

**A**fter an 18-hour flight from San Francisco, alumnus Dr Hedy Susanto Djie (EEE/Class of 2005), flew in for NTU Alumni Homecoming. Another alumnus from China, Mr Zhang Dai (NBS/Class of 2005), also flew in. They, like several other overseas alumni, returned to the Yunnan Garden campus to be part of *the* alumni event of the year.

Today, at least one-fifth of NTU's more than 130,000 alumni lives and works abroad. Many have travelled beyond our Garden City after they graduated not unlike dandelions, the blooms that were incorporated into the design element of this year's Homecoming theme, 'Bond, Share, Unite'.

Noting the similarities, Senior Minister of State for National Development and Education Ms Grace Fu, shared that as dandelions thrive and bloom in their new habitat, the heritage they share with the mother plant would remain. She said: "The dandelions are symbolic of the Nanyang Spirit, the hallmark of the NTU alumni." Ms Fu was the Guest-of-Honour at NTU Alumni Night 2009.



**Band of brothers:** *The EEEAA Executive Committee, united in their EEE polo tees, sings at the karaoke session held during the NTU Alumni Barbeque Get-together.*



**Battle of the sexes!** *May the best men or women team wins at the NTU Alumni Sports Competition held as part of the annual Homecoming.*

The NTU Alumni Night was one of five activities put together for the Homecoming, held for the first time over a weekend from 23 to 25 October. The weekend affair kicked off with an Alumni Barbeque Get-together on Friday, held near the Chinese Heritage Centre. This was followed by two forums (*for coverage on the English session, see page 27 and Chinese, page 30*) and NTU Alumni Night 2009 on Saturday. Wrapping up on Sunday with an Alumni Sports Competition, the Homecoming was organised by NTU Alumni Affairs Office.

## Community in bloom

Why the stretch when previously Homecoming was a one-day affair?

NTU's Director of Alumni Affairs, Mr Soon Min Yam, explained: "We wanted our alumni to have more time to rekindle ties with former classmates and faculty. We hope they can spend time on the campus that was once their playground and see for themselves how much their alma mater has advanced. This will instill pride and promote rootedness to the University." Mr Soon added that having the Homecoming over the weekend would encourage more to come home, as they could better plan their travel.

The US-based Dr Djie did just that. En route to Singapore, he had dropped in on his family in Indonesia before flying over together. He and family attended the NTU Alumni Night where the 32-year-old engineer was presented the Nanyang Outstanding Young Alumni Award (*the Nanyang Alumni Awards recipients are profiled on pages 17 to 23*).

Equally elated was alumnus Mr Zhang. He had not been back since he graduated from his MBA four years ago. "I miss my alma mater and attended the Barbeque, Chinese Alumni Forum and NTU Alumni Night," said Mr Zhang, 50, CEO and President of the NTU Alumni Association in Zhejiang.

## Romancing the Yunnan Garden

Among the returning alumni, there were also those who came in pairs.

If there was a Homecoming Couple title, surely husband-and-wife alumni pair, Dato' Er Kok Leong and Mdm Lau Yi Yean, deserved to be crowned. Both were classmates from Nanyang University. When they graduated in 1966, they had become firm friends. Now in their 60s, they are like the petals of one flower, each completing the other. The Homecoming was especially meaningful for the couple, as the University had honoured Dato' Er with the Nanyang Distinguished Alumni Award.

Yet another returning couple, Ms Fan Fang (EEE/Class of 2000) and her husband shared that they used to go on 'dates' at each other's school laboratories. Both went on a campus tour to enjoy the greenery of the Yunnan Garden campus which used to inspire the 40-year-old. It still does.

## We are one

Demonstrating a sense of community and camaraderie was the School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering Alumni Association (EEEA).

Led by President Mr Hendri Zhang Weiqian, they attended the Friday Alumni Get-together Barbeque (BBQ). They even came in the association's new maroon polo tees. Toggled up with jeans, it was just the kind of get-up that was appropriate for a BBQ.

As the BBQ got underway, with food and conversations free flowing, the EEEAA alumni took to the mikes the moment the karaoke set was switched on. Striving to 'entertain', they were, needless to say, original.

With karaoke chart-toppers being sought as much as the local mixed grill of satays and stingrays among others, the Homecoming BBQ was turning into a typically Singaporean-flavoured activity.

One good start deserves a great finalé. The Homecoming, which wrapped up with the Alumni Sports Competition held on Sunday, saw alumni pitting their skills against one another in badminton, basketball or table tennis.