. This social consciousness was very much reflected in ambitious projects like the Piece by Piece for Peace project in AY 1990/91. Held in conjunction with the Annual Food and Fun Fair, it raised \$4,450 for the needy and was also used to promote awareness for peace among students during the first Gulf War, which was ongoing at this time. In 1995, the Hall was part of a combined Halls fundraising project with a bazaar of 40 stalls, an open house for junior college students and a Jam and Hop—a dance party on campus. The late President Ong Teng Cheong graced this event. The following year, the Eusoff Voluntary Corps (EVC) organised Social Awareness Week with the theme, "If not us, who? If not now, when?" They collected funds for Third World countries by selling 'love loaves'.



THE CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE



Institutionally, the Hall has been active in the community, especially through the tremendous work performed by the EVC, which carries on the REVC tradition established in 1968; and in 1997, the EVC made a commitment to visit and provide practical help to residents living in one-room flats in the Outram area once a fortnight through arrangements with a voluntary organisation. This has become a longstanding arrangement and today, Eusoffians make weekly visits to 19 elderly people in the area, bringing with them food and good cheer. It now includes a Health Management Programme, which the Hall generously funds, to ensure that these elderly have access to badly needed medical care. The EVC has been recognised for its immense contribution to society by numerous awards including the prestigious NUS Student Achievement Award in 2007. Through their efforts, these young Eusoffians have enabled some of the most disadvantaged individuals in our society to live with dignity.

These efforts at social service do not stop at home. The Eusoff Expeditions Team, which was part of an international service learning project, has burgeoned into an annual expedition to Cambodia to help the children of Prey Veng province. Eusoff Expeditions was established in 2004 by Grace Koh, a young lady who was determined to make a difference in the world. Grace conceived of the plan, put it to paper, and won the support of the Hall and the university in supporting this expedition. Thus far, the team has been to Cambodia four times. Each year the team wins funding from the National Youth Council for its exemplary efforts. Grace continues to champion the cause even now as an alumna of Eusoff, and she has big plans in the making with a proposed hostel for the children of Prey Veng to attend school in Phnom Penh. She is one of many young Eusoffians who live out the best ideals of Eusoff in their daily lives.

These are but a few examples, and the chapters that follow detail in many ways the culture of excellence that has been a part of our past and our present. We will see how Eusoffians have challenged the norms within society; how they have excelled in culture and the arts, sports, in the working world and in community service. The traditions, value and virtues that have inspired thousands of Eusoffians both past and present will invariably inspire future generations to great heights of excellence and harmony. Eusoff...All Hail to Eusoff!



*Dato Panglima Kinta
Dr Haji Mohamed Eusoff
CBE, FP, LL.D*

A Daughter Remembers...

At a time when young women were married off after their 'A' Level examinations, Datin Ragayah Eusoff told her father that she wanted to further her education. He could not have been more delighted for he was none other than Dato Panglima Kinta, Dr Haji Mohammad Eusoff, the Pro-Chancellor of the University of Malaya, who would, in his quiet and inimitable way play a pivotal role in determining the shape of education in Malaya and Singapore.

Sadly, he never saw Ragayah enter varsity because he would pass away suddenly in July 1957 before she could be admitted. Ragayah would find herself living at Eusoff College in Singapore, the only institution named in his honour. Eusoff College, for her, embodied his legacy—an institution that gave everyday people a chance to access higher learning. Ragayah said, "In my heart of hearts, I felt proud that Eusoff is a living symbol of what he always wanted—a university education for the people."

Eusoff College and Eusoff Hall bear the proud name of Dato Panglima Kinta Dr Haji Mohamad Eusoff. Dato Eusoff was Pro-Chancellor of the then University of Malaya in Singapore and Chairman of the University Council from 1953 until his untimely death on 7 July 1957. The Hall was named after him in recognition of his outstanding services to education including the important role that he played in the Carr-Saunders Commission in the establishment of the very university that he loved.

Dato Haji Mohamed Eusoff was born in Ipoh in 1897 to a family of traditional Malay chiefs of the Kinta district in Perak. He received his education at the Anderson School in Ipoh before embarking on a career in the Malayan Civil Service, where he served with great distinction. In later life and as a leading member of the traditional Malay ruling class, Dato Haji Mohamed Eusoff served as the Panglima Kinta of Perak in 1951. He was also a member of the Perak State Council (1952) and the Perak Council of Regency (1955). Dato Eusoff also held positions on the Ipoh Town Board (1953), was President of the All-Malaya Muslim Missionary Society, the Ipoh Red Cross Society (1955) and also President of the Perak Amateur Athletic Association. His other contributions to society included being a Justice of the Peace in Selangor in 1948 and in Perak in 1953.

However, Dato Eusoff's most significant contribution was in education and in the establishment of the University of Malaya in Singapore. He was appointed as the only Malay member of the Carr-Saunders Commission on 'University Education in Malaya' in March 1947, which eventually oversaw the establishment of a university in Singapore. For his efforts, he was inducted into the Court of the University of Malaya at its first meeting in 1949 and subsequently conferred an honorary doctorate in law in 1951. In 1953, Dato Eusoff became the Chairman of the University Council and in 1954 the Pro Chancellor of the University. He was a strong advocate of an all-rounded education saying often that it was 'life outside the classroom' that enriched the lives of students as much as their academic studies; and that each generation of students should 'contribute something new, challenging and stimulating to the richness and diversity of university life.'

Eusoff College and Hall stand as the only institutions that honour the legacy of this great man, and Eusoffians continue to live the philosophies of their namesake.

The traditions that he set out for the university as a whole are the traditions that Eusoffians emulate every day.



1958 - 1984



1984 - 2001



1988 - present

The Evolution of the Eusoff Crests

A crest is an emblem that represents the best qualities that an institution aspires to. Similarly, the evolution of Eusoff's crests reflect the changing nature of Eusoff over the past five decades. The first Eusoff Crest was inaugurated in 1966, the same year that the first Eusoff constitution was passed. It featured a spider orchid and an open book against a maroon background.

At a time when women formed only a fraction of the population in tertiary institutions, the spider orchid was chosen to represent the values embodied by the ladies of Eusoff—those of self-respect, responsibility, dignity of womanhood balanced with harmony, beauty and grace. The open book symbolised the unquenchable thirst for knowledge and academic achievement which all Eusoffians sought, and a conviction to keeping with the aims of the university. Finally the maroon background epitomised the courage and spirit of all Eusoffians.

When Eusoff College admitted men in 1984, a crest with the orchid which was deemed appropriate for an all-girls college, was modified to reflect the co-ed nature of the college and create a more unified identity. The eagle was included into the new design to symbolise the indomitable spirit of all Eusoffians, as well as an indefatigable desire to attain honour and excellence in all pursuits. The white background signified sincerity and purity.

The crest again underwent changes when the College moved to the current Kent Ridge campus and became Eusoff Hall. The Eusoff Hall crest incorporates all the most cherished emblems of the two preceding crests. It has three main features—the orchid, the open book and the eagle. The orchid adopted in the present crest is the Vanda Miss Joaquim, the national flower of Singapore, symbolising integrity and honour, grace and beauty, and serves as a reminder of the legacy of the women of Eusoff College. The eagle and the open book are also part of the heritage bequeathed by Eusoff's rich history. The colours of the crest are maroon to signify courage; gold to signify magnificence; and white to symbolise sincerity.

An important feature of the crest is the Hall's motto 'Excellence and Harmony'. It describes the desire of all Eusoffians to aspire to achieve excellence in all their endeavours, be they academic pursuits, community work or cultural and sporting activities. Yet, the motto is also a reminder that these aspirations are to be accomplished in harmony with the people we work and live, in harmony with nature and in harmony with the world we live in.

Eusoff Alumni

It was a quiet evening, perfect for a gathering of old friends to reminisce about their college days. Apart from reminiscing over cups of tea, Mrs Tan Chee Kiow and her fellow ex-Eusoffians had also met for the express purpose of establishing the Eusoff Alumni.

It was June of 1988, and the transition from Eusoff College to Eusoff Hall was in full swing. It was in the context of that imminent transition that these Eusoff ladies wanted to work towards the establishment of the Eusoff Alumni. The strong attachment of the alumni to the College was unmistakable and these ladies wanted to foster these bonds through the Eusoff Alumni.

Mrs Tan and her friends would go on to play a major role in the establishment of the Eusoff Alumni. Mrs Tan herself would serve as the first President of the Eusoff Alumni while the other founding members, Mrs Shirley Loo-Lim, Mrs Elsie Foh, Dr Violet Phang and Ms Lim Bee Lum, who were there at the first Eusoff Hall meeting, would serve in the first Alumni Committee. These founding members had a series of meetings to crystallise the idea and finalise the drafts of Eusoff Alumni Constitution.

When the group approached Professor Andrew Tay, Master of the Hall, for his support, he readily backed the group and its initiatives. Professor Tay saw the alumni as a vital link between former residents of Eusoff College and Eusoff Hall and the Hall and NUS, to bring alumni together. A Pro-tem Committee was then formed to implement the formation of Eusoff Alumni.

The Eusoff Alumni was finally inaugurated on 17 December 1988, at the new Eusoff Hall at Kent Ridge. The Heritage Corner was also unveiled, serving as the focal point of the history and legacy that underpin the Eusoff Alumni.

“We want to grow the Eusoff family,” reflected Mrs Tan on the hopes of the founding members for the Eusoff Alumni. And as Eusoff celebrates its 50th year and beyond, the Eusoff Alumni will continue to serve to connect the Eusoff family past and present, near and far.

The First Eusoff Alumni Committee

Mrs Tan Chee Kiow

Associate Professor Violet Phang

Dr Anne Pakir

Mr Francis Xavier

Dr Shirlena Huang

Ms Lim Bee Lum

Mrs Elsie Foh

Mrs Shirley Loo-Lim

Mrs Foong Swee Hoon

Mrs Tan Chee Khoon

President

Vice President

Secretary

Asst Secretary

Treasurer

Asst Treasurer

Committee

Committee

Committee

Committee





Farewell Dear Eusoff, Your Spirit lives on...



Tan Suan Imm (nee Chew) who was among the pioneer group of women undergraduates to move into Eusoff College in 1958, was there on the evening of Saturday 24th March 2001 to say her own goodbye to her Alma Mater.

I parked my car, and paused to look at the familiar red brick building as I walked up the short driveway and joined over a hundred Eusoffians in the familiar grounds of dear old Eusoff College again. This time we had come to bid a final farewell to our Alma Mater for soon her premises would be returned to the authorities for future re-development... I was delighted to see Leong Siew Mun, Jasbir Kaur and Rita Joshi who had made the journey from Malaysia specially for this occasion.

In the dining hall over tea and later during the buffet dinner in the Quadrangle, we reached out to old friends across the vistas of the years, and we toured the college facilities and rooms, exchanged fond memories of happy yesteryears spent in the College. It was time for more reminiscences and sing-a-long later in the lounge after dinner, over coffee, chocolates and pralines. And it was indeed fitting that before we proceeded from the lounge to the driveway outside the college at 9.45 pm for the final closing ceremony, we stood up as one and raised freshly filled wine glasses to salute and drink a toast to a Grand Old Dame.

Carrying a white lighted candle each, we then walked slowly towards the front entrance of the college. The Eusoff College flag was lowered for the last time by the president of the Eusoff Hall (Kent Ridge) Junior Common Room Committee and handed over to Associate Professor Andrew Tay, Master of Eusoff Hall, together with other Eusoff College memorabilia. Associate Professor Lee Kok Onn then closed the door, locked it and handed the key to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Shih Choon Fong. Jasbir in her capacity as a former president of the Eusoff College JCRC, then passed on a special candle to the Eusoff Hall JCRC president to symbolise the passing on of the Eusoff spirit to Eusoff Hall so that the Eusoff spirit will continue to live on. We blinked back tears as we linked hands and sang *Auld Lang Syne* as we bid a final goodbye to our Alma Mater whose spirit we know will live on, in the hearts and memories of thousands of women graduates and post-graduates from Malaysia, Singapore and many parts of the world, who spent some of the happiest years of their youth within her walls and for whom she has always been a home away from home.



PRINCIPALS of EUSOFF COLLEGE

MASTERS of EUSOFF HALL

By Guay Ee Ling



Professor Andrew Tay and President Wee Kim Wee at the opening of Eusoff Hall, 1988.



A.P. Tan Tin Wee (Far Right) and Prof Andrew Tay (3rd from left) at the 2008 Eusoff Dance Production



Professor Ruth Wong

Principal of Eusoff College (1958–1959)

Eusoff College could not have asked for a more suitable first principal than the late Professor Ruth Wong, well-known in local academic circles for her contributions to education. In 2008, an entire episode of a television programme in a series about outstanding educationists in Singapore featured the late Professor Wong as a pioneer in the field of education. It was our great loss when Professor Wong resigned in 1959 after she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue her Doctorate in Education at Harvard University. Her short tenure belies the enduring nature of what she impressed upon and had given to Eusoff College.

As the first principal, she assumed the responsibility of laying the foundations in the form of the values and spirit she hoped all Eusoffians would come to possess, and in this she left a lasting legacy. She stressed the importance of responsibility, self-respect, harmonious living and the dignity of womanhood, values that are indeed representative of Eusoff College through the years. Through her careful management of the College's finances, she was able to provide for future generations of Eusoffians and also ensured that the young women who entered the College would have some of the best facilities on campus.

I would like to pay tribute to our first Principal, Professor Ruth Wong who was there for a short time... As the first Principal, she took such pains to make sure that the college was run well and I think what we appreciated most was the fact that she took trouble to see that the physical side of Eusoff College was well maintained... I think it was very much her own high standards that maintained the quality of the physical facilities as well as the administration of the college.

Dr Jasbir Kaur, 2nd JCRC President of Eusoff College



Professor Jean Robertson

Principal of Eusoff College (1959–1967)

The late Professor Jean Robertson was with Eusoff College for nearly a decade. She was a senior fellow from the time the College was established, and went on to become its second principal in September 1959. She played an integral role in the discussion and formulation of what were to be Eusoff traditions together with Professor Ruth Wong and the other fellows.

Professor Robertson's dedication to Eusoff College and its residents was unquestionable. Despite her heavy commitments outside of Eusoff College as a Head of Department, a social worker and a member of various university committees and government boards, she always found time to devote to the running of the College. Under her able leadership, Eusoff College soon grew in stature and before long, gained the reputation of being one of the best residential halls of the university.

Professor Robertson's contributions to Eusoff College in the near-decade she spent there can hardly be measured with any conventional yardstick, and indeed, it was Eusoff College's loss and the University of Hong Kong's gain when she left the College in 1967 to assume the position of Professor of Social Studies in Hong Kong.

Miss Robertson retired in 1973 and died tragically in a car accident on 7th November, 1974 while travelling in the south of France. In memory of the good years that she put in for Eusoff, the Senior Common Room Committee of Eusoff donated a trophy for Eusoff's Girl of the Year Award. Seah Jiak Choo, Eusoff's Girl of the Year 1974-1975, became the first winner of the Jean Robertson Trophy.



Dr Nalla Tan

Principal of Eusoff College (1967–1972)

Dr Nalla Tan became the principal of Eusoff College in 1967 with a clear vision for the College. In her leadership of the College, Dr Tan drew from her own experiences as a hostelite in her university years. She believed that undergraduates should focus both on academic success and on the lessons that came from participating in the corporate life of the College.

Eusoff residents described Dr Tan as a good wife and mother, who coped well with her duties as a full time Social Medicine lecturer in addition to her responsibilities as the principal of the College. Her ability to balance both her marriage and career served to inspire many women graduates of Eusoff College to achieve the same in future, and in that, Dr Tan was a Eusoffian who embodied the value of the dignity of womanhood.

Most if not all of the College's residents profoundly felt Dr Tan's influence and impact on Eusoff College, and the appreciation of her efforts can be seen in the naming of the trophy for the EC-3rd Residential College games after her in 1971. The Residential College games were played against a sister hall at the University of Malaya. Those who experienced life in Eusoff College under Dr Tan will not forget her or her contributions, and indeed, to many of them, Eusoff would not have been the same without her.



Dr Aileen Aw

Principal of Eusoff College (1972–1978)

Dr Eileen Aw had been a fellow at Eusoff College for about two years before she took up the role of principal in 1972, and she shared similar ideas with her predecessors on the traditions and values they hoped to inculcate in every Eusoff resident. In her introductory message, Dr Aw indicated that she hoped life in Eusoff could be made rich with experiences that would stand each girl in good stead in their future personal and professional lives.

Dr Aw actively participated in a great number of the various activities organised by the Eusoff residents, such as the annual Rag and Flag. Eusoff College was like a large family to Dr Aw, who regularly brought her young children to Eusoff College while she worked in the office.

In addition to concerning herself with the welfare of the residents, Dr Aw also worked to foster and improve the relationship between her, the fellows and the residents with events such as a pancake supper prepared by her and the fellows for the girls in the College. Dr Aw said she always felt 20 when she was with the residents, and in turn, they deeply respected her and appreciated the warmth and happiness she brought to Eusoff College in her time as principal there.



Dr Lim Kiat Boey

Principal of Eusoff College (1979–1996)

Dr Lim's first association with Eusoff goes as far back as 1958, when she briefly assumed the position of resident fellow. Fortunately for Eusoff, she returned over 20 years later to become the longest serving principal of Eusoff College, while teaching linguistics and the methodology of language teaching at the Regional Language Centre (RELC).

While Dr Lim did not take up residence in Eusoff College, she made sure to go down to the College daily to handle the administrative affairs of the College, as well as to interact with the residents. Her practice was to return to Eusoff College every lunch time, where she would meet with the other resident SCRC members who also regularly came back for lunch at the College.

Dr Lim was respected and well-liked among the Eusoff College residents primarily because of her continued concern for the residents and their welfare, and also because of her ability to mediate and resolve disputes, no matter how divisive or sensitive the issue. For instance, the JCRC of 1979/80 initially had some problems among themselves, which Dr Lim helped to iron out after many meetings with them. That particular JCRC was so grateful to Dr Lim, they presented her with a painting-plaque to thank her for all her time and efforts.

In her time as principal, Dr Lim saw the College and its residents through the transitions of turning co-ed and later on, into a postgraduate students' hostel. Indeed, she was an exemplar of the very words she imparted to the residents in her first principal's message quoting Tennyson—'to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield'—and her commitment to Eusoff was such that even after retiring from teaching at the RELC in 1991, she continued as principal of Eusoff College until 1996.

A Eusoffian's message ... to Dr Lim Kiat Boey

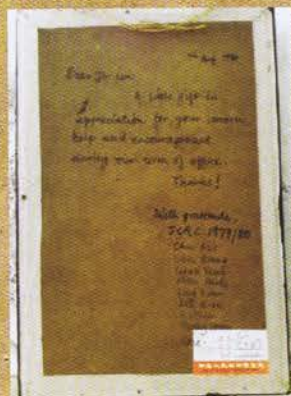
(An excerpt from the Eusoff College Yearbook AY 1981/82)

The principal, Dr Lim Kiat Boey, in the eyes of Eusoffians, is more than a figure who drives a beige mini-minor. She is, above everything else, the principal of Eusoff College—a lady respected by all and the person behind the whole administration of the college since 1979.

One often sees her signature on the office memos and papers containing information for internal circulation. It is through these that Eusoffians are informed of certain SCRC decisions concerning Eusoff College. That beige mini-minor parked in front of Eusoff College announces her presence and that she is attending to the College's daily affairs. She is seldom seen about Eusoff College in the afternoon because she is busily attending to her administrative duties. Busy as she is with her linguistics lectures at the RELC, and the running of our hostel, she manages a smile and a 'How-do-you-do?' for every girl in Eusoff College. Her concern for the hostel and Eusoffians is shown not just in the carefully prepared speeches she makes, but also in the efficient way Eusoff College is run.

We may appear shy and tongue-tied in her presence. This is so not because we are afraid of her but because we respect and admire her.

To Dr Lim, this is a message of appreciation for what you have done, and we thank you for being here and for caring.



The plaque presented to Dr Lim by the 1979/80 JCRC. The message reads:

Dear Dr Lim,

A little gift in appreciation for your concern, help and encouragement during our term of office.

Thanks!

With gratitude,
JCRC 1979/80



Professor Lee Kok Onn

Principal of Eusoff College (1997–2001)

Like some of his predecessors, Professor Lee Kok Onn had been a resident fellow at Eusoff College before he took on the role of principal in 1997. He was one of the first male staff to live in Eusoff College as a resident fellow, and remembers coming in with the first batch of young men in 1984 to the then still predominantly female college, where he was very impressed by the strength and capability of the mostly female JCRC.

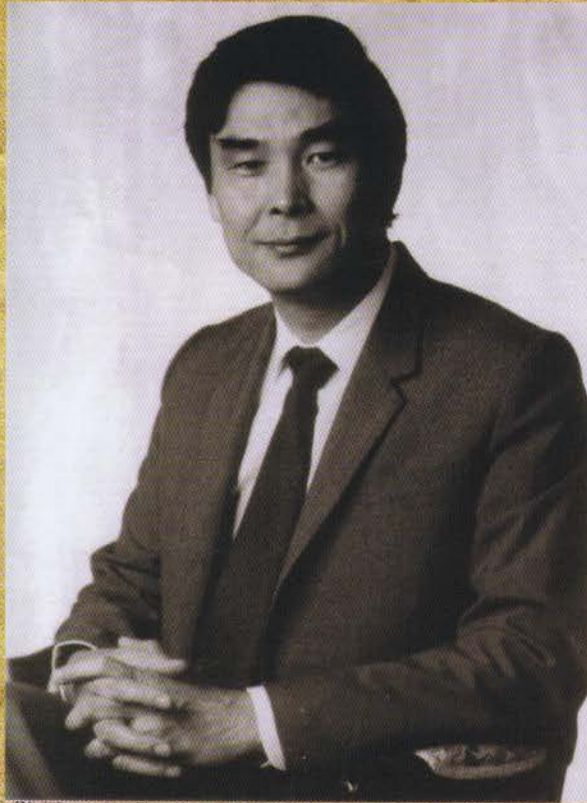
Professor Lee remained a resident fellow of Eusoff College until he had his first child in 1988, but he continued to be involved with Eusoff as a non-resident Fellow, until he was asked to be the principal of Eusoff College upon Dr Lim Kiat Boey's retirement in 1996.

One of the first things Professor Lee did in his tenure as Principal was to speak to the university authorities to get them to implement a policy ensuring at least one-third of the residents at Eusoff College would be Singaporeans. After Eusoff College turned into a post-graduate hostel, the resident population became predominantly international and Professor Lee was concerned that many of the post-graduates would have spent three or more years in Singapore without making a single lasting friendship with Singaporeans.

Inspired by a sabbatical at Stanford where they had a host family scheme for all their overseas students, including postgraduate ones, Professor Lee also worked fairly urgently to implement such a scheme in Eusoff College, where every resident was placed with a Singaporean family who would bring them out for tours, dinners and the like.

Being the last principal of Eusoff College when it closed in 2001, Professor Lee expressed his sadness that an institution that had been 'a home away from home' for so many generations of students, as well as a place where some of the deepest and most meaningful friendships were made, was closed. In this vein, he hoped that "the future will be stronger than the past."

next up: **Masters of Eusoff Hall**



Professor Andrew Tay

Master of Eusoff Hall (1988–2003)

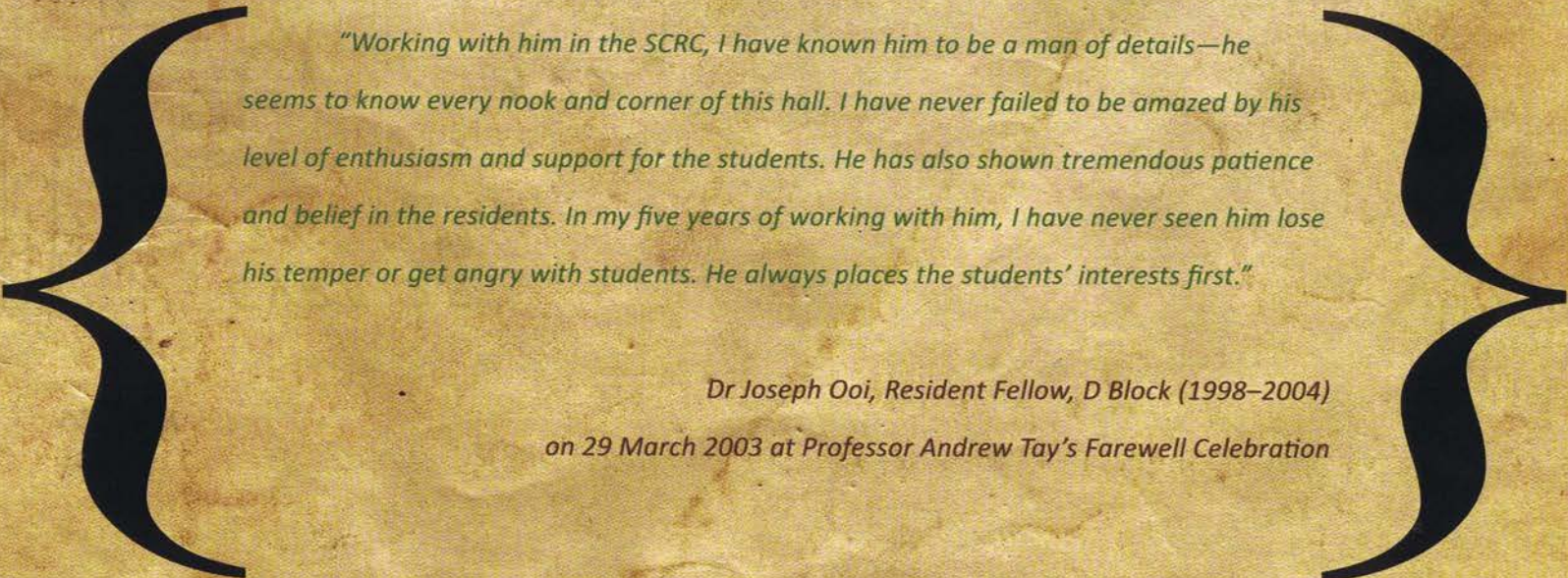
Having been a resident fellow at Dunearn Road Hostels and Kent Ridge Hall since 1976, Professor Andrew Tay came to Eusoff College in 1984 with a wealth of experience that proved invaluable in his position as vice-principal. He was actively involved in ironing out the day-to-day details of Eusoff College's transition to a co-ed hostel with the then-principal Dr Lim Kiat Boey, as well as overseeing the renovation of the Nassim Wing, the old Raffles Hall premises after the latter moved to the Kent Ridge campus.

When plans were made for Eusoff College to move to the Kent Ridge campus, Professor Tay was appointed Master-Elect in 1987 in order to oversee and provide feedback for the architects in the design and construction of the new hall premises. As the founding Master of Eusoff Hall, Professor Tay envisioned the Hall as a continuation of Eusoff College on campus, and most of the Eusoffian traditions like Grand Open House and the accompanying food and fun fair to raise funds for charity were retained. Traditions like the annual project of a cultural or drama performance, which had somehow become lost when Eusoff turned co-ed, were also revived, ensuring that the Eusoff spirit remained strong in Eusoff Hall.

One of the initial problems faced by Eusoff Hall was that of having to compete with the other halls, which had already firmly established themselves in Kent Ridge campus, having moved there earlier. There was a dearth of talent but not of spirit, as Professor Tay rallied the Eusoffians to participate actively in hall activities and keep the Eusoff flag flying high. Professor Tay's efforts soon paid off as Eusoff Hall began to establish a foothold in both sports and cultural activities, as exemplified by the large scale of the annual project *KOJIKI*, which put Eusoff on the campus map by being the first hall production to be held in Kallang Theatre.

Professor Tay's dedication to Eusoff was such that he chose Chinese names with the meaning of Eusoff Hall's motto 'Excellence and Harmony' for his son (Jie An) and daughter (Jia Ning), who were born during the first decade in which he was Master. Jie An is now 19 years old and serving his National Service, while Jia Ning is 15 years old and in school. His commitment to Eusoff, however, did not interfere with his role as a loving husband and father, as seen in his constant thoughts and mentions of his family in his speeches and yearbook messages.

Professor Tay's contributions to Eusoff Hall in his 15 years as founding Master serve as a reminder of all that exemplifies Eusoff—dedication, ambition, tradition and of course, excellence and harmony.



"Working with him in the SCRC, I have known him to be a man of details—he seems to know every nook and corner of this hall. I have never failed to be amazed by his level of enthusiasm and support for the students. He has also shown tremendous patience and belief in the residents. In my five years of working with him, I have never seen him lose his temper or get angry with students. He always places the students' interests first."

*Dr Joseph Ooi, Resident Fellow, D Block (1998–2004)
on 29 March 2003 at Professor Andrew Tay's Farewell Celebration*



Associate Professor Tan Tin Wee (2003–Present)

Associate Professor Tan Tin Wee is ever present in Eusoff Hall, and his door is always open to students who want to see him. He is utterly dedicated to Eusoff, and the students often see him keeping the same late hours as them as he moves around talking to students, finding out their concerns and encouraging them in their work.

His first involvement in halls of residence came with Eusoff when he became a non-resident fellow at Eusoff College in 1991. Subsequently, Associate Professor Lawrence Chia, then Master of Sheares Hall, invited Associate Professor Tan to be a resident fellow at Sheares in 1992, a position that he held for over 10 years. In April 2003, Associate Professor Tan returned to Eusoff when he was appointed Master.

Bringing his wealth of experience in residential matters, Associate Professor Tan has been instrumental in driving forward some of the key transformations in the Hall. For instance, one of his first projects involved the renovation of student rooms, the flats for resident fellows, the Hall Office and some central facilities, in order to create a conducive environment for student initiatives. It was a measure of the man that he upgraded all other facilities first and waited five years until 2008 to have his own residence upgraded.

Associate Professor Tan has a consultative approach and he has always been student-centric. In order to foster synergistic cooperation, trust and mutual respect between the SCRC and JCRC, he regularly holds face to face meetings and meals with JCRC presidents and other committee heads. He is deeply involved in promoting an atmosphere of learning, and encouraging student enterprise in Eusoff Hall.

Under his charge, student initiatives continue to receive the strongest level of support. Student-initiated projects such as Eusoff Expeditions, as well as the success of the Eusoff Business Incubator companies, all benefited from the strong support of the Hall and the guidance and enthusiastic support provided by the Master.

Associate Professor Tan also takes a keen interest in Eusoff Hall's involvement in the community service. He is a very strong supporter

of the Eusoff Voluntary Corps (EVC) and Eusoff Expeditions, and is ever present at their activities and always pushing them to broaden their frontiers. For example, the budget of the EVC was rejected in 2004 on the grounds that it was too small, before it was tripled to give them greater financial freedom to plan and implement their various programmes. Today, EVC is a multi-award winning organisation which has brought online such innovative programmes like the Health Management Programme for the Elderly and the Social Entrepreneurship Workshop.

First and foremost in Associate Professor Tan's mind is the safety and welfare of students. Back in 2003, his first day in Eusoff started with the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) scare in NUS during the examinations period, and his experience then has shaped the Hall's response to Crisis Management and Risk Assessment. It was his pioneering efforts particularly in pro-actively tackling dengue in NUS that has helped the Hall innovate further by preparing a range of Crisis Management protocols, making us one of the better prepared Halls in NUS. More than that, Associate Professor Tan has instituted several safety protocols like Simon-Voss transponder protected gates as part of a series of measures to increase security on the Hall premises. Most Eusoffians were enthusiastic when he pushed very hard to put more funding into providing them with better breakfast options and dinner specials. This saw the introduction of the Meal Enhancement Plan which saw students have the option of cereal and fresh milk at breakfast, and a special dish at dinner.

Indeed, Eusoff Hall is still going strong under the leadership of Associate Professor Tan, and we can certainly look forward to many good years ahead under his able guidance.

the Quintessential Eusoff Experience

What is the quintessential Eusoff experience, if there is such a thing?

What makes Eusoff, Eusoff?

Is it the friendships formed that determine the uniqueness of our experience? The traditions that have evolved over the years and that bind us together? Or is it the romances that were sparked in the red-brick corridors of this Hall that have made our experience exceptional?

Such a distinct Eusoff experience may seem strangely undefinable, but we think that it is all of the above. The quintessential Eusoff experience is not just a single thing, but an amalgamation of events that have shaped us and made us who we are right now.

Read on. This story is as much yours as it is ours.

By Michael Wan Chang Chin

hall experience
the quintessential eusoff experience
spirit of friendship and camaraderie

EUSOFF COLLEGE

Residents of Eusoff College appear to have taken the charge that they are "socially inactive" rather seriously. In spite of the sup-



Friends and Camaraderie

"Lasting friendships were kindled and shared experiences contributed to my personal growth. My closest friends are ex-Eusoffians, with whom I have laughed through light-hearted moments in Eusoff and with whom I have sweated through the 'exam hell'. Indeed I am grateful to Eusoff College for bringing such good friends into my life."

Cheryl Lee Chui Mie

JCRC President (1979–1980)

Every Eusoffian's experience is, without doubt, unique. Yet, when asked to name one particular element that best characterises their years spent here, 'lasting friendships' would probably spring to a Eusoffian's mind, regardless of cohort, gender or personality.

Late-night suppers, be they at Koek Lane, Bugis Street after the Annual Ball, or at Fong Seng and Niqqi's Cheese Prata shop were and still continue to be common daily fixtures for Eusoffians. Walk along the corridors of the Hall, and you will find an impressive array of door tags and posters welcoming you. Birthday celebrations



evoke memories of a birthday boy, with remnants of cream cake on his face, being tied to a pole and 'spanked' by supportive Hall mates as they celebrate with much frivolity. Interesting stories of residents engaging in unorthodox activities are plentiful but probably just Eusoff folklore and urban myths. Come the dreaded exams,

there is a dramatic change. Friends huddle in rooms, mugging together through endless nights, as they encourage each other to push beyond their mental limits.



Friends and Camaraderie



Eusoff, for many, is a second home—a home with many friends whom they can count on; friends they can share their joy and sorrows with, friends to celebrate with, and, most importantly, friends whom they can entrust their lives to.

Goh Siang Hwee (2003–2007), one of the original members of the Eusoff Expedition team said, “I think it’s perhaps the only time in our lives when we do the craziest things, especially during birthdays.” The Expedition team recalled a particularly

memorable birthday celebration. They moved every item from the unsuspecting victim’s room to her boyfriend’s room, arranging the room so it looked exactly like her original room!



As for Professor Wazir Jahan Karim (1967–1969), her group of friends from Eusoff is so close-knit that they meet up every year to catch up with one another. “It’s getting bigger and bigger, you know? Even the people who’re not in our circle are joining us. They want to come because it’s really fun,” she says.

The bonds of friendship are so strong that Mrs Tan Suan Imm (1958–1961), who was in the very first cohort at Eusoff College, still meets with a group of Eusoff ladies weekly.

“We came into Eusoff knowing that it’s our hall, but we left it feeling like it’s our home.”

– Grace Koh, (2003–2007)



Orientation

First impressions count. Such was the inherent importance of Orientation in Eusoff Hall.

It was through Orientation that deep-seated perceptions were formed, where life-long friendships were forged, and where freshies were imbued with the Eusoff spirit. In the past, when ragging was still condoned, Orientation was more than a tool to instill this Eusoff spirit. It was also

a way for mischievous seniors to assert some semblance of authority over the freshies. Most importantly, it was also a time when seniors began scouting around for unsuspecting but attractive members of the opposite sex.

Orientation was undoubtedly when the Eusoff experience started for many residents. The sight of freshies bowing down to the seniors, echoing 'Good afternoon

Senior Gentleman, or Senior Lady was not uncommon. One of the major rites of passage took place during dinner, where freshies had to learn proper 'dining etiquette'—a ritual that dictated every movement from scooping the rice, opening their mouths, to eating the rice.

Ms Lim Bee Lum recalled, "During Orientation, they had the 4-square meal. First, they had to paint their nose white and tie



green ribbons, like a clown. After which, they would engage in the calculated procedure of eating. They had to count '1, 2, 3, 4' for every single action."

In the 1960s, ragging was not as serious in Eusoff as compared to other male-dominated halls. However, Eusoff College did have its fair share of terrifying seniors. Professor Jasbir Kaur (1958-1961) recalls, "We had one or two ladies who were 'dragons' and terrifying. They struck

fear in the hearts of the junior students. Despite that, ragging in Eusoff College as I recall was quite light. It was all done in good spirit, not to harm anybody but just to shock the freshies a little bit."

Meanwhile, cheer fights, push-ups, and lullaby-singing sessions were commonplace. One yearbook article recounted how the writer lost his voice after the first cheer fight, and how lucky he was that he was not 'an unfortunate soft-voiced

freshie'. Another freshie, who did not have the same enthusiasm for the song fight, had to perform a solo cheer in front of everyone.

The Orientation usually ended with a telematch with the other halls, much like a mini Inter-Hall Game that served to examine the bonding and teamwork that existed between freshies and seniors.



Orientation



Orientation now

What is Orientation like now? The objective today is for orientation is solely to provide a warm welcome to undergraduate freshmen, without the enthusiastic ragging of the past. These undergraduate freshmen come from all walks of life—Singaporeans and Malaysians, to international students from Vietnam, China, India, Oman, Mauritius, Denmark, Holland and more.

These days, Orientation has become more relaxed, in effect fulfilling its purpose of building bonds among the freshies without resorting to ragging or regimented activities.

Stefen Chow and his wife Lin Hui-Yi, who both joined Eusoff in 1999, recall what Orientation was like for them. Says Hui-Yi, "The Programmes people were trying to be fierce and trying to instill discipline, saying things like 'Throughout this whole

Orientation, you shall not go off and skip our programmes. If not you will suffer severe consequences'."

The freshies often had to go through certain mandated activities to bond with their seniors. For example, they had to knock on their seniors' door and have a chat with them in a bid to chalk up a certain number of points. "The seniors made it a point to ensure you spend enough time with them, thus forcing you to chat

with them. You have the 'official' bonding and you have the 'unofficial' bonding," Stefen says. After all, Orientation was a time for both men and women to check each other out.

JCRC President (2007-2008) Sim Jit-vern discusses the importance of Orientation now. "In Eusoff Hall, the Orientation Programme for new residents plays a big part in shaping and kick-starting the academic year. These sessions are special because they are conducted by the senior undergraduates, all of whom have been freshmen before. Hence, valuable advice is imparted to the freshmen based on experience and knowledge. The sessions are interspersed with team building activities and games, which are aimed at fostering closer ties among the residents and building a good community spirit which is important for communal living."

Initiation Pledge

(from AY 1979/1980 Yearbook)

I, freshette ... lowly and humble, having made umpteenth fumbles, do thank the inimitable and magnanimous senior ladies for so thoughtfully and graciously orientating me.

Having undergone three stimulating weeks of scintillating and thrilling orientation, I have explored limitless seas and discovered new horizons. I can now scale peaks formidable and conquer depths unfathomable.

Having crossed barriers innumerable and overcome umpteen obstacles previously insurmountable, I have discovered within myself submerged talents and unsuspected potentials.

I have only the inspiring senior ladies to thank for helping discover the new and exciting me.

I now declare my undying loyalty to our beloved Eusoff College and will henceforth endeavour to serve her to the best of my abilities.



Rag and Flag

Rag and Flag has been a longstanding tradition in university life. Students are encouraged to have fun and explore their creativity while raising important issues of the day through their float presentations. More than that, Rag and Flag Day is also about the wider community. Eusoff together with other university students

work to raise funds for worthy causes. While the magnitude and complexity of Rag and Flag has increased substantially through the years, the idea behind the event has always been the same—to contribute something back to the community. Today, Rag and Flag has evolved from a simple one-day event to a staggering half-

a-million dollar fund-raiser. Moreover, the event reached a milestone in 2007 when it was held at the Padang for the first time.

Rag and Flag, or Welfare Week, as it was known in the past, has always been an integral part of the Eusoff experience. Eusoff Hall won it for the first time in AY



1968/69 and has consistently proven to be a strong contender every year, even capturing the title for three consecutive years, as in 1971 to 1973.

Ms Lim Bee Lum recalled that in the past, all Eusoff College residents were involved in the building of the float. The secret behind winning the title was to come up with

a fascinating theme, and to dress everyone up to suit the theme well. Ms Lim said, "We would always have a strong theme but we didn't spend that much money on our outfits. I remember fondly that the other halls would always be sneaking around to find out what our theme was for that year. We had this small driveway into the car park and that's where we

parked the lorry. We would sit on wooden benches at the entrance to the drive so that if anybody comes peeking, we will hammer them."

Today, Rag and Flag is serious business. The Rag and Flag Team spearheads the building of the float and freshies get involved during the Orientation process.





Rag and Flag

During the days of the College, the ladies used to work through the night before Rag Day, building the float with only a few days of preparation. Today, the Rag Team works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

throughout the three-month break before the new academic year begins. The floats are veritable masterpieces of technological and design brilliance. In 2007, when Eusoff won the Best Float for Halls of Res-

idence, the float was a Space Shuttle. It had a ramp that dropped down to allow the Explorer, our version of the Mars Rover, to drive onto the field. The float presentation involved more than 70 dancers



in elaborate costumes, all hand-made by the wardrobe team, and spectacular body paint. The event is a sight to behold, especially when the entire Hall—freshmen and seniors alike—cheer their hearts out

for their beloved Hall. Rag Day marks the apogee of our Orientation celebrations. There, amidst a sea of yellow shirts, the crimson flag unfurls, unleashing a ferocious cheer, “Eusoff to the Fore!” It is

here—in this one moment—that the freshmen understand the passion for Eusoff.



Eusoff Queen to Mr and Miss Eusoff

According to Dr Jasbir Kaur, Eusoff always teemed with excitement during the Rag and Flag season as it coincided with the election of the Eusoff Queen. The winner of the contest—dubbed Miss Eusoff—would be paraded during the display of the float. Eusoff women had a reputation for winning just about every beauty contest on campus. Ms Christine Khor (1969–1971) reveals that Eusoff always made

good use of their Malaysian connections to pick the best-looking women who were then drilled in how to walk right and talk right, thus dominating the campus contests of the day.

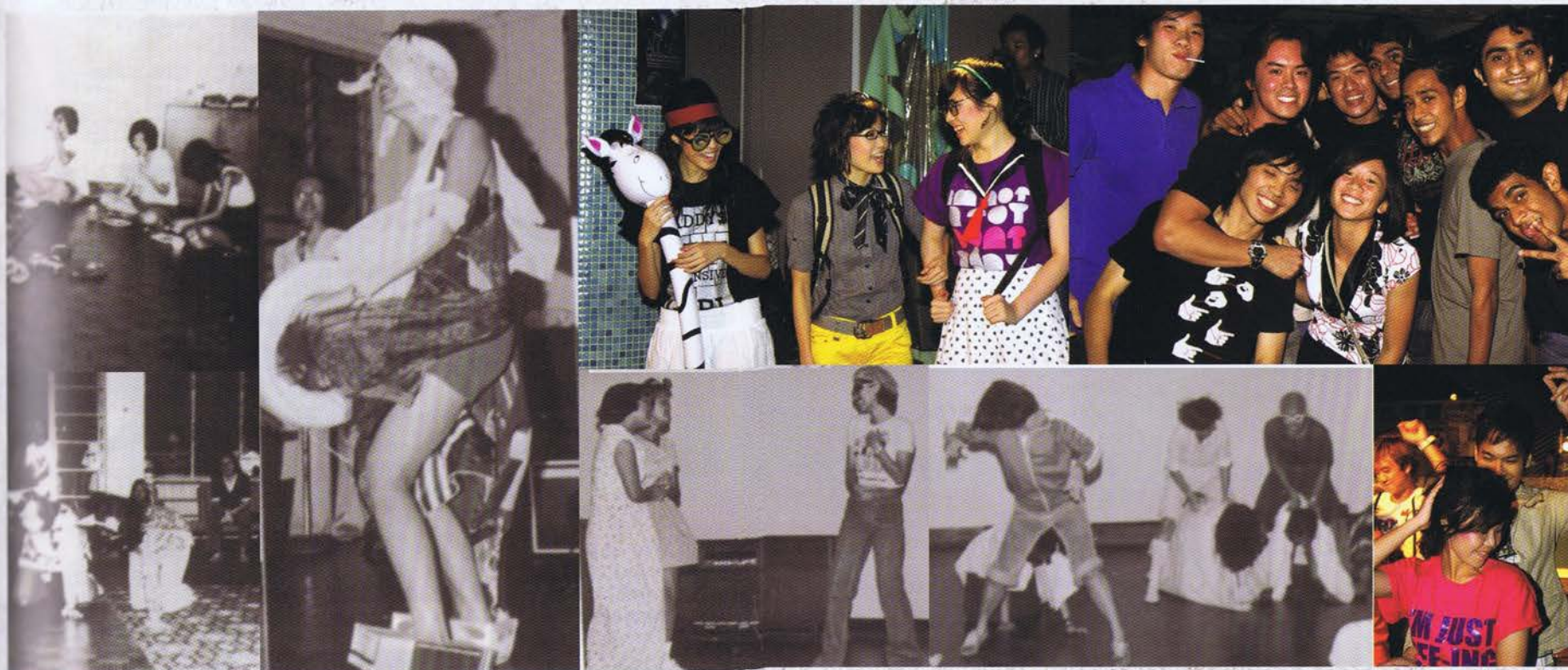
The Eusoff Queen tradition has evolved into something new. No longer associated with Rag Day, the competition is now part of the Annual Dinner and Dance (DnD) celebrations.

Reflecting the co-ed nature of the hall, the DnD celebrations now have a Mr and Miss Eusoff contest. Each of the five blocks puts up their most attractive couple, who are crowned at the dinner itself.





Jam and Hops, and the Eusoff Bash



Hen Hops may be a thing of the past but Eusoffians have not forgotten how to party. In the 1980s and the 1990s, Eusoffians organised what became known as Jam and Hops—a combination of live music and dancing. People from all over campus turned up during the Orientation period, and the Forum at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences would be transformed into a large outdoor concert stage with stage lights and booming speakers. Thousands of undergrads would pack into

the space to party the night away, and then walk to Fong Seng afterwards for *nasi lemak*. Today, Jam and Hops are things of the past. The 21st century Eusoffian parties are at exclusive nightspot venues like Zouk, Ministry of Sound and the Butter Factory. Bashes, as the parties are called today, mark the Hall's celebrations of the end of Orientation and the annual Dance Production, or as a part of the pre-Dinner and Dance festivities.

Formal Dinners

How can we talk about the Eusoff experience without mentioning formal dinners? Every year, without fail, there is always a place in the calendar of events for at least one formal dinner. For every occasion, every award won, every significant event, the Hall celebrates with a formal dinner where it expects its young women and men to dress up, sit together and share a meal with guests of the Hall.

There were certainly good reasons behind these formal dinners, which were sometimes difficult to organise and sit through. Associate Professor Kalyani Mehta from the Department of Social Work in the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and JCRC President in 1969, told us:

“The general feeling I got from the residents was: ‘Why did we have to dress

up and go down and have all these formal things?’ The principal, Dr. Nalla Tan at that time, used to emphasise that this is all part of grooming and learning how to greet our guests. It wasn’t very interesting after a while, especially if you had deadlines to meet and had to spend three hours at the dinner. It used to be kind of a chore. When I became President in the final year, the baby came to lap—to change



the attitude and to make it into an event that people would enjoy. For example, bringing in some nice music so that it was a more enjoyable event for all."

The tradition of the occasional compulsory formal dinner, together with hall-catered food, have both become a part of Eusoffian culture and what it means to be a hostelite. Through the act of living to-

gether and having meals together, formal dinners have certainly helped to forge a stronger common identity.

For Eusoffians, what is so memorable about these dinners? One yearbook article described it most succinctly. "Formal Dinner. Wah. Must be an important affair. Need to dress up, and eat like ladies and gentleman... What does one hear? The

buzz of conversation? No, the BUZZ!!! Of conversation, with periodic 'shhh's' from those who diligently strain to hear the speaker who is periodically rendered unintelligible as his words of wisdom are diffused by the echoes, crackled by the sound system, and drowned by the noise."



Open House

In the past, it was known as the Grand Open House, which was a fun fair and charity event, and up to the 1990s, the fun fairs were still an integral part of the day when the Hall was open to parents and friends. The Grand Open House was the only day in the year that visitors could visit the rooms in Eusoff College, especially since male visitors could not get beyond a particular point in the main block which led to the female-only dormitory rooms. With the college going co-ed, and with the more open concept plan in Eusoff Hall, visitors to the Hall are a common-sight. In fact, almost every weekend, it is usual to see families helping Eusoffians to carry their groceries or bulky items, or Mother coming to inspect the state of the room. Open House today is more for junior college students to visit the Hall as part of the outreach activities to potential Eusoffians. The old fun fair has become the annual Bazaar at the Forum under the Central Library. Stalls selling everything

from food to T-shirts to games are set up to help raise funds for various voluntary organisations. Eusoffians stay overnight in the Forum in shifts to 'guard' the goods—all very much a part of the fun of life in Eusoff.





Traditions

Traditions bind disparate groups of people together more profoundly than any creed or mission statement can do. Traditions help people identify with a particular place in order to live out the dreams and vision of an organisation. The culture and values of a particular place depend largely on its traditions.

These traditions, some evolving over the years, have collectively moulded Eusoff Hall into what it is today, and continue to sustain it still.

Even though many of these traditions have come and gone, they are worth another look to appreciate the inspiration behind them and how they have contributed to the quintessential Eusoff experience.





Past Traditions

Panty Raids

The relationship between Eusoff College and Raffles Hall in the 1960s and 1970s is best summed up as a love-hate relationship. The boys would play pranks on the girls one moment and give them flowers the next. As part of this love-hate tango, the Raffles boys decided one day to steal bras and panties from the Eusoff laundry room. At the same time, some of these guys would knock on the Eusoff room doors and try to get the girls, many of whom were scared out of their wits, to hand over their prized assets. Lingerie, that is.

The next day, bemused residents would be greeted by fresh underwear hung on the flagpole in front of Raffles Hall. Ms Lim Bee Lum's account of the raid is reflective of the mock antagonism that typified

these Eusoff-Raffles skirmishes:

"Of course when the Raffles boys come to raid us, they must pretend to be warriors. When the police came, the boys started to serenade us, singing to us and we serenaded back. We told the police: 'No problem, no problem, we were just singing.' The policemen will say: 'Don't make too much noise, go back and study okay?' After that, they would happily continue the raid."

Nobody from Eusoff College would dare claim the boy's 'trophy' on the flagpoles for fear of derision.

Professor Wazir Jahan Karim said:

"No one would claim their undergarments. I mean, they were good-looking underwear. And the next day it would be removed by the garbage people with great disgust."

This would become an annual affair,

occurring usually during Orientation week. According to some accounts, the panty raid even received considerable co-operation from the girls.

Professor Wazir said: "I think the Raffles boys knocked on the girls' doors and they were so scared that they threw their panties at them and then hurriedly locked the door. I never understood how it worked. How did the boys get hold of all those bras and panties? I mean, the next day they will be on the pole. I'm sure the girls did offer some to them."

Although these were peculiar times when guys would resort to stealing a girl's lingerie to prove a hall's superiority, Ms Lim thought that it was all in the name of good, harmless fun. She said: "We had fun!"

Past Traditions

Cracker Wars

This tradition traced its roots to a particular incident; when Raffles and Eusoff held their first ever debate against each other in 1959. The Raffles boys, in a bid to verbally intimidate the girls, resorted to unabashedly sexist comments. One of the speakers from Raffles said that 'women are just things to get married to' and that men 'condescended to marry women' only so they could benevolently 'enlighten' them. The Eusoff girls were nicknamed 'M-U-G-S', in a bid to stereotype the girls as bookworms who were unable to think out of the box. So incensed were the girls by these remarks that they decided to teach the boys a lesson and ten girls started plotting against Raffles Hall. And that was how it began.

16 March 1959: While the Raffles boys were still in the festive Chinese New

Year mood, these 10 brave young souls stormed the Raffles building in the middle of the night, lit the first firecrackers, and threw them at the unsuspecting boys.

Awoken from their slumber, the astounded Raffles Hall boys started retaliating, but the damage was already done. Waves of Raffles and Eusoff students started to pour in, some only curious, some mysti-

fied, others ready to take up arms and join in the fight.

The audacity of these 10 feisty ladies started a movement known as the Cracker Wars. It was such a roaring success that *The Malayan Undergrad* called it the "beginning of (a) new fusion of life and activity".

Through the Years

...from the *Malayan Undergrad*
17th February, 1959

Varsity Women: Half Knitted Blue Stockings

• Unenlightened • Socially inactive • politically apathetic

THIS was the decision arrived at during a lively debate between Raffles Hall and Eusoff College held on the 11th of this month. Charles Keel, the opening speaker stated that "women are just things to get married to." He later added that in the Varsity GIRL is spelt M-U-G. These "mugs" have flat noses due to constant contact with books.

Raffles Hall's second speaker Gopinath Pillai said that to a woman student in the University, anything other than books is a waste of time. Woman students reminded him of Raffles Hall food — "You don't feel like eating it."

BUNDLE OF INERTIA
Tan Chin Siew, speaking for the males described women as a bundle of inertia.

(Mahasiewa) Kaur restricted herself to a series of definitions and concluded that "if women do not attend functions that's because the men do not invite them."

women as a bundle of inertia. He felt that the "driving force behind all projects is a non-female".

Eugene Wijeyesinghe then spoke of the women as a completely unenlightened group. "The only reason why men stoop so low as to marry them is because they feel that this would uplift the women".

WEAK DEFENCE
In the face of stiff attack from the men, the women took a passive role. Eusoff's leading speaker Jasbir

do not invite them".

Stertorous Speaker Lucy Maniam began her arguments by asking the house a series of questions. Expecting no answers she was completely shaken when she received the wrong kind of answers.

Still dazed she concluded, "You come to Eusoff and see what happens when the Newspaperman comes in the morning."

ENLIGHTENED DIPLOMACY
Miss Leong Siew Mun was of the opinion that it was enlightenment on the part of girls to refuse invitations to dances. Women do not discuss politics with men, she continued, because they do not wish to hurt the men's ego. She concluded that this was diplomacy on the part of the women.

By this time most of the male members of the house were in high-spirits. Amidst boos and cat-calls, Miss Lee Kee Kok screamed, "If this crude and vulgar remarks and unruly behaviour is enlightenment, how glad we are that we are not enlightened."

BIG CHANGE AT EUSOFF COLLEGE

Residents of Eusoff College appear to have taken the charge that they are "socially inactive" rather seriously and made attempts to disprove it. In spite of the proximity of the examinations (and girls are supposed to be spelt MUG) they have over the last month been showing a remarkable enthusiasm and interest in University life.

The Chinese new year cracker warfare seems to be the beginning of this new fusion of life and activity. The initiative and bravado of the ten girls who stormed the nearby Raffles Hall was a sufficient incentive to rouse the sleepy hollow. The effect was so great that quick preparations were made to defend against the return attack from Raffles Hall.

The visit of H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh provided another occasion for letting Apart from the usual enter-tainment of guests at dinner nations. What an excellent on Wednesday evenings, there idea to waylay the Duke! A was a special 'Garden Party' banner was produced in next on the 25th of February in to no time and about fifty honour of the maidens who girls were soon down at the will be leaving the College. Duncarn Road Hostels to it was attended by many make a bid to stop the Duke's dignitaries including the

make a bid to stop the Duke's car. Though not a complete success, it was thought worth the glimpse of the Duke described by one enthusiast as a "Greek God".

"War"



dignitaries including the Vice-Chancellor, and Professor A.A. Sandesham. Also present were many members of the staff and Student Councilors. Guests and members of the College mixed informally and spent a very pleasant evening. The Vice-Chancellor was even persuaded to address the gathering. With his usual good humour the Vice-Chancellor, referring to the Raffles Hall escapade during the Duke's visit, suggested the setting up of a department of 'Physical Culture'. Miss Jasbir Kaur, on behalf of the Eusoffians, bade farewell to the senior students.

The examinations have since then occupied most of the residents, but it is believed that this spirit of adventure and life is here to stay. Being accused too often of a pathy and inactivity, a certain number of residents are sitting up and trying to remedy the fault. If the achievements of the last month are any indication there is hope that Eusoff College will cease being a place occupied by 'MUGS'.



Professor Jasbir Kaur recalls: "We collected money, bought loads of crackers and went to war. The objective was to keep the boys out but I remember a lot of them managed to come in. And some of them were kind of arrested and locked up for breaking the rules!" Professor Lee Kee Kok, now a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Manchester, said: "This tradition seems to typify the sort of rela-

tionship we have with Raffles. The Raffles lot will come and release firecrackers. We, in turn, would be ready with our own firecrackers, other missiles and even water at the ready. We would toss the firecrackers out the windows at the boys."

Past Traditions

Hen Parties

Mind you.

These Eusoff girls didn't chicken out.

They were just part of a Eusoff tradition called Hen Hop parties.



It was the Eusoff version of a bachelorette party, more commonly known as hen parties, popularised by Western pop culture. In the 1960s and 1970s, Eusoff College ladies would participate in an evening of fashion parades and skit items. The main stars of the show at these parties were the 'hens'! In the spirit of informal fun, these poor 'hens', comprising seniors and

juniors alike, would have to cackle after each item and parade themselves by performing all sorts of unimaginable antics.

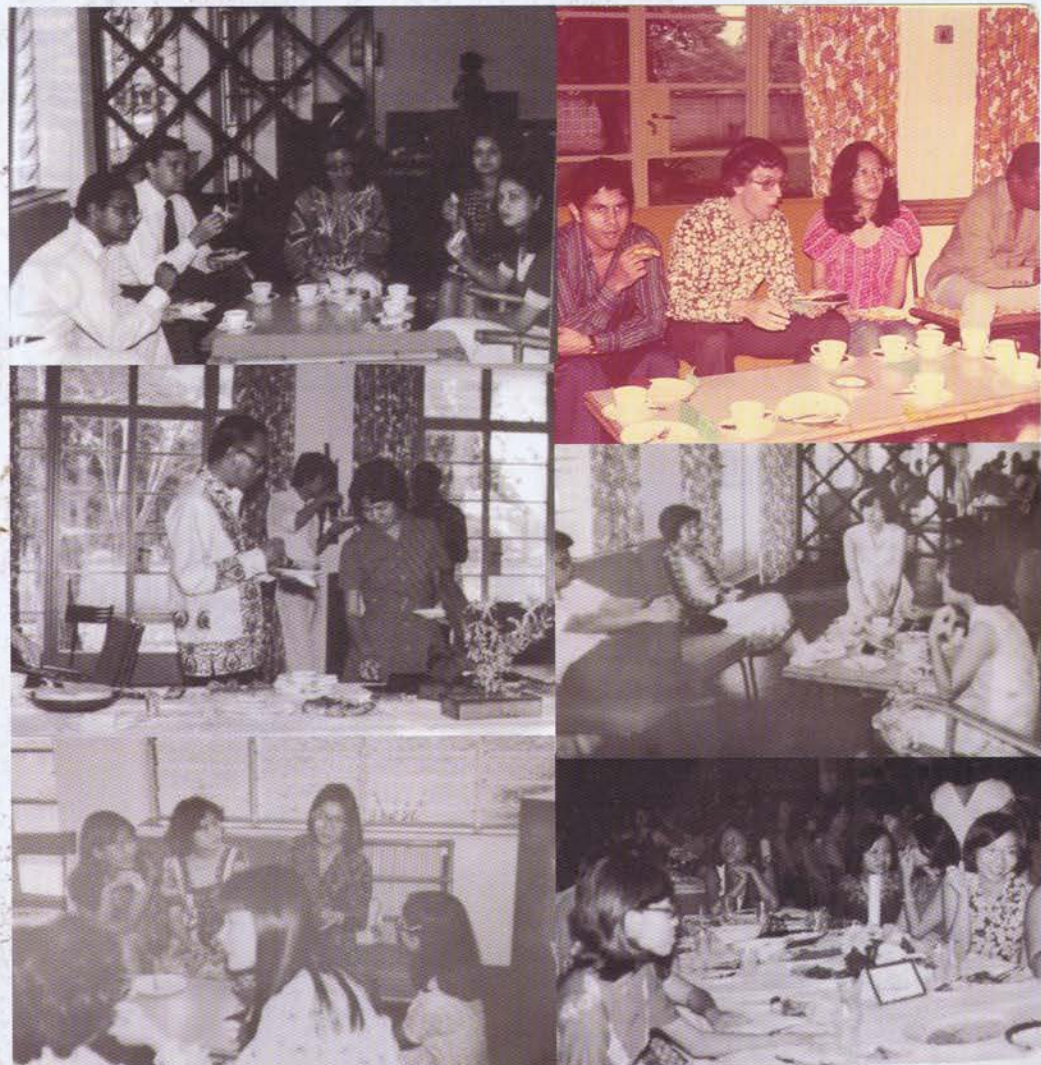
This was a way the students organised their own fun, the self-entertainment of the past in a world without cable TV or the Internet. It became so popular and such an integral part of the Eusoff experience that Eusoff College actually celebrated its

25th anniversary with a hen hop exchange between former and present Eusoffians!

With Eusoff Hall going co-ed in AY 1984/85, hen hop parties gradually faded away.

Coming Down Tea

During the Eusoff College years, one of the most significant events for a senior graduating student was the Coming Down Tea. Final year students invited professors to their hostel during this farewell tea not just to thank them for teaching them during their years in the university, but also to show them around their rooms, showcasing to their lecturers those interesting items and unforgettable memories which made their stay in Eusoff extremely memorable.





Romance in Eusoff

You know what it was like.

To look at that pretty girl or that really cute guy from the opposite block out of the corner of your eye. You know, THAT guy or girl. Suddenly, it all adds up. Committee meetings you would never have gone for, late night suppers, 'chit-chat' sessions into the middle of the night, showering the person with exorbitant gifts, nudging on MSN chat every half-hour when you could have walked to the person's room. In the end, you find yourself falling ever more hopelessly in love.

Ms Leong Ching, who was in the Hall from 1988 to 1991, where she met her future husband, wrote this about Hall romance in a *Straits Times LIFE!* article:

"A lot of the courtship rituals of the 1990s go on in hostels. It's a testing ground for marriage—cooking, laundry, bills and all. After all, if you've chatted to a guy while hanging up your laundry, frillies included, there is nothing very much to hide.



We learnt what the dating game was like, to flirt and study philosophy at the same time.
To rise at dawn, swim at sunset, play tennis doubles with five people.

Ostensibly, after delivering the Cold Storage bags, my mother always lingered in my room to check my tennis rackets to see if they needed re-stringing. The real reason was to try and catch a glimpse of whichever chap I happened to fancy at the moment."

Many people find their soul mates in Eusoff, and these relationships sometimes lead to a beautiful marriage. A couple once had their marriage ceremony held in Eusoff Hall; others have staged their wedding photography sessions on its well-trimmed lawns.





Romance in Eusoff

Stefen Chow and Lin Hui-Yi (1999–2003)

Married 22 March 2008

Stefen: There was a lot of romance going around. For us, we met each other during Orientation. We were in the same Orientation group. When I saw her, that was it. My resistance crumbled. (laughs).

Hui-Yi: I think the time you spend in the Hall is really conducive for building a relationship because I saw Stefen every day except during weekends when I went home. However, day in and day out, you will see the person, you understand how he lives, how he cooks his instant noodles, how his alarm clock wakes the block up in the morning that I have to go and knock on his door. Last time we could duplicate keys, so I would have a key to his room and upon entering his room, he would still be sleeping while his alarm clock would be on full blast. I guess you really get to understand the mundane and also interesting facets of a person and how it might work out in the long term. Another plus would be the late night strolls on NUS campus.

Stefen: It was really quite romantic, and compared to a relationship between two working people, you definitely get to spend much more time together. In Hall, being in a relationship is kind of sweet.



Kristian Thorbjornsen and Rachel Huang Yanling (2003–2006)

Married 7 October 2007

On 7 October 2007, Kristian and Rachel exchanged their vows at the Multi-Purpose Court (MPC) in Eusoff Hall. Their wedding ceremony was attended by family and old friends from the Hall. To them, the place held utmost significance.

Kristian explains, "It was at the MPC where I first met Rachel. It was during the inter-block games and she was there playing netball." Perhaps meeting the love of his life in Hall made his experience in Eusoff even sweeter. "The whole Eusoff experience was enriching. It was the part of university life that I would not mind reliving," says Kristian. During his stay in Eusoff Hall, he was heavily involved in committees such as Flag and IHG Convening, as well as acting and dancing for the Dance Productions.

Indeed, love was in the air at the MPC the day they proudly affirmed their love for each other, declaring, "Love sealed where it first began."





From College to Hall—Continuing of New Traditions

"I am sure that what the first Fellows of the College would wish with me at this time is not so much for the blind preservation of established traditions as for the continued appreciation of the meaning behind them."

*The late Ruth Wong
First Principal of Eusoff College*

"When Eusoffians moved from the College to the Hall, they did not feel like they were establishing a new hall but rather continuing the Eusoff spirit in a new location. They kept many of the best traditions of the College. However, as with any institution, the passage of time brought new changes—some traditions evolved to reflect their era while other new hall customs were created."

*Professor Andrew Tay
Founding Master of Eusoff Hall*



Conclusion

Some traditions in the Hall have evolved but the same spirit of friendship and camaraderie still exists. The university experience comes alive in the Hall through the mundane as well as the spectacular. It is the precious experience of living with friends, working together, building up the Hall together that makes the experience unforgettable. Although divided by years, the Eusoff experience of friendship, trust, love, struggle, joy and success is both common to the College and the Hall.





Eusoffians Challenging the Norms

Conquering Everest



On 2 June 2005, Stefen Chow E-Fung stood on top of the world. Literally. Having reached the summit of Mount Everest, he unfurled the NUS Flag and planted it on the peak. This simple act represented the culmination of a journey—the human journey in the constant and continual quest to scale greater heights.

For Stefen and his team in the NUS Centennial Everest Expedition, their journey to the top of the world had started three years before. They were the only five out of 68 applicants who made the final team. The team undertook a strenuous physical and mental training regime, including an ice-climbing course in Beijing and expeditions to three other Himalayan peaks. They also earned the distinction of being the first university team from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to attempt such an expedition.

Significantly, two members of the team, Ee Khong Lean (Team Leader) and Stefen, are both Eusoffians. Both credited the Hall with giving them the experience and skills that stood them in good stead for Everest. Indeed, they were not the first nor the last to reach the summit of the world. The residents who walked these proud corridors have always set themselves apart on the larger world stage.

Ex-Eusoffian Johann Annuar, preceded Khong Lean and Stefen to Everest. The former vice president of the JCRC was a member of the first ever Singapore Mount Everest Expedition, which successfully scaled Mount Everest in May 1998. He played the vital role of communications officer and was in charge of communications hardware and software throughout the expedition. Even from such a lofty perch, Johann's thoughts were with Eusoff Hall. From Mount Everest Base Camp, he reflected, "That's what I love so much about the Hall—it brings people together like no other institution can."

On Top of the World

Now ex-Eusoffians Jane Lee and Sim Yi Hui are attempting another landmark achievement by being the first Singapore women's team to scale Everest. The Women Everest Team also rekindled the Eusoffian connection when they consulted Johann's team for advice and insight into the expedition.



1999 - 2003

Stefen Chow E-Fung



Stefen Chow E-Fung was part of the NUS Centennial Everest Team that reached the summit of the world's highest peak on 2 June 2005. Today, he is an award winning photographer and a much sought-after speaker.

Stefen is now famous for his mountaineering feat, but there is more to this Engineering graduate than his Everest achievement. Even during his student days, he distinguished himself as an active student leader in Eusoff, leading the Eusoff Voluntary Corps (EVC), and the marketing committees for Rag and Flag as well as Dinner and Dance (DnD), among other things. For him, the committees in Eusoff were the learning platforms that allowed him to develop his potential and engage with the real world. Citing the example of leading the marketing committee in DnD, he explained that it was all unfamiliar when he started, having to deal directly with corporations, figuring out how everything worked and managing expectations.

It was tough learning on the job but he would not have it any other way. As he put it himself, "Where else do you canvass for funds from private corporations for you to hold a party? [Hall is a great place to learn] because the consequences were not very serious. [If] you don't meet your Marketing target, you drink less alcohol during the DnD. And [if] you don't raise enough funds it's not like you get sacked or you get EOGM. It's really a very safe place for you to develop your potential."

Stefen would be the first to say that his time at Eusoff prepared him for the climb of his life. He was selected from over 60 applicants to be in the final five-member team to scale Everest. In his final year in NUS, when he was working on his Final Year Project, he endured



Climbing the Human Spirit

gruelling mental and physical tests as well as team work and leadership trials.

"It was a crazy, crazy last half of the year. And looking back it was quite amazing how I graduated because I was spending so much time just training," he quipped. "In the end, it wasn't the strongest climber [who made it] but also the team player and a person who could communicate. I was pretty lucky to get through it. And part of the reason why I felt I was highlighted within the group was because of the street-wise, street-smart kind of attitude that brought me to Everest. And I would say that the street-smart attitude developed from



1999 - 2003

Stefen Chow E-Fung



Eusoff Hall days where all the committees that I joined, all the relationships that I have built, allowed me to be very vocal and easy with new relationships.” While on the team, Stefen again made use of the skills acquired at Eusoff to negotiate with a number of companies to secure the best equipment for the team.

So, how is life after Everest? Stefen is now engaged fulltime in his other passion—photography. In addition to being a photojournalist for various international magazines and news agencies, he is a much sought-after speaker and corporate trainer. Stefen has been named one of Asia’s finest photographers by Nikon, and staged his first solo exhibition on Mount Everest at the National Library entitled *Climbing the Human Spirit—An Everest Journey*. His accomplishments has also won him recognition by NUS as one of its 10 Young Outstanding Alumni.

Sometimes all this seems too good to be true, he conceded. But he still looks back to Eusoff, where it all started. In his view, his time at Eusoff was the best time of his life.





2004-2006

Jane Lee



Jane Lee is the co-founder and leader of the Singapore Women's Everest Team, which is currently preparing for the climb of their lives.

When asked about mountaineering, Jane's enthusiasm is irrepressible as she patiently describes the nitty-gritty details of her favourite sport. However, the general image of a mountain climber is not that of a woman in bulky mountain gear. So why an all-women team? Jane explained that the five women who participated in the NUS Make It Real programme that climbed Allen's Peak in Nepal decided that they had great camaraderie and chemistry climbing together. Wanting to build on the initial experience and climb more mountains together, four out of the five eventually came together to form the Women's Everest Team.

When asked about the difficulties they faced in their preparation for the gruelling climb up Everest, their biggest difficulty was, surprisingly, not the training or the physical exertions but the finances. "It is difficult to raise funding for mountaineering in Singapore, I guess, mostly because the sport is very niche. And the trouble with the sport is that it has very high costs. For instance, you can't just buy a basketball and start playing. The fact that Singapore does not have any mountains means that when we train, we already expend a lot of our expenses going overseas to climb," she explained. Indeed, all the various costs can add up to a hefty sum. For instance, a bottle of oxygen costs US\$500 and each climber needs six bottles. And so Jane and her team have been working hard scouring for funding via government organisations, corporate sponsorships and public contributions. This has really stretched them as they have had to prepare sponsorship proposals and meet with sponsors in addition to juggling their jobs. Fortunately, their employers have been supportive. Jane also sees a positive angle in this because the sponsorship, either by institutions or by the public, allows Singaporeans on the street



to identify with their expedition to Everest.

"We have our Everest Base Camp trek [and] we [are] actually inviting more people to come visit us and stay a night with us if [they] can and be a part of our Expedition in a very small way, in a way that's manageable to most people on the street."

The team has been training together systematically for the past three and a half years. But being an all-female as well as an Asian team



2004-2006

Jane Lee



brought with it interesting encounters with other international teams. Whenever they meet climbers from different parts of the world who talked of climbing the Alps or in Colorado, the team would joke that they have Bukit Timah Hill in Singapore, which stands at 164 metres. The other teams would usually remark, "Wow, you guys are tiny" or, "Whoa, you guys are all girls!"

"They're very amused by the fact that we're women climbers and that we're Asians," quipped Jane. But the team went on to confound the international climbers with their mountaineering achievements. On their last climb in Cho Oyu, Tibet, the sixth highest mountain in the world, many international teams did not make it to the summit because of the terrible weather. The Women's Everest Team led the pack by being the first team to make it up together, and their summit was the first for that season in Cho Oyu. Their successful summit also meant that they broke up the trail, which allowed others to follow subsequently.

"I guess this is an interesting bit of info—a group of women from Singapore and we've only been climbing for three and a half years and we did this in a season when most climbers retreated and went home."

When asked how her time at Eusoff has impacted what she is currently doing, she said, "I think what helped was the fact that it was a very vibrant culture. And I think being in a vibrant culture helps to give you a sense of energy."

In fact, the team was formed when Jane was still at Eusoff, and she remembers the Monday nights spent in the Eusoff Hall boardroom



for the team's weekly meetings. She is thankful for the networking support afforded by the Hall and for the effort put in by the Master of the Hall, Associate Professor Tan Tin Wee, in helping them to secure sponsors.

Finally, the message Jane hopes to spread through her expedition is to encourage others to reach for greater heights. "[We want] to spread the message that [if] six women who hold ordinary jobs in Singapore can climb Everest, [then] what else can be done?"



Conclusion

“Because it is there”



Tenzing Norgay famously said, "I have climbed my mountain, but I must live my life." Even as these Eusoffians look behind them or ahead to the towering heights of Everest, they understand that Everest itself is not the end. The spirit in them that responded to the challenge of the mountain will go forth to meet the challenge of life itself.

Eusoffians who graduated from these hallowed hallways went on to be frontrunners who have wrought remarkable changes in their own fields, and Eusoff celebrates their courage and triumph in challenging the limits that have constrained others. John F Kennedy once said, "One man can make a difference and every man should try." At Eusoff, men and women have made that difference, and continue to do so every day.

PERCEPTION 71

arrival
you come i come altogether now
"EUSOFF ALL HAIL TO EUSOFF"
 what is happening?
hello, yes i'm american; you?
malaysians from ipoh. oh
me? from minnesota oh
(one whole year is a long time they told me)
 help i'm lost and lonely
what was your name again
could you please write that down?
netball? you mean volleyball.
i'm eating what? where? how?
questions questions
 what does it mean
i'm coming i think i understand
(were you in a daze too?)
but i'm so sleepy. what the hell is that
 oh i see
and i see again. but i don't see.
"it is invariably saddening to look through
new eyes at things upon which you have
expanded your own powers."
i've got to TALK to someone. if i hop
another hop i'll drop
 yes mum and dad there

is a place called Singapore and its NOT in china.
lets go for supper. wo shi meigo ren
nin hao ma. no-la
tenth week.
i looked into the mirror over your shoulder
and although we looked quite different
it was the same feeling that passed through
us as we smiled and joked. and home
is where the heart is.
 and then at times
it is anachronistic, dissonant, but who can
 turn back?
are you going to the library? lets go for coffee.
we walked. it was sunset. i kept thinking
how different the sky was here. i told you
and you laughed. the trees cut such proud
angles against the sky.
 and i thought
are you and i so different. what separates us?
i do things you would never do.
you do things i would never do.
are barriers of human walls necessary
i wish i knew, do you?
Black sky, star lit by stars
all this will be about here and we will go
our own lives to lead in our own ways

immeasurably full. Left to perpetually
wonder ABOUT each other how are you
and how am i and what is different
about you, about me and illusion or reality.
our eyes met. we laughed
 laughter
intermingling, mine indiscernible from yours.
and we knew that you are you and i am i
and despite all pain possible at some future
point in space and time it didn't matter
because we respected and understood.
The sun set
we held hands and ran back through the rain.

Gretchen Liu (nee Gustafson)

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of overlapping geometric shapes in shades of green, yellow, pink, and blue. A black, torn-edge tag is positioned diagonally across the upper half, featuring the title in white, hand-drawn capital letters. The tag is secured with a yellow ring at its top right corner and a pink ring at its bottom left corner. A thick black line curves across the middle of the page, passing behind the tag.

THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT EU SOFF

"Can you take me to Eu-how-to-pronounce-the-word-soff Hall please?"

"Where ah?"

"Eeeewwsoff Hall, National University of Singapore!"

"NUS ah! Ok ok!"

Thus begins the international student's first brush with Eusoff, NUS and in essence, Singapore. Completely new to his surroundings, barely able to pronounce the name of his destination, barely understanding the language spoken (though it claims to be English), life for an international student in Eusoff can be quite a stressful yet rewarding, experience.

After racking up a hefty taxi fare from being lost in NUS with the 'taxi uncle' having difficulties differentiating between Yusof Ishak House and Eusoff Hall, the international student finally arrives at his destination. He alights from the cab, suitcases and boxes filled with goodies from his homeland in tow, and takes in the sight of the low-lying red-bricked buildings that he will have to call home for the next few months.

He checks in and gets his key-called-a-transponder from the nice ladies at the hall office. It is then that the real journey begins—the arduous task of lugging all his stuff across the never-ending staircases and hallways to his designated room. Woe betide the student if he has the misfortune of being put on the fourth floor of a far flung block—fortunately for him, he invariably comes across friendly senior Eusoffians who will help get him and his luggage installed.

He gets to his room and inspects it and the surroundings—this will be his room for the next year. Often, it is luxurious compared to what he would get at a hostel room back home. Still, work needs to be done to make it liveable for the rest of the year, and he sets about cleaning

THE CONTEMPORARY EXPERIENCE

and unpacking. Halfway through, reality suddenly strikes him—that he is all alone in an alien country, that the people around him are unknown to him, that everything is new and foreign. It does not quite help that day after day NUS loads him with information brochures, that he has a multitude of forms to complete, bank accounts to open, student passes to apply for and what not... Information overload, his brain warns him.

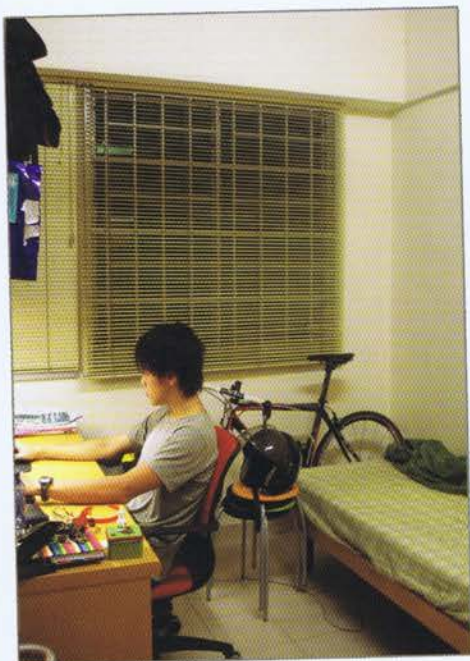
Fortunately again, that is when Eusoff comes to his aid. He befriends his immediate neighbour, possibly an international student like him (good), a local (better) or a local with a car (best!). The enthusiastic seniors in EHOC (the first of many acronyms he will come to learn) or the Eusoff Hall Orientation Committee conduct a week-long orientation programme to acquaint him with life in hall and NUS. Slowly, it starts to become easier to navigate through these new, uncharted waters.

Before he knows it, school has started. He sets his alarm, wakes up religiously (only in the first two weeks) to get to his classes on time...before he begins to become immune to his alarm clock (like a true-blue Eusoffian). He barely makes it to breakfast on time, or misses it altogether, gets to the bus stop and just manages to board the bus—if it is not already bursting at the seams with people, that is. Usually it takes about a week to get used to the mildly confusing shuttle bus routes on campus. His lecture-going attire goes from fully formal, to semi-formal, to 'just-rolled-out-of-bed' informal. When in Eusoff, do as the Eusoffians do, right?

When he comes back in the evening, hall dinner, and the queue for it, awaits him. He eats with his neighbours or new friends from Orientation, before retiring to his room to engage in academic activities (which invariably turn to activities of leisure at some point in time). He then begins his hall commitments—he engages himself in anything that interests him, trying out things that he would never do—and suddenly, he becomes conscious that he is beginning to realise his full potential in Eusoff.

Playing his favourite sport with his neighbour, who might just be the champion trainer he had always wanted, but could not quite afford, or learning how to play the guitar from the ace guitarist of the rocking hall band, the international student is in awe of the potential latent and concentrated in the place called 'hall', amazed by all that he can do and increasingly satisfied with his busy life.

Life in Eusoff as an international student is truly a mixed bag. But these memories will always be cherished by the international student, whether he has stayed here for six months or six years...



Rooms:

For the claustrophobic, Eusoff has the most spacious rooms among the various on-campus accommodation, including the newer high-rises. If that is not enough, double rooms in Eusoff give the feeling of more space—even more so if your roommate happens to have a boyfriend/girlfriend living off-campus, because that way, the room is as good as yours.

Location:

A mere stone's throw away from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) and the School of Business, Eusoff makes it possible to literally run to your classes. With the School of Computing (SoC) partially shifting to the old Law Link near Biz, lessons become closer for those in the SoC too. The guys from Engineering or School of Design and Environment have nothing to complain about either, since both buses from the Eusoff bus stop will take them to their faculty.

Apart from lessons, nothing beats having eating places and a 24-hour convenience store right in Eusoff's backyard—perfect for nocturnal hall residents.

Activities:

'Eh come on', we 'go bananas' and get the 'Eusoff fever' doing activities. Proud of its achievements in both the sporting and cultural fields, Eusoff has a rich heritage of residents who go on to make a difference in their respective fields, as evidenced by the other chapters in this book.

All these perks beg the question—why would an international student not want to stay at Eusoff? The thing is, not everything about Eusoff makes the choice so clear cut or simple for the international student, because there are some things he cannot decipher that easily about Eusoff or NUS or Singapore, for that matter.



IT'S CONTAGIOUS.
EUSOFF

TOP QUIRKS

Food:

Oh Mother! I miss you, but most of all I miss the delicious food you cook!

The eternal complaint of any Eusoffian, whether international or local, is the food. Ask any random Eusoffian about hall food, and the response is very often along the lines of 'it sucks'. It is true that the hall caterer offers a wider variety and more options to Eusoffians now than before, so much so that an alumnus, upon finding out our menu, go 'Wow, you get so much these days eh!'

But still, the food always sounds nicer on paper than it actually is, and the stomach grumbles...

Late nights:

No matter how you try to explain the perennial late night meetings (I mean the official ones, for hall activities) to parents across seas and time zones via Skype or the telephone, they never ever understand.

"So what did you eat in the morning?"

Random garbled reply... "What was that?"

"Ma, the phone isn't clear... call me later."

"Oh, you can't hear me, OH MY GOD! It's so late, what are you still doing?"

And the battle continues. Our stamina is put to further test trying to explain to our parents this new hall culture—the late night work syndrome, where meetings are invariably scheduled after 10 pm for want of people and air-conditioned lounges in Singapore's 'always summer' weather.

But then again, we are not alone on such things. Our local friends have similar problems to explain at home as well. Issues, problems and more generally, hall life binds us together beyond the divides of nationality, religion, language and colour.



GOING INTERNATIONAL IN EUSOFF

IRC—The International Relations Committee

Eusoff was the first NUS organisation to pioneer orientation for international students. Professor Andrew Tay, Master of the Hall (1988-2003), recognised that the population of international students coming to the Hall was on the rise. He was determined that they receive as much practical help as possible like setting up bank accounts or finding food nearby or getting to know the city and finding their way around. Professor Tay said that from his own PhD experience in Australia, he knew how bewildering it could be trying to integrate into a new country and society.



The scheme began as a part of the Hall Orientation programme but quickly developed into a full-fledged Hall committee—the International Relations Committee, which was formed in 1995. The Deputy Vice Chancellor at that time thought this was a great idea and asked other Halls to also consider starting up a similar programme for their international students. Today, the IRC is an integral part of the Hall setup and it successfully integrates hundreds of foreign students from far and near into life in the Hall, the University and Singapore.



Near Afar—The Malaysian Experience in Eusoff

It is not a commonly known fact, but the most active residents in both Eusoff College and Eusoff Hall are quite often our neighbours from across the Causeway. In truth, Malaysians were, for a few years, not even considered foreign students, as Singapore had not separated from Malaysia then. Dr Jasbir Kaur, who was among one of the first groups of residents at Eusoff College, recalls that even while most of the students were Malaysians, she feels that her batch was an extremely well-integrated group.



"All three races were there—Malays, Chinese, Indian—and we all studied together, we played together, we had a lot of fun together, we ate together in the same dining hall."

As it was, the political separation of Malaysia and Singapore in 1965 did not significantly alter the close bonds that had already formed among the Eusoff College residents. For the Malaysians, Eusoff was their home away from home, and their desire to make the best out of things explains why many of them were so active in their time at Eusoff.



Back then, Singapore was not that much different from Malaysia, but that is certainly not the case today, as the decades of independence have led to the development of disparate cultural identities. Despite the geographical proximity, Singlish colloquialisms have not made their way to most

parts of Malaysia, as evidenced by the bewilderment

exhibited by Malaysian residents when encountering Singlish for the first time. The Singaporeans are equally surprised that while they share the *lor's* and *lah's* with the Malaysians, the latter have never heard of *Buay Tahan*, C.M.I and other Singlish expressions. Apparently, the cultural distance between Singapore and Malaysia is further than their physical proximity...



Even so, most Malaysians have a much smoother transition into life at Eusoff, by virtue of the few, but still present, similarities shared with Singaporeans. That is not to say that the Malaysians just blend into the local crowd—rather, they continue to retain a strong sense of their Malaysian identity,

through events such as Malaysia Night, where they gather for a barbeque on 31 August to celebrate Malaysia's National Day. The composition of partygoers never remains purely Malaysian though, as the food inevitably attracts the attention of hungry friends, both local and international.

While the Malaysian experience in Eusoff is certainly unique when compared to the other international residents, the essence of it is still the same—hall activities, food and fun—the very same elements that typify the inimitable Eusoff experience.

FAR ABROAD - THE NEW GENERATION OF GLOBAL STUDENTS AT EUSOFF

The 'real' international student, in the truest sense of the word, as a different culture, and not just a different nationality came only in the 1990s, with the arrival of the first student from Mauritius in 1990. The first batch of PRC scholars from China arrived in 1993, the Indians arrived a year later and Indonesia sent students in 1998. By the turn of the century, Eusoff boasted of a sizeable number of Malaysians, Filipinos, Indians, Indonesians, Vietnamese, Cambodians as well as exchange students from the US, UK, Germany and Canada among others.



The international experience in Eusoff, 1970s style

Armed with a motto of sorts to 'try everything' and to be open to meeting people, it is little wonder that Gretchen Liu (nee Gustafson)'s memories of Eusoff College from June 1971 to March 1972 are like those of any other Eusoff College residents of that time.

That she easily recalls and mentions things like the *char siew pau* man, panty raids, Rag and Flag Day, chatting at *sarabat* stalls shows the deep impression Eusoff College left on her, one of the few international exchange students studying on the then University of Singapore campus.

Coming from the University of Minnesota at a time when universities in the United States tended to be very politicised, the vibrant campus and college culture were a pleasant surprise to Gretchen, who was also struck by how 'young people here knew how to have fun'.

While she admitted that there was some culture shock at the beginning (having rice at almost every meal, and the weather, for example), she soon adjusted to life in Singapore, thanks to the welcoming environment and people at Eusoff College. Before long, she was gamely joining in the various activities and festivals celebrated at Eusoff College, such as the Mooncake Festival where she recalls eating so many mooncakes, she has never been able to touch another mooncake since.

When Gretchen left Singapore in 1972, she took away with her 'many warm and fond memories' and lifelong friends, things that contributed to her returning and truly making Singapore her home.

The International Experience in Eusoff through the eyes of a Non-Resident Fellow

Shortly after Pamela Lee came from Hawaii to Singapore as a young American bride in 1966, Dr Nalla Tan invited her to be a Non-Resident Fellow at Eusoff College. She was initially unsure that she could fit in, since American university life at that time was more liberal than its Singaporean counterpart.

Her fears proved to be unfounded as she soon settled in and busied herself with the duties expected of non-resident fellows, one of which was to be in the College a few hours every evening to keep a record of who had made long distance calls on the communal telephone.

She reflects on the changes the passage of time has wrought upon Eusoff:
"Telephones have dramatically modernised, rooms have become smaller with controlled environments and values have changed, but enjoying the camaraderie of being together with other fellow students at a particular point in time has not changed. Simply put, it is something very precious that must be recognised and treasured."



INTERNATIONAL EUSOFFIANS



Name: Thomas Jackson
Country: United Kingdom (On exchange from University of Durham)
Eusoff Year: 2006
Memories of Eusoff:

- Arriving at Eusoff in the rain after travelling for over 24 hours
- The craziness of Orientation, especially the games that involved running around the Hall and the competitiveness of IHG.
- The amazing quality of the food, but the loveliest kitchen staff in the world.
- Making friends from around the world that I will hopefully stay in touch with forever.



Name: Morikawa Nobuhiko
Country of Origin: Japan
Year in Eusoff: 2007/2008
Memories of Eusoff:

Hey, Eusoffians, the world's greatest hall residents!! I feel great having been with you guys for 10 months though EH is toooooooooooooooooooooo punctual!! Haha.





Name: Owen Goldstrom
Country of Origin: United States of America

Year in Eusoff: Fall Semester 2006

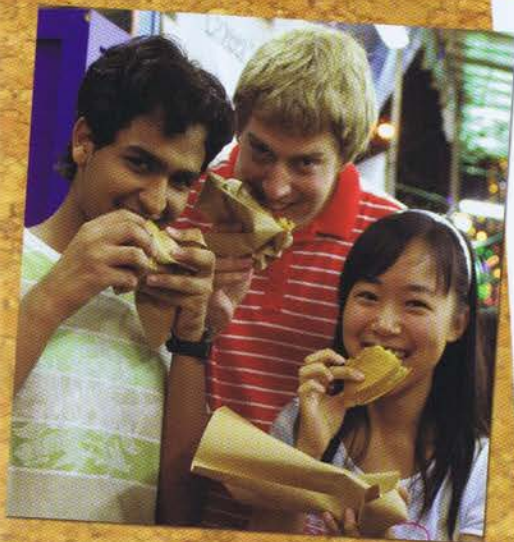
Memories of Eusoff:

Some funny things I remember would be how the lunch lady had a crush on me and always gave me special desserts. Also, how when we made food for exchange student cultural day I burnt the chilli. We definitely had some funny moments when exchange students

tried to speak Singlish and ended sentences in Lah and walawie....

Another thing that was funny was how nobody knew what my lacrosse stick was, except for a few people who had seen American Pie.

Fond memories would be playing Risk till all hours of the night in the Eusoff lounge, eating at the prata shop (I think my favorite was banana cheese prata).



Name: Dennis Øster Pedersen

Country of Origin: Denmark

Year in Eusoff: Semester 1, 2007

Memories of Eusoff:

All my memories from Eusoff are great. It was the best semester of my life!



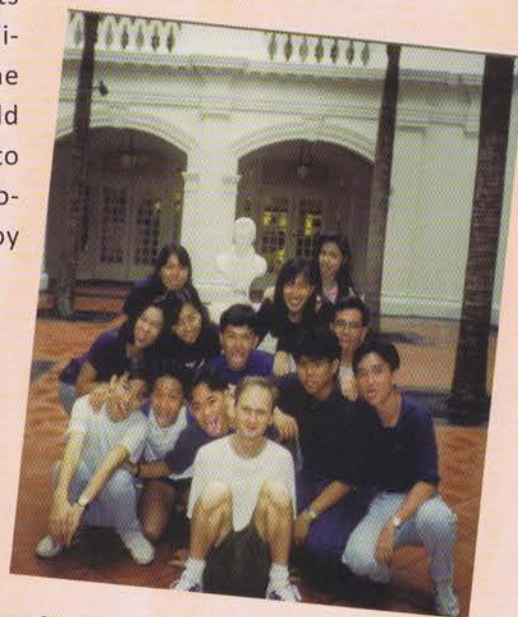
Survival Guide for the International Student



Being international in Eusoff is as funny as life can ever get. Sometimes, we can never understand some things as they are here on campus—like why NUS chooses to freeze its students in the library and the examination halls by judiciously setting low temperatures on the air-conditioning system, or even the use of tissues in a tropical country.

We are amazed by other things, like how a card can be tapped in buses for tickets. Or how it could rain so much, yet classes are never cancelled. Or that taxi cabs don't charge random rates above their meters. Or no corruption. Cleanliness. Clockwork precision. Lecture theatres. High speed free internet. From the first drive out of Changi airport to things we see around us day in and day out, Singapore, and in a way Eusoff, amaze us to the day we graduate.

The international experience cannot be complete without a separate section on Singlish. Something uniquely Singaporean. Any international student's first brush with Singapore invariably is a taste of its hybrid language- English, Chinese dialects, other Indian languages. Some expressions used in Singlish would seem like rubbish or meaningless to the uninitiated ear. Here, we introduce a random sampling provided by our informants in Eusoff:



SINGLISH 1101:

Arrow

To delegate a task to someone, where the task is usually unpleasant or boring.

Buay

A prefix which literally means 'cannot'. For example, '*buay tah-an*' means 'cannot stand it'.

Blur

Someone who is inept or in a world of his own. Can also be used to describe the feeling of being dazed. A common usage is 'Blur like *sotong*'.

Die die

To go all out, with no possibility of non-compliance. The Singlish equivalent of 'die trying'.

Kena

Malay term which denotes that something has happened. The closest English approximation is 'to get'.

Kiasu

Hokkien adjective literally meaning, 'afraid of losing'.

Lah!

The ubiquitous Singlish tag. Generally used like a full-stop in a sentence.

Shiok

A Malay-turned-Singaporean expression denoting extreme pleasure or something of high quality.

So how ah?

A Singlish-shortened version of 'What do you propose to do, then?'

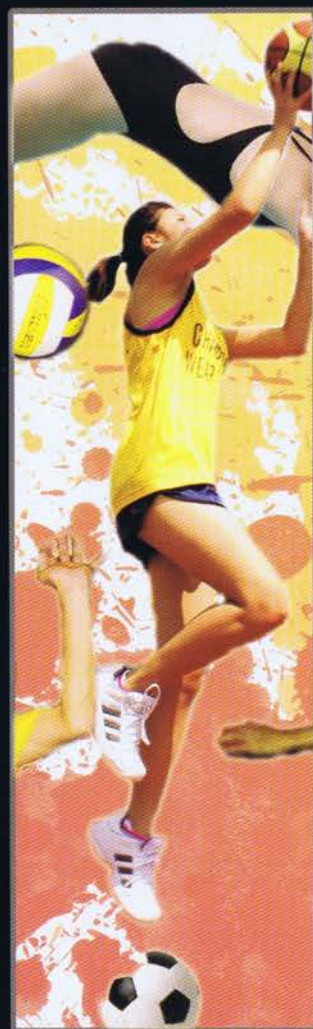
Wah lau!

A popular Hokkien/Singlish expression used in much the same way as 'oh my goodness', 'wow', or 'damn!', depending on the tone used, and the context.

As it can be seen, being an international student in Eusoff thus means novelty in a lot of things – food, events, people, culture, language and lifestyle. For most, it is an extremely memorable time of their life, not only because of Eusoff, but also because it is their first time away from their home country, their parents and their roots. One's college days are amongst the most fondly remembered and enjoyed periods of one's life, and being an international student in Eusoff is even more reason to enjoy and cherish these memories. Last but not least, the best thing gleaned from the international student's halcyon days in Eusoff are of course the many bonds and friendships forged in their time here, be it a short semester or four years that pass all too soon.



eusoffians in sports





The 'Sports Hall'

It was 12 am and NUS was completely deserted. Second-year Political Science student, Shanta Arul, decided that this would be the best time to go for a jog with her friends around the campus—a challenging, heavily inclined track covering over 7 km.

"It's a convenient time and there are not so many people around," she explained.

Such midnight jaunts are not uncommon among Eusoffians, and would actually during the 'Yellow Fever' season, otherwise known as IHG—the Inter-Hall Games.

IHG, in fact, is such a major event on the Eusoff calendar that during IHG season, almost all other hall activities work around IHG training schedules, so that Eusoff sportsmen and sportswomen may

train unfettered by other concerns. As IHG fixtures draw closer, midnight meetings make way for midnight runs—like this one Shanta was embarking on—for Team Eusoff to build up their general fitness, and forge stronger bonds and team spirit while they were at it.

And it is unmistakable when IHG season descends upon Eusoff, for the hall is



painted yellow by both members of the Sports Management Committee (SMC) and ordinary Eusoffians alike. Bright yellow banners, flyers and even replica banana skins are put up all over the hall, while the ubiquitous yellow and black T-shirt is hung outside windows as a show of support. Scoreboards are plastered all over the hall to keep everyone abreast of the latest medal tally, and match fixtures

tacked onto noticeboards for supporters to pencil into their schedules.

Prolonged chit-chat sessions during dinner or supper become a thing of the past during the IHG season, as Eusoffians go down to the track or the courts at the Sports and Recreation Centre (SRC) to cheer themselves hoarse. Eusoffians in the crowd are always easy to spot, thanks

to the striking yellow T-shirts worn to show Hall solidarity.

In the past decade, Eusoff has built a reputation as a 'sports hall' with its passion and commitment to sporting excellence, as well as for its various accomplishments in sports. Eusoff Hall cemented its position as one of the top two sports halls in NUS by clinching its first Overall IHG Champi-



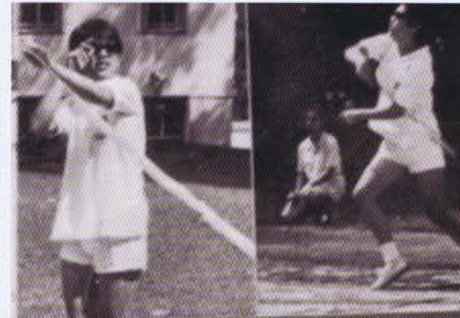
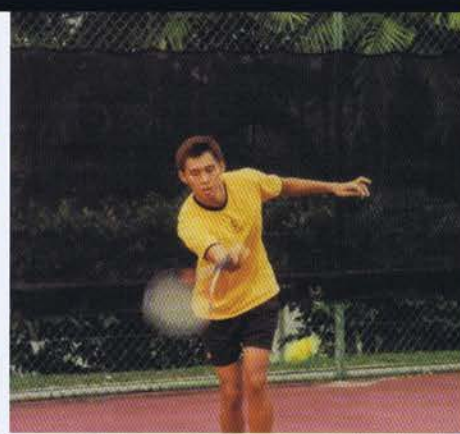


The Sports Hall'

onship title in AY 1997/98, and it has not looked back since. More recently, Eusoff Hall won its second Overall IHG titles in three years, after coming heartbreakingly

close on a number of occasions. Eusoff Hall has also produced outstanding athletes who are vital members of the NUS Team on the Inter-Varsity Polytechnic

(IVP) circuit, and some of them go on to excel in the national and even international arenas.

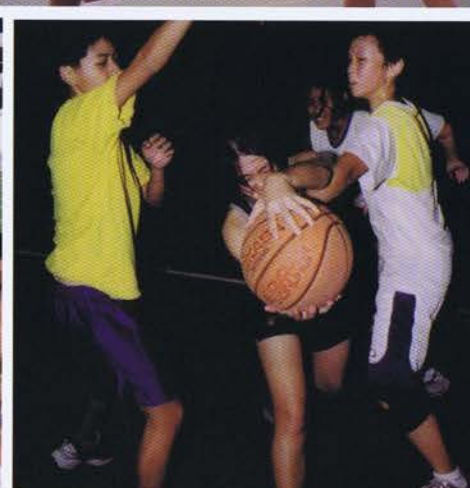
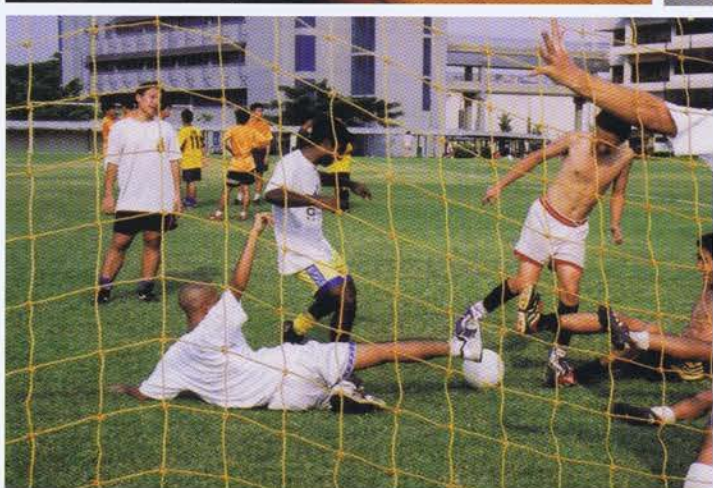
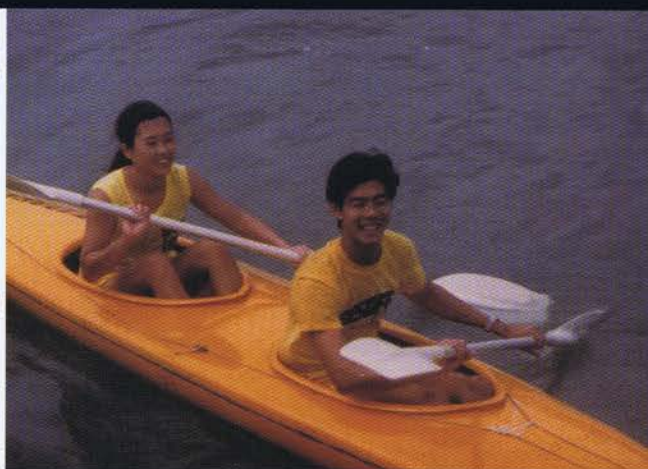


The sporting culture in Eusoff was cultivated when Eusoff College moved from Bukit Timah to Kent Ridge and became Eusoff Hall. Though the emphasis on sports may be new, the passion and competitive edge are not. They are an extension of the en-

during Eusoffian qualities of striving for distinction in every field.

Besides being an arena to channel Eusoffian drive and vigour, sports have also played a role in bringing people together

by bridging differences, building friendships and by its pure enjoyment value.



Sports and Fun

The appointed time for the competition had arrived. Seven Eusoff girls and seven Raffles boys faced off at the multi-purpose court in Eusoff College for a game of netball. The whistle went. The Raffles boys started brightly, with the Wing Attack swiftly lobbing a brilliant pass to the Goal Attack who was about to take aim. Sensing an imminent goal unless drastic measures were taken, the Eusoff Goal Defense executed a lethal technique to prevent Raffles from taking the lead: she pulled down her opponent's pants.

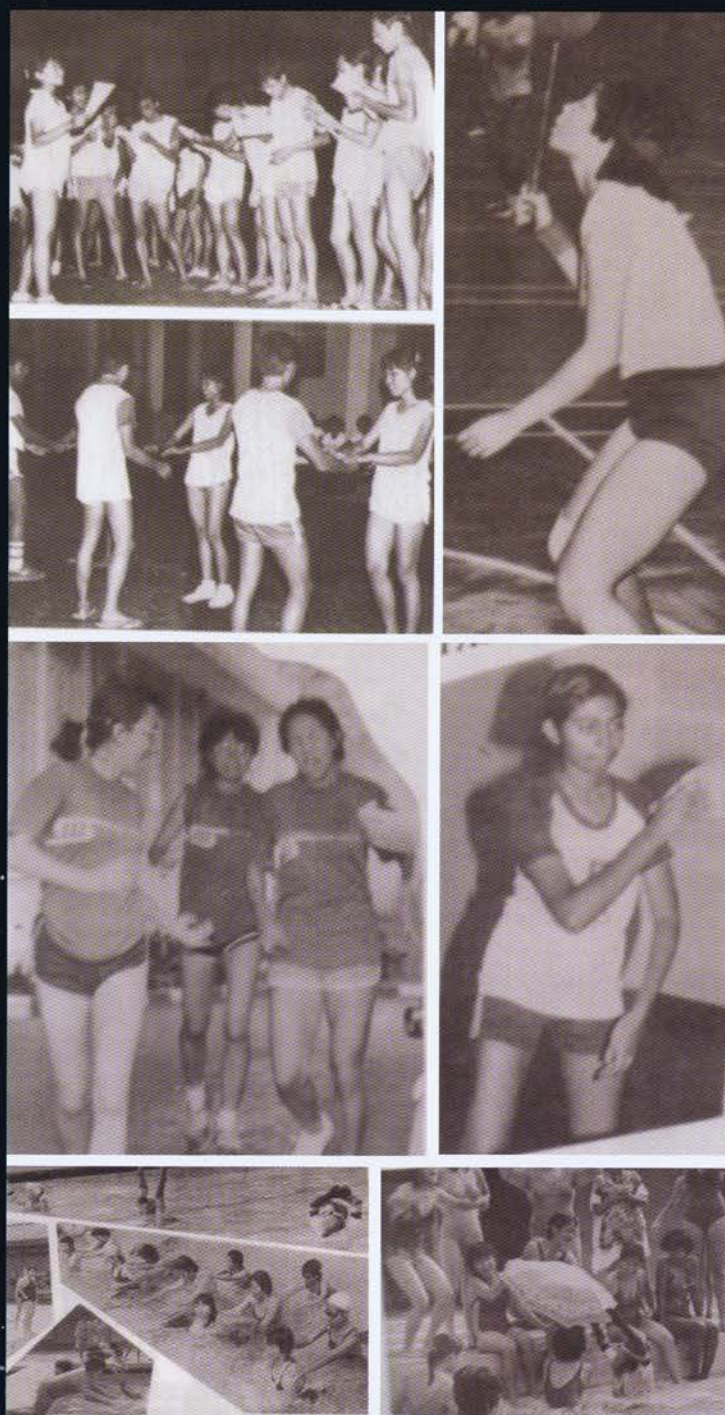
The Eusoff centre took advantage of the confusion to snatch the ball for a fast break. The home crowd cheered wildly. The Eusoff Goal Shooter let fly a shot that seemed destined for the net—until the Raffles boys carted off the goal post. Five seconds later, 20 other 'players' were on the court, trying to get a piece of the action. In the same five seconds, one netball became five. Pandemonium reigned.

The girls, still trying to score despite their abducted goal post, quickly improvised. One girl held a basket and shouted to her teammates, "Keep throwing the balls, I'll catch them!"

This bizarre fancy dress netball game was an annual affair in the 1970s, where Eusoffians and Rafflesians had great fun squaring off. Contestants had to come in fancy dress and so the guys would arrive in *sarongs* (wearing tight pants inside, in anticipation of the girls' killer pants-pulling move), while the girls wore togas and accessorised with coloured ribbons and any other wacky things they could get their hands on.

But the fancy dress was just one of the peculiar features of the game. There were no rules—the players would make them up as they went along. Hence the shifting of the goal post, a basket as a makeshift replacement and other antics. The enthu-





siastic crowd also joined the game at the first given opportunity. At the end of the day, it was all in the name of fun.

That was the principle on which the Eusoff girls operated from the conception of the College right up to the early 1980s. Sports were a way of organising fun as demonstrated by the fancy dress netball game. There were also a myriad of games played in the Quadrangle over the weekends, such as games of table tennis and hopscotch that sometimes lasted until 2 am.

This attitude towards sports has lasted till today, where *sepak takraw* enthusiasts can be seen on the Eusoff multi-purpose court (MPC), playing until the lights go out at 11 pm. Furthermore, communal living affords Eusoffians the privilege of gathering people for a game 'when you feel like it'.

Sports and Fun

In Eusoff College, sporting events became social events of sorts, with almost the whole College going down to cheer and support their sportswomen. Eusoffians would fervently exhort their team in the annual Eusoff College-King Edward VII (KE) Games for almost all the events. Back then, it was more feasible to do so as these games lasted for only a day, as opposed to the modern IHG which takes place over the course of a month or so.

Sports also served as a way of bridging gulfs and building bonds for the girls. When Ms Emily Sandosham, Fellow of Eusoff College from 1960 to 1962, was promoted to be Principal of the 3rd Residential Collège (RC) in the University of Malaya, Eusoff College and the 3rd RC started their annual games. Eusoff girls would travel down to Kuala Lumpur for the first few years while the 3rd RC contingent came to Eusoff College in 1969.

Interestingly, in these games, the highlight was the Eusoff cheerleading team. They were featured in yearbook reports about the games, while their sporting contemporaries were conspicuously missing. When EC beat KE, the cheerleading team was even given credit for the success! So formidable were the cheerleaders that other hostelites caught in cheer combat with Eusoffians dubbed them 'Eusoffierce'.

Even though Eusoffians then were better known for their cultural performances and highly anticipated social events, Eusoffians being Eusoffians, their customary competitiveness was no less present in sports events. In 1983, during the inter-hostel games, Eusoffian Rita Wong grittily played on in the rain despite a bout of flu and a sprained ankle. She was recognised as the Sports Girl of the Year that year for her spirit and sporting feats. That was how





Eusoffians held on to the motto: "Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing."

The entrance of boys into the College in 1984 changed the dynamics of the college and injected new vibrancy into their sporting activities. Male residents also meant that Eusoff College could participate fully in the inter-hostel games, with representatives to compete in the boys' events. As the then principal, Dr Lim Kiat Boey, noted, "the most striking difference (between Eusoff now and before it went co-ed) [was] the change in emphasis of activities in the Hall from cultural to sports."

This shift in emphasis would herald a new era of sporting excellence.

"We come from Eusoff"

"We come from a great, great hall,
We come from Eusoff
And we come as fighters of a great,
great hall
We march on to victory
And we march on to glory
And we march with a spirit never
seen before"

As a freshman in Eusoff Hall, History student Guay Ee Ling learned a cardinal rule: during the course of the IHG season, Eusoff flags were never to be unfurled and waved around, except when Eusoff had clinched the championship—lest that act jinxed Eusoff's chances. Another uniquely Eusoffian belief was that if an overcast sky was threatening to end a game or training session with a downpour, someone should quickly insert a blade of grass into the band that held a girl's ponytail, and the session would not be marred by rain.

The passion for sports in the Hall means that Eusoffians are not exempt from having their own repertoire of quirky superstitions. While Eusoffians, from freshmen to graduating seniors, dutifully comply with these superstitions for fear of jinxing the team, they also believe in Gary Player's philosophy—"The harder I practise, the luckier I get."

In Eusoff, the desire to excel is the driving force that prompts many to sacrifice their time and put themselves through punishing exercise regimes. Eusoffians participating in IHG spend almost their entire semester break in December going for rigorous and intensive training sessions. Depending on the number of sports one participates in, an IHG player may have up to six hours of team training a day, three times a week. Eusoffians Caroline Koh and Hannah Cheong, who took part in four and five events respectively in the AY 2006/07

IHG, sometimes had to train from 9 am to 6 pm a few times a week during the December break.

IHG rouses Eusoffians and pulls them together like nothing else can. The euphoria and heartbreak, the triumph and near misses—the outcomes often reduce



Eusoffians to tears. Both players and supporters are united in that common bond—the desire to win under the crest and flag of the Hall. Eusoff ‘spectators’ are never just spectators. They join the players in feeling every joy and disappointment. As Sham, the Sports Secretary in AY

2003/04 observed, “the players wearing their hearts on their sleeves were matched by those on the sidelines—the chants, the cheers, the ecstasy and the tears, are all demonstrations of people who care enough to also wear their hearts on their sleeves.”



1997/1998: *Champions, At Last*

Near misses. Runner-ups. After years of waiting in the wings, Eusoff finally made its mark in the sporting arena by clinching the Inter-Hall Games Overall Title for the first time in 1998.

And what a year to do it, too—it was exactly 10 years since Eusoff Hall moved to the Kent Ridge campus, as well as the 40th year since Eusoff College came into existence.

Make no mistake about it, reaching this pinnacle of sporting achievement among the halls of residences took 10 years of hard work—heartbreaking losses, lessons learnt, hardened resolves, restructured training plans—tempered with the patient belief that one year, surely, would be Eusoff's year.

Being the last of the halls of residences to shift to the Kent Ridge campus, Eusoff Hall initially found itself short on sport-

ing talent, which made overtaking sports juggernauts like Temasek, Kent Ridge and Sheares Hall almost impossible in the short run.

So Eusoff waited. As Eusoff Hall began to establish itself in a few sports like squash, tennis, soccer and chess, increasing its modest medal haul year by year, more gifted sportspeople also began to join its ranks.

In AY 1997/98, Eusoff Hall finally hit upon the perfect winning combination of spirit and talent to pip the traditional giants to both the IHG Guys' and Overall Championship.

The medal haul was a massive 15, golds, nearly twice that of the previous year. Both the men's and women's teams did their part to add to Eusoff's Overall Championship title—as evidenced by the gold doubles in tennis, table tennis, swimming,

international chess and hockey. Eusoff guys also contributed with golds in carom, *sepak takraw* and soccer, while the girls stormed to their 3rd consecutive squash title, as well as a 2nd consecutive gold in tug of war.

By marching 'with a spirit never seen before' in 1998, Eusoff truly marched on to victory and proved itself to be a 'great, great hall'.





Champions Wear Yellow

"Prior to AY 1997/98, Eusoff had tried unsuccessfully to introduce different coloured IHG T-shirts. We were the only Hall which did not have identifying colours, while all of the other five halls were associated with mascots or colours, like the green and black of RH, or Temasek's white and green.

When the JCRC was formed, one of the main aims of our term in office was to unite the hall and establish a solid Eusoff identity. Not only for IHG, but also to bring residents together, to attract talented applicants to seek entry to Eusoff and so on.

One of the ways we did this was to have an identifying colour. Fortunately for me, the Presidents of the 7th, 8th and 9th JCRCs were still staying in the hall when I assumed office as the 10th JCRC President, so I roped them in to form my team of consultants.

After much brainstorming, they proposed the colours yellow and black. Not wanting to waste time or money, I designed the first yellow/black IHG T-shirt myself using MS Word. As you can see, it was not very imaginative. The printer didn't do a very good job with the yellow, which turned out pale, but it was a start.

We won the IHG in AY 1997/98, the first time for Eusoff Hall. From then on, yellow and black stuck. We used it for most of our publications and marketing material. It literally became Eusoff. We refined it in AY 1998/99 by replacing the pale yellow with the much stronger and brighter version you still use today. It looks simply amazing."

*Paviter Singh,
President of the 10th JCRC
AY 1997/98*

2005/2006: The Historic Treble

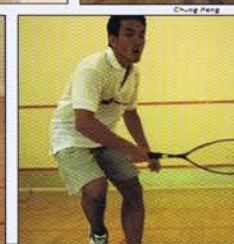
In 2006, we would win the Treble; capturing the Overall IHG Championship, the Men's and Women's Championship. The clean sweep of all three trophies was built on the successful training methods put into place by graduated seniors and the winning mentality of the Eusoffians in that year. On hindsight, it seems like this was a cakewalk with both the men's and women's teams dominating from the start. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, Derrick Phong, the Sports Secretary said it well, "The route to victory was certainly not easy; torturous, to say the least!"

After a fantastic start, the teams began to struggle and stumble. The men's soccer team was dominant in the early stages and set to blaze a path to the semi-finals, but lost rather unexpectedly and cruelly to Raffles Hall on penalties. This seemed to be the start of our decline. Morale was low as the defeats mounted and Temasek

established a strong lead in the standings. We lost the men's hockey and table tennis finals although we were expected to make a strong defence of our titles. We were lucky to win the basketball finals, and there was a growing sense that our title was perched precariously on the precipice.

Sensing a critical moment in our quest for the title, hundreds of Eusoffians turned up for the *sepak takraw* finals. It was a tense game and victory was secured only at the final moment. A wave of relief washed over the crowd amidst huge cheers. The gloom was lifted and Team Eusoff never looked back, striding on to victory after victory. In track and field, we scored a double victory, something that we had never previously managed. Both the men's and women's team took the gold in swimming and touch rugby. The women's handball team won gold, and the men's road relay team won their event so convincingly that





they were almost two minutes ahead of the second placed team. In the final reckoning, Eusoff dominated the field, securing a total of 134 points. The nearest challenger secured only 123 points, and the other halls never broached 100 points in the contest. The historic Treble could not have been won in better style.

2007/2008:

Sweet Victory in the 50th Year

In 2007, Eusoff missed out on retaining its IHG championship. Losing to Temasek was painful enough, but the manner of the defeat was particularly galling. The final event was the road relay, the most grueling of events, where a six-person team runs 2.2km legs of a campus-wide route that includes long and punishing uphill stretches. The men's team were favourites to win gold and the women's team needed to place second for us to win the Championship. Luck was not with us and the women's team, in second place behind Temasek for most of the race, were eventually overtaken by the Kent Ridge team, and placed third.

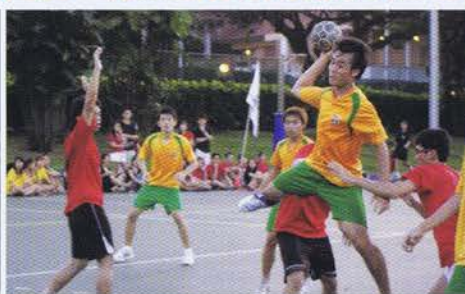
Tied on points with Temasek, Eusoff had to cede the crown because Temasek had a higher tally of gold medals. Although a very creditable showing by the sportsmen and women of Eusoff—retaining the Men's Championship, coming in second in the overall stakes and being tied on points

with the champions—the manner of the defeat was a huge blow for the Hall.

There was never a doubt that everyone was gearing up for IHG to win it back from Temasek—not only to make up for the devastating way we had lost the previous year, but also to win the championship in our 50th anniversary year. There was an added intensity to the preparations and a nervous tension hung in the air.

On 19 February 2008, we ran the road relay again. The men's team were the favourites but Temasek had a very strong team. Trailing behind the leaders Temasek throughout the race, it seemed that we were destined to lose when we dropped to third place after the fourth leg of the race. Enter Peter Marini Pik Chiang, the fifth runner of the day. A tall and strapping man known mainly for his good nature and quiet demeanour, Peter set off trying to make up lost ground. He set





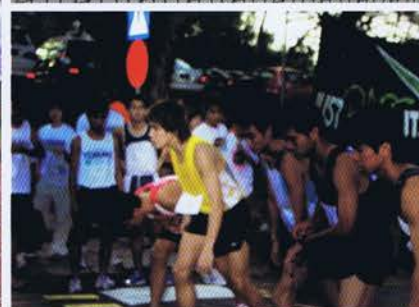
the speed record for the day, completing 2.2km in 7 minutes and 4 seconds to set up a nail-biting contest between Eusoff and Temasek.

Sikhander 'Sunny' Singh, a national athlete who represented Singapore at the SEA Games in 2007 in duathlon and NUS Sportsman of the Year in 2008, was our anchorman. But even for Sunny, the 40-second lead that Temasek had over Eusoff seemed a bridge too far. The minutes ticked away and in the dark of night bathed by the dull glow of the yellow globes in the carpark, Eusoffians were incredulous when they saw the famous yellow jersey of Eusoff in the lead. Running an incredible leg at 7 minutes and 9 seconds, Sunny stormed towards the finish line. So commanding was his lead that he slowed down to acknowledge Eusoffians before turning to backpedal across the line, with both thumbs pointing to the



2007/2008:

Sweet Victory on the 50th Year





word 'Eusoff' emblazoned on the back of his shirt. The Temasek runner, having been overtaken by Sunny 500 meters from the finish, was so dispirited that he collapsed from exhaustion and needed to be helped over the line.

Eusoff would celebrate not only the victory of the men's team but also the absolute courage and determination of our women's team. Lee Joo Fee, our second runner and team captain, sustained an injury in her attempt to avoid a car. It was only 500 metres into that leg of the race when Joo Fee injured her right knee, but she continued to run despite the pain to keep her team in the race. It is this indomitable spirit that we celebrate in all Eusoffians—the sheer determination to succeed and the absolute refusal to be bowed under any circumstances.

Three days after this incredible win in the road relay, Eusoff beat Temasek by two points to once again be crowned IHG Champions.



Excellence in Sports

Eusoff has over the years built up a reputation as a sports hall. It has been attracting the best sporting talents to build on the efforts of the trailblazers before them. These sportsmen and sportswomen have also gone on to win individual accolades in national and international arenas. Eusoffians swept the top two awards during the 2006 NUS Sports Awards when Sikhander Singh and Jacqueline Chow Chung Shan were respectively named Sportsman of the Year and Sportswoman of the Year. Sikhander went on to represent Singapore in the 2007 SEA Games. Meanwhile, Vijay Liew, Andrew Boey and Pan Jianhe were also recipients of the NUS President Sports Team Award for their contributions to the Dragon Boat team.

Other Eusoffians who have made their mark internationally include UK Shyam, Chen Huifen and Jasmine Ang. UK Shyam was one of our national sprinters at the 2002 SEA Games, while Jasmine repre-

sented Singapore in women's basketball during the 2007 SEA Games. Huifen is a national netball player who represented Singapore in the XVIII Commonwealth Games in 2006 as well as the 5 Nations Cup in 2007.

The achievements in sports reflect the overall culture of excellence in the hall. Yet, sports in Eusoff is not merely about Hall pride and the glory of victory—it is an ingrained part of the life of every Eusoffian. It is about the friendships forged and the community spirit that comes with getting out onto the field or the court. There is always someone to run with even in the quietest hours of the night, and no one stands alone on the court for long before others come to join in. Eusoffians always stand together.



EUROPEAN IN THE ARTS

A decorative graphic featuring a series of parallel diagonal stripes in various colors (purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, red, brown, black, pink, grey) that converge towards the bottom left corner. Overlaid on these stripes are several stylized floral and plant motifs, including green daisy-like flowers, purple and yellow daisies, and a green vine with small leaves and flowers.

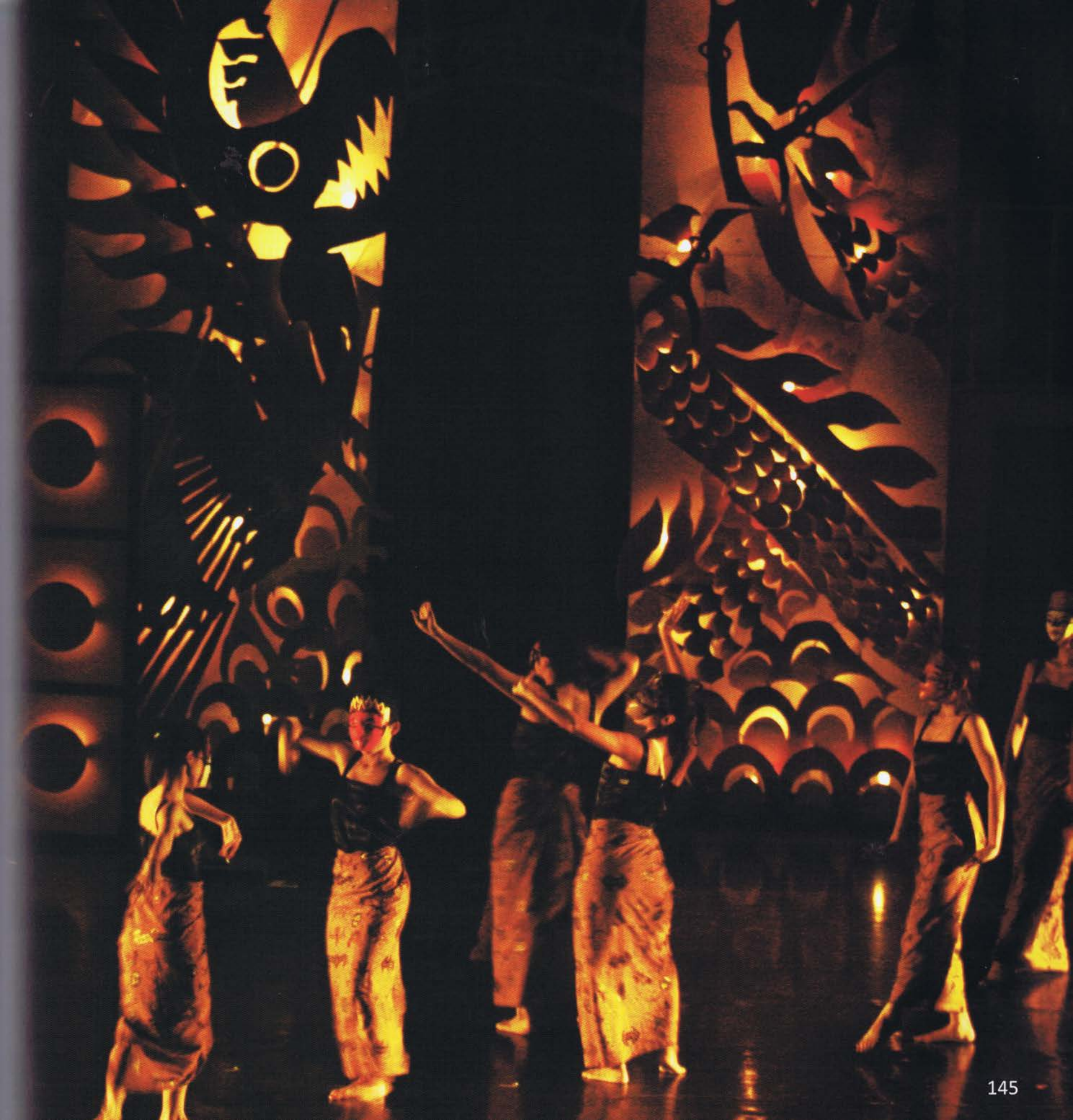


introduction

A history of excellence in sports may have built up the physical prowess of Eusoff in the sporting arena, but what fuels the *soul* of the Eusoffian? As you may have correctly guessed, it is the bubbling of creative energy in the Arts. While it is a challenge of one kind to wield the perseverance needed for the golden finish in an athletic race, it is satisfaction of another kind to see a creative project come to fruition at its debut performance. In this respect, Eusoff has been proudly providing one of the major breeding grounds in NUS for residents to express their restless creativity, and to experience the resulting sense of exquisite satisfaction.

In fact, many Eusoffians have been inspired enough to carve out spectacular careers in the local and international arts scene. Think jazz vocalist [Rani Singam](#), who has been touted as the next Billie Holliday. There is [Ovidia Yu](#), award-winning novelist, short-story writer and playwright, who currently serves on the Eusoff SCRC. You may also know [Kirpal Singh](#), poet extraordinaire and literary and cultural critic, also an SCRC member. [Christine Khor](#) is Director of the NUS Centre for the Arts. In the field of acting, think [Michael Cheng](#) from Tapestry Playback Theatre, former MediaCorp artiste [Jacelyn Tay](#) and the inimitable [Joanna Wong](#) who was awarded the Cultural Medallion for her services to the arts. And the list goes on...

This chapter unveils Eusoff's journey in achieving excellence in the Arts.



The Creativity Club

The Creativity Club was formed in AY 1970/71. Its main purpose was to provide a creative outlet for residents, besides sports and other activities already in existence in the college.

In the same year, the Creativity Club organised a concert called *An Evening at Eusoff*. It was a two-night affair which consisted of music, poetry, dance and drama. Although it was an amateurish performance held in the college itself, it was an opportunity to identify latent talents. The creative efforts of Eusoffians were to be displayed over the years.

from the diary of Eusoff College, 30th Anniversary



In 1961, the operetta *Peasants' Cantata* was performed for the first time on the Quadrangle, the courtyard at Eusoff College. For nine years thereafter, College residents were preoccupied by a series of external events that included Singapore's move towards independence. However in AY 1970/71, despite the competing demands of other activities such as the Cycling Club, Film Society, Food Committee, Library Committee and the Lounge Committee, the Creativity Club was formed. Its various subcommittees included music, dance, drama, photography, art, literary appreciation, flower arrangement and interior décor.



Anxious to express themselves, the Club embarked on its first project, *An Evening at Eusoff*, only three months after its formation. A review in *The Singapore Undergrad* considered the concert to be 'credible' as a first venture. From these humble beginnings, the Club pioneered Eusoff's first annual project play, *Nostalgia*, in 1974 and has since proven itself to be both innovative and prolific.



Drama, Music, Dance

With the passing years, the Creativity Club attracted increasing numbers of residents in its endeavours. Soon, spin-offs from the Club were separately created in concentrated areas of interest such as drama, music and dance. These respective performing groups proceeded to develop a reputation for themselves within Eusoff College (and later, Eusoff Hall) and at external tertiary competitions and cultural events.

Drama Club

The year 1987 saw Eusoff's entry into the NUS Drama Festival with the Chekov play *The Proposal*. Although the play did not win the favour of the judges, a Eusoffian remarked:

“

This was a brave attempt by a small group of Eusoffians who worked primarily alone, without great confidence, without any precedents, without any real kind of experience, without any supporters and without any real budget. For such spirit, love and effort—it was a winning play indeed. This may just be the beginning of greater moments to come.

”

Indeed, the Drama Club subsequently took part in the 1988 NUS Drama Festival with a revised excerpt of Neil Simon's *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. It also participated in other events such as the Varsity Playhouse Drama Competition in AY 1990/91, a performance at Borders in AY

1998/99, and the first inter-hall Dramafest, SIX, in 2006. Drama nights in Eusoff have also been a regular feature of the Club for many years.

Today, the Drama Club is better known by its recently adopted name The Yellow



Subs. It does not merely function to appease the voracious energies of drama enthusiasts, but also features a holistic plan to identify and develop newfound talents. Regular workshops are conducted to equip members with specific skills. For instance, a workshop on acting in theatre was conducted by Eusoff Drama Club alumni. In addition, SCRC member and renowned playwright Ms Ovidia Yu conducted a script-writing workshop. Club members subsequently put these skills to good use through creative involvement in the inter-Hall drama productions, the production of a short film, script-writing, directing and acting for the Eusoff Hall Dance Productions.

Members of The Yellow Subs have also been active in spearheading new projects in the NUS drama scene, in particular Joe Chung, who headed The Yellow Subs in his final year at NUS and Eusoff. Since his first year in Eusoff, he had dreamed of collaborating with the drama clubs in other halls to produce a night of performance dedicated to drama. After years of vision and deliberation, and months of hard work and persuasion, Dramafest debuted in 2006. It has since become part of the ExxonMobil Campus Concerts, making its second, more polished appearance in 2008 with the presentation entitled *Confessions*.



Drama, Music, Dance

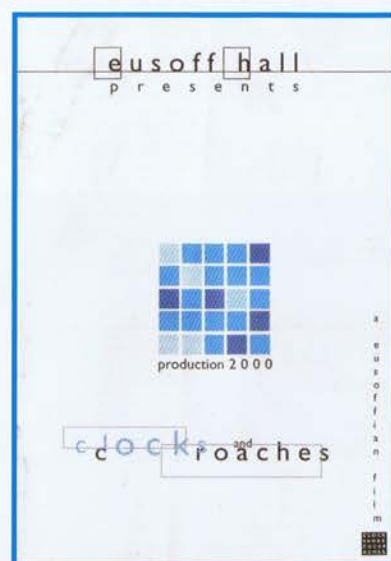
Branching into Film

In 1999, a production committee known as EH! Films was formed. The committee pioneered Eusoff's foray into the realm of motion pictures. This made Eusoff the first among the six halls to venture into filmmaking. Fuelled by passion, the talented team persisted against the odds to produce *Clocks and Cockroaches*, a series of four short films. Guests at its gala premiere included Rear Admiral Teo Chee Hean and Singaporean film director Eric Khoo.

Clocks and Cockroaches is currently being catalogued by the Asian Film Archive. The director of the film was Michael Cheng, who now divides his time teaching children with autism and performing with the Tapestry Playback Theatre. A recipient of the Cultural Person of the Year Award in 1999, he also went on to receive Hall Excellence Awards for Outstanding Service (2000), Distinguished Service (2001) and

Special Mention (2002) during his four-year stay in Eusoff Hall. Here, Michael reminisces about the creative process behind the film and his passion for acting:

“.....
I guess there's just something about performing that makes me feel alive. I can't fully describe the satisfaction of reciting the written word just right, or the thrill of improvising drama on the spot, or the freedom of allowing your body to move and feel on stage.”



Excerpts from the interview with Michael Cheng:

*You directed Eusoff's debut film collection *Clocks and Cockroaches*. What was the driving force that jumpstarted this pioneer project?*

The idea for C&C came about as a confluence of factors. A year before C&C, Eusoff Hall started the Video Production Unit (VPU). I was in the original committee. We started doing music videos for IHG and other hall events that were very well-received ... The hall was also looking for something special to do for the millennium. Instead of doing another major drama production, some of us came together and discussed making a movie, based on our experience with hall productions, and VPU's momentum in shooting and editing videos. Some of the key pushers in this project were the Producer, Teo Yann Yann, Steven Lau, head of Film and VPU, Johann Annuar, Head of Editing, and of course, Professor Andrew Tay, the first Master of Eusoff Hall.

What were the obstacles and challenges that you and your team met along the way from the film's conception to its screening?

We had next to no experience in making a movie. We had to go back to the books, dig out the theory, and put them into practice, and pray like hell everything would work out. There were too many obstacles to list, from working out the script, to getting the right cast, to making sure everyone had something to do, to catching the cockroaches we needed for the film. The entire experience was hard to put into words. We had such a tough, yet ridiculously fun time that the experience will stay with us for a long time. We were in fact, still editing the morning before our screening at GV Grand. I really salute those who were there slogging with us the entire two months, from the first minute to the last.

I heard local film director Eric Khoo was among the audience the opening night. Who invited him and did he give you guys any pointers?

Erm, I have no idea who invited him, probably Yann Yann's idea or maybe Marketing. Anyway, I was seated next to him. I don't really remember what we said to each other! Throughout the whole screening, I was literally eating my nails, thinking about the shot we should have taken more time with, the better angle to shoot from, how some parts of the story could have been improved and so on. There was a lot of cringing on my part as I watched the film.



Drama, Music, Dance



What led you to your current involvement in the Tapestry Playback Theatre?

Ironically, there is a Eusoff connection that led me to Playback Theatre. Steven Lau was my next-door neighbour in B Block. Some years ago, he asked me to do a bit of research into drama forms that might be suitable for his work [in Outward Bound Singapore]. Tapestry Playback Theatre was having a performance at that time. After watching them perform, I was hooked to its beautifully energetic and vibrant improvisational drama. I've been working with them ever since. I perform two to three times a year with Tapestry and it's something I see myself doing for a long time to come.

What do you miss about living in Eusoff Hall?

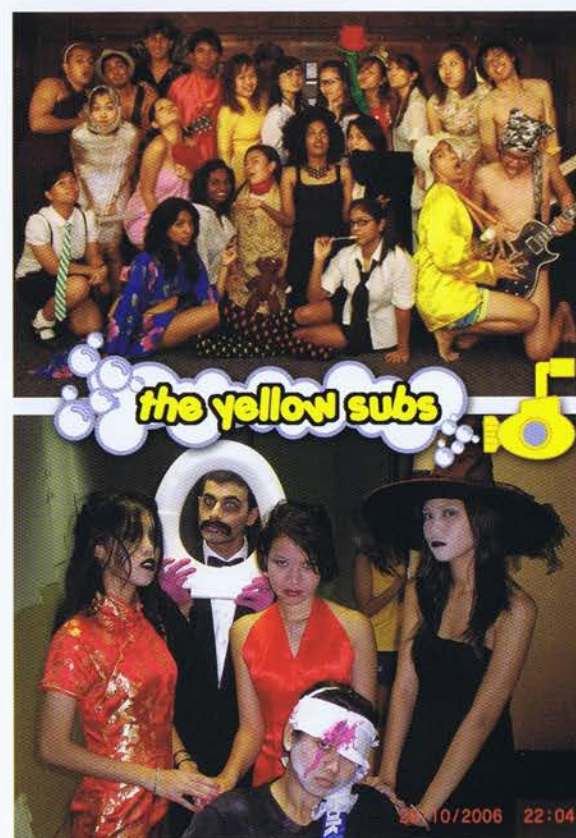
Phew! This is a really tough question. Playing football in the tennis court in the middle of the night, preparing for orientation during the days when we could actually 'tekan' the freshmen, winning Rag and Flag, etc. On hindsight, I think the best times of my time in hall were spent with my friends at B4, talking through the night in our hammocks in the corner, until the birds started chirping with the coming of the dawn...

Encouraged by its groundbreaking success the previous year and armed with renewed zeal, EH! Films made history once again by producing a full-length feature film—the first student group to do so at the time. The film, *Jack's Car*, was screened at Golden Village Grand, Great World City in March 2001. It took a full five months and a modest budget of \$35,000 to produce the 105-minute feature. Various sponsors such as the Singapore Film Commission and the National Youth Council contributed to the budget. The film explored the angst of four young people and the friendships forged and tested among them in their quest for self-identity and fulfillment. Well-known local comedian Mark Lee made a cameo appearance in the film.

EH! Film went from strength to strength, producing *Snake* in 2002, which debuted at GV Marina in March. Written by award-winning poet and playwright Ng Yi-Sheng,

the film set a new standard with its elaborate retro costumes and special effects. After this production, however, EH! Film went on a hiatus.

Work on a new film surfaced recently in 2007, with a project undertaken by a Yellow Subs member in her final year, Yeap Mei Yi. This creative project began as an idea for a stage play but seemed to take on a life of its own, eventually evolving into a screenplay after much encouragement from the current Master Tan Tin Wee and her Yellow Subs peers. Despite lacking formal training in filmmaking, Mei Yi overcame numerous difficulties and collaborated successfully with EusoffWorks to produce the 50-minute feature, which is scheduled to be screened in late 2008. In an interview, Mei Yi expressed her gratitude to Eusoff for granting her the opportunities and resources to embark on this experiment.



Drama, Music, Dance

The Band

It started off with a singer and a guitar, but today, Eusoff is home to not one but many full-fledged bands, bringing together in the process a variety of musical talents and wannabes. Like other performing groups in Eusoff, the Band committee provides an outlet for its residents to develop their talent and express their passion

for music in the midst of heavy academic commitments. In AY 1991/92, five talented musicians crossed paths in Eusoff Hall, and formed the dynamite team that won the NUS Battle of the Bands champions' trophy for Eusoff. Two of the musicians, Leonard Ng and Rani Singam, later went on to produce excellent results in the local and international music scenes. Leonard

Ng is a practicing lawyer and also a singer-songwriter currently based in London. To date, Leonard has released two EPs, *Winter Sessions* and *It's Beautiful*, the latter reviewed by Future Music magazine to 'sit comfortably amongst Keane and Coldplay in the CD racks'. Rani Singam, on the other hand, gave up her flourishing career in the legal service to become a jazz vocalist. Her debut album, *With a Song in My Heart*, was released in 2004 and created waves in the Singapore jazz scene, successfully launching her career in the music industry.





Rani Singam's eloquent charm and bubbly persona takes center stage as she tells us about her stay in Eusoff and what goes into the making of an artist.

Rani's experience in Eusoff lasted all of one year, in AY 1991/92. Even though she lived near the NUS campus at that time, she had wanted to sample independence and freedom. "I did my own laundry and cooked my own meals," she said in between sips of hot mocha, "Hostel life is really fun, because we can just do our own thing, and hang out with block mates and friends." Reminiscing about the late nights at Fong Seng, she adds, "Back then it had the old kopitiam style, today it looks more modernised."

Even as a busy law student, Rani performed regularly on campus. Her passion for singing developed when she took Indian classical music lessons at the tender age of five. At seven, Rani joined the Radio Television Singapore (RTS) Choir. "Jazz was a late thing," she says. Even in college, her repertoire included mostly folk songs or the blues. "But there's a lot of room for experimentation and improvisation with jazz. It's very fluid, depending on what happens with the band. That's why it's so fun." Despite all the years of singing, it was a law career that she started off with. She made the leap after she quit the legal service with the birth of her first child, Logan. "I went for jamming sessions even as a stay-home mom."

Her passion and perseverance paid off—she was discovered by Singapore jazz maestro Jeremy Monteiro while performing in a local jazz bar one night. "I feel fortunate," Rani recalls. "After that everything happened so fast, recording my album and so on." That success perhaps came with being in the right place at the right time, when the local jazz scene was just taking off. "But Singapore is small, so you must be prepared to travel." Rani has

Drama, Music, Dance

made memorable appearances in China, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and New York, and has collaborated with many well-known musicians. Her album, available in stores and on the Internet, was recorded in Los Angeles. "I even had Ron Feuer, the original keyboardist for Elvis Presley, work on one of my tracks," she beamed.

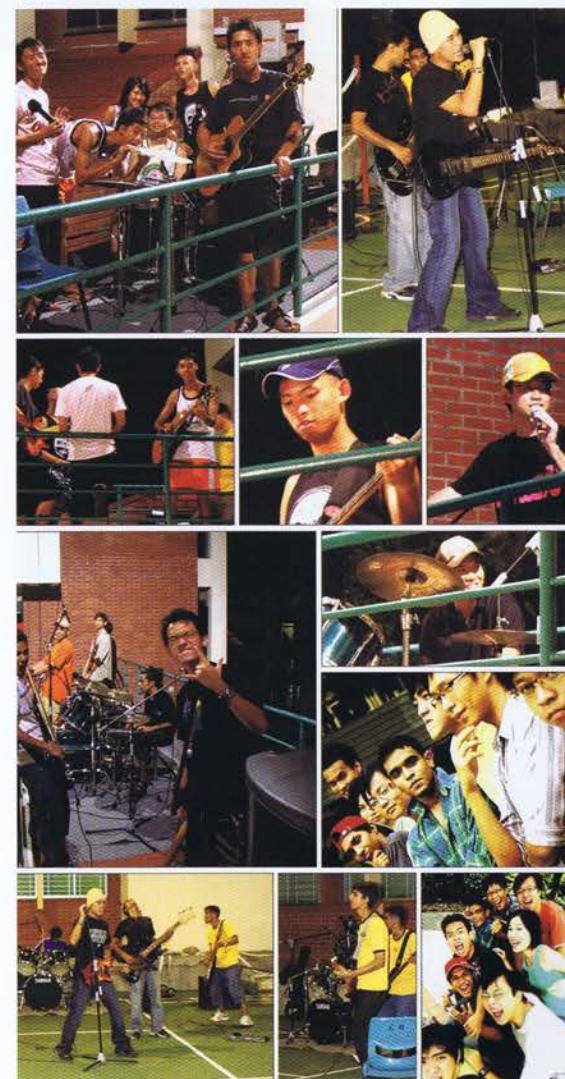
But Rani is now putting her music career on hold, as she is expecting her second child. "My priority is still my family," she explains. She views her pregnancy as an important time for creative reflections, "I draw inspiration from my own life experiences. Every day is something that contributes to that journey of discovery and creativity." When asked what was currently on her iPod, she replied, "Kurt Elling (renowned male vocalist), and with this pregnancy I'm listening to Mozart. It's supposed to be good for both mom and baby," she laughs.



Besides winning the NUS Battle of the Bands for Eusoff in AY 1991/92, Rani and Leonard participated in the Rolling Good Times Love Duets Contest on national television in the same year, and won. "I remember Eusoffians coming down to the studio to cheer for us," Rani reflects, "I think everyone should go through hall life—it's a good experience."

The most recent talent revival began after a band room facility was constructed in the early 2000s and the band and audio equipment given a full makeover. Visit the band room on any given night and there will be at least one resident band jamming into the night, making full use of the upgraded facilities. As the only resident band for the longest time, Peroxide did Eusoff proud by bringing home numerous trophies. Peroxide won the 2007 Festival of Love and Youth (FLY) Battle of the Bands Competition at Fort Canning, winning favour from the crowd and judges as 'the most professional band we have seen [in the competition]'. In the same year at Jam Aloud, the first rock band competition jointly organised by the NUS Arts Club and the NUS Media Entertainment Club, Peroxide presented its first original piece entitled *Lil' Miss Perfect* and clinched the Most Popular Band award. The band was also a regular finalist at Jam X, a prestigious tertiary band competition. Recently,

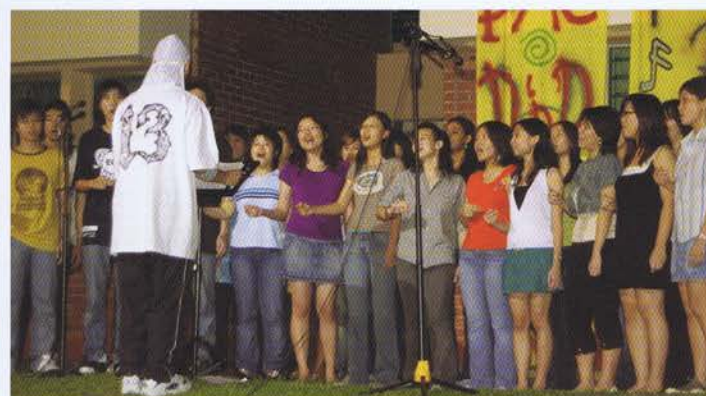
however, more Eusoff bands are beginning to carve out reputations for themselves in various competitions and invitation-only performances on and off campus. Among these promising bands are Peer Pleasure, runners-up in the 2008 Talent Quest competition, and who have also jammed at Cathay@Dhoby Ghaut and Zouk; Second Nature, one of the finalists at the 2007 Boys' Town Hollies Festival Competitions, boasting a portfolio that includes a charity gig with Cambodia Heartbeat, a performance at the Youth Park, and Lime Magazine's opening act at Orchard Cineleisure in 2006; and Sixology, a tightly-knit team of six who recently burst onto the scene and clinched the champions' title at the 2008 Stardust Competition.



Drama, Music, Dance

The Choir

Branching out from the now-defunct vocal group Voices (1976–1999) in the late 1980s, the Eusoff Choir found its niche as a choral group, as opposed to the acapella repertoire of Voices. Indeed, they were first runners-up at the national choral competition Cantata, held in 1992 at Victoria Theatre. In addition to an external performance at Borders in AY 1998/99, the group has also been involved in the annual inter-hall production, *Amplitude*, since 2003. Today, the group has become more versatile under new creative directions. They are certainly gaining more recognition among the public as well, being the only choir group from NUS invited to perform at the Singapore Conference Hall's Choral Series in October 2007, and even garnered encore invitations to carol at luxury 5-star hotel Mandarin Oriental Singapore.



Chinese Performing Group

New groups and committees often surface as circumstances dictate. It was thus that the Chinese performing group *Xinyao* (新谣) was formed in 1991 to cater to increasing interest in the performance of Mandarin pop music and songwriting. *Xinyao* Night became a regular feature in the annual calendar of internal performances, and even expanded to a combined halls *Xinyao* concert in AY 1998/99.

With the influx of students from Malaysia and the People's Republic of China, the group expanded to include Chinese drama and was renamed the Chinese Performing Group (CPG). While the group continues to be active in *Xinyao* on campus, the Chinese drama wing entertains residents with original plays during the Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations.



Drama, Music, Dance

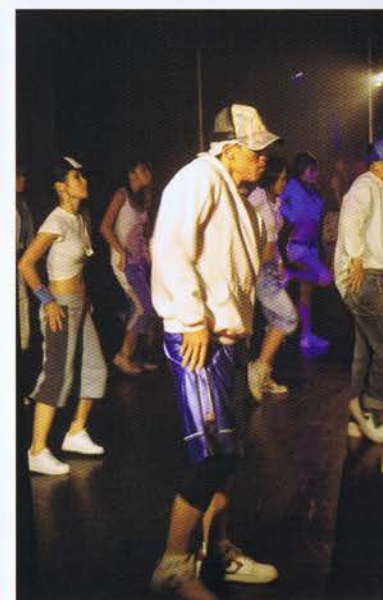


Dance Corps

Dance has always been one of the distinguishing factors attracting incoming freshmen to Eusoff Hall. It has a rich history featuring original dance choreography created by its very own members. For two consecutive years from AY 1998/99 to 1999/2000, the Eusoff Dance Corps even featured a portfolio of ticketed dance-only productions. The Corps also forms the core group of dance talents that is the creative force behind the innovative choreography for the annual Rag presentation and the Eusoff Hall Dance Production. That said, not all of its members have a dance background, so the Dance Corps provides a platform for residents to develop or explore their interest in dance.

The Dance Corps participates regularly in Funkamania, a prestigious annual hip-hop dance competition for tertiary students. In 2006, it secured a spot in the finals despite fierce competition. The

annual inter-Hall dance production, NUS *Dance Uncensored*, also provides an opportunity for members to explore other choreography aside from the Eusoff Hall Dance Productions and to showcase their versatility in various dance styles. Eusoff's performances at *Dance Uncensored* often garner rave reviews that have helped to secure its reputation as a hall of premier dance talents.



A Night of Culture in Eusoff

With the different performing groups in hall each vying for the attention of the residents in various external competitions and events, it seemed logical to have a Culture Night within Eusoff where the groups could come together to display their works. This has been a regular event since 1992, although today the event's implied meaning differs from the Cultural Night of 1977, which celebrated ethnicity by combining the Indian, Chinese and Malay nights all into one.

There have been a few interesting collaborations over the years, aside from the usual serial presentation of performances by each of the performing groups during Culture Night. *Lunchtime Performance—Act I, Scene I* was the first ever lunchtime performance brought to Eusoff residents on 23 November 1988. It featured performances showcasing dance, drama, choir and band. In 1991, Culture Night was subsequently transformed into a Campus

Concerts Show in which the groups put up performances in three parts: *In Tune, EH!* featured performances by the Band, *Xinyao*, Choir and the Acapella group; *Tommy* was a play put together by the Drama Club; and *Truth or Dare* featured dances by the Dance Corps.

One particularly interesting event in 1999 featured an unusual collaboration between Eusoff and Temasek Hall for a night of drama, music and dance. The event,

which took place at Kent Ridge Guild House, was entitled *Forbidden*, poking fun at the long-existent rivalry between the two halls.



Evolution

The Arts scene in Eusoff has definitely come a long way from the Creativity Club of the early 1970s and 1980s. While we traced the evolution of the various performing groups such as the Yellow Subs, Band, Choir, Chinese Performing Group and Eusoff Dance Corps, the underlying theme has been the richness of resources, alumni expertise, and the great flexibility and encouragement that Eusoff has offered its residents over the years. This has allowed hidden talents to emerge, and provided a platform for the achievement of excellence in the arts within Eusoff.



Eusoff Hall Dance Production

Originally called the Annual Project Play in the 1970s and 1980s, and then renamed the Eusoff Hall Concert Production in the 1990s, the Eusoff Hall Dance Production is the ultimate combination of creative talents available at the Hall, and a fine expression of the artistic excellence for which it is so well known.



Which of the following annual productions were you a part of?

1990/1991: *Salvation*

1991/1992: *KOJIKI*

1992/1993: *Shadows of Kul*

1993/1994: *Children of the Pear Garden*

1994/1995: *The Water Station*

1995/1996: *Happily Ever After – A Fairy Tale Kinda Story*

1996/1997: *Absence...Makes the Heart Grow Fonder*

1997/1998: *Plaza Suite*

1998/1999: *The Good Woman of Setzuan*

1999/2000: *Emotif*

2000/2001: *And We All Fall Down—Sins, and Other Assorted Bad Things*

2001/2002: *First Ladies*

2002/2003: *Evermore*

2003/2004: *Black Russian*

2004/2005: *Leaving: La Vida Loca*

2005/2006: *Runway or Another*

2006/2007: *A Feast of Fate*

2007/2008: *Love is in the Heir*



Eusoff Hall Dance Production

The Many 'Firsts'

In 1961, an operetta, *Peasants' Cantata*, was performed for the first time in the Quadrangle at Eusoff College. Nine years later, the Creativity Club was formed and, soon after its inception, presented *An Evening at Eusoff*. In 1974, Eusoff's first annual project play, *Nostalgia*, was staged. Thereafter, the productions just kept coming. In AY 1976/77, *West Side Story* debuted at Victoria Theatre. Subsequently, annual projects by the Creativity Club included *May Chuen Intrigue* (AY 1977/78) and *Marco O' Polo*, which was performed at the Cultural Centre in AY 1978/79. The 1980s featured productions such as *Tea House of the August Moon* (AY 1980/81) and *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (AY 1981/82), to name just two.



On the Road to Greater Achievements

The productions have since grown in scale, contributing to the development of a vibrant arts scene on campus. Since 1990, Eusoff Hall has successfully staged a major cultural production every year. Most are original; some are innovative adaptations of well-known plays. There has been plenty of variety—an attempt at a pop musical, comedies, love and romance, fallen kingdoms and incarnations, creation and eternity, a tragedy about women, and even one about patients at a mental institution.

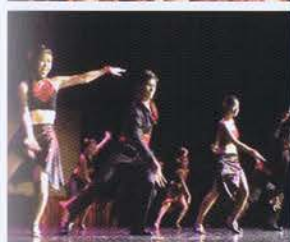
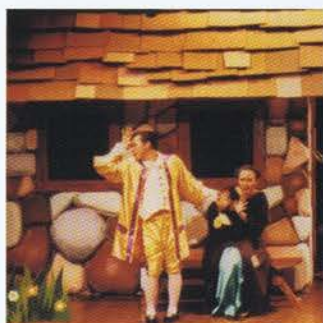
Sometimes, professional choreographers were roped in, such as Ms Boon Teo, who studied at the Royal Academy of Dancing in the United Kingdom and the Martha Graham Contemporary Dance School in New York. Having choreographed for Eusoff's venture into dance drama, *KOJIKI*, Ms Boon Teo returned the following year

to serve again as the Artistic Director and Choreographer for *Shadows of Kul*.

The AY 1993/94 production *Children of the Pear Garden* was a creative adaptation of a local play by Kaylene Tan. Its successful staging garnered recognition in a critical review by William Peterson in his

book, *Theatre and the Politics of Culture in Contemporary Singapore*. Mrs Joanna Wong, the first Chinese opera artist to win the prestigious Cultural Medallion in 1981, was roped in to help infuse Chinese operatic technique into the production. Together with two other Chinese opera artistes, Ms Lou Mee Wah, who also won

the Cultural Medallion in 1997, and Ms Cheong Siew Wai, Joanna managed to coach the cast in less than a dozen lessons.



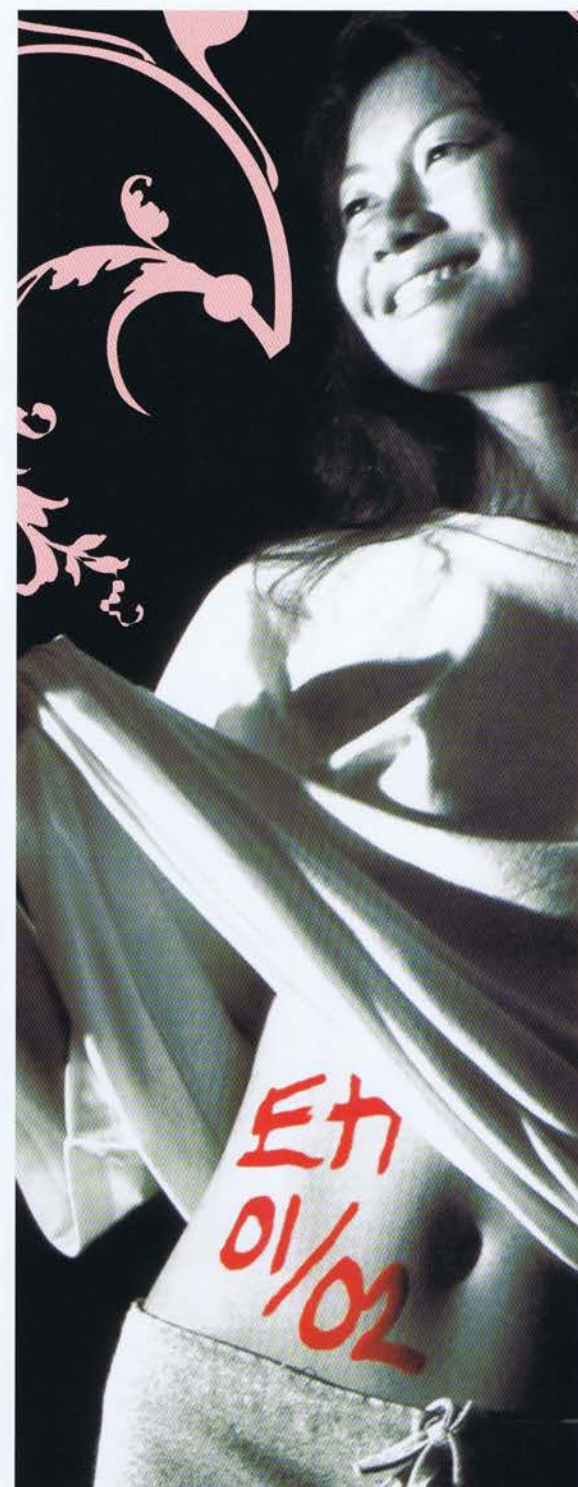
Eusoff Hall Dance Production

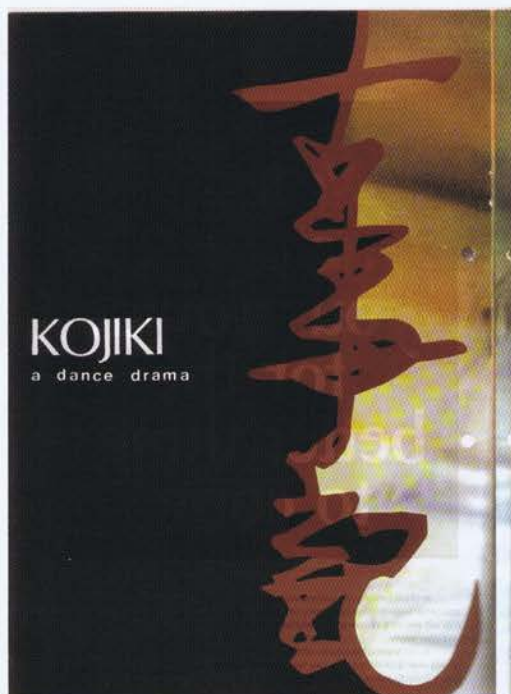
The student choreographers also displayed a great deal of passion, with some even going on to choreograph dances for subsequent productions. Ms Betty Kang holds the current known record of seven years—she has been involved in Eusoff dance productions since her first year in NUS and continues to return to contribute in dance choreography. The former Miss Eusoff (AY 2001/02) says she enjoys working with Eusoffians, and returning each year to help out with the dance production gives her the opportunity to ‘catch up with old friends’.

Betty started out with a lead role as the Greek goddess Hera in *First Ladies* but in the following year took up choreography in addition to her involvement in the acting cast. While it was no easy task teaching the movements to a large group of dancers, she patiently broke down the dance steps into learnable bits. “It has helped refine my teaching skills,” the cur-

rent schoolteacher laughs. When asked what she missed about her stay in Eusoff Hall from 2001 to 2003, she replied, “The Eusoff spirit and camaraderie. I also wish to thank Eusoff for granting me the chance to choreograph all these years—it has given me a unique sense of achievement.”

The list of Guests of Honour in Eusoff production history include well-known personalities like President Wee Kim Wee, Ministers Dr Lee Boon Yang, Mr Mah Bow Tan, Mr Lee Yock Suan, BG (NS) George Yeo, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, and Speaker of Parliament Mr Abdullah Tarmugi.





From the staging of *Salvation* in LT13, Eusoff Dance Productions went on to bigger and grander public locations. *KOJIKI* and *Shadows of Kul* debuted at Kallang Theatre, followed by *Children of the Pear Garden* at the World Trade Centre Auditorium. *The Water Station* then made a stop at Victoria Theatre. The next three productions were moved to Jubilee Hall at Raffles Hotel. Other locations included the origi-

nal Drama Centre and Far East Square. In 2001, *And We All Fall Down—Sins and Other Assorted Bad Things* debuted at the newly-opened NUS University Cultural Centre (UCC). The Eusoff Dance Production has since made its home there, becoming the only hall of residence to hold its productions at the 1000-seater UCC Main Hall.

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The spirit prevailing in Eusoff Hall is not a singularly lone phenomenon in the context of Singapore’s move into the field of entertainment, arts and culture. The move is both vibrant and exhilarating. And, above all, it is a nation on the move. Modest beginnings but promises of bigger things along the way.

*The late President Wee Kim Wee, Guest of Honour
at the AY 1992/93 production *Shadows of Kul**

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Eusoff Hall Dance Production

The productions have also donated their profits to charity. In the AY 1995/96 production, *Happily Ever After—A Fairy Tale Kinda Story*, Eusoff Hall staged an additional first-ever Charity Premiere, where a \$10,000 cheque was presented to the Lions' Home for the Elders. Since then, other adopted beneficiaries have included the Children's Cancer Foundation, the MILK (Mainly, I Love Kids) Fund, Down Syndrome Association and St Luke's Hospital for the Elderly. The latter was the beneficiary for the AY 1996/97 production *Absence...Makes the Heart Grow Fonder*, in which the script focused on Alzheimer's disease as a growing societal concern.



The Script behind the Velvet Curtains

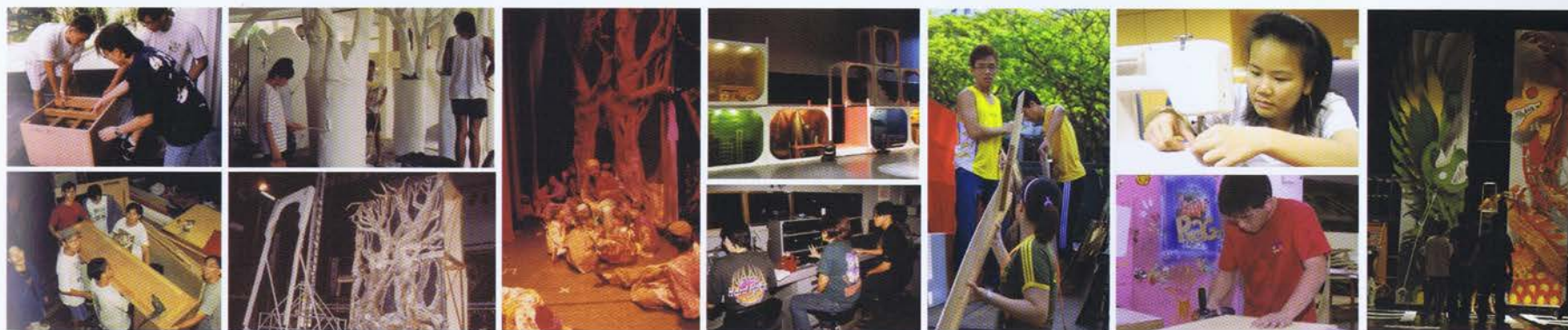
“

I had every single aspect of the musical—scenes, dialogue, props—etched out in my imagination but it took quite some time to actually come up with the script.

Shahharuddin Roslan, scriptwriter and co-director of Eusoff's first pop musical, Salvation (AY 1990/91)

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Shahharuddin's analogy is an apt one: the productions each year are the fruits of labour of not one creative mind, but those of the entire cast and crew—from the producers and directors to the sets designers—working long hours over months. From the planning process to the opening night, the script of the production proceedings remains generally the same every year. There are administrative issues to deal with, the designing of the sets and costumes, hard work at the con-



struction of the sets and the sewing of the costumes, publicity and marketing efforts, the creative aspects of script-writing, dance choreography, gruelling auditions, endless rehearsals, and finally the crucial week of bump-in, where everything finally falls into place. These efforts are carried out, from start to finish, entirely by Eusoffians.

While the various committees work on their respective areas, each year the student leaders of Dance Production meet with Associate Professor Ho Chee Kong over many late nights to work on the

multitude of administrative and logistical issues that inevitably arise, especially when such a large ensemble of students is involved. Says A/P Ho, who has been the production's resident advisor/executive producer since 2001, "There is not a dull moment when the Dance Production swings into action each year. While there were often times when the students would face various obstacles, Eusoffians, being who they are, would just simply take all in their stride, solve the problems and push on to produce a memorable show, year after year."

The wealth of experience gained by participating in such a tedious process is invaluable. It allows ample room for experimentation and encourages one to go through the bumpy learning process of what works and what does not. Many perspectives are brought into the production process, and while these are sometimes streamlined, it spurs the members to adopt the production as their own.

Eusoff Hall Dance Production



Wern-Jhien is no stranger to Eusoff Hall Dance Productions. He has been working behind the scenes for four years running and has contributed greatly to the creative process by drawing from his rich musical background. This charming and witty final-year law student finds time from his busy schedule to chat about music, Eusoff, and how the two came together during his undergraduate years.

You made a name for yourself as the long-time music director for Eusoff's Dance Production (DP). When did it all begin?

It started when I was in my first year. I joined the tech crew at a time when there was no such thing as a music department. I saw the potential in the production in terms of music, so I capitalised on that—I suggested to the producers/directors to allow me to inject musical elements into the production and they agreed.

From there on, each year, I pushed for more things, made myself more relevant. Finally in my fourth year, I had the opportunity to include original compositions into the dance production, though the songs were not written by me.

Was a 'musical' what you have been aiming for? Is that ultimately what you would like to see in DP?

Yes. And if possible, I'd do away with the dances. [Laughs] But then it wouldn't be called a 'dance production'! But I think this year [2008] was quite spectacular in the sense that it was always how I imagined the marriage between dance and music to be like for Eusoff.

When did you get trained in music? I started when I was seven years old. I'm still training!

[Outside of hall, Wern-Jhien is much involved in his band, Silent Scream, which released their self-titled debut album in 2007. Singles like Unspoken and Revolution have made it into the Top 10 charts in Malaysia. He plays the keyboard, does the music arrangement and also helped co-produce their debut album.]

It's not the end

You've brought your talent into Hall and made significant contributions. In turn, what have you gotten out of Eusoff?

Number 1: I met my girlfriend. She's been a great, great inspiration.

Number 2: DP gave me the opportunity to do things that I'll never be able to do on a non-professional basis outside. When else would you be allowed to operate music in a theatre? It also gave me a chance to work on a creative project other than my band.

Creative projects are different because when you come out with an idea, you're usually very personally attached to it, and when it gets shot down, it'll hurt a lot if you don't know how to deal with it. So I matured in that respect.

The Eusoff Hall Dance Production has established itself as a *tour de force* on the NUS arts scene. The respective performing groups are steadily growing in reputation as well. The individual artistic talents in Eusoff Hall are not only good at what they do, they are creative and inspirational pioneers at the same time. Eusoff Hall provides the right kind of environment that nurtures a seed to a baby plant, which will eventually mature and blossom. The seed, of course, is the seed of creation, of ideas. A bubbling of creative energy. A breeding ground for experimentation. These themes have been reiterated throughout this chapter because of the belief that these are the components that have led to Eusoff's excellence both on-stage and off-stage. And this crucial blend of factors is why Eusoff will continue to excel in the Arts.



The Land of My Youth

Coming back to Singapore,
walking in the heat
and sudden rain,
I remember
my youth.

This is the land
where I first missed home,
looking up at the sky,
recognizing even in the night
the SIA logo
on planes flying low, thinking
they could take me home.

This is the land
where I learnt to make friends,
running down the college steps
to buy siew mai, vegetable meat buns,
quarters of egg white and yolk inside,
from the bao man at ten-thirty pm
near exams.

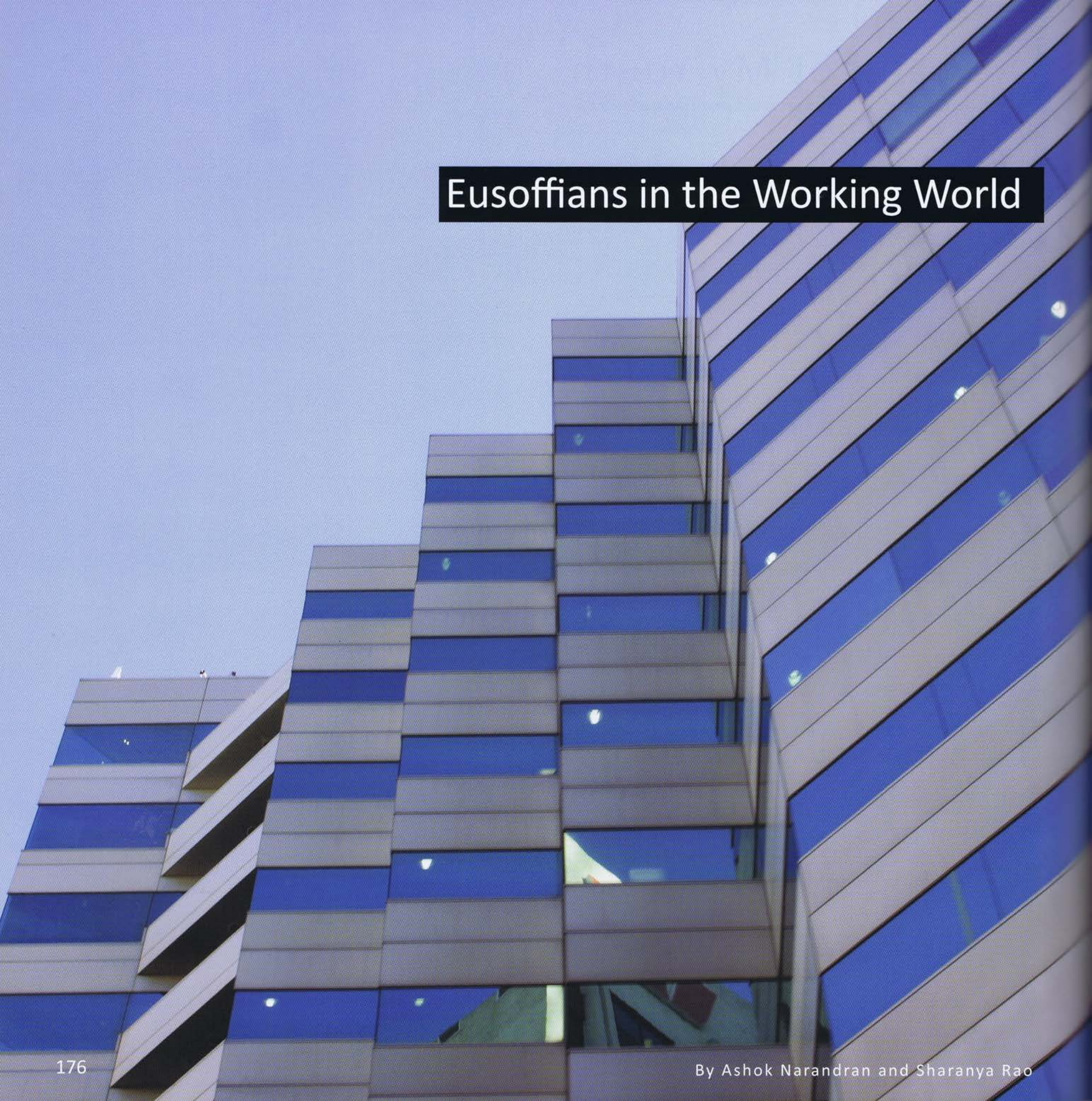
This is the land
that taught me there could be
different kinds of people,
many ways and languages,
that spent so much
on my education
so freely.

This is the land
where I lost my innocence
about love, about marriage,
the land where I met God,
grew into a woman
and found
poetry.

This is the land of
my youth I cannot live in,
the land I take
with me
wherever I go.



Agnes Lam, 5 December 2005



Eusoffians in the Working World

Almost by definition, Eusoffians set themselves apart from regular undergraduates by virtue of the multitude of extra-curricular undertakings that typically enrich their tertiary lives. From social service work to entrepreneurial projects to managing the lives and needs of fellow hostelites, life in Eusoff provides ample opportunity for one to explore and discover strengths and weaknesses and see how one fares in real-world scenarios, albeit within the confines of the microcosm that is Eusoff.

Numerous Eusoffians who have achieved success in their professional lives have looked back fondly on their years spent in the Hall and reflected with pride and gratitude on the opportunity to serve the Hall through the plethora of activities they had been involved in as residents. For such individuals, these early undertakings imbued them with essential qualities and invaluable lessons, which would form the bedrock of experience and passion upon which they would develop professionally and succeed. A varsity life lived in Eusoff has enriched many socially and professionally. For some, Eusoff was where years of social awkwardness were shed and a new confident, assertive, and self-aware individual emerged. Others count self-discipline, integrity, authenticity and selflessness as some of the values that Hall life has given to them—qualities that have guided them to professional success as well as enriched them as people.

No doubt, an active involvement in Hall life eases the bumps and jolts on one's transition to the working world. In this chapter we look at some of the many Eusoffians who represent these values, as well as the spirit of adventure and entrepreneurship that has been encouraged by the Hall through the celebrated and well regarded Eusoff Business Incubators Scheme. Space constraints do not allow us to feature the multitude of successful alumni but the pages that follow reflect the values, traditions and experiences that all successful Eusoffians share. Each of the people featured here has seen his or her career or life shaped and guided to some extent by the experiences gleaned from years living in Eusoff College and Hall. From CEOs and directors to journalists and academics, Eusoff Hall's alumni have excelled in diverse fields but share the commonality of the Eusoff experience and the indelible mark of the Hall's credo—Excellence and Harmony.



Professor Jasbir Kaur

Professor of Education,
Universiti of Malaya

Jasbir Kaur helped collect money to fund the fire crackers that they threw at the Raffles boys. She remembers that some of the boys actually got locked up by the police for their part in the 'Cracker War'!

Professor Jasbir Kaur was a College resident from 1958 to 1961, and part of the pioneer cohort of Eusoff residents. She was also from the original batch of students who had initially been placed in the Kuala Lumpur campus of University Malaya but was later transferred to Singapore. Jasbir was instrumental in engineering the move to Singapore. Feeling rather isolated as their faculty was separated from the rest of the student body in the university, Jasbir, as editor of the student newspaper, *Mahasiswa*, lobbied for the Arts Faculty to be moved to Singapore.

Jasbir's activist spirit would find an outlet in the College. She served as the 2nd JCRC President of Eusoff College, and was actively involved in most of the activities of the College. For her, being involved was part and parcel of experiencing everything connected to university life. Her days in Eusoff College were most memorable. "It was the best time of our lives," she quipped.

She went on to pursue a PhD in education after fulfilling her scholarship obligation with the Ministry of Education in Malaysia. She returned to Malaysia and has been, for the greater part of her career, a Professor of Education. She is a very well respected member of Malaysian academia and an internationally recognised figure for her work on women's education. Before her retirement, she went to London to work in the Commonwealth Secretariat in an area called Higher Education Co-operation.

That early spirit of activism would continue to define her life. She feels strongly about the role of women in the field of education and has been working to promote a greater role for women in academia. Jasbir runs the 'Women in Higher Education' programme for the Association of Commonwealth Universities based in London, with the objective of encouraging women to aspire to a role in university management. "You know, the proportion of women in [university] management [worldwide] is very low. I'm currently doing statistical updates. And you're still talking about 9 or 10% of women across the Commonwealth. Because far too often, the view of women in universities is that they're good teachers, they're nurturers, they do good counselling and so on. But maybe they're not to be deans, they're not to be vice-chancellors, they don't make heads of departments. They do, a few of them do, but it's not the norm," she explained. Most of her work is done in developing countries and in the last few years she has been working mostly in Africa, with African universities.

Jasbir believes that women should aspire to the highest position in whatever field they work in. In a way, she has come full circle. She credited the opportunity given her as a young woman in the university with putting her on the academic path, at a time when the proportion of women in universities was low. And now she hopes to change the statistics for women in management positions in universities. Now in semi-retirement, she reflects, "It's been a good life. And I think Eusoff College definitely laid the foundation for later life."

HE Ambassador Chan Heng Chee

Singapore's Ambassador to the United States



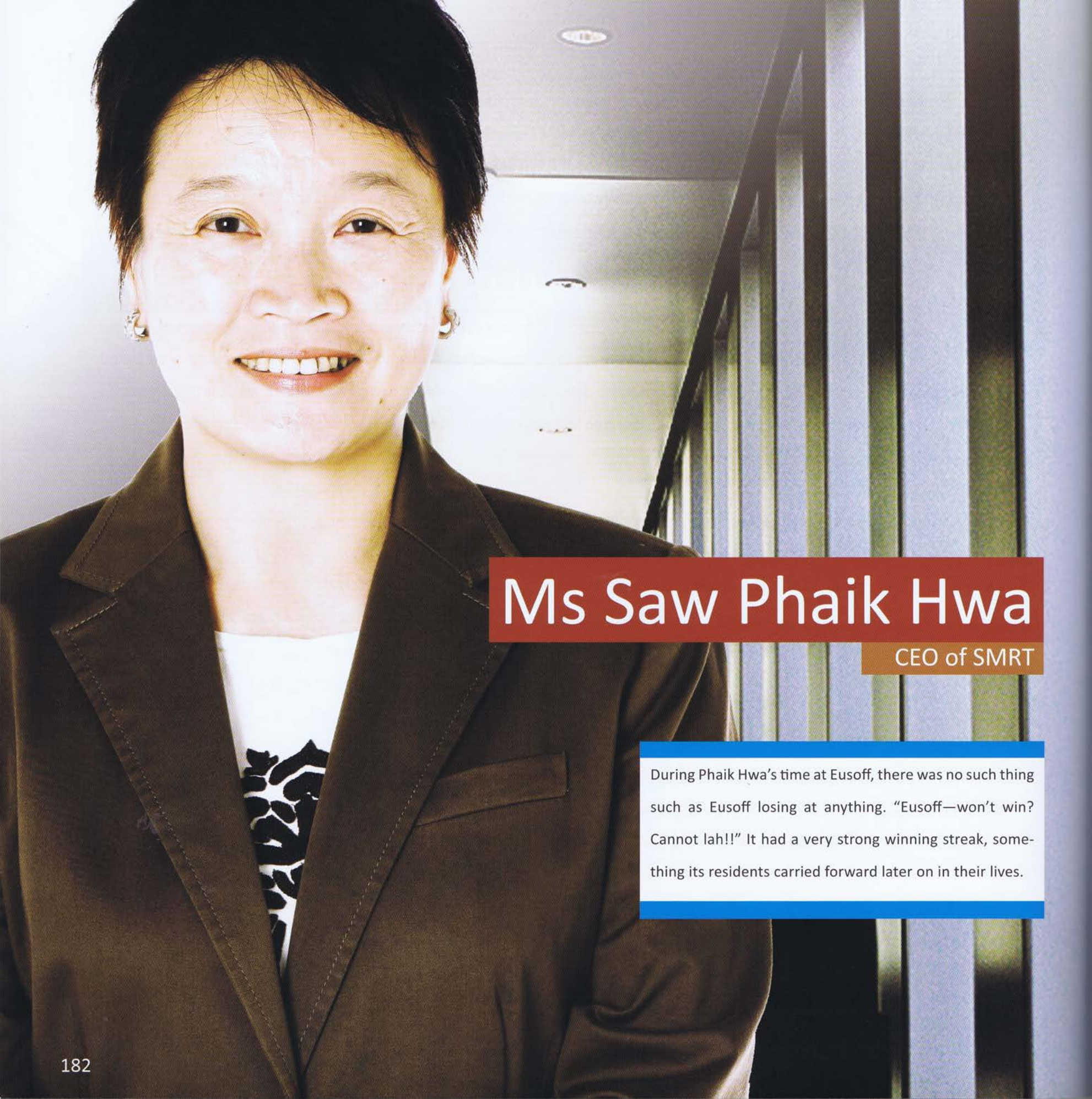
Professor Chan Heng Chee is currently Singapore's Ambassador to the United States, a role that she has held since July 1996. In a distinguished career, she has held several important posts including Executive Director of the Singapore International Foundation and Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN). She was the first woman from Singapore to be appointed Ambassador and the first woman from East Asia to be appointed Permanent Representative to the UN, when she was there from 1989 to 1991. Heng Chee is also an internationally recognised scholar in Singapore studies and in Political Science, and was the founder Director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).

Heng Chee had a 'rough' initiation into Eusoff College, where she was a resident from 1961 to 1963, when she was targeted for ragging as she was already well-known as a freelance writer for the *Singapore Free Press* and *The Straits Times*. After the initial period of Orientation, however, she enjoyed college life where she participated in the community living in Eusoff. She eventually graduated from University of Singapore with a First Class Honours degree in Political Science and would eventually become a Professor of Political Science and Head of Department at the National University of Singapore.

The transition from an academic to a diplomatic life has been, in her own words, 'interesting'. Although she had to deal with being in the 'boys' club' at the UN, she felt that there was also an advantage in being a woman because people were usually willing to give women a hearing although ultimately, diplomatic performance is measured on merit and not gender. Following her successful stint at the UN, she was asked by the government to establish the Singapore International Foundation (SIF), Singapore's version of the Peace Corps. She looked at models in the US, New Zealand and Australia and created a similar organisation for Singapore to channel the idealism of young Singaporeans. She is particularly proud of having been able to shape the SIF's agenda, which provides great service to the international community.

In July 1996, Heng Chee became Ambassador to the US and immediately had to deal with several bilateral interests and issues. She again delivered when in 2003, the Free Trade Agreement was signed between the US and Singapore. She also crafted the Strategic Framework Agreement that was also signed a few years later.

Heng Chee sees herself as one of her generation of women who pushed to make inroads in Singapore. Like other Eusoffian ladies of her generation, she blazed a trail for other women by notching up many firsts and excelling in fields traditionally dominated by men.



Ms Saw Phaik Hwa

CEO of SMRT

During Phaik Hwa's time at Eusoff, there was no such thing such as Eusoff losing at anything. "Eusoff—won't win? Cannot lah!!" It had a very strong winning streak, something its residents carried forward later on in their lives.

Ms Saw Phaik Hwa stayed in Eusoff College from 1974 to 1978, and even then it was obvious that this young lady had a tremendous amount of talent and zest for life. She was Orientation Committee chairman and JCRC President and was, by her own admission, involved in almost everything that was going on in the Hall. Eusoff was a terrific experience for her and helped mould her into a tenaciously optimistic and adventurous individual. Phaik Hwa has particularly fond words for her friends at Eusoff College. They were her family. In fact she still enjoys strong friendships with many of her fellow Eusoffians and they have occasional get-togethers.

The layout of Eusoff's quadrangle was such that everyone knew one another and it was this family environment that nurtured and instilled her with a new sense of confidence and assuredness. Being the first women's college in Singapore, Phaik Hwa felt a palpable belief amongst Eusoff College girls in fair and equal treatment—something uncommon in an era where gender equality was not the norm. She recalls that the College encouraged them to have their own opinions, their own points of view, and to succeed on their own terms. This helped cultivate strong, confident women who were not afraid of obstacles and confrontation. Phaik Hwa also believed that the competitive academic environment in the College allowed her to develop intellectually. Her challenges in extra-curricular areas were numerous as well, including the tough run for the presidency of the JCRC, but she reflects on these experiences philosophically, accepting that they were merely 'part and parcel of life'.

Phaik Hwa's journey through Eusoff College was an enriching experience for her. Inner strength, courage and confidence were the qualities she developed during her stay, and which were essential for her journey forward. She has reached the very pinnacle of success as the CEO of a major corporation in Singapore.



Ms Seah Jia Choo

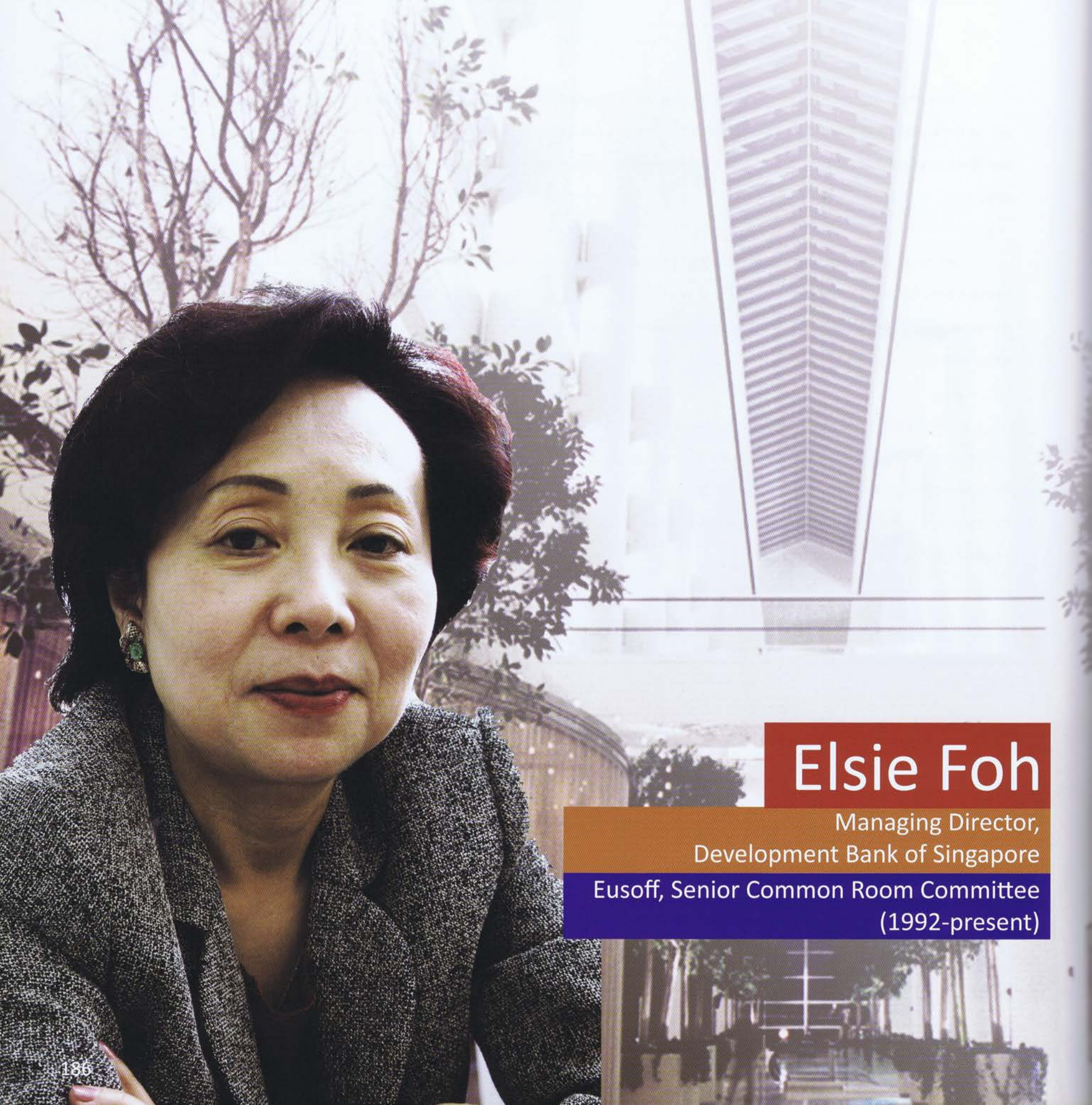
Director-General of Education
(Ministry of Education)

Education, like knowledge, is a journey, one that many people undertake. However, there are few in this world who are guides aiding the travellers in their journey, and fewer who are good at their job. Ms Seah Jiak Choo is one of those select few who displayed a tendency to teach and nurture people even during her university days, when she was often called upon to counsel those with personal problems.

As Director-General of Education, the most senior professional of the 29,000 - strong education service, she is in charge of developing leadership in all the schools, junior colleges and centralised institutes to respond, as she puts it, 'nimble to the changing profile of students and the economic and social environment'. She also oversees the planning and execution of curricular and co-curricular programmes in schools.

She stayed in Eusoff College from 1971 to 1975 and valued its diversity. She enjoyed interacting with students from various nationalities and faculties and often took more interest in their work and projects than her own! She had an 'open-door' policy back in her college days and left her room open for her non-hostelite friends to drop in to rest if they were sick. It was this willingness to share her time and to help and nurture those around her which led to her being voted Girl of the Year for the College in 1975, in addition to receiving the Jean Robertson Trophy.

The motto she lives by sums her up in the best way possible—"Think in terms of giving not getting, enjoying not enduring, and contributing not criticising". Fitting words from someone in a profession that involves the selfless service of imparting knowledge.



Elsie Foh

Managing Director,
Development Bank of Singapore
Eusoff, Senior Common Room Committee
(1992-present)

Elsie Foh was a resident in Eusoff College in the early 1970s and stayed for three years, where she made the most of her time in the College. She played a lot of sports, participated in the making of floats, threw starch at the Raffles guys, enjoyed the diverse population and the fact that she was growing up. Since she was from a close-knit family environment where her parents took care of everything, the sudden changes such as doing her own laundry and managing her needs with just the help of her friends enabled Elsie to develop soft skills such as dealing with people, proper etiquette and social graces. These skills would prove invaluable to her after university.

Although a chemistry graduate, Elsie struck out on a different path after graduation. She went into banking and has never looked back. Today, she is recognised as one of Singapore's leading women bankers, one who has played a key role in shaping the face of banking in Singapore. Elsie is currently a Managing Director at DBS, and head of a transformation programme that focuses on putting in place an information technology infrastructure for the bank. Over her long career of more than 20 years in banking, Elsie has held various positions: Chief Operating Officer for DBS' Singapore Consumer Banking Group, Board member of DBS Asset Management Ltd, Director of Network for Electronic Transfers (S) Pte Ltd, alternate Council member for the Association of Banks in Singapore, member of the Consumer Mediation Unit (CMU) Panel of Mediators, and has held board positions in several companies. Elsie's contribution also extends to public service as a member of the Public Education Committee on Family, and as a Non-Resident Fellow of Eusoff Hall, a position that she has held since 1992.

To be successful, she believes that Eusoffians must be able to 'adapt and adopt', which is very much a part of her personal philosophy. She believes that one must have a keen interest in learning and be open to new ideas. Elsie learned to find balance in her work and social life, something very important for a female executive. This is a skill she learnt at Eusoff when juggling her academic work with College activities. She firmly believes that every person should have aspirations, integrity, and enthusiasm in order to succeed. Most importantly, it is love for the job that fuels excellence in whatever one does, and only that can bring satisfaction.



Ms Christine Khor

Director of NUS Centre for the Arts

A Penang-born resident at Eusoff College's Bukit Timah campus from 1969 to 1971, Christine Khor's three years as a hostelite saw her actively involved in hall activities. In addition to serving as editor of the Eusoff College yearbook for two years, Christine's artistic inclinations led her to dance in *Fiddler On The Roof*, emcee the College's famous fashion show (with models including the young Farah Khan, now Kuala Lumpur's top fashion entrepreneur) and participate in many events like the University Malaya-Singapore University Games in KL as a cheerleader. She also fondly recalls the spontaneous 'incidents' that enlivened hall life such as the 'Flour War', Rag and Flag Day, panty raids and Raffles Hall seniors 'croaking' (half-drunk) in the moonlight under her window.

Christine credits her diverse experiences in Eusoff with helping her develop into an effective leader, communicator and arts activist by enhancing her talents and equipping her with early skills that later resulted in creative, pragmatic working relationships with different teams in her varied career in the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), The Straits Times, the Economic Development Board and the Singapore Tourism Board.

Today, as Director of the NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA), Christine oversees the operation of the University Cultural Centre, NUS Museum, and 23 CFA groups encompassing music, dance, film and theatre and involving almost 2000 proactive students and alumni from the various faculties on campus. She approaches her work with the same zest she had for life while a Eusoffian—a passion for the arts that is unequalled, and which the university community and beyond is the better for.

NUS Centre for the Arts (CFA) is the arts cradle of the University and as Director, I work in a fun and creative environment, to the envy of many. I am tasked to nurture and instill a love for the arts in all our students and staff, by providing opportunities for those with an interest and passion in the arts to further hone their talent. At CFA, we develop good programmes and make available opportunities for our students to work with industry professionals. Our arts programmes inject vitality into campus life and provide an avenue for students to express their creativity.



Mrs Lim Yae Foong

Chief Operations Officer of Esco Micro Pte Ltd

Lim Yae Foong was a resident of Eusoff College from 1973 to 1976, while pursuing a degree in Pharmacy. Back in her College days, Yae Foong was the librarian on the JCRC committee. She recalls that hall life helped develop her social skills, leadership skills and most importantly, survival skills—all of which have come in handy in her 30-year career. Yae Foong also said that while the College taught her many things, she felt that the best lesson she learned was to be considerate to other people's needs and not just her own. This, she feels, has made her a strong team player—something that she considers a very important quality for those in leadership positions.

Immediately after graduation, Yae Foong worked at Guardian Pharmacy for a spell, gaining invaluable work experience and knowledge. She learnt a lot from two of her female bosses who had very different personalities and work philosophies and this gave Yae Foong what she calls the 'yin and yang of work experience'. In 1978, ESCO Micro Pte Ltd was founded together with her husband. She finally left her job at Guardian Pharmacy in March 1982 to run ESCO full time with her husband.

At present, ESCO stands as a global giant in laboratory equipment and clean room technologies. It is a market leader in containment, clean air and laboratory equipment technologies with active sales in over a 100 countries and direct company offices in the top 10 geo-specific markets.

"Always equip yourself with skills! You never know when what you learned could come in handy," says Yae Foong as advice to Eusoffians entering the workforce.

She was allowed only 45 minutes of television during her formative years in Malaysia. She spent the spare time learning skills such as sewing. This came in handy unexpectedly when she once had to stitch up a tear in a piece of laboratory protective gear at a company factory.



Mr Colin Ong

Director of Financial Services ,
Great Eastern (part of the OCBC group)

Chairman , Advisors Clique

Mr Colin Ong's first foray into financial services began with Eusoff Hall, where he stayed in the Hall from 1989 to 1992. A Political Science and Sociology major, Colin's breakthrough into the world of entrepreneurship and financial planning resulted directly from his involvement in hall activities.

Colin was part of the marketing team for the mega production *KOJIKI*, which was held at the Kallang Theatre. Colin was spotted by one of the sponsors for the event, who subsequently offered to mentor him in the world of financial services.

Participating in hall activities taught Colin numerous marketing and leadership skills and allowed him to build a truly valuable network of friends and contacts that he has maintained till today.

He joined Great Eastern right after graduation in 1992. Interestingly, some of those working with Colin today happen to be Eusoff Hall residents or hostelites from both NUS and NTU. Colin feels that this is a result of the similar virtues, high level of cohesiveness and mutual support ingrained in hall culture. Apart from the unwavering Eusoffian desire to succeed, Colin also sees the numerous activities that the typical Eusoffian undertakes as standing him or her in good stead for the transition to the working world.

Colin had fun playing soap polo (a soccer variant with soap as the ball and the players sliding on a soapy floor on their posteriors), cards with league games thrown in and various other crazy activities. Even today, the Financial planning practice he founded with his fellow Directors (all of whom were either hostelites or student leaders), Advisors Clique, enjoys a hall-like culture and environment. The Practice has a family-like atmosphere, where every individual is passionate about the larger cause and pursues this by playing their part in the productivity of the team. More importantly, everyone believes in helping their fellow associate along the way. Finally, to promote the cohesiveness of the team, Colin and his fellow directors at AC always find time to engage everyone in 'crazy activities', just like in hostel days.



Choon Wee's philosophy is that 'every dog will have his day'. His advice to young Eusoffians is never to underestimate themselves, as perhaps their time has not yet arrived.

Mr Tan Choon Wee

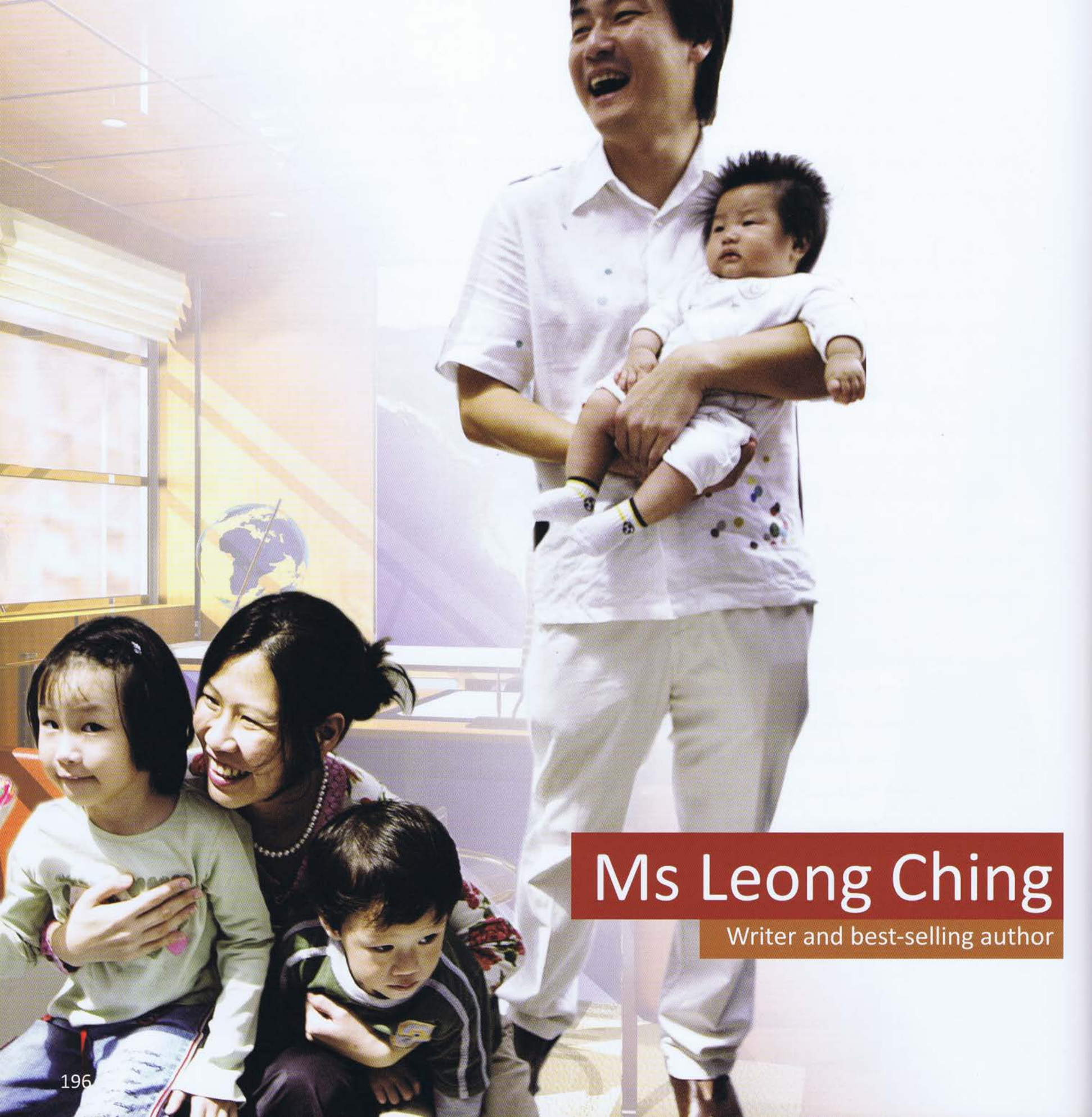
Director of Lexicon Ltd and China Enersave

Tan Choon Wee stayed in Eusoff Hall from 1988 to 1990. He was a member of the pioneer batch of Eusoff Hall residents. A Mechanical Engineering major, Choon Wee and a group of friends transferred from Raffles Hall to Eusoff Hall—a decision that he has never regretted. The close friends and the relationships he built in Eusoff have formed the most prominent memories of his life in university. Choon Wee was very active in sports and took part in events such as Rag and Flag.

He cherishes the friendships made at Eusoff, and believes that living in the Hall benefited him in many ways. The network that he built through fellowship has helped him to a certain extent in his work. Moreover, hall life also taught him that everyone has to recognise his or her own strength and that through teamwork, success can be attained in a smoother fashion—a maxim that he lives by today.

Choon Wee started work with Singapore Airlines (SIA) upon graduation as part of the management trainee programme and was later posted to the Market Planning Division, where he priced and monitored airfares. The same adventurous spirit that spurred him to move from Raffles to Eusoff also saw him switch over to the financial industry, where he found his true calling. Having left SIA, he joined OCBC as a corporate banker where he was introduced to the complexities of the stock market. Choon Wee later joined DBS Securities and was involved in Institutional Sales where he brokered everything from equity to institutional funds. From 1996 to 2004, he worked at Kay Hian James Capel, which is UOB Kay Hian today. It was only after a stint in Kuala Lumpur as the Chief Dealer at RHB Securities that Choon Wee decided to strike out on his own in 2005.

Having spent 17 years in the finance industry, specifically in banking and broking, this experience and knowledge helped Choon Wee to finally branch out on his own. Coming back to Singapore, he started his own business, and currently runs his own investment firm. He has invested in several listed companies, and sits on the Board of Directors of two firms. His job is mainly related to managing investments, structured deals, and investing in derivatives. Though his major was Mechanical Engineering, he believes the transition from engineering to finance was a very natural one because he was always interested in finding something to do with business.



Ms Leong Ching

Writer and best-selling author

Leong Ching's journalistic record speaks for itself. With exclusive interviews with Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew and then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, and a stint in Channel News Asia as a Deputy Editor under her belt, to call her accomplished would be quite an understatement. She is one of those rare journalists who has made the transition from print media to television, and is trained both as a line producer and a studio director.

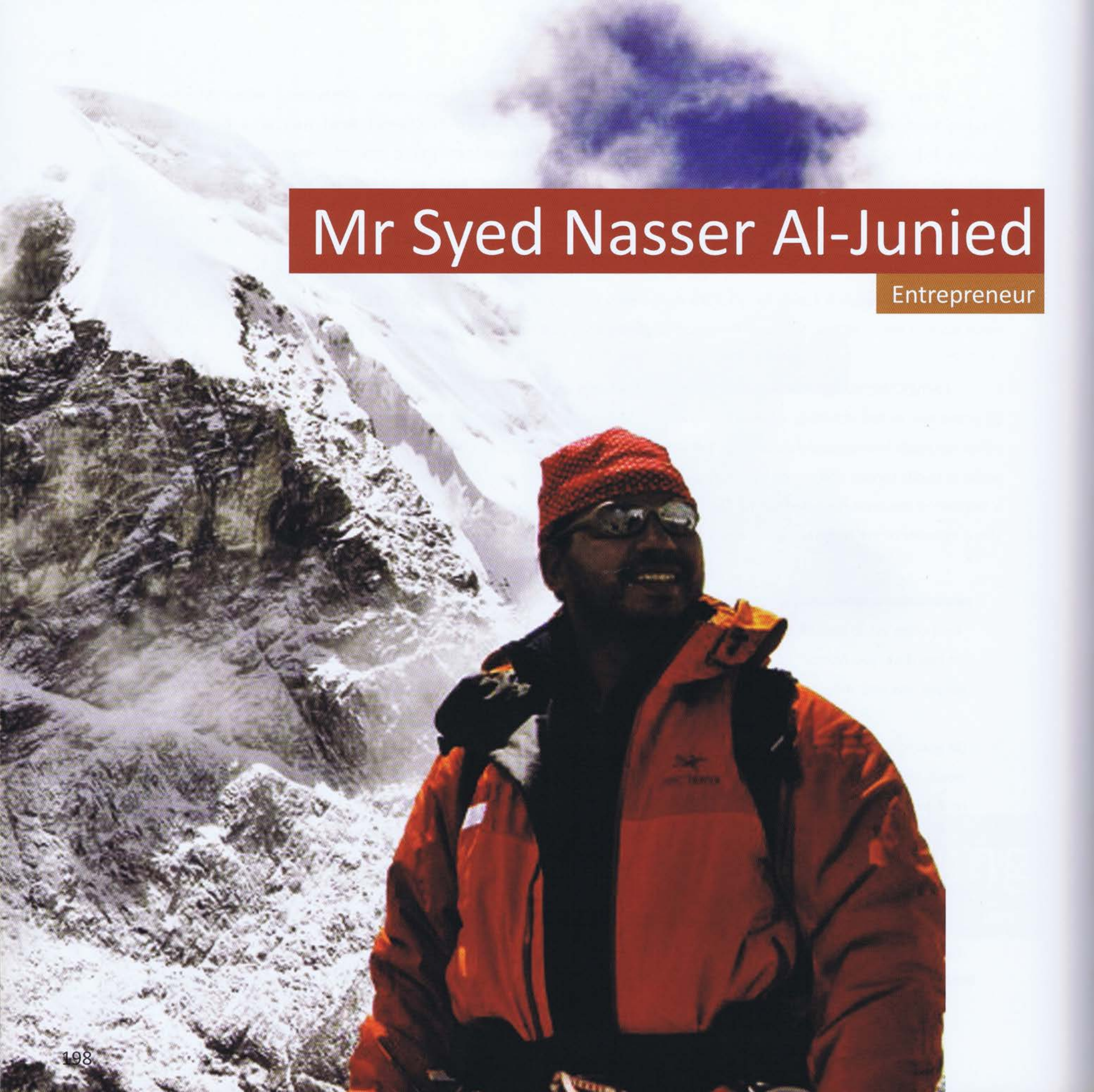
Above and beyond her work in journalism, Leong Ching is also a much sought-after author. She has also authored a number of books for government ministries, leading companies and charitable associations. She has written *Cycle and Carriage 50th Anniversary*, *The People's Action Party's 45th Anniversary* book, and its 50th Anniversary book as well. She also produced, among other works, *Coming of Age: Nanyang Technological University's 21st Anniversary* and *Children's Society: 50 years of Growing Up*.

Leong Ching was an active student leader while she was in Eusoff from 1988 to 1991. She was a member of the JCRC and played an active role in hall activities, where she honed her already considerable talent for communications, leadership and management, which has made her successful at both the Television Corporation of Singapore (TCS) and *The Straits Times*. Leong Ching continues to be active in public service and sits on the council of the South West Community Development Council under Mayor Amy Khor. She is also a member of the resource panel for the Government Parliamentary Committee of the Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports, and is also a member of the National Family Council.

"I am often asked how life in the Hall has benefited me. That is a difficult question because there are good days and bad days. On bad days, you wonder why you have to eat food with psychedelic colours in a styrofoam box and run around just because people one year older than you yell at you.

On good days, ah, the good days, you laugh till your legs are weak, you talk till the sun comes up, you dream of changing the world, you fall in love, you make good friends that last forever more. The good days, I can't tell you enough about them. You'd have to find out for yourself.

Living in Eusoff Hall prepared me for life. Real life, not just 'working life'. It taught me the solid value of intangibles—of making time for people, making space in your head for dreams and ideas, how to move people, how to tell stories. Also, if truth be told, Eusoff Hall has a Block B which had a fourth floor, which has a room with a view of the sea. I was invited to comment on that view by a rather dashing young man from Malaysia, whom my father thought I ought to marry. I quite agreed.

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a red knit beanie, sunglasses, and a red and black outdoor jacket, is smiling and looking upwards. He is standing in front of a steep, rocky mountain slope covered in snow and patches of green vegetation. The sky is bright and cloudy.

Mr Syed Nasser Al-Junied

Entrepreneur

Nasser Al-Junied, a 41-year old Singaporean of Yemeni descent, is a third generation member of one of the founding families and entrepreneurs of modern Singapore. He graduated with a degree in Double Physics from the National University of Singapore in 1990 and began his career as a currency trader with Chase Manhattan Bank.

Between 1991 and 1995, he was Vice President at Smith Barney Asset Management where he was Head Trader of the Group's commodities and currency derivatives discretionary portfolio. Following a successful career as a money manager, he switched roles and joined the Swiss Banking Group where he started the Emerging Markets Sales and Product Management Group. He was responsible for structuring and distributing Fixed Income and FX products to the global hedge fund community. He went back to trading in 1997 and headed the Asian FX and Fixed Income derivatives team for the Global Emerging Markets Group at Credit Suisse First Boston (CSFB). During this time, Nasser was the sole book runner for CSFB's Asian currency options book, which was the single largest Asian currency portfolio in the world.

Upon 'early retirement' from investment banking in 2000, Nasser started a boutique private equity fund, Asiawerks Global Investment (AGI Group), and was one of the first movers in acquiring natural resource concessions in Indonesia. His portfolio of listed companies is currently involved in coal mining, oil and gas services and financial services. In Malaysia, he is a substantial shareholder and Director of CMS Trust Sdn Bhd, one of the largest Islamic asset management companies domestically.

Nasser is currently the Finance Director of Bumi Hijaui, one of the largest wood producers in Indonesia.

Nasser is a keen extreme adventurer and mountaineer having scaled an 8,000m peak in Tibet in 2007. He is now planning an Everest summit in 2010. A passionate Cuban cigar collector and connoisseur, he has an encyclopedic knowledge of cigars and their history. He speaks fluent Bahasa Indonesia and German .



The Eusoff Business Incubator

The industrial and entrepreneurial spirit that Eusoffians have come to embody in their professional lives are qualities that the Hall has actively nurtured over the years. Inaugurated in 2004, the Eusoff Business Incubator (EBI) is a venture that seeks to provide NUS students with a platform from which to launch and run their own start-up companies at a relatively low cost. An affiliate of the NUS Business Incubator, EBI provides start-ups with physical facilities and infrastructure such as office space and equipment, as well as access to a wide network of professional resources that include mentors, advisors and consultants to assist companies in business development and networking opportunities.

Eusoff Hall has already opened its doors to two companies that have achieved a measure of success in the formative years that they have spent within the Hall's premises. Gajah International, a research and development company focusing on various consumer electronic products and storage devices, was the first venture to capitalise on the EBI scheme back in 2004. Beginning operations in a small office in the hall compound, Gajah has grown considerably. Today, the company boasts regional affiliates and offices in Taiwan, Hongkong, Australia and Malaysia, and has an average annual turnover of \$7 million.

Unipath, the second EBI company, has enjoyed similar success. An enrichment centre that adopts a modular system closely pegged to current school syllabi, Unipath's appeal lies in the holistic approach it adopts, with coaching on optimal learning styles and education strategies, as well as a wide array of workshops and courses integrated with the curriculum. Since its inception, the centre has had close to 300 students pass through its doors.

Kevin Chua, one of Unipath's founding members, expressed his gratitude to Eusoff for the support it has rendered the fledgling company. "The Hall has given us a lot of support in terms of sharing knowledge and ways in which to expand our business," he said, adding that he and his colleagues had gained valuable business experience through working and learning with the hall.

Hall residents, in fact, feature on Unipath's teaching staff, with the company tapping into the rich pool of undergraduates that Eusoff has to offer, to fill positions as tutors and educational material developers. Unipath also trains a select number of residents in management and organisational skills, grooming them to take up positions in the centre as potential colleagues upon their graduation.

Conclusion



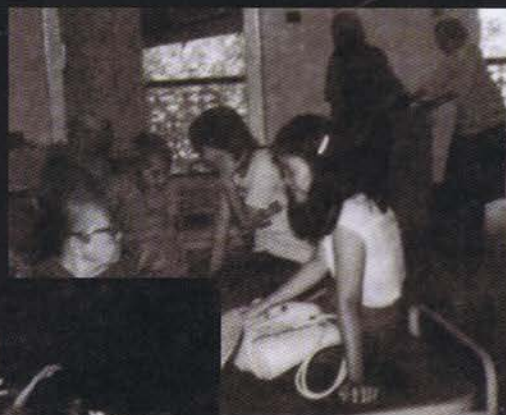
While it is possible to coast through university merely on the back of academic achievements, the successes of these Eusoffians and others like them make it clear that there is much more to be gained from a university education than mere paper qualifications. For Eusoffians, university is a period of exploration and growth, where one's limits are stretched and new possibilities discovered. Our ability to reap such rewards is linked to the willingness to undertake new responsibilities and endeavours—opportunities that Eusoff provides in abundance. From overseeing editorial work to approaching sponsors for Hall projects, Eusoffians are spoilt for choice when it comes to the variety of extra-curricular commitments they might pursue while in Hall. For many working professionals among us, Eusoff was where they cut their teeth, managing the successes and failures of Hall committees, programmes and ventures—experiences that have proved invaluable to the professional plaudits they have eventually won. Hall life not only eased their passage into the working world, but provided them with the resources and fortitude to achieve successes that would make all Eusoffians proud.

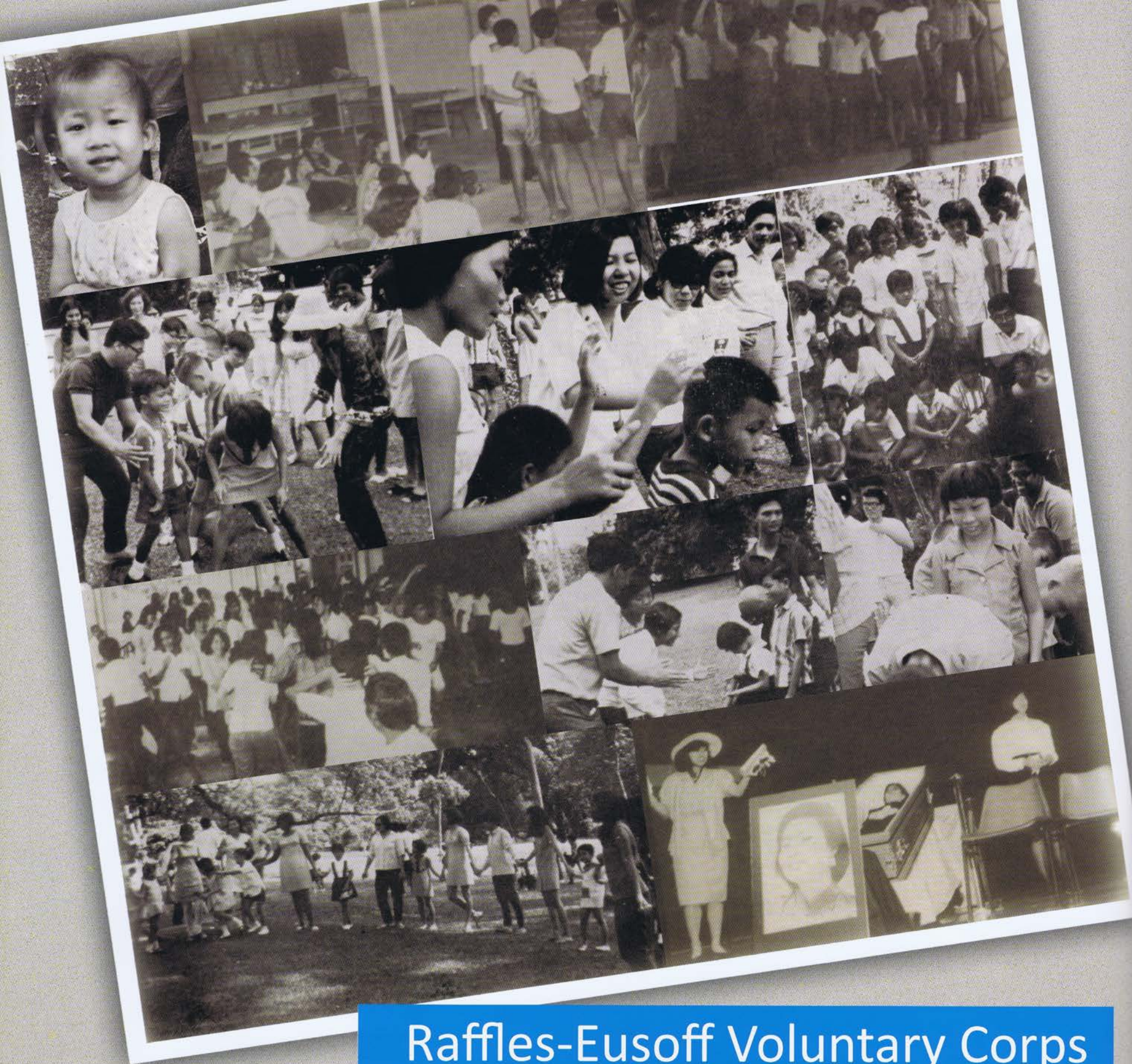
Eusoffians in Community Service



The Eusoff Voluntary Corps (EVC), Eusoff Hall's resident social service organisation, recently received recognition for the fine work it has rendered to the less fortunate over the years. Elderly Service, a branch of EVC, was conferred the National University of Singapore (NUS) Student Achievement Award on 29 October 2007, while EVC MINDS (Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore) was honoured with the Outstanding Contributor Award during the MINDS 45th Anniversary Gala Dinner held on 24 August 2007.

EVC's latest accolades are not particular to the current team that runs the Corps; rather, they are the result of a rich history and ongoing culture of community service in Eusoff Hall. EVC's roots can be traced back to the 1960s and to the days of the Raffles-Eusoff Voluntary Corps (REVC), a voluntary organisation then co-run by the ladies of Eusoff College and the gents of neighbouring Raffles Hall. Back then, the REVC busied itself by undertaking an extensive and varied array of social service ventures. Visits to the orphaned children of Perak House and mentally disabled residents of Woodbridge Hospital were some of the regular fixtures on REVC's weekly calendar. In addition, members organised special projects for the needy, handicapped and underprivileged, such as throwing parties for the young patients of St Andrews Mission Orthopaedic Hospital, building a badminton court for Toa Payoh Girls' Home and treating the patients of the Woodbridge Hospital Chronic Sick Ward to a movie screening at Orchard Theatre. Effort, passion and creativity marked the Corps' undertakings then, and the altruism that the organisation embodied distinguished it from most of the other clubs and societies in the university.





Raffles-Eusoff Voluntary Corps

The REVC has since split, following the founding of Eusoff Hall in 1988, but its essence and purpose have been retained by the current EVC. The EVC of today is equally active in supporting the underprivileged. Their work ranges from delivering weekly lunches to their elderly charges to accompanying them for their specialist referral sessions to tutoring and befriending orphans and children from troubled families.

The good work that EVC does for the needy on local shores is mirrored by the efforts of Eusoff Hall's yearly Expeditions Team in their services rendered overseas. The brainchild of Grace Koh, Eusoff Expeditions is a service learning project that has seen four batches of hostelites contribute to villages in Cambodia since 2004. In their time there, they built classrooms and wells for the locals, conducted English lessons for their children and walked away with invaluable memories of people and a place far removed from Singaporean life.

Such unique experiences have become an integral part of hall life in Eusoff and a fundamental constituent of the quintessential Eusoffian experience. More than simply a student, sportsman or a leader, the Eusoffian is also a volunteer and a humanitarian. Many Eusoff alumni credit the successful and fulfilling careers they have in social service to the values and ethics instilled in them during their time in hall, which also imparted to them the practice of giving back to the community. Eusoffians like Kalyani Mehta, Francis Xavier, Corrina Chua and Gregory Vijayendran have all pursued such a path and in doing so, have brightened the lives of many much less fortunate than themselves.

In this chapter we highlight some of their contributions to the community, illustrate the ongoing efforts of our Voluntary Corps and Expeditions teams, and hope to show how their successes are born of a larger culture of giving that lies at the heart of Eusoff.



Eusoff Voluntary Corps



For most undergraduates, weekends are sacrosanct, strictly reserved for leisure, family, recreation and the like. There are, however, a small number of students who willingly forfeit such indulgences for a few hours each weekend by devoting their time to people in need. These are the members of the Elderly Service arm of the Eusoff Voluntary Corps (EVC), who haul 38 boxes of food in taxis to the Chin Swee Road area every week and distribute them to elderly residents living there. In addition, the Eusoffians assist in carrying out daily household chores and running errands for these senior citizens. Some even go so far as to accompany them on regular visits to the neighbourhood polyclinic.

Many of the beneficiaries of the services rendered by EVC-Elderly Service are senior citizens who live alone, often in poor conditions, and lack help and support for the tasks and chores that have become difficult due to their age and medical conditions. Furthermore, many of these individuals have been neglected by their next-of-kin and relatives and live a life of solitude. The Eusoffians who visit them weekly provide them with kinship and laughter and a few hours of companionship that certainly go some way towards brightening up their weekends.

“Most of these old folks don’t have any family or are abandoned by their children,” said Tan Wai Jin, head of the EVC. “Those who have children are, as a result, not eligible to receive government welfare,” she adds, citing a crucial reason why the EVC’S work does is so important: they help people whom no one else will.





Andrew Hong and The Health Management Programme

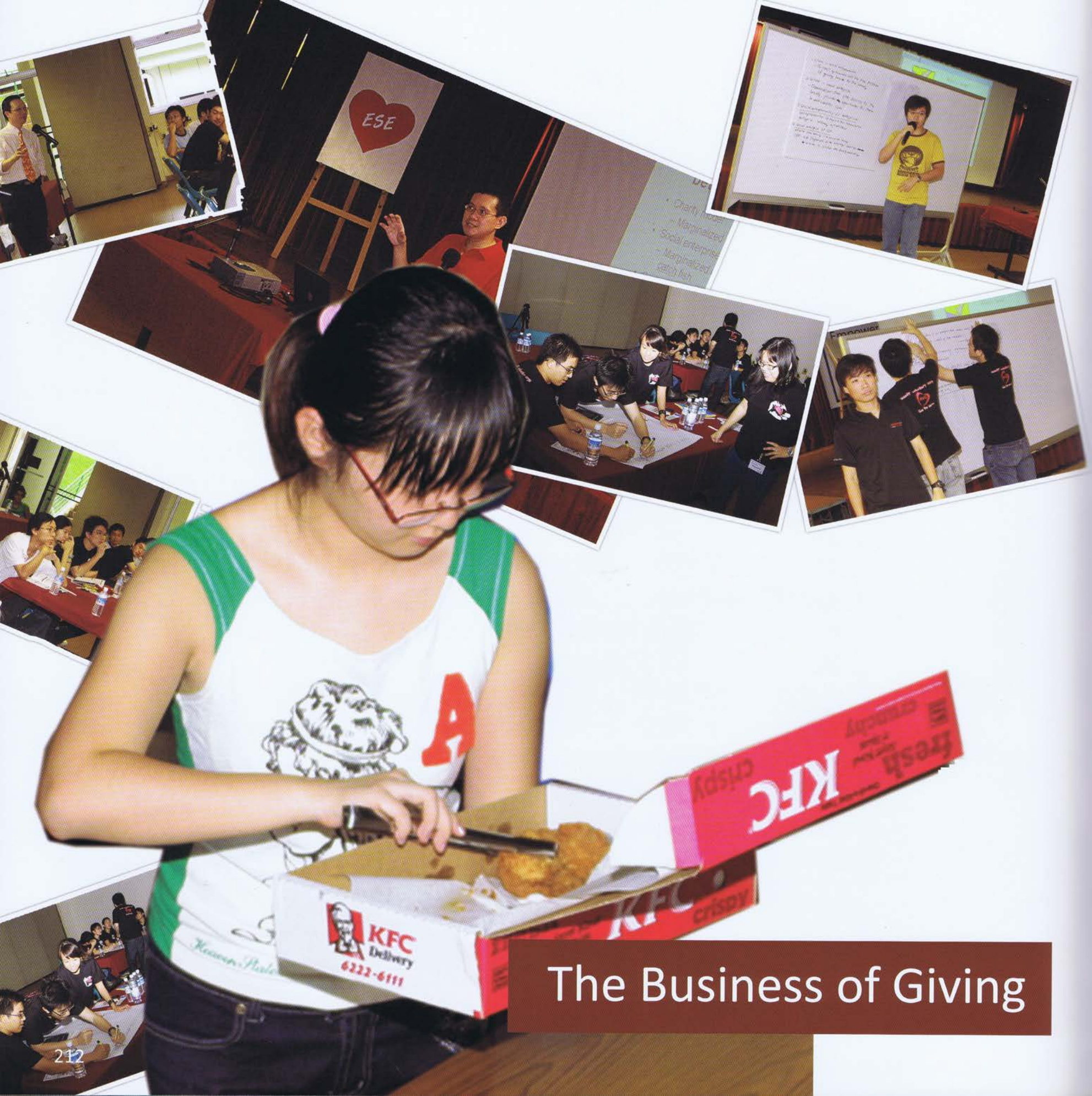


It is in the nature of true volunteers never to be content with merely fulfilling the tasks they are appointed to accomplish, but rather to seek to constantly do and give more to those under their charge.

Witnessing the passing of two elderly persons during his time as head of EVC-Elderly Service, Andrew Hong, a fourth-year medical student was moved to enhance the welfare and quality of life of the old folk that he and his members visited every week. What frustrated Andrew more than anything was the fact that many of these people were not even aware of the dire conditions of their health. Despite exhibiting symptoms of ailments ranging from severe arthritis to unchecked diabetes, these elderly citizens simply did not have the financial means or the physical capability to make the journey to a physician to seek treatment. Recognising this, Andrew began to take his elderly charges to medical clinics for consultations so that they could get proper diagnoses for their physical ailments. His commitment to their well-being did not end there, however. The treated patients would often have to attend follow-up sessions with specialists or occasionally even be admitted for surgery. Andrew ensured that they kept to their appointments, sometimes even forfeiting an hour or two of lessons to do so.

His sacrifice has not been in vain, for the improvement in the health of many of these individuals has been tremendous. One gentleman with severe cataract problems has since undergone surgery and can now see reasonably well, with the aid of his new glasses. A lady suffering from severe arthritis has been put on a dosage of glucosamine preventing the deterioration of her other joints. Another diabetic patient has also been receiving treatment since volunteers detected his sores.

The spontaneous efforts that Andrew made to better the lives of these individuals have since transformed into a concrete initiative of the EVC. The Health Management Programme today sees EVC members going as far as identifying basic risk factors to the people they visit before they become symptomatic. Using a sphygmomanometer and a glucometer newly acquired for these purposes, members are able to detect elevated risk factors in their charges and refer them for treatment in good time.



The Business of Giving

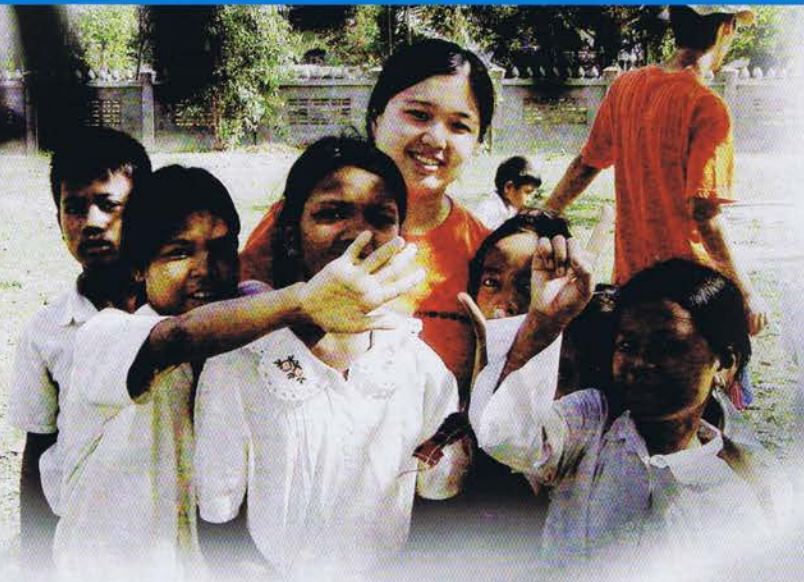
The acquisition of such equipment and the sponsorship of all the medical expenses of EVC's elderly patrons have been possible largely through the industry and resourcefulness of the Corps' current leaders, Wai Jin and Johnny Yap Tiong Lay. Rather than simply running the organisation as their predecessors did, the duo attended workshops and seminars on Social Entrepreneurship and implemented the new ideas and initiatives in their work with the EVC. Their efforts have since garnered sponsorships which cater for their elderly charges' weekly meals, pay for some of their provisions and foot their medical bills. The added funding also allows EVC to provide more benefits and better service to its other beneficiaries such as the Salvation Army Haven Children's Home, where volunteers tutor foster children and serve as role models and companions for them.

Despite EVC's many current contributions, the organisation is not content simply to maintain the status quo. On 29 March 2008, the Corps launched a one-day workshop entitled Empowering Social Entrepreneurship. The initiative, attended by members of the EVC and other community service clubs in NUS, saw invited guests and speakers who have made careers out of giving back to the community speak on the entrepreneurial principles for organising, creating, and managing a venture to make social changes in our community. The event successfully spread the message of volunteerism and provided invaluable insight into the ways in which those who are willing and able can better serve the less fortunate.





Grace Koh and the Founding of Expeditions Team



Whether or not the children of Tnal Chay Village would make it for academic classes on any given day used to be dependent largely on the weather forecast. In the rural village in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where padi fields dominate the surroundings, water is a scarce resource and the nearest market a good half-hour drive away, school children had to be content with their lessons being held out in the open, fully exposed to the elements. If it rained, classes would be suspended for the day and the children would retreat to the confines of their homes.

These scenes struck Grace Koh and her teammates while on a visit to the province back in 2004. Grace, a Eusoff Hall resident at that time, was in fact on a recce trip, scouring for a suitable location to put into action a project that she and several recently graduated seniors had formulated together. The plan was to start a programme that would bring Eusoff Hall residents to Cambodia to render services to the local people for several weeks and in return, for Eusoffians to walk away with invaluable experiences and memories of life in a foreign, rural locale and a heightened awareness of the plight of its inhabitants.

Fuelled by a passion for travel and a spirit of volunteerism cultivated through her work in the Eusoff Voluntary Corps, Grace was faced with the task of building the programme from scratch. She began by looking across the hallway and recruiting some of the good friends and neighbours she had made during her years at Eusoff. With a team assembled, Grace went about establishing her project within the framework of the Youth Expedition Project (YEP), a nationwide programme that seeks to encourage volunteerism among youth and the establishment of independent student-led expeditions.

With the endorsement of the YEP, Grace's brainchild, Project Barefoot, took flight and saw 29 Eusoffians whisked off to the rustic countryside of Tnal Chay on 21 May 2005. Over the next 14 days, these students got to know the residents of the village, became friends, teachers and playmates to their children and grew to love and be loved by the people who had warmly welcomed them into their community. Most important, however, was the work that the team put into building a classroom for the children of the village to have their lessons in. Under the guidance and instruction of a local contractor, Eusoffians provided the manual labour needed to construct the building from the ground up. By the time the last Eusoffian left Phnom Penh at the end of the expedition, the children of Tnal Chay village had a roof over their heads to look forward to whenever they attended lessons, and the assurance that classes would go on as planned, rain or shine.

The Cambodian children were not the only ones to benefit from the groundbreaking project. The Eusoffians involved walked away deeply touched by the people they had met, lived with and whose lives they had come to understand, appreciate and empathise with.

A photograph of three people laughing in a natural setting. On the left, a man is shirtless and laughing heartily. In the center, a young boy in a black and yellow shirt is also laughing. On the right, another young boy in a white and orange shirt is laughing. They are all sitting on the ground, possibly near a stream or a clearing. The background shows some foliage and a dirt path.

Eusoff Expeditions

Fourteen days in a foreign setting distant from the luxuries of home, it seemed, made for a truly eye-opening experience.“ I felt that I had learnt a lot from the trip and I wanted to bring more people there,” said Quek Xuewei, the Logistics Head of Grace’s founding team. “The entire experience teaches you a lot—about life and the world in general.”

Xuewei had the opportunity to share those lessons with her fellow Eusoffians. The success of Project Barefoot saw the organisation of another trip to Cambodia the following year, giving continuity to the overseas service project that saw the effective creation of Eusoff Expeditions.

Project Patchwork, the trip Xuewei helmed in 2006, was essentially modelled on the same tenets as the first—improving the infrastructure in the village, focusing on the educational needs of the children—but took Eusoffians to a different location: the Chan Village in the Prey Veng province. Her project’s contribution was another classroom, in addition to conducting English language classes for the children. The third expedition, Project D.A.Y.S. (Do All You Should) in 2007, saw a revisit to Chan Village where a new team constructed a library and dug three wells. More recently, the fourth expedition Project Heartrock saw Eusoffians head to Village Sleang in the same province to provide them with wells and toilets.

The members of the founding team believe that such a system of continuity is exactly what is required if truly meaningful contributions are to be made to the community being served.

As Grace puts it, “If you really want to see change, it won’t be in those two weeks. You need time, years.” With the excellent foundation that she and her pioneering team have laid, Eusoff Expeditions looks set to be a mainstay on the hall calendar.



A portrait of Kalyani Mehta, a woman with short dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a light green collared shirt, a gold necklace, and a gold earring. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a window and framed pictures on the wall.

Kalyani Mehta

Kalyani Mehta, JCRC president from 1970 to 1971, has made social service her calling in life and her career. After her time in Eusoff, Associate Professor Mehta went on to work as a Counsellor in the Schools Counselling Service and later, in the Singapore Children's Society. She finally returned to university to pursue a Masters and a PhD in Social Work. Having completed her PhD in 1994, she became a professor at the Department of Social Work at the National University of Singapore. Apart from training future social workers, Kalyani has been active in service to both the local and international communities. Most of us know her as a Nominated Member of Parliament, passionate about social justice causes, but Kalyani has been involved in a much wider array of activities that reflects the best of Eusoff's traditions and values.

As an internationally recognised scholar of gerontological studies, Kalyani Mehta is a member of the Gerontological Society of America, British Society of Gerontology and Gerontological Society, Singapore. She served as President of the Gerontological Society, Singapore and represents Singapore in the International Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology.

She has also served as consultant to several international and regional organisations such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok) and the Asia Development Research Forum, a programme sponsored by the International Development Research Centre (Canada). In Singapore, she is consultant to the Marine Parade Family Service Centre and a member of the National Council of Social Service Board of Council.





Francis Xavier



Talking to Francis Xavier, one tends to forget that one is speaking to a seasoned partner of an established law firm, whose day to day workplace dealings include commercial litigation, fraud, corporate disputes and the like. Such is his disarmingly casual, down-to-earth demeanour and the passion and genuine verve with which he discusses the issues that are evidently close to his heart.

“One of the things I’ve been working on is an education programme in the Himalayas,” he says casually midway through our conversation, adding that he treks and climbs in the region from time to time. On one such trek, Francis was struck by the impoverishment of some of the local villagers and the constraints they faced in attaining a formal education and freeing themselves of the confines of a life of largely menial, herdsman-type labour. Where others would feel pity, Francis saw potential and envisioned brighter, more fulfilling lives for such villagers with their acquisition of a single skill—a workable command of the English language. With such a hope in his heart, Francis set about making arrangements to teach English to the villagers, hoping to provide them the opportunity to take up work as tour guides and Sherpas and possibly lead much more comfortable lives.

Unfortunately, his Himalayan dream was thwarted by the violent acts of Maoist insurgents in the region. However, it is evident that the forces that compel Francis to constantly see potential in the underprivileged and drive him to use the resources available to him for the betterment of those much less fortunate than him, cannot be snuffed out as easily.

“

Initially the nomadic tribes didn’t trust us, but now the refuge has more than 500 children. That’s 500 less slaves.

”



Closer to home, Francis's other involvements also reflect the passion exemplified by his efforts in Thailand and the Himalayas. As part of the Executive Committee of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore, Francis helps to coordinate the running of all the dyslexia centres in the country and is currently working with the association towards the development of a dedicated school for dyslexics.

On one other such foray into foreign lands, this time the Northern reaches of Thailand, Francis discovered the distressing plight of local tribeswomen who were being trafficked as sex slaves, fuelling the prostitution rings of urban cities such as Bangkok and Hatyai. Using the clout and resources that his position as President of the Rotary Club provides him with, Francis and his colleagues established a refuge in Chiang Rai for boys and girls from the Akha tribe, a group he had personally handpicked. Since his founding efforts, the centre has grown into a safe haven for such youths, as well as a place where they can learn English, simple crafts and life skills. The project has since become self-sufficient, catering to the welfare of more than 500 refugees.

In addition, he busies himself with another privately driven project that straddles the Causeway. Working with the Rotary Family Service Centre in Singapore, Francis has made considerable efforts to identify and aid poor families in Singapore and Malaysia with youths between the ages of 9 and 15. His goal: to establish a foundation that provides mentorship and guidance to these youths and contact with persons whom they can look up to and admire as role models and perhaps aspire to emulate. For this project, Francis has roped in colleagues from the Rotary Club along with his own siblings, who have been more than eager to help out as mentors. He has also been funding the project, for now, out of his own pocket.

His ability to juggle several projects at once, in addition to the daily demands of a legal career, seems to have been born of a hectic but enjoyable few years in Eusoff College.

"Without the skills that I learned in Eusoff College—how to manage work, outside interests and ECA—I wouldn't be able to juggle my time like this now. Without the distinctions that I made in varsity and hostel life, I wouldn't be able to do this," he said.

His own impetus for entering into social service however has more personal roots. Having been born into a poor family, Xavier is not one to take for granted the blessings in his life today, and is ever-grateful to people who reached out and guided him when he needed help. And it is this very approach that he takes to the people he aims to help now.

"The whole idea is not to be a charity," he insists. "Not to treat these people like charity cases—to give them money or food, but to teach them life skills and give them access to the paradigms of success."

Corrina Chua

Thirteen years as a professional counsellor has allowed Corrina Chua to interact with a wide range of clients, from military personnel to low-income families to couples with marital issues, but interestingly the first people she 'counselled' were her own friends from Eusoff Hall.

"My room was practically open most of the time, other than bedtime and study time, for people to come in to chat, cry, laugh, ventilate their frustrations, and register their feedback. Consciously or unconsciously I was already starting my counselling career," reminisces the former Eusoffian, who spent three years in the Hall.

Corrina's schooling in a Catholic convent exposed her to voluntary and community work from an early age and ingrained in her the need to show kindness and compassion to everyone around her, but it was only during her years in Eusoff Hall that a true sense of social awareness and community spiritedness was nurtured and honed in the budding social worker.

"I was a friend, a neighbour, a student representative, a leader, a care-giver, a counsellor, so on and so forth. Hall experience helped me to hone my social skills and other life skills like being assertive, being able to negotiate, communicate and work in teams," she said, adding that her JCRC appointment taught her how to respect and accommodate different peoples' lifestyles and wishes as well as their likes and dislikes.



Her experiences during hall life spurred Corrina on to a successful career as a counsellor, clinical supervisor and consultant. She has worked with the Singapore Armed Forces Counselling Centre in the past, and today she provides freelance counselling and clinical consultancy services at Atman Counselling and Training Consultancy and Whispering Hearts Family Service Centre.

She also works closely with troubled teenagers who are under probation with the Probations Branch of the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. In addition, she trains junior social workers and helps them to keep up their confidence and satisfaction in their field of work as she believes in contributing back to the profession.

Corrina says that this ability to manage her varied endeavours in the field of social service was born of a university life spent juggling hall activities, academic requirements and social activities. "Hall life has definitely helped me in terms of being able to cope with stress, multi-tasking as well as organising my time. It gave me a lot of confidence in terms of people skills that I could immediately put to use when I graduated and took on my first job."

True enough, Corrina's undertakings during her Eusoff days appear to mirror her professional involvements today. As Head of both the Hall's Annual Project Committee as well as the Eusoff Voluntary Corps, Corrina organised fundraising activities for community welfare projects as well as Service Learning programmes and volunteering experiences for her fellow residents.

Guided by her values of respect, humility, compassion, trust and faith, Corrina strives today to make a positive difference to the lives of her clients. Her efforts, be they simply providing comfort and empathy to someone in grief, educating a child with life skills or lobbying for the rights of marginalised groups, are sowed with the hope that her clients will go on to do well for themselves and pay forward the good they have received.

Gregory Vijayendran



When commercial litigator Gregory Vijayendran chaired Camp Rainbow in 1994—an adventure camp for chronically ill children and their families—a desire to do much more for these people stirred within him. It was in those moments of perceived needs that he, together with a team of like-minded volunteers, comprising pediatricians, teachers and health-care professionals, conceived the modern mission of Club Rainbow—to provide comprehensive social, informational, financial, educational and emotional support for the families of children suffering from a range of chronic and life-threatening diseases.

Today, Club Rainbow has gone some distance towards fulfilling the vision charted for the organisation. The Club has built a Rainbow Family Care Centre which runs various centralised programmes and services for the close to 500 families under its charge. It also has a satellite centre in the National University Hospital and is working towards developing one at the Kandang Kerbau Women's and Children's Hospital (KKWCH). The club has also initiated several fledgling programmes catering to the families of children suffering from major



illnesses such as congenital heart disease, blood disorders and rare genetic disorders. Regular tuition services for child patients warded in the KKWCH are also part of Club Rainbow's emphasis on education, with plans to develop more enrichment and therapy services in the works.

Gregory serves as President of the Management Council of Club Rainbow, where he directs policy and strategic planning for the charity. Not content to simply maintain the status quo, the Council strives to improve the quality and range of services the club provides to the Rainbow families, all with the intention of better serving the needy families that they support.

"My colleagues and I cannot close our eyes to the needs we see, of which we are privileged to have a vantage point that few others have," says Gregory, whose first foray into Community Service was through volunteering as a tutor at a Malaysian orphanage in his pre-university days.

The need to serve others, which he felt even back then, was engaged again during his university life. Serving as Eusoff Hall's JCRC President from 1989 to 1991 and as Chairman of the Council of Halls of Residence, Gregory had the opportunity to work with and lead people hailing from diverse academic disciplines, and different social backgrounds—an experience that he feels privileged to have had.

"Working with people who draw from different disciplines and with different personalities and gifts is always an exciting proposition—there is so much you learn from each other. Every one of your co-labourers is a gift to you," he says.

Gregory's heavy commitment to hall activities necessitated managing a fine balance with his own academic work. Juggling the two, he feels, has prepared him for the life he leads today, where he strives to manage his charity work and his career as a lawyer effectively.

He also recounts with pleasure and gratitude how many of his peers and other residents from the Hall such as Monica Bong (JCRC President 1991/92), Mala Sundram, Ada Fong and Lee Hui Yun have gone on to make contributions to Club Rainbow at various stages in its history, all for a cause that he describes as 'a labour of love'.

"Community service, even if it appears unrewarding economically, offers you a richer, deeper dimension to your life. Many times you think you are doing all the giving but actually, you are receiving so much more—things that money cannot buy."



Conclusion

From the days of the REVC to more recent projects like the Social Entrepreneurship workshop, Eusoffians have consistently taken an active interest in the well-being of others outside their community, especially those in need. On paper, the Hall provides residents with two main avenues through which to serve the community, namely, through membership in the Eusoff Voluntary Corps or the Expeditions team. In practice, the social dynamics of hall life and the camaraderie between residents foster a sensitivity within a resident for his or her neighbour's needs and wants—an intuition that many Eusoffians have proceeded to employ and develop in their contributions in the sphere of social service. Eusoffians have proven to be acutely aware of the needs of those around them and eager to help the less fortunate better their lives. The hall provides residents with numerous roles and responsibilities that they may choose to take up should they see fit, but the opportunities for community service stand out amongst these for the richer, deeper dimension to life that they provide.

Former JCRC President Gregory Vijayendran speaks of exactly this when he says this of his term of service in Eusoff Hall: "I did not always lead well in Eusoff but I learned one thing over time: leadership is about service—if you want to be great, learn to serve others."

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Melissa Chin Pei San . Sharanya Rao . Rachel Ng Hwee Teng

Design Team

Lim Hong Wei . Ying Ke Sin . Gladys Ng . Adiyoga Sri Prabawa

Yvonne Lee . Jason Low . Allan Alex Sim . Joshua Ng Tarng Jiun

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Eusoff!

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Today!

EUSOFF COLLEGE

EUSOFF HALL ANTHEM

Joe Peters

♩ = 116



Eu - soff our Hall. U - ni - ted we will stand. With our



might un - dy - ing flame we'll be bright and for - ev - er strong.

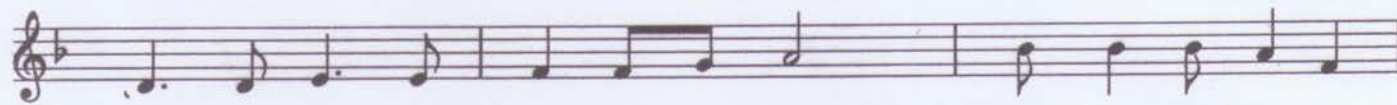


Eu - soff our Hall. In har - mo - ny we live. And with

FINE



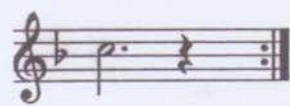
ex - ce - llence we strive to lead all a bright and shi - ning star. (When)



du - ty calls we an - swer with pride. Per - fec - tion is our



goal With de - ter - mi - na - tion true. Stead - fast to o - ur Glo -



ry.

