

THE LIVING MEMORIAL

The Newsletter of the AIF Malaya Nursing Scholarship Trust

Patron: Lieutenant General Peter Leahy AC (ret'd)

Issue 1/2019

December 2019



Our student for 2020

The Scholarship is very pleased to introduce our student for 2020:

She is Ms Tan Sheng Lian from Singapore. Her current role is as Assistant Nurse Clinician (Haematology) at the Singapore General Hospital. She obtained a Bachelor of Science (Nursing) from the National University of Singapore. Sheng has worked at the Singapore General as a student nurse and has been on the staff there since 2012.

She is the co-author of a journal article: 'Use of complementary and alternative medicine in adult patients with cancer', *Singapore Nursing Journal*, October – December, 2012, 39(4).

While at Curtin University, Tan Sheng Lian will be enrolled in a Master of Science (Health Practice – Clinical Leadership) in 2020 and 2021.

A photograph of Sheng will appear in our next newsletter.

Celebration of Achievement for 2019 student, Pauline Wong

Our latest student, Pauline Wong, from Malaysia, has successfully completed her studies at Curtin University and is returning home as a degree qualified Clinical Nurse Specialist. Her achievement was celebrated at a ceremony at Curtin on Tuesday 26 November last.

This year, we were honoured by the presence of well-known historian and author Lynette Silver AM. Ms Silver has written a number of books on aspects of Australian history, and in

particular the experiences of prisoners of war of the Japanese. Her 1998 book *Sandakan: A Conspiracy of Silence* exposed the horrific treatment of Australian and British POWs on Borneo. Ms Silver's address at the Celebration of Achievement was entitled 'Turning Tragedy into Triumph – A Priceless Legacy'.



Lynette Silver AM with Pauline Wong

She spoke movingly the plight of the POWs and the courageous hand of friendship extended to them by the indigenous Dusun people of Sabah. She remarked that:

One great benefit from the incorporation of Sabah into Malaysia is that the Nursing Scholarship is now open to all Sabahans. Because of my work in relation to Sandakan POWs and the notorious death marches of 1945, Sabah is particularly dear to my heart, as is a deep commitment to acknowledge in practical ways the sacrifice of the local people who helped our prisoners of war. ...

Consequently, when invited by Mike O'Brien to travel to Perth to help celebrate the academic success of Pauline Wong, a Sabahan, I was delighted to accept, and would like to take this opportunity to extend to her the heartiest congratulations on behalf of the Sandakan POW families. As we all know, she is the recipient of a scholarship created to acknowledge the assistance provided by local people to our prisoners of war - assistance which, in Sabah, was outstanding.

Author hopes more Sabahan nurses get Australian scholarship

(Edited item from the **Daily Express**, Sabah, Malaysia, 3 December 2019.)

KOTA KINABALU: History author Lynette Silver said she hopes to see more Sabahans who are pursuing nursing as a career being successful in landing the AIF (Australian Imperial Force) scholarship

She was elated that a Sabahan, Pauline Wong, was a recipient recently and did two years at the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine at Curtin University.

Wong, 27, has been a registered nurse since 2012 at QEH [Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah]. She was awarded the scholarship for 2018-19. She was the first applicant to be awarded the scholarship from Borneo.

Pauline told Lynette that she came across the scholarship by chance when she saw a small notice pinned on the board at QEH directing her to the AIF Memorial Nursing Scholarship website in 2017.

Although it had been open to applicants from Sabah and Sarawak all along, the scholarship is awarded alternately between Singapore (for post graduate study) and Malaysia (nursing degree).

"I hope a Dusun applicant wins this scholarship one day. Perhaps even a student who has been educated because of our Sandakan Memorial Scholarship Trust,* which is open to Dusun girls, to acknowledge the help given to our POWs (Prisoners of War) in Sabah by Dusun people," said Lynette.

"The Dusuns saved the lives of all six POWs who escaped from the death marches, and many people of various ethnic backgrounds suffered, with eight executed for their assistance to POWs in Sandakan", she said, adding that over the years, all scholarship winners have come from Singapore or Peninsular Malaysia.

* The Sandakan Memorial Scholarship Trust was established in 2005 to provide girls from remote regions of Sabah with secondary schooling.

Scholarship Plaque Unveiling – Singapore

On 30 September last year, a small group gathered to participate in a ceremony at Curtin University's Singapore campus. The group was there to unveil a plaque commemorating the students who had received an AIF Nursing Scholarship over the 70 plus years since its inception.



The gathering at Curtin Singapore for the plaque unveiling commemorating more than 70 years of AIF Scholarship alumni

Among the guests were the Chancellor of Curtin University, Dr Andrew Crane; Vice Chancellor, Professor Deborah Terry AO; representatives of the Australian High Commissioner and Singapore's Chief Nurse, three previous scholarship recipients, and staff from Curtin's Singapore and Bentley campuses.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor and President Curtin Singapore, Professor Linley Lord, welcomed the guests, followed by short speeches from Professor Terry and Professor Phillip Della, Head of the School of Nursing. Professor Terry and Emeritus Professor Robin Watts AM, representing the AIF Scholarship Board, then unveiled the plaque.



Professors Terry (left) and Watts do the honours in Singapore

In closing the ceremony, Professor Lord outlined the next steps in this project. The plan is to gather the stories of the scholarship alumni from both Singapore and Malaysia, which will contribute to the development an interactive video to accompany the plaque.

Our Supporters

We would never be able to achieve our aims without extensive community assistance. Our helpers include:

- The Australian Red Cross who provides us with all our administrative and secretarial support.
- The Ministries of Health in Malaysia and Singapore who choose and support our scholarship holders.
- Curtin University who provide us with specially tailored educational courses for our nursing scholarship holders.
- Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and its High Commissioners in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore who give us essential support.
- Victoria State Trustees, who administer our funds.
- Our Auditor, Mr Joe O'Brien.
- Our donors.

Our Donors

We are indebted to all our donors, whether large or small. They keep the *Living Memorial* alive.

Other recent donors include:

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Our contact details

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If you would like to make a bequest or donation to the AIF Nursing Scholarship Trust, please ask us for a brochure or use the contact details above. Donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible

