

## **2021 LAS LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION AWARD**

### **TAY AI CHENG**

Tay Ai Cheng has had a profound influence on the international landscape of literacy and librarianship as a well-respected and dynamic speaker, innovator, and leader. She held numerous prominent roles and made significant contributions to the international and Singapore library scene. She is being honoured with the Lifetime Contribution Award for her lasting contributions in her illustrious career at the National Library Board of Singapore (NLB) and active involvement with the Library Association of Singapore (LAS), as well as international committees for library professionals.

As a testament to Ai Cheng's inspiring leadership, expertise, and professionalism, she has held diverse positions within NLB, including those in the reference library, the technical services, corporate services, the human resource divisions, and the processing and warehousing services. With her invaluable experience and knowledge of the many diverse aspects of a library, Ai Cheng rose through the ranks to become Assistant Chief Executive (Public Libraries) where she directed the daily operations of over 26 public libraries and played a major role in developing new and existing libraries, services, and programmes. She was in charge of national reading and learning programmes in Singapore such as kidsREAD, and National Reading Movement. She then became NLB's Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Librarian, overseeing the National Library, the National Archives, and the Technology, Resource Discovery and Management, Volunteer Management, and Corporate Social Responsibility arms of NLB.

She was elected and served as one of the IFLA Governing Board (GB) members between 2019 and 2021. During her term, she managed the governance, financial and professional direction of IFLA, and represented IFLA in legal and other formal proceedings. Together with her fellow GB members and the IFLA HQ, Ai Cheng worked on a mega exercise of the recent IFLA restructuring.

Besides serving on the main board, Ai Cheng was part of the Professional Committee (PC) and the Congress Advisory Committee. During her term, she played a part in the review of the PC, which resulted in the revamped PC more effectively inspiring, leading, and coordinating the work of the Professional Units.

As a strong advocate for the library and the profession, Ai Cheng was a frequent speaker at local and international conferences including the IFLA WLIC, the International Summit of the Book, the Chinese Library Annual Conference, the Shanghai International Library Forum, and more. She also mentored colleagues from the Suzhou Dushu Lake Library, China for a decade. She would never hesitate to share best practices and learnings with her library peers to ensure that all library systems, regardless of their resources and environments, would have equal access to improve their capability to better serve their respective communities.

In addition, Ai Cheng was a Panel Member for the Global Libraries' Access to Learning Award from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for two terms. This award, which honoured many ground-breaking projects by libraries and similar institutions around the world that are improving people's lives through access to technology, is in line with Ai Cheng's strong belief that libraries play an important social role to change people's lives for the better.

LAS is privileged to present Tay Ai Cheng with the Lifetime Contribution Award in appreciation of her passionate and dedicated service to championing libraries not just locally but globally.