

# Wonderwoman loses battle with cancer

Even in the last painful stretch, Molly Lee strove to help her blog's readers

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THERE were countless letters to answer, talks to give, and many more women to encourage, but this wonder woman wasn't able to do it all.

After three years of fighting ovarian cancer, Ms Molly Lee – who had won Vanilla magazine's inaugural Singapore Woman Award in March for starting a highly-popular blog on cancer – died yesterday morning. Battling her second relapse when she won the award, Ms Lee, 33, was a fighter all the way to end, said husband Josef Lee.

"She was very cheerful, and she had plans," he said. "She wanted to give talks to women about her experience with cancer, she wanted to reach out to more people."

The publicity led many to discover her blog – [www.WeAreWonderwomen.com](http://www.WeAreWonderwomen.com) – after she was featured in Vanilla magazine as a nominee, the number of hits she received rose from 80 to more than 130 a day.

"I would update her on the comments on her blog every day, and the letters and email she received, and she tried very hard to respond to all of them," said Mr Lee, 29, a broadcast designer.

This, in spite of being in tremendous pain and discomfort from the disease and the chemotherapy.

"From April, it was just bad news all the way; we were told that the treatment



AT THE SINGAPORE WOMAN AWARDS: Ms Molly Lee with her husband Josef.

TODAY FILE PHOTO

wasn't working. The tumours were causing her stomach to swell and she couldn't do anything, she couldn't sleep for days because of the pain," added Mr Lee.

Through it all, Ms Lee made sure to update her blog when she could, getting her husband to type her posts when she was too ill to do it herself.

"She felt that it was almost like her responsibility to respond to the readers who were asking her for advice," said Mr Lee. "At the same time, I think the encouragement from readers gave her a lot of strength, they inspired her too."

Since Mr Lee posted about Ms Lee passing away yesterday morning, well-wishers have posted more than 20 responses. Said one: "Goodbye Molly, may you rest in peace ... Thank you for inspiring so many of us to be strong and be positive in the way we look at our lives. You will be missed."

Said Vanilla assistant editor Ms Pamela Ho, who had interviewed Molly for the magazine: "I think people will remember her strength, the way she never talked like she was going to die. She always talked about the things she liked to do, her favourite food, because she was so optimistic."

## MOLLY'S RECENT BLOG POSTS

**APRIL 22** Quoting my doctor, "You are now in a critical stage". It is because Docetaxel (the 3rd chemo drug that I am already trying) is still unable to kill the cancerous tumours in my body. Hmm ... oh my ... so I finally know now that my cancer is the most aggressive among the three of us (me, my gyn-onco, and my cancer). Hehehe ...

There are so many emails that I need to clear from all the supporters, and my WonderWomen who kept writing in. I wish I can get to know each and everyone of you better so that we can further encourage each other. Hopefully, I will feel much better after the drainage and continue fighting this sickness :=)

**MAY 2** Just to let everyone know that I have never chosen to give up my life and my fight against cancer. Did my previous entry sound as if I have given up? Hmmm ...

**MAY 13 (FINAL POST)** "From the very beginning, I knew that my time is not up yet, even though I am in a critical condition dealing with cancer. God sent angels (my sister and mum to take care of my daily needs) and a good Traditional Chinese Medicine physician to treat me. God has also taught me to live each day by itself and learn to trust him in all situations."

Mr Lee hopes to continue running the blog – which has seen over 23,000 hits since its inception last year – as a place women can go to to share their own experiences fighting cancer and to seek answers to their questions.

"I do hope more women will continue to come and share their experiences," he said. "That's what the blog was created for, and I hope to continue it."

Those who wish to pay last respects to Ms Lee can do so at Punggol Field, Block 203 (Multipurpose Hall), from now until Sunday when the cremation will take place.

**Where the Singapore model of law development is concerned ... the idea is that economics must come first; no point having free speech if your rice bowl is empty. But I would disagree because if my rice bowl is empty, I would like to say that I am hungry. I would also like to say that the economic policy is bad.**

— Nominated MP and Law Professor Thio Li-Ann



TODAY FILE PHOTO

## Politics, law and human rights 'fanatics': AG Walter Woon

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DO NOT confuse politics with the law, Singapore's new Attorney-General cautioned, and "be careful" of those who use human rights "to advance their own political agendas".

Professor Walter Woon made the point at his first public appearance as Attorney-General yesterday, as the Law Society launched a high-powered committee seeking to "encourage the promotion and discussion of public and international law issues".

While he described the new committee as a "commendable initiative" – since everyone "has a vested interest in good governance" – Prof Woon cautioned Singaporeans against taking the Government to court simply because they do not agree with its decisions.

"We have to be careful when we talk about public law, and not to confuse law with politics. There are many people who think if a decision is made and they don't like it, then this is something the law can correct. There is a line between a political decision and a legal decision," he said.

The new committee's maiden project is to study the relevance of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Singapore law.

Prof Woon weighed in on the issue with

several strong words. Noting that human rights is "now a religion among some people", he said: "You have, like in some religions, the fanatics. And it's all hypocrisy and fanaticism (for these people) to set the views, as the leading spokesmen, of what is acceptable and what's not."

Prof Woon stressed, it is a "misconception that Singapore officialdom is against human rights". He said: "What we are against is the assumption of some people that when they define what's human rights, that decision is the decision of the rest of humanity."

Reiterating that civil liberties must be seen in "the context of our society", the Attorney-General observed how some places allow insults to be hurled against religions. "Is this what we want? Even if we don't pay the price, our children will pay the price."

Prof Woon also voiced his disapproval of advocates using human rights to pursue their own causes. For instance, while the issue of same-sex marriage has been framed as an issue of human rights, he questioned: "Is this a question of human rights?"

He also cited the example of how a lawyer accused the court of breaching human rights, after it ruled against his client in a suit she had taken out against the Government when her son fell down in school.

"The lawyer wrote in to say it was

a breach of human rights – the right to survival – that we should enforce the cost against the client," said Prof Woon.

Legal academic and Nominated MP Thio Li-Ann, who gave a talk yesterday on human rights, agreed that politicising the issue undermines civil liberties as certain rights are promoted at the expense of others.

Still, she noted, the Singapore Government does not speak "the language of human rights". When it abolished the quota for female undergraduates in medical school, no mention of the word "right" was made in Parliament; yet in its report to the UN, the Government cited the move as a step forward for women's rights.

Several reasons could be behind this, Prof Thio said, including how Singapore's communitarian society frowns upon "radical individualism". But she disagreed with the perception that human rights promotes individualism, noting that the wording of the UN declaration places a greater emphasis on "collectivism".

She also noted that the Government "legitimizes itself not so much by consigning rights but by performance". While she felt it was "good thing" in terms of upkeeping the living standards of the citizens, she said: "The problem is, can we indefinitely sustain the high economic growth rate? What happens when the ball drops?"