



A bronze bust of Tan Sri Tan was unveiled by President Nathan. Looking on (from left) were the late philanthropist's grandson Chew Kwee San, granddaughters Chew Gek Hiang and Gek Khim, daughter Tan Kheng Lian, nephew Tony Tan, and Mr Koh Boon Hwee, chairman of the NTU Board of Trustees.

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DESMOND LIM

NTU gets gift from late tycoon

Tan Chin Tuan fund marks birth centennial

■ BY AMELIA TAN

ABOUT 50 friends and relatives of the late philanthropist and banker, Tan Sri (Dr) Tan Chin Tuan, gathered at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) last night to celebrate an endowment launched in his memory.

Also present were about 50 staff and members of NTU, the beneficiary of the \$20 million Tan Chin Tuan Centennial Fund.

The gift to the university is one of several events organised by the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation (TCTF) to celebrate the centennial of his birth.

Tan Sri Tan died at the age of 97 in 2005.

The foundation contributed \$10 million, which was matched equally by the Government. The fund will support a professorship, a forum and an exchange fellowship in engineering.

Tan Sri Tan's daughter and TCTF chairman Tan Kheng Lian, 74, said it was fitting that her father's birth centennial was marked with the launch of an educational fund named for him.

Speaking to The Straits Times before the dinner, she said: "Dad was passionate about education. He said, 'Unlike money, nobody can take education away from you.' I think he would have been happy to know that we are following his wishes to support education."

NTU president Su Guaning said the fund "continues a long partnership between NTU and the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation".

As a high-ranking local representative in the British colonial government in the 1950s, Tan Sri Tan lobbied the British to allow the establishment of NTU's predecessor, Nanyang University.

Over the years, the foundation has also funded many programmes in the university.

It contributed \$2.5 million to the Tan Chin Tuan Exchange Fellowship in Engineering, established in 1997 to fund research collaborations between NTU and overseas institutions. Part of the Centennial Fund will be used by the fellowship.

In October, the inaugural Tan Chin Tuan Centennial Forum in Tianjin, China, will bring together NTU's China alumni and international academics. The theme is sustainable development.

Named as the Tan Chin Tuan Centennial Professor yesterday was the executive director of the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute, Professor Ng Wun Jern.

Prof Ng, who has spent 28 years researching water and waste water management, said he plans to use the money to bring research partners from Europe, North America and Asean to Singapore.

Guest of honour for the event, President S R Nathan, unveiled a bronze bust of the late tycoon outside a lecture theatre which bears his name.

TCTF deputy chairman Chew Gek Khim, who is Tan Sri Tan's granddaughter, said: "My grandfather celebrated life. He would have big birthday bashes at our home even after he reached 90. I think he would have liked to be remembered in this way."

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DAD'S PASSION

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Fund chairman
Tan Kheng Lian