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Ngee Ann honours late Lien Ying Chow

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CHARITIES need to be focused if they wish to make a great impact, said Margaret Lien, wife of the late businessman and philanthropist Lien Ying Chow.

'The thing is to be very focused, rather than trying to help everyone,' she said.

Mrs Lien, who is the chairman of the Lien Foundation, said unfocused charities might end up 'not making that great an impact'.

She was speaking to reporters after Ngee Ann Polytechnic's (NP) ceremony for the naming of the Lien Ying Chow Library and the opening of the Lien Ying Chow Gallery.

The late Dr Lien was the founder of Overseas Union Bank, which has since been taken over by United Overseas Bank. He also opened the Mandarin Hotel in 1972. As president of the Ngee Ann Kongsi, a Teochew foundation, he had a hand in establishing Ngee Ann College, now known as Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

He founded the Lien Foundation in 1980 to continue his philanthropic work, and died at the age of 98 in August 2004.

Last September, the foundation donated \$5 million to start NP's Lien Ying Chow Education Initiative, which will allow the school to give out 15 scholarships and more than 200 bursaries each year.

The foundation has also initiated a personal digital assistant (PDA) programme with the polytechnic's School of Health Services, under which nursing students and staff will be equipped with PDAs. The programme will start in three to four months' time.

NP principal Chia Mia Chiang said that through the naming of the library, and the opening of a gallery showcasing Dr Lien's life, the polytechnic wishes to honour Dr Lien and inspire its students to similar heights.

At the ceremony, Minister of State for Education and Manpower Gan Kim Yong said: 'Dr Lien was an inspiring example of someone who had left his mark not only in business, but also in philanthropic causes such as education.'

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