

## 2018 LAS LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD

### SYLVIA YAP SWEE BENG

Sylvia Yap Swee Beng had an illustrious 43 year library career as one of Asia's leading academic librarians and advocates of the library profession.

Sylvia joined the University of Singapore Library in 1973 upon receiving her honours degree in Zoology. She was then sponsored to attend a postgraduate course in London and was awarded a diploma in Library and Information Science in 1975 from the University of London. Upon returning to Singapore, Sylvia served in increasingly responsible roles in the Central, Medical and Science Libraries, rising to Deputy Librarian in 1991 and University Librarian in 2003, overseeing the NUS Libraries, comprising seven libraries.

With deft leadership and administrative skills, a keen eye for design, a recognition of technology trends, and a deep appreciation of the needs of the university community, Sylvia brought a fresh perspective to the NUS Libraries. She opened, brightened and expanded library spaces and made them more welcoming, accessible and conducive for the NUS community, encouraging more learning, collaboration, and innovation.

Among her major accomplishments, Sylvia set up the Science Library in 1986 and was involved in upgrading the Central, the Chinese and CJ Koh Law Libraries and supervised the building of the Central Library Annexe. She introduced DIALOG, a commercial online searching service, to the Singapore academic libraries in 1982. She was also involved in many digital projects at the turn of the century transforming the NUS Libraries into an active digital hub.

Sylvia has been a powerful and passionate voice for libraries and librarians in Singapore and in Asia. She served as President of the Library Association of Singapore (2005-2007) and was a member or chair of numerous LAS committees. As LAS President, Sylvia oversaw the LAS 50th Anniversary celebrations, championed and chaired the Professional Development Scheme Board, launched the LAS annual conference, established the LAS awards panel, and kept a careful eye on LAS finances. Outside of LAS, she was appointed to the National Library Board (2005-2009) and the National Archives of Singapore Board (2009-2011).

Internationally, Sylvia was an active speaker at regional library forums, a long serving member of the Pacific Rim Digital Library Alliance, where academic librarians around the Pacific Rim collaborated on digital initiatives, and a member of the Organizing Committee for the IFLA World Library Congress held in Singapore in 2013.

Sylvia received the Efficiency Medal, National Day Award (1988), the Long Service Medal, National Day Award (2006), LAS Professional Service Award (2009), Public Administration Medal (Silver), National Day Award (2010), and the NUS Outstanding Science Alumni Award (2014) in recognition of her work and achievements.

In appreciation of an extraordinarily distinguished library career, marked by vision, devotion, hard work, fairness, warmth, humor, and humility, LAS is privileged to present Sylvia Yap Swee Beng with the 2018 LAS Lifetime Contribution Award.



Samantha Ang  
President, Library Association of Singapore  
4 May 2019