Some people are keen to make their exit a memorable event

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INGAPOREANS are an organized lot and like to make things memorable. Last year, they demonstrated that their skills at planning has not declined when a total of 700,000 people attended the 10-day-long National University of Singapore (NUS) graduation parade.

Graduation ceremonies are no exception, especially for those who are among the first generation to graduate from the university. Many students and their families use these events to make a dramatic entrance, from the grandeur of the parade, to the elaborate costumes worn by the graduates, to the creative and elaborate decorations set up around the campus.

A recent study found that 60% of graduates plan to spend at least 25% of their income on their graduation ceremony, with 10% planning to spend more than 50%.

This year, the NUS graduation ceremony is expected to attract around 10,000 participants, with more than 5,000 expected at the main campus in Bukit Timah.

WHERE TO GO

FOR further information on graduation ceremonies and related events, visit the NUS Office of Student Life and Development (OSLD) website at www.osld.nus.edu.sg. You can also follow their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nusgraduation.

DID YOU KNOW:

Wal-Mart sells coffee

Supermarkets stock almost everything under the sun, even coffees. Superstores chain Wal-Mart in the United States has a choice of 17 cappuccinos on its website, with prices to fit any budget from the $0.99 for the "Dunkin' Donuts" to the $4.25 for the "Starbucks".

F Fears of terrorism in general have increased in recent years, with a rise in the number of attacks targeting public places.

Despite being called "mother" and "papa," they have their own identities. The students have planned their funeral to the last detail, even holding a rehearsal in 2005 to ensure that everything goes as planned. The students featured a display of 999 white and red roses, a Chinese flower funeral, and a procession carried with a casket painted with white and red flowers.

"She wanted her funeral to reflect her personality so that people would remember the way she lived and not that she was dead," says Mr Chen, NUS vice-mayor. "She gave a service fee for her funeral, which was under S$1,000 for the basic package and S$2,000 for a more elaborate service. She had no friends or family members left to take care of her.

In November last year, the "Flying forfriends" of 20-year-old Tan Su Bing, Tong, completed with a replica of funeral processions which were covered by the international media. The event was attended by 100 guests and celebrated his "last flight against a gegen muscular disease since children.

Madam Chin is still on a stint in Singapore, although a Nursing home school closed last year found that 10 per cent of 370 Singaporeans surveyed wished to have more control and say with regard to planning their funeral arrangements in advance, with more than half saying they fear having to pay families for funeral arrangements.

Mr and Mrs M.L. Lim, both teachers in their 80s with one son, have commissioned an original song and photo montage to be staged at their funerals to leave behind something unique for their friends and family.

In a similar vein, Mr Peter Lee, a Singaporean who gave a service fee for his funeral, said: "I want the best for those who come to my funeral. I want people to see me as the person I was in my life, not as the person I am now."

Mr Chen, who was still in his 80s, passed away on July 19, was at the front of the line waiting for his turn to give a service fee for his funeral. He had already arranged for his body to be cremated, but he wanted to make sure that his final wish was fulfilled.

Mr Chen said: "I want to pay for my funeral, but I want to make sure that it's done properly. I want people to see me as the person I was in my life, not as the person I am now."

Mr Chen was a well-respected businessman, and many of his friends and family members were present at his funeral. The service was held at a local temple, and was attended by hundreds of people.

The service was a mix of Chinese and Western elements, with a Buddhist monk leading the prayers and a priest conducting the service.

After the service, the family gathered for lunch, and then visited a nearby temple before leaving for the cemetery. The funeral was a fitting tribute to a man who had lived a full and meaningful life.