

Making waves as a Singapore-trained engineer

Assoc Prof Ong Soh Khim from NUS Department of Mechanical Engineering has brought honour to Singapore and NUS by becoming the first Singaporean woman to receive the prestigious 2009 Emerging Leader Award in Academia from the Society of Women Engineers, a recognition of her demonstrated leadership in academia and groundbreaking research in manufacturing engineering, as well as for being a role model for other women engineers.

“Receiving this Award means a lot to me as it is a strong signal that a Singapore-trained engineer is as competitive with the other nominations from all over the world. I am deeply honoured as it is a recognition of my hard work and achievement for the last 15 years,” said Assoc Prof Ong who is also a junior faculty member of the NUS Graduate School for Integrative Sciences and Engineering. She is on

a second term as a member of the NUS University Senate Delegation from July 2009 to June 2011.

Assoc Prof Ong can be said to have been “made in NUS”, having completed her Bachelor (1992) and Ph.D. studies (1996) at the University and later joining her alma mater as a faculty member. Her other achievements include The Outstanding Young Person of Singapore Award (Science & Technology Category) in 2006, and she was also the first ASEAN female to have received the M. Eugene Merchant Outstanding Young Manufacturing Engineer Award from the Society of Manufacturing Engineers in 2004. In the same year, Assoc Prof Ong clinched the Singapore Youth Award (Science & Technology Category) awarded by the National Youth Council, which is the highest youth accolade in Singapore. She also served as a Nominated Member of the Singapore Parliament from January 2005 to April 2006.

Assoc Prof Ong’s area of expertise is in manufacturing engineering research including design, development, analysis, planning and fabrication of products for aerospace parts and consumer electronics. Her current research interest is the application of augmented reality to the development of assistive technologies which include assistive, adaptive and rehabilitative devices for persons with disabilities. She said: “This is an area which could offer great help to the disabled, the handicapped and the elderly. It is rewarding to know that the assistive technologies can help a disabled person or an elderly attain a better quality of life.”

Looking forward, she hopes to continue her research in assistive technologies to help the disabled and the elderly. “Technologies are evolving all the time and we should take good advantage of new tools and techniques to help the less fortunate,” she added. ■



MADE IN NUS: Assoc Prof Ong Soh Khim.