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NTU names medical school building after late Singaporean entrepreneur

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SINGAPORE: The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has named a new building at its medical school after the late Singaporean businessman Toh Kian Chui.

The private charity Toh Kian Chui Foundation had donated S\$20 million to the school in February.

The government then matched this with S\$30 million, bringing the total endowment to

S\$50 million.

Half of the endowment will be used to support up to 25 scholarships each year, and a gold medal award for the top student of each cohort.

Part of the funds will also be used to set up a distinguished professorship, which would provide funding for research.

The university said it hopes this can help attract top scientists and researchers to mentor its students.

Built in 1924, the headquarters for NTU's medical school at 11 Mandalay Road used to be a hostel for Singapore's first medical school.

NTU's medical school now has a new building, which has been named the Toh Kian Chui Annex.

Professor Bertil Andersson, president of NTU, said: "When we decided how to have this design, we were so amazed how you could get the old building to reflect in the new building."

"... I think Singapore should be very proud of its short history and I think it's sort of the old is reflected in the new, and for me that is also very symbolic."

A pioneer entrepreneur born in 1927, Singaporean businessman Mr Toh's story was one of rags-to-riches.

In the 1960s, his construction company was known for projects such as Changi Airport's first runway.

Mr Toh died in 2000 at the age of 74.

Ms Toh Keng Choo, daughter of Mr Toh, said: "My father was unable to go to university or to be educated because at the time it was just difficult."

"And I remember once I asked him, if he had the chance to study, what he would want to study, and he said right away, medicine. And I always remember that and I wanted to remember him that way."

Education Minister Heng Swee Keat said as a pioneering entrepreneur, Mr Toh was a good role model for his diligence, resilience and in giving back to society.

Mr Heng said: "A values-centred education is of particular importance, especially in medical education, as all doctors will need to have within them the compassion, empathy and integrity to deal with each and every patient."

"They will also be faced with many difficult situations where they have to exercise judgment."



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This year, the scholarship supported by the endowment was awarded to one student out of the 54 in the first cohort of NTU's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKC Medicine).

NTU student Ang Jia Wei, a recipient of the scholarship, said: "At that point of time, my main focus was on getting into the medical school because it's not easy and this was really a bonus, icing on the cake and I'm really thankful to have this opportunity."

"If not for this scholarship, I would probably take a bank loan and probably work for the next few years."

Lim Chuan Poh, chairman of LKC Medicine's governing board, said: "It is... the school's, and I believe the foundation's, hope that the students at LKC Medicine who have benefited from this generosity will one day be in a position to continue this legacy of paying it forward." - CNA/de/nd



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