

2019 LAS LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD

CHOY FATT CHEONG

Choy Fatt Cheong has had a distinguished library career, spanning more than 30 years, as an educator, consultant, international spokesperson and leader. He is a true intellectual whose innovative thinking, passionate advocacy, and unparalleled service to Singapore's academic library community has led to superb accomplishments.

Mr Choy has held academic library positions at the National University of Singapore, as Chief Librarian of the Singapore Command and Staff College and SAFTI Military Institute, and was the University Librarian of Nanyang Technological University (NTU) for more than 10 years. He pioneered and spearheaded many initiatives that not only benefited NTU tremendously but also established Singapore's academic libraries footing internationally.

A dynamic and innovative leader, Mr Choy established NTU Libraries as a place of constant growth and change. Keenly aware that relationship building with the community was key to providing excellent library services, he decentralized the library's physical touch points and created a system of 7-Subject Libraries that were in close proximity to the schools for which they focussed their collections and services on. He initiated and developed the concept of a Learning Commons in the main Lee Wee Nam Library in 2010. The space, with its multiple types of learning spaces, state of the art technology, and social learning elements was ahead of its time in the region, and many other academic libraries later adopted a similar approach. He spearheaded the promotion of open access to research at NTU and in Singapore, setting up the NTU institutional repository (IR) in 2008 – once again showing an ability to foresee important changes in the research community due to digital opportunities, research needs and funding practices. He also developed the NTU Open Access Policy to enable the intellectual output of NTU to be collated in one place and made it possible for NTU's research work to be discoverable by a worldwide community. The Policy was also the first established mandate for Singapore and was promulgated in 2011.

As an educator, Mr Choy established and served as Principal Lecturer and Head of Information Studies of the pioneering diploma course in Information and Library Studies at Temasek Polytechnic. He set up two new diplomas in Information Studies. He also contributed to the delivery of NTU's Master of Science (Information Studies) programme as an Adjunct Professor.

Mr Choy selflessly served in the Library Association of Singapore in a vast number of key positions including founding editor of the Singapore Libraries Bulletin, longest serving President, Treasurer, and he initiated the Professional Development Scheme (PDS). He set up the PDS to ensure library professionals are always learning, capable and relevant.

He was always generous in sharing his expertise. He served on many Boards including those of the National Library Board, Council of Chief Librarians, Congress of Southeast Asian Libraries, Libraries of ASEAN University Network and the International Association of Scientific and Technological University Libraries. He instituted the Professional Internship Programme for International Librarians (PIPIL) where he designed and implemented library management training with our partners in ASEAN countries. In addition, he formed partnerships with leading libraries in China through exchange programmes because he valued diversity and collaboration. As an acknowledged thought leader in academic libraries, Mr Choy received repeated invitations to speak at other libraries around the region and the world.

The Library Association of Singapore extends its heartfelt gratitude to Choy Fatt Cheong for his extraordinary contributions to the development of the library profession in Singapore. We are honoured and privileged to present him with the 2019 LAS Lifetime Contribution Award.