

(From left) President Halimah Yacob with Singapore Council of Women's Organisations president Junie Foo; infectious diseases expert Leo Yee Sin, one of seven women newly inducted into the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame; and Hall of Fame resource panellist and 2014 inductee Geh Min at the Istana yesterday. PHOTO: SINGAPORE COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS



International Women's Day

Seven female trailblazers inducted into Hall of Fame

They include infectious diseases expert Leo Yee Sin and music icon Nona Asiah

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Senior correspondent

Infectious diseases expert Leo Yee Sin, who has been at the forefront of Singapore's battle against Covid-19, was one of seven women inducted into the Singapore

Women's Hall of Fame yesterday. Their addition means there are now 174 women honoured in the Hall of Fame, which was started in 2014 by the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (SCWO) to recognise women who have made an impact on Singapore through their outstanding achievements and contributions.

Among the high-fliers this year are Ms Koh Soo Boon, the first Singaporean woman to break into Silicon Valley and the founder of Singapore's first female-led venture capital firm iGlobe Partners; and Professor Lily Kong, president of Singapore Management University and the first Singaporean woman to head a Singapore university.

The other trailblazers are Malay music and film icon Nona Asiah; golfer Kee Bee Khim, who dominated women's golf in Singapore

and the region for nearly three decades; pioneering biomedical researcher Ding Jeak Ling; and pioneering social worker and family violence specialist Sudha Nair, who started the Centre for Promoting Alternatives to Violence.

President Halimah Yacob presented the inductees with trophies at the Istana yesterday morning, which was International Women's Day.

Professor Leo, 62, who is executive director of the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID),

started the first HIV centre in Singapore.

She said: "This honour is both a recognition and an appreciation of our work at NCID and the work of the healthcare sector. I hope that this recognition will serve as an encouragement for women to take up leadership roles and to acknowledge the great contributions they make in the healthcare sector."

Madam Asiah, who is in her 90s, was represented by her son, music director Indra Shahrir Ismail, at the ceremony.

He told The Straits Times: "This is really a great honour. My mother's drive and dedication not only shaped my siblings and me, but led her to contribute much to the children and community too."

His mother began singing as a young girl during the Japanese Occupation and went on to become a singer, narrator and host for Radio Malaya.

She later became a vocal coach and mentor to young talent. She was awarded the Cultural Medalion in 2016.

SCWO is the national coordinating body of women's organisations in Singapore, with over 60 member organisations representing more than 600,000 women here.

President Halimah, who is also SCWO's patron, said Singapore has made huge strides in enabling women to realise their potential.

"Though there is much to celebrate, we must not lose sight of our collective goal to build a fairer and more inclusive society, where Singaporeans have equal opportunities to achieve their fullest potential."

Madam Halimah said a White Paper on women's development will be presented in Parliament soon.

Expected to outline a range of policies and programmes designed to further gender equality, it builds on the year-long series of Conversations on Singapore Women's Development, where 6,000 women and men shared feedback and ideas on issues affecting women.

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