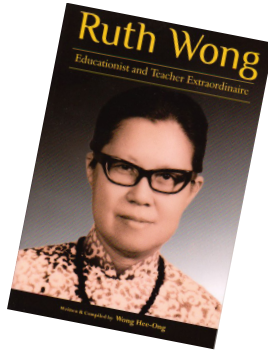

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REMEMBERING DR RUTH WONG HIE KING (1918-1982)

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The aphorism, “Each (child) has a will of his own; each needs direction”, is perhaps one that requires no further elaboration. After all, it should not be something unfamiliar to our community of student-centric educators who believe that every child can learn, a key tenet of our education system. In the 1970s, however, things were not as rosy and the educational sea was arguably much choppy as our newly independent Singapore attempted to shift from the survival-driven education system. But then came the godsent Dr Ruth Wong Hie King, founding Director of what was called the Institute of Education (IE) in Singapore. The late Dr Ruth Wong, who spent 44 years of her life as an educator, definitely played a pivotal role in the early development of the IE (or NIE, as we know it today) and without a doubt, her seminal ideas considerably improved teacher education insofar as today, many of us are still indebted to her.



In order to pay yet another homage to this extraordinary educator, Dr Ruth Wong’s own younger sister, Dr Wong Hee-Ong, has put together her reminiscences, anecdotes, and tributes to celebrate Dr Ruth Wong’s remarkable life, the collection of which is entitled, *Ruth Wong: Educationist and Teacher Extraordinaire*.

As a young student teacher myself, I was thankful to be invited to this event because it reminded me that it would be remiss of us not to model after distinguished educators such as Dr Ruth Wong herself. Her life stories have shown me that while it is important to enunciate the values and principles that we hold as a teacher, it is even more important to also live by them. Like the child mentioned in the opening paragraph, I, too, surely, have a will of my own, but I only have teachers like Dr Ruth Wong to thank, for providing me with that direction, and guiding me, little by little, as I try to find my own place in this world.

The audience included esteemed guests – Professor Freddy Boey, Deputy President and Provost of Nanyang Technological University, and Professor Tan Oon Seng, Dean, Teacher Education, in addition to Dr Ruth Wong’s old friends, colleagues, and students. Many anecdotes and sharing by Dr Ruth Wong’s former colleagues ensued, punctuating the informal conversation session that served to assert the long-lasting impact of the legacy that Dr Ruth Wong has left.