

PRESS RELEASE

NUS Medicine establishes Ellen Siow Professorship in Neurosurgery to advance neuro-oncology research

Singapore, 22 August 2025 — Today, the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS Medicine) announced the establishment of the Ellen Siow Professorship in Neurosurgery in a tribute to the life and legacy of Ellen Siow and her family's enduring commitment to medical research, education, and philanthropy.

The Professorship aims to advance education and research in the field of neuro-oncology, specifically in brain tumours and gliomas. By supporting the full spectrum of translational research, it will drive the development of innovative programmes and interventions that can be translated into better outcomes for patients. It will also strengthen both academic teaching and clinical research, fostering progress that benefits people in Singapore and beyond. Through this Professorship, the School will be able to appoint a leading expert in the critical field of neuro-oncology research and accelerate transformative research initiatives.

"Brain tumour has twice struck my family," said Doreen Siow, a representative of the Siow family. "In 1963, my father was diagnosed and died on the operating table during surgery. In 2022, my sister Ellen, was diagnosed with GBM. She also had surgery but died six months later in March 2023. My mother, who was not told of Ellen's cancer, passed a month later of old age. To honour Ellen's memory, my mother's estate is donating funds to establish a professorship to do more research on GBM, where there are significant unmet needs. We understand that cancer treatment in many areas has made great strides, but treatment of GBM in particular has not changed much and the prognosis remains very poor. We hope this gift will support more research and teaching and its ultimate goal will be to extend the duration and quality of life for victims of this disease."

Made possible by a generous gift from the Siow family, this professorship is funded through the estate of Willie Siow Fung Wai Ying, the family matriarch. She was born in Hong Kong and moved to Singapore after her marriage and was widowed at age 39 when her husband Vincent Siow died of a brain tumour in 1963. Willie was a lifelong philanthropist inspired by the example of her own parents, who endowed several schools in Hong Kong for children from low-income families. Throughout her lifetime, Willie supported a range of charitable causes, including contributions to Dover Park Hospice, a few nursing homes, a bursary for students from low-income backgrounds at the Institute for Technical Education in Singapore, and donations to healthcare and education initiatives in Hong Kong and Nepal. Willie's deep interest in medicine, education, and the elderly led her to dedicate a large portion of her estate to charity following her passing in April 2022.

The Professorship is named in memory of Willie's second youngest child, Ellen Siow, who was diagnosed with glioblastoma in 2021 and passed away six months later in March 2022 at the

age of 62. The Siow family chose to endow this professorship to support further research and medical advancement in the treatment of glioblastoma, a devastating and currently incurable brain cancer. It is an aggressive malignancy arising from astrocytes—cells called astrocytes that support nerve cells—in the brain or spinal cord. With no existing cure, current treatments focus on slowing the disease’s progression and alleviating symptoms, underscoring the urgent need for research into more effective therapies.

Professor Chong Yap Seng, Lien Ying Chow Professor in Medicine, Dean of NUS Medicine, said, “We are deeply grateful to the Siow family for their vision and generosity. The Ellen Siow Professorship in Neurosurgery will have a profound impact on advancing research and clinical practice in neuro-oncology, with the potential to bring renewed hope to patients and families affected by glioblastoma in Singapore and beyond.”

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About National University of Singapore (NUS)

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education, research and entrepreneurship, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. We have 15 colleges, faculties and schools across three campuses in Singapore, with more than 40,000 students from 100 countries enriching our vibrant and diverse campus community. We have also established more than 20 NUS Overseas Colleges entrepreneurial hubs around the world.

Our multidisciplinary and real-world approach to education, research and entrepreneurship enables us to work closely with industry, governments and academia to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in our faculties, research centres of excellence, corporate labs and more than 30 university-level research institutes focus on themes that include energy; environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems; Asian studies; and Smart Nation capabilities such as artificial intelligence, data science, operations research and cybersecurity.

For more information on NUS, please visit <http://www.nus.edu.sg/>

About the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine)

The NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is Singapore's first and largest medical school. Our enduring mission centres on nurturing highly competent, values-driven and inspired healthcare professionals to transform the practice of medicine and improve health around the world.

Through a dynamic and future-oriented five-year curriculum that is inter-disciplinary and inter-professional in nature, our students undergo a holistic learning experience that exposes them to multiple facets of healthcare and prepares them to become visionary leaders and compassionate doctors and nurses of tomorrow. Since the School's founding in 1905, more than 12,000 graduates have passed through our doors.

In our pursuit of health for all, our strategic research programmes focus on innovative, cutting-edge biomedical research with collaborators around the world to deliver high impact solutions to benefit human lives.

The School is the oldest institution of higher learning in the National University of Singapore and a founding institutional member of the National University Health System. It is one of the leading medical schools in Asia and ranks among the best in the world (Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2025 by subject and the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by subject 2025).

For more information about NUS Medicine, please visit <https://medicine.nus.edu.sg/>