

# SUSS book prizes to honour late social work pioneer

**K.V. Veloo was key in laying foundation for growth of social services in Singapore**

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Friends and relatives of late social work pioneer K.V. Veloo have raised \$50,000 to endow a convocation award for social work in his name.

Mr Veloo, who died after complications from pneumonia in June, aged 84, was instrumental in laying a strong foundation for the development of social services in Singapore.

Minister for Social and Family Development Desmond Lee had, in a Facebook post when Mr Veloo died, cited the introduction of the Community Probation Service in 1971 as among Mr Veloo's most notable contributions. This scheme, in which trained volunteers complement staff in managing probation cases, became a model for similar schemes in the region.

The endowment gift, which will be matched by a dollar-for-dollar government grant, will fund two book prizes for undergraduate students at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS).

Named the KV Veloo Book Prize in Rehabilitation & Criminal Justice Systems and the KV Veloo Book Prize in Social Policy & Planning, the awards will be given out yearly to the two top students pursuing the undergraduate programme at the SR Nathan School of Human Development of the SUSS.

Each book prize is worth \$1,000, and will be awarded at the annual convocation event from 2020.

At a ceremony yesterday with the donor group and family representatives to ink the gift, SUSS provost Tsui Kai Chong thanked Mr Veloo's wife Rani "for allowing us to use Mr Veloo's name".

He also expressed his appreciation on behalf of SUSS social work students who will benefit from the goodwill. "Thanks to all the donors for your generous contributions.



Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) provost Tsui Kai Chong presenting a token of appreciation to Mr K.V. Veloo's wife Rani. PHOTO: SUSS

"This is special because a group of friends are donating in their friend's honour," he added.

"It is very apt that the book prize is named after Mr Veloo, who was a pioneer in social work."

Friends and family who donated to the fund included former Nominated MP Laurence Wee, veteran civil servant Benny Lim, and Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (Sana) former president Baey Lian Peck.

Mr Veloo devoted nearly 50 years to social work, helping to shape policies in areas such as prison welfare, drug rehabilitation and eldercare. He served as the first chief probation and aftercare officer and was a towering presence, together with Dr Baey, in Sana at the start of the all-out anti-drug war more than 40 years ago.

During his time in senior welfare unit posts, he helped review the Destitute Persons Act and the Children and Young Persons Act.

After he retired in 1993, the National Council of Social Service made him consultant and later director of special projects.

Asked once what made him proud to be a social worker, Mr Veloo replied: "I touch lives, bridge gulfs, heal rifts and build bonds. When you serve man, you serve God."

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**Mr K.V. Veloo (above) devoted nearly 50 years to social work, helping to shape policies in areas such as prison welfare, drug rehabilitation and eldercare. He served as the first chief probation and aftercare officer and was a towering presence, together with Dr Baey Lian Peck, in the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association at the start of the all-out anti-drug war more than 40 years ago.**