

A farewell party for Eugenia Savarese UWAS

Exco members were invited to Gina's place at Pasir Panjang on 8 June 2001 just a week before she and her family left Singapore for Hong Kong. Her husband Frank got a new post in Hong Kong and the whole family was relocated there. Almost all the members of the Exco were present. A big thank you to Brenda Goh for convening this event. Former office bearers Elsie Yu and Jaclyn Goh also joined in the farewell for Gina and her family.



Elsie Yu presented a precious coin set to Gina.



UWAS Exco members' farewell gift to Gina

Continuing Education International Conference:

"Lifelong Learning – Provisions, Participation and Possibilities"



UWAS President Elena Lui presenting a copy of "Women's Future World's Future" to Ms. Lesley Hart, Director for Lifelong Learning Centre.

UWAS President Associate Professor Lui Hah Wah Elena was invited to chair one of the panels of the International Conference "Lifelong Learning – Provisions, Participation and Promise" organised by the Singapore Association Continuing Education on 19-20 November 2001 at the RELC. The chief sponsor of the event was the Lee Foundation. Associate Professor Lui took the golden opportunity to present a copy of the "Women's Future, World's Future" to the keynote speaker, Ms. Lesley Hart, Director of Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Strathclyde, UK. Ms. Hart has been awarded an MBE for services to Lifelong Learning.

Talk on **Medical Negligence**

Gina Savarese

On Saturday, 26 May 2001 we were very fortunate to host a talk by Dr. Catherine Tay Swee Kian entitled **Medical Negligence**. Dr. Tay is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Business Administration at the National University of Singapore as well as a Lecturer/Supervisor in Medical Law and Biomedical Ethics in the Faculties of Dentistry and Medicine, also at the National University of Singapore.

The venue for the talk was at the Raffles Room of the Tanglin Club, where an elegant high tea was served. After the high tea, our first speaker was Dr. Tay's friend, Mr. Edmund Kronenburg, who graciously agreed to join Dr. Tay to give us an overview of the legal issues of medical negligence and what options are open to us should we suspect malpractice on the part of a physician. His insight into the possibilities of legal redress on the part of the patient was both interesting and informative. He was quite forthright in admitting that doctors often protect each other and that it is sometimes quite difficult to prove negligence without the corroborating testimony of other physicians.

Dr. Tay then gave us an informative talk on the issue of medical negligence. In her wonderful, upbeat style, she informed us of some of the various types of negligence that have been perpetrated both in Singapore and around the world. She taught us that it is our right to ask questions of physicians and to get several opinions before proceeding with any serious medical procedure. She came armed with articles and reports of careless mistakes that have been made by doctors who are often too arrogant to admit that they are wrong.

We are past the age when physicians were placed on pedestals and never questioned. As we, the public, become more informed, we can take an active part in our healthcare and make the serious decisions that affect our health. Now, in the age of the Internet, there is every opportunity to learn all we can about our illnesses and request the treatment we feel may be best for us. However, one must always remember that the physician is the trained expert, and that, in most cases, he is competent and caring. Collaboration between doctor and patient, and the willingness of a physician to spend time with a patient and explain the procedures that are to be performed, as well as being willing to inform the patient about their illness and discuss the best form of treatment, are the hallmarks of an excellent physician.

Our thanks to Dr. Tay and Mr. Kronenburg for a very informative afternoon, for being willing to answer all our questions, and for taking time out of their busy schedules to spend time with us.



Dr. Catherine Tay Swee Kian enlightened UWAS members and guests on medical negligence



Mr. Kronenburg, UWAS President Associate Professor Elena Lui, Dr. Catherine Tay, and Dr. Tay's guest



Gina and UWAS members and guest at the reception desk at the talk on "medical negligence"

WOMEN ARE MAKING THEIR MARK IN TODAY'S NEW ECONOMY

Rosy Nakhooda, Program Chair

A summary of the UWAS symposium on MULTIPLE ROLES OF WOMEN IN THE NEW ECONOMY Raffles Town Club, Saturday 3 November 2001

It was 3 November 2001, and Election Day in Singapore. It was also the day on which UWAS was holding its first ever full-day public symposium on the subject of the **"Multiple Roles of Women in the New Economy"** at the Raffles Town Club. As the day began, the organizing committee led by chairperson, Brenda Goh, waited with bated breath to see if the participants would be siphoned off to the polls or keep their date with UWAS. The time was 8:15a.m. and slowly and steadily an enthusiastic crowd started pouring in. The rest of the day turned out as beautiful as the clear blue sky above.

The objectives of the symposium were to highlight the various contributions of women in today's Singapore; to provide models of women who manage their different roles successfully; and to help empower women to cope with the challenges of the new economy.

The distinguished Guest of Honour, HE Mrs. Eva Walder-Brundin, Ambassador, Embassy of

Sweden to Singapore, in a lucid and succinct opening address, was quick to set the pace and identified three distinct characteristics of the new knowledge and information based economy: speed, democratization and the need for education and decentralization of decision-making. All these characteristics, she said, benefit women and will require changes in entire corporate structures.

Given the speed at which the new economy evolves,

flexibility becomes essential to handle several tasks at the same time. And flexibility, she said, is a strength that women possess in abundance. This includes work-family responsibilities which will never be abandoned by women. Entire organizational structures will need to change to accommodate childcare facilities and flexible working hours and responsibility sharing.

With democratisation and democratic elections, the old authoritarian style of leadership will give way to a more integrative and communicative process of governance as more women begin to hold higher positions in knowledge organisations. HE Mrs. Walder-Brundin went on to



Arrival of Guest of Honour HE Mrs. Eva Walder-Brundin

emphasise that while men may possess muscles, it is the brain which is the capital of the new economy, and that belongs to both men and women. "No country," she said, "can do without half its brains."

The essential threads of these thoughts were soundly endorsed by the keynote speaker for the first panel on *The Emerging Role of Women in the Business World in the New Economy*, Dr. Shirley Lim, President of the Singapore Council of Women's



Programme Chair Rosy, Panel Speaker and guests

Organisations and the founder president of Research Communications International Pte. Ltd said that the new fluid economy was driven by the three I's: Internet Culture, Internationalisation and Innovation.

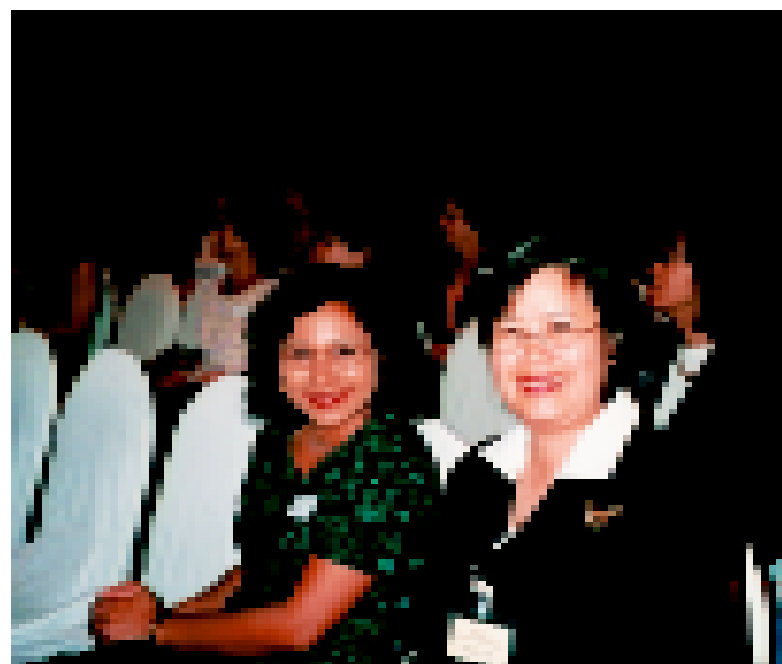
Women today, she noted, make up more than half of the global workforce and they are increasing their share in the paid economy. The rate of growth of women owned businesses is faster today in industrial countries than that of men. It is this crucial period of opportunities for women, and the new role that women play in it that will determine the New Culture that we create for our children. "The potential is vast," she said.

Dr. Lim also stressed the importance of Family-Work Life Balance in the new economy and reinforced HE Mrs. Walder-Brundin's call for the

need to develop family friendly workplaces. The focus now, said Dr. Lim, has shifted from performance to people. And when you build people, improvements in performance follow.

While women these days, Dr. Lim pointed out, continue to need help with education and financial support, the trend is that women are learning to invent their own positions rather than wait for the system to provide them with one. In the new economy, she said, women will need to bring forth their forte for an integrative approach which combines work, family, the community and international relations.

Another panelist, Mr. George Abraham, executive director of the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, showed by way of example five case studies of successful women entrepreneurs in Singapore, that success in the business does not come easy to women. They had all experienced their share of corporate rejections and failures, and it was only with true grit and persistence that they had forged ahead as leaders in their respective fields.



UWAS member Dr. Theresa Devasahayan and Organising Committee Chair Brenda Goh

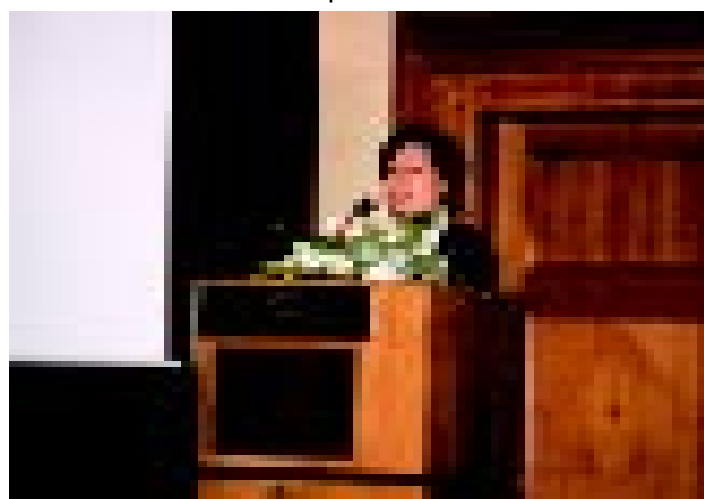
Panelist Ms. Kuan Lui, an entrepreneur in her own right as head of a unique cookery school in historical Fort Canning Park, exemplified beautifully the modern women. She talked pragmatically of her highly successful new venture as a "retirement career" with a built-in exit plan. Earlier she had headed a pre-packaged Asian

spices business which she sold off to a listed public company in Singapore.

Speaking on the second panel on Women in Today's Community and Social Service, Dr. Elsie Yu, an economist and a much decorated artist in Singapore who spends considerable time on community service, spoke with some misgivings about the consequences of the unleashing of an "unprecedented productive capacity by the power of the mind." An extraordinary gap, she said, has been created by technological over-development and our social underdevelopment. Today's materialistic world, she noted, makes us self-centred, selfish and egocentric. What we need is compassion and moral anchor with which to undertake social and voluntary services.

Other speakers on the panel for whom community service is a way of life, included fiery and outspoken Ms. Ivy Singh, President of Netball Singapore, and Ms. Minda C. Cruz, Minister and Consul General, Embassy of the Philippines in Singapore, Ms. Singh spoke in her familiar candid directness of the need for the leaders in sports and community service to speak to young people today – whom she called the "new wave women" – in a more definitive and communicative manner rather than in the old authoritarian style. They clearly express a desire to be aware of their environment, and we must, she said, respect their earnest curiosity and respond.

Speaking on the third panel on *Education, Training and Development – Gearing to the Needs of Women*, Ms Normala Manap, Vice President, Program Development and International Affairs, Tsao Foundation, pointed out that despite the strides taken by women, there is still a whole lack consideration for the specific needs of women in



Panel Speaker Dr. Elizabeth Ong

the area of training and education. With obvious intimate knowledge of her subject, she called for the development of community based training programs for women as distinct from individualized and market based training. She further identified the specific areas in which women need training, namely, vocational assessment, resume writing and interview techniques, life skills workshops, computer and software training, job search counseling, self-employment courses and information referrals.

The final three panelists on *Globalisation and its Impact on Women*, stirred much interest among the audience with their lively presentation and the stories of their varied and colourful lives. All had changed their lifestyles entirely by moving to a country other than their place of birth. Dr. Elizabeth Ong, President of the Filipino Ladies Group in Singapore is married to a Singaporean. She talked at length of the adjustments this entails and how it affects one's life.

Ms. Jules Takagishi, President of Prime Time Business and Professional Women's Association, who holds a full time UN position in Singapore, is a Japanese lady, who grew up in America, studied in Japan, worked in Melbourne, married an Australian and now lives in Singapore. Her husband, she explained, is a "trailing spouse." Having grown up in an ultra-conservative and male dominated Japanese family environment, Ms. Takagishi said that she had to marry a non-Japanese "in order to be myself." She believes that it is much more difficult for an Asian women to break with tradition in Asia than it is for a western woman.

The final speaker, Ms. Jane Iyer, is now content to call herself an expatriate wife. She moved to Singapore from England two year ago with her husband and baby son after having worked for more than twenty years as a senior executive in the human resources and insurance businesses. A graduate in European languages, she now enjoys the cultural diversity of Asia through travels in the regions and Friends of the Museum. While globalisation has meant drastic lifestyle changes, all three women on the globalisation panel said that they felt thoroughly enriched by their new experiences.

In the final analysis, by all accounts, the symposium was a huge success under the overall supervision of chairman of the dedicated and

energetic organizing committee, Brenda Goh, and the leadership of the chairpersons of the four panels.

When asked for her comments, Brenda replied: "The symposium was great. Both speakers and participants felt refreshed and invigorated. The humor, knowledge and experiences of the speakers thrilled the participants with admiration. Participants felt empowered and convinced that women do play an important role in today's new age economy.



Kim Hoon, Chwee Beng and Lay Yen at the reception desk

"We urge women to take a positive outlook and cease to see their role as just an administrative function. Instead they must see themselves as strategic partners in society, the business world as well as home. Take proactive approach to add value to society's effectiveness. A change of mindset and actions is required for women to be successful and to stay relevant in the new age economy.

"I also wish to take this opportunity to thank my energetic and very savvy organizing committee for their hard work in putting together this timely symposium."

Brenda's enthusiasm, shared completely by her efficient and with-it organizing committee, was thoroughly endorsed in the 31 responses received on the circulated UWAS Feedback Forms. Asked to comment on the appropriateness of allocated time, choice of speakers, quality of the presentations, leadership of the chairpersons and adequacy of the discussions the answers were an almost unanimous "yes." The vast majority of the respondents also found the facilities, location, food and refreshments satisfactory or better.

Superlatives on superlatives were piled on thick when asked about the relevance and benefits of the symposium. Here are just a few responses for you to enjoy: "inspirational and motivational experience", "a fantastic way to remind us women of our roles and responsibilities in the new economy", "very well organized and purposeful event", "encouraging, relevant, supportive", "an

enriching and enlightening symposium", "topic of women and globalisation – excellent speakers and material/content" and simply "excellent".

In the organising committee, President Elena Lui and Program Chair Rosy Nakhoda were responsible for the program design and the invitation of speakers and chairpersons. Vice President Serene Low and International Hospitality Chair Chan Fong Kin looked after the efficient logistical arrangements. Katherine Chua coordinated the arrangements for the venue and catering. Honorary Assistant Treasurer Lim Kim Hoon, Honorary Assistant Secretary Lee Chwee Beng and Membership Chair Ong Yoke Yin were in charge of the registration and publicity. Exco committee member Leong Chooi Peng was the lively Master of Ceremonies who spiced the day with many an amusing anecdotal interjection. Sewing up all matters together and keeping them astutely on the up and up financially was Honorary Treasurer Tan Chor Suan. Ang Lay Yen and Ng Seok Hui were there to help with the IT presentation, photography and registration. Mary Ann Hawkins was an invaluable gofer. If there ever was efficient teamwork, this was it.

The success of the events was in no small measure due to the generous sponsorship of the Lee Foundation through the kindness of Dr. Della Lee, a longtime friend of none other than former Liew Geok Hiok President Elena Lui herself. We take this opportunity to thank Dr. Lee for the valuable contribution and the continuing support of our projects.