

Estate of late doctor bequeaths \$6.75m to NUS

Gift willed in 2007 made possible after recovery of funds misappropriated from her

Malavika Menon

The estate of the late Dr Freda Paul, who suffered from dementia and was wrongly influenced by her maid and two foreign workers into giving them almost \$5 million, has bequeathed \$6.75 million to her alma mater, the National University of Singapore (NUS), the institution said in a statement yesterday.

The gift from Dr Paul, a respected paediatrician at Singapore General Hospital and an associate professor of paediatrics at the then University of Singapore's Faculty of Medicine, was willed in 2007.

She took an interest in children with special learning needs and had bequeathed much of her estate to help needy female medical students at the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine.

Professor Tan Eng Chye, president of NUS, said yesterday: "We are deeply appreciative of this generous gift from the late Dr Freda Paul, which will go a long way towards nurturing the next generation of female medical leaders as well as advancing the field of paediatrics.

"I hope this gift will also inspire more NUS alumni to impact society by supporting programmes at the university, either through lifetime gifts or a bequest as exempli-

fied by the late Dr Paul."

The gift will enable NUS Medicine to set up a bursary for financially needy female medical undergraduates, a professorship, as well as a prize that will be awarded to female medical undergraduates.

It was made possible after legal action by her estate to recover misappropriated funds.

Dr Paul was single and her sole asset was a bungalow in Haig Road, which was sold in 2009 for \$15.4 million.

She was suffering from dementia, and after having had her will written, she was befriended by construction worker Kulandaivelu Malayaperumal and engineer Gopal Subramaniam, who were working on a site adjacent to her home.

Together with her maid, Arulampalam Kanthimathy, the duo influenced Dr Paul into transferring to them large sums of money from the proceeds of the sale of her old home and into making a new will in 2010 that would have bequeathed nearly all of her remaining assets to them.

Some of the sale proceeds were used to purchase a smaller home for the elderly doctor.

In 2013, Dr Paul's distant relatives, Mr Philip Jeyaretnam and Dr Ruhunadevi Joshua, were appointed as deputies under the Mental Capacity Act to manage her affairs.



Dr Freda Paul, who had dementia, was befriended by engineer Gopal Subramaniam (top) and construction worker Kulandaivelu Malayaperumal (bottom). Together with her maid, the duo influenced her into giving them almost \$5 million.

PHOTOS:
DR RUHUNADEVI
JOSHUA, ST FILE

GENEROUS GIFT

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PROFESSOR TAN ENG CHYE,
president of NUS.

Dr Paul died in August 2016 at the age of 87.

Mr Jeyaretnam and Dr Joshua successfully applied to court for a statutory will restoring Dr Paul's earlier testamentary intentions, including her gift to NUS.

They took proceedings on behalf of her estate against the three individuals and obtained a judgment on May 15, 2017.

About \$4 million was later recovered and further funds were realised from the sale of Dr Paul's smaller home.

Mr Jeyaretnam said: "I am delighted that Dr Paul's life and career will now be honoured by this significant bequest to NUS Medicine, as she had wanted."

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