

2017 LAS LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD

KOH THONG NGENE

Mr Koh Thong Ngee had a career in academic libraries that spanned 32 years. He contributed to the Library Association of Singapore over a period of 16 years.

He joined the Nanyang University Library service in February 1960 as a Graduate Assistant in the Chinese Department. He was appointed Head of Acquisitions soon after. From 1964 to 1972, he served as Deputy Librarian. In 1973, he became the Librarian and held that position until 1980. When the University of Singapore and Nanyang University merged in August 1980, he was absorbed into the National University of Singapore (NUS) Library service and continued as Librarian. In 1983, he was concurrently appointed Head of Chinese Library. In July 1991, he was appointed Acting Chief Librarian of NUS Library where he remained until his retirement in 1992.

Mr Koh was concerned with the development and welfare of support staff in the NUS Libraries. During his tenure he sought to provide a good career path for the library attendants. In particular, he helped to promote eligible library attendants to the clerical grade. He also encouraged interracial interaction among staff. Those were the days when the library staff held parties to celebrate important festivals of each ethnic group like Chinese New Year, Hari Raya and Deepavali. He also worked very closely with and supported union representatives in their various welfare efforts. Additionally, he enjoyed mentoring young librarians in NUS.

Improving library physical facilities was another area he worked on tirelessly. He was interested in how to better use the limited space in the NUS Libraries and achieved it with small-scale renovations over time. When the NUS Libraries received additional space, he decided to build a single central storage facility to benefit all of the NUS libraries. With this central storage, each library freed up space to provide more seating areas for the users.

Mr Koh was active in the Library Association of Singapore. He was LAS President from 1973 to 1975 and participated in LAS committees on censorship, constitution review, copyright, library education, library cooperation and training from 1971 to 1987.

For his dedicated leadership and service to the library profession, LAS is privileged to honour Mr Koh Thong Ngee with the 2017 LAS Lifetime Contribution Award.



Samantha Ang, President
Library Association of Singapore
26 May 2018