

NUS names professorship after liver pathology pioneer Aileen Wee

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Aileen Wee has spent the last 50 years of her medical career unravelling the complexities of liver diseases, from uncovering their causes to analysing the cellular and tissue changes behind conditions like fatty liver, hepatitis, cirrhosis and cancer.

More recently, the 75-year-old pathologist at National University of Singapore (NUS) and National University Hospital (NUH) has adopted artificial intelligence as an assistive tool in the assessment of key parameters of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis, a progressive form of fatty liver disease that is becoming an increasing global health burden.

The accurate assessment of these parameters, which are related to disease activity and chronicity, is critical in evaluating the effects of new treatments and outcomes of clinical trials for this global disease.

In recognition of her work and her push for new frontiers, the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine at NUS (NUS Medicine) has launched a professorship in her honour.

Called the Aileen Wee Professorship in Liver Diseases, it is the latest in a series of professorships initiated by NUS Medicine to recog-

nise outstanding Singaporeans and train the next generation of leaders in medical sciences.

It promotes partnerships with experts from various disciplines to address issues such as cancer, tackle emerging healthcare challenges, and spur important discourse to improve the practice of healthcare in Singapore and abroad.

“The liver is one of the most complex organs in the human body. The study of liver diseases is multi-dimensional, multi-directional and multifaceted.

“As a multidisciplinary approach is the way to go, this professorship is not confined to any discipline,” Wee said.

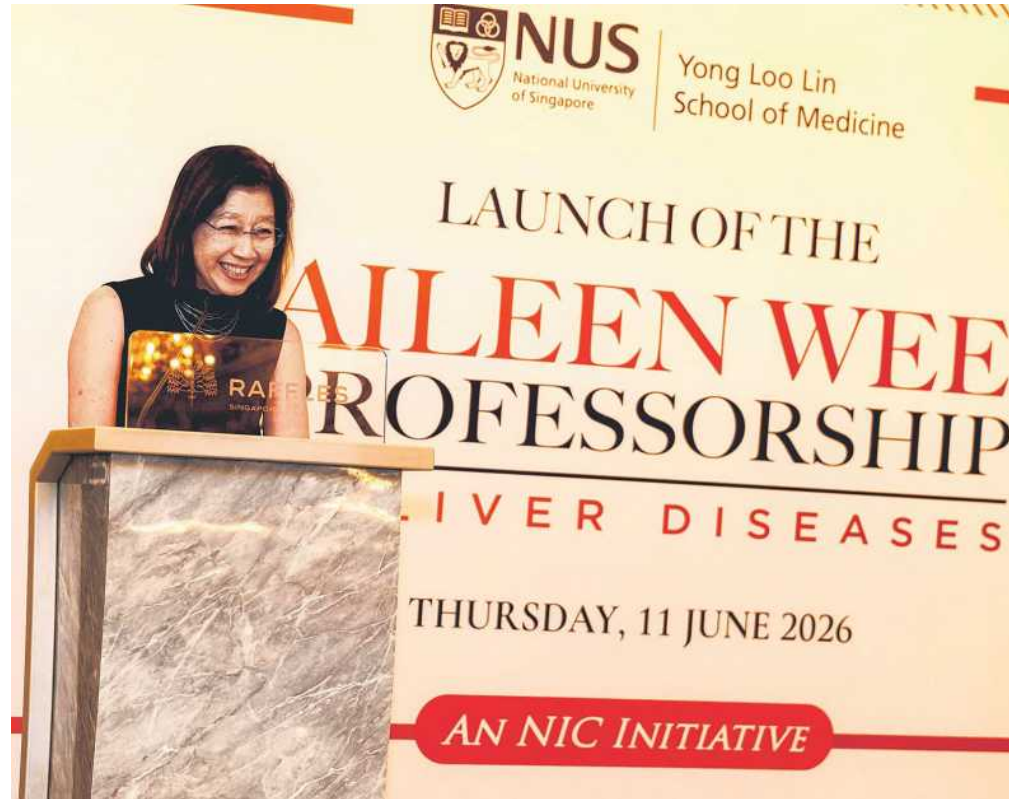
“I hope it will benefit scholars who are actively pursuing any aspect of research to uncover some of the many unknowns in the diseased liver for the betterment of patients.”

She added that she was “very honoured and deeply grateful for this magnanimous gesture” of NUS Medicine and the many donors who have shown their generous support.

The Aileen Wee Professorship was launched officially on June 11 at Raffles Hotel Singapore.

Wee is married to cardiac surgeon Lee Chuen Neng, who also has a professorship named in his honour in 2024.

Wee is the lead for the World



Health Organisation’s Reporting System for Liver Cytopathology, which aims to standardise communication with clinicians globally to improve patient management.

As a pioneer in her field, her work has shaped the global understanding of the role of fine needle

aspiration cytology, said NUS in a statement.

It is a minimally invasive diagnostic procedure that uses a very thin, hollow needle attached to a syringe to extract a small sample of cells or fluid from a suspicious lump, mass or organ to be analysed

and determined if it is benign or cancerous.

Wee has extensive international collaborations with pathologists and researchers and her work has contributed to the development of international standards that guide clinical practice worldwide, ac-

Pathologist Aileen Wee hopes the professorship, launched officially on June 11, will benefit scholars who are actively pursuing research “to uncover some of the many unknowns in the diseased liver for the betterment of patients”. PHOTO: NUS MEDICINE

cording to NUS.

In Singapore, she has trained generations of medical students, residents and specialist pathologists, and has been widely recognised for her dedication to teaching and mentorship.

She served as director of undergraduate medical education at NUS Medicine’s Department of Pathology from 1985 to 2012 and was the coordinator of the school’s undergraduate medical curriculum during that period.

For her contributions to medical education, she received several accolades, including the NUS Teaching Excellence Award (1997-1998) and the Singapore Society of Pathology-Becton Dickinson Award for Pathology (2009).

Dean of NUS Medicine Chong Yap Seng said: “With the Aileen Wee Professorship in Liver Diseases, we honour not only her remarkable contributions to pathology, research and medical education, but also her enduring impact on the practice of medicine in Singapore and around the world.

“This professorship will carry forward her legacy by advancing interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthening innovation in liver disease research and diagnosis, and inspiring future generations of clinician-scientists and educators.”

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