

Fundraising launched to set up professorship in honour of pioneer eye surgeon Robert Loh



The late eye surgeon Robert Loh set up the Eye Bank at Singapore General Hospital in 1966. PHOTO: NCSS

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Rachel Au-Yong Housing Correspondent (<mailto:rachelay@sph.com.sg>)

SINGAPORE - A fundraising campaign to set up a \$10 million professorship in honour of late eye surgeon Robert Loh was launched on Saturday evening (July 22).

The Robert Loh Professorship in Clinical Innovation in Ophthalmology will support the recipient's research efforts, and fund lectures as well as humanitarian missions, among other things.

College of Ophthalmologists president and Singapore National Eye Centre medical director Wong Tien Yin, who is coordinating the fundraising efforts, said the professorship will help the next generation of doctors remember the pioneer medical professionals who laid the foundations for the healthcare system here.

"Robert Loh is one of the reasons why eye care in Singapore is at world-class standards today," he said.

Dr Loh set up the Eye Bank at Singapore General Hospital in 1966, and introduced microsurgery, laser surgery, intraocular implants, corneal grafting and modern retinal detachment surgery to Singapore.

He died in January this year (2017) after suffering a stroke. He was 91.

He was also the first president of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and the longest-serving president of Christian charity YMCA.

Besides meeting strict academic standards, Prof Wong said the recipient of the professorship, which could be named as early as next year, must be able to innovate new technologies so that "eye care tomorrow is better than eye care today".

Like Dr Loh, the recipient also should have a track record of community service, he added.

At the Academy of Medicine's 60th anniversary gala dinner on Saturday, Dr Loh's wife, Mary, kickstarted the fundraising process with a \$250,000 donation from the family.

Individuals from the medical field have also raised another \$250,000.

Prof Wong said the goal is to raise \$5 million by May next year (2018), and added that he hopes the Ministry of Education will match this with a dollar-for-dollar grant.

Minister of Education (Higher Education and Skills) Ong Ye Kung attended the dinner as its guest-of-honour.

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