

Grand Dame of Singapore Education: A Brief History of Bukit Timah Campus

Public Lecture by
Dr Kevin Tan (Law Class of '86)

Friday, 2 Feb 2007, 2.00 pm
Venue: Seminar Room 2-3, Block B
NUS Faculty of Law, Bukit Timah Campus

In 1897, Dr Lim Boon Keng, Singapore's first Queen's Scholar (1887), suggested that a college be established in Singapore to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. His proposal did not manifest for the next thirty years for it was only in 1919, that a Government committee inaugurated a \$2 million endowment fund for Raffles College.

The Straits Settlements Government donated a site in Bukit Timah Road and a public appeal was made. The largest donations came from Sir Manasseh Meyer, Oei Tiong Ham, Tan Soo Guan and Eu Tong Sen. In 1922, legislation was passed to incorporate Raffles College and in 1924, an architectural competition was organized throughout the British empire for a design befitting the College's lofty aspirations. The winning design was submitted by Cyril Arthur Farey (1888-1954), and Graham Richards Dawbarn (1893-1976) of London. The original design comprised college buildings built around two adjoining quadrangles, with wings spreading out on either side of the lower quadrangle (closest to Bukit Timah Road).

Since then, the campus has been home to Raffles College (1928-1949); the University of Malaya (1949-1962); the University of Singapore (1962-1981); the National Institute of Education (1982-1991); College of Physical Education (1984-1991); National Institute of Education of Nanyang Technological University (1991-2000), Singapore Management University (2000-2005) and the National University of Singapore (2006- present)

This talk charts the history of Bukit Timah Campus from its beginnings through its major milestones to the present day.

The Speaker

Dr Kevin YL Tan is President of the Singapore Heritage Society, and an alumnus of the NUS Faculty of Law (Class of 1986). He taught at the Faculty from 1986 to 2000. Since then, he has been director of Equilibrium Consulting Pte Ltd. He has edited and written 16 books, 6 of which relate to Singapore's history and heritage.