

90 GOING ON 100

Retiree shares 90th birthday with NUS

Year-long celebrations in store from this month

RETIRED teacher V. Ambiaavagar will share a special memory with the National University of Singapore this year when both celebrate their 90th birthdays.

He was born in October 1905, three months after the university began as a medical school.

A 1931 graduate, he taught at Raffles Institution and Beatty Secondary and was the Director of Education before retiring in 1961.

From this month, he and other graduates will join the year-long activities planned for NUS 90th anniversary celebrations.

One highlight is a dinner at the Westin Stamford with President Ong Teng Cheong, NUS Chancellor, as the guest of honour.

Mr Ambiaavagar hopes to be among the 1,500 graduates expected at the dinner on Sept 30. Some of the alumni are coming from abroad.

"I hope to stay in good health for the dinner," he said.

NUS alumni affairs and development office director Peter Lim said that about 30,000 graduates have been told of the celebrations.

Malaysia's Prime Minis-

ter, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, a 1952 medical graduate of the former University of Malaya in Singapore, will attend the Faculty of Medicine Alumni Dinner on Dec 1. Mr Lim, 73, said the premier was a staunch supporter of medical alumni activities.

Asked why the university was celebrating a 90th birthday, NUS Vice-Chancellor Lim Pin, 59, smiled and said: "Ninety years is reasonably long and 100 years is too long to wait for."

Mr Peter Lim, who graduated in 1949 with an Arts degree, said every faculty has a budget to spend on the celebrations. Some of the money will be recouped. The dinner tickets, for example, will cost \$90 a head.

Graduates should keep their ties with the university, he said.

"It's a pity if you get a degree from the university and get out. You are not getting the best out of the university."

Mr Ambiaavagar agreed. He added this birthday wish: "I wish that more students will place emphasis on service to society. Now, too many people place emphasis on money."



A birthday wish

'I wish that more students will place emphasis on service to society. Now, too many people place emphasis on money.'

— Retired teacher V. Ambiaavagar, who will celebrate his 90th birthday this year.

Source: The Straits Times, July 6, 1995.

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HISTORY OF NUS

- 1905: The Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Government Medical School started.
- 1912: The name was changed to King Edward VII Medical School and nine years later was known as the King Edward VII College of Medicine.
- 1923: The Raffles College opened in Singapore. It merged with the King Edward VII College of Medicine in 1949 and was known as the University of Malaya.
- 1942-45: Both college buildings were used by the Japanese during the occupation.
- 1962: The university was split, with the university here renamed the University of Singapore, and the University of Malaya operating in Kuala Lumpur.
- 1980: The University of Singapore merged with Nanyang University to become the National University of Singapore.