

**11 December 2019**

### **Tribute to Mrs Ann Elizabeth Wee**

The IPS family mourns the passing of a dear friend, Mrs Ann Elizabeth Wee.

The doyen of the social work community in Singapore and Associate Professorial Fellow of the National University of Singapore's Department of Social Work, Mrs Wee was a sprightly 93-year-old when we saw her at the launch of IPS' most recent publication at the end of last month.

Mrs Wee took an active interest in discussions of public policy that we held. Her interventions reflected the irrepressible agency of a passionate social conscience that acts as an intellectual spur to the quieter endeavours of others.

She never spoke of, but for, the disadvantaged, performing the role of a participant-observer in their affairs even as she suggested, with scholarly precision and political realism, how policies and programmes could help them concretely.

Never convinced that what was new could be assumed to be better, she examined how contemporary labour policies and trends in business strategies might exacerbate social inequality and, indeed, create an underclass.

She appealed for deeper scrutiny of these trends and, yet, also of the opportunities that might exist to help the disadvantaged, especially women, experience social mobility and improved livelihoods in the modern economy.

Her concerns clearly were a reflection of her deep commitment to her vocation as a social worker which began in post-war Singapore. Those concerns were well taken and an inspiration to us to think harder about a range of social, economic, labour and healthcare policies in our country.

Her legacy as an educator, her role model as an active senior, and her presence as a true Singaporean who married the heart and head to build a better future for so many -- these comforts will far outlast this period of grief at her passing.

You were a national treasure. Rest in peace Ann, knowing that your work will continue.

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