

In Memoriam

Dr Edwin S.C. Lee (1939–2023)

The Department of History mourns the loss of Dr Edwin Lee, who passed away peacefully on 20 May 2023 at age 83. He had requested Albert Lau and me to visit and pray with him at Sengkang General Hospital a few days earlier.

Edwin graduated from the University of Singapore with a BA (First Class Honours in History) in 1962. His whole academic career was spent in the History Department. He was appointed an Assistant Lecturer in 1965 and proceeded later to Cornell for his Masters in Southeast Asian History (1971).

He made significant contributions to Malaysian and Singapore studies. His Master's thesis was revised and published as *The Towkays of Sabah: Chinese leadership and indigenous challenge in the last phase of British rule* (SUP, 1976). While engaged as a Lecturer (1970–80) and Senior Lecturer (1980–90), he researched on colonial Singapore and taught Southeast Asian history. He contributed a chapter on “The Colonial Legacy” to *The Management of Success: The Moulding of Modern Singapore*, edited by K.S. Sandhu and P. Wheatley (ISEAS, 1989). His PhD dissertation (NUS, 1982) was published as *The British as rulers governing multi-racial Singapore, 1967–1914* (SUP, 1991).

Edwin was co-editor with me of *A History of Singapore* (OUP-ISEAS, 1991), to which he contributed a chapter on social history. He was a valued member of the Preservation of Monuments Board, for which he wrote a useful handbook, *Historic Buildings of Singapore* (PMB, 1990). With Tan Tai Yong he published *Beyond Degrees: The Making of the National University of Singapore* (NUS, 1996). Promoted to Associate Professor in 1990, he served as Head of Department from 1992–99 and as Deputy Chairman of the editorial board of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*.

After retiring as Associate Professorial Fellow from NUS in 2003, he had a research attachment at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, from which emerged a monumental study of *Singapore: The unexpected nation* (ISEAS, 2008). He was also commissioned to write *Singapore's Engineer-Leaders: Partnership with the nation: A history of the Faculty of Engineering, National University of Singapore* (NUS Faculty of Engineering, 2010).

Edwin was an engaging teacher, a caring tutor, a convivial colleague, and an outstanding Singapore scholar. He will be greatly missed.

ERNEST C.T. CHEW

Head, Department of History (1983–92)

Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (1991–97),

National University of Singapore