

## Media Release

### **Wee Eng Hwa Unveils Bestseller, *Cooking for the President: Reflections & Recipes of Mrs Wee Kim Wee***



**Singapore, 19 December 2022 (Monday)** - Drawing on the culinary genius of her late mother, Koh Sok Hiong, Ms Wee Eng Hwa has released the third edition of her first English food memoir, *Cooking for the President: Reflections & Recipes of Mrs Wee Kim Wee*. Ms Wee is the daughter of Dr Wee Kim Wee, who was Singapore's President from 1985 to 1993.

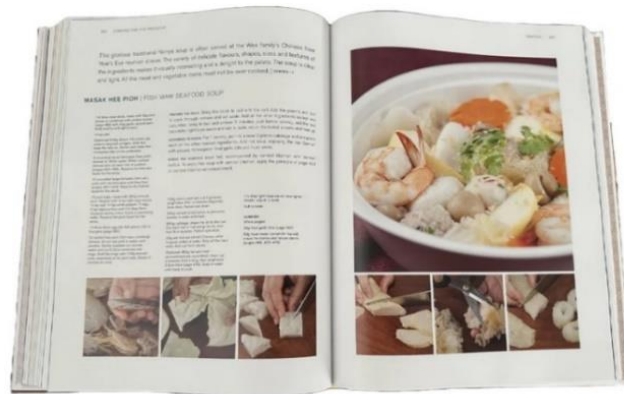
#### **A legacy of authentic nonya cuisine**

The book features a collection of 227 recipes and not less than 60 variations. It captures four generations of nonya cuisine. Most of the recipes were Mrs Wee Kim Wee's (née Koh Sok Hiong's) very own rendition of the Peranakan dishes prepared for the late Dr Wee Kim Wee, who was her husband of 69 years until he passed away peacefully on 2 May 2005. Throughout the volume, readers will find highly visual, practical tips and step-by-step instructions on food preparation and ingredients. While this edition has all the recipes of the first edition and the menus chapter of the second edition, it has a new chapter called "Alternative Ingredients", dedicated to readers who are keen to cook dishes from the book but lack certain ingredients required in the recipes and who would benefit from an easy-to-refer set of different ingredient options that could be treated as alternatives to the original ingredients of the recipes in the book. It also contains significant amendments.

Included in this book are the recipes of nonya cuisine originally created by Mrs Wee, as well as the essence of nonya cooking learned from Mrs Wee's grandmother, Saw Hai Choo ("Mama Choo"), who was a legendary cook in her time. Mrs Wee described each recipe as having been stress-tested many times by herself and Ms Wee over a span of more than 20 years. The mother-daughter duo was determined to perfect each recipe with the unifying goal of capturing its authentic character.

The book showcases delectable desserts such as *ondeh ondeh*, *ang ku kueh* and *kueh dadaa*. From tasty appetisers such as *sambal timun* (spicy pork cucumber salad), *Mama Choo's luak chai* (pickled Chinese mustard leaves) and *sambal buah binjay* (spicy soya sauce binjay fruit) to hearty soups and mouth-watering favourites such as *pong towhu* (beancurd prawn pork meatball soup), *masak hee ploh* (fish maw seafood soup), *satay ayam goreng rempah titek* (spicy coconut milk fried chicken), *nonya mee* (nonya braised yellow noodles), and *nonya popiah* (nonya fresh spring rolls), Ms Wee

brings aspiring culinary artists on a meticulously curated journey of the tangy and tantalising flavours that represent the best of nonya cooking.



Over the course of Dr Wee’s career in diplomacy and politics, Mrs Wee was hands-on in cooking for family and friends, as well as for diplomatic functions and National Day celebrations. The late Dr S R Nathan, who was Singapore’s President from 1999 to 2011, described how “the aroma of Mrs Wee’s cooking would welcome us the moment we arrived...the complex flavours and colours of her dishes were more than inviting. Each visit was an enjoyable experience.”

#### **A book for all ages**

Beyond the collection of recipes that have been organised into visual and instructional step-by-step guides suitable for culinary artists, *Cooking for the President* offers useful insights to all readers, from history buffs and social aficionados to citizens across all ages.

Encapsulated within the book are the personal life journeys of Dr and Mrs Wee Kim Wee before they became President and First Lady of Singapore. The early chapters of the book chronicle Dr Wee and Mrs Wee’s early lives and circumstances before they were matchmade. Mr Wee’s soaring career in journalism makes an inspiring story, as well as his next career as diplomat. Readers will learn about his eventual ascendancy to become Singapore’s President in 1985, and his role as an active citizen after retirement from the Presidency. Through all of this, Mrs Wee devoted herself to be “the eyes and hands of the family”.

The pages are peppered with memorable quotes and gems of wisdom. For example, Dr Wee, who had always emphasised the importance of education of the heart, would say that he studied at the “University of Life” whenever he was asked which university he hailed from.

Accompanied by a treasure trove of photographs, the book captures the spirit and passion of Dr Wee and Mrs Wee as they took on their roles in the public eye, as well as their popularity amongst ordinary citizens and leaders alike. Ms Wee Eng Hwa delves into the values and philosophies that her late parents lived by, including contentment, kindness, empathy and humility. With candidness, Mrs Wee Kim Wee’s role in contributing to her husband’s success is detailed in the book, where she is described as a perfect complement who “shared his care and concern for the people, especially the poor, oppressed and elderly.” The couple’s enduring love for each other is consistently acknowledged in the recollections in the book of friends and colleagues who had interacted with Dr and Mrs Wee.



Summing up her sentiment for the cookbook, **Ms Wee Eng Hwa** said, “This is a compilation of the accumulated culinary experience of four generations of great nonya cuisine, which my family and I are delighted to share as a legacy for Singaporeans. Beyond the well-loved recipes, it is also a tribute to my parents, two extraordinary people who are worthy of great honour. Proceeds from the sale of this book will go to the [Wee Kim Wee Heritage Fund](#), which will be used for SMU scholarships for financially challenged students, programmes for the Wee Kim Wee Centre and the upkeep of the displays in the Wee Kim Wee Room which will be open to the public for viewing. If you are seeking a meaningful gift this holiday season, do keep this book within your consideration set.”

This limited-edition bestseller is available for purchase at [The SMU Shop](#).

###

#### **About Singapore Management University**

Established in 2000, Singapore Management University (SMU) is recognised for its disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research that addresses issues of global relevance, impacting business, government, and society. Its distinctive education, incorporating innovative experiential learning, aims to nurture global citizens, entrepreneurs and change agents. With more than 12,000 students, SMU offers a wide range of bachelors, masters and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with six of its eight schools - Accountancy, Business, Computing, Economics, Law and Social Sciences. Its seventh school, the SMU College of Integrative Studies, offers degree programmes in deep, integrative interdisciplinary education. The College of Graduate Research Studies, SMU’s eighth school, enhances integration and interdisciplinarity across the various SMU postgraduate research programmes that will enable students to gain a holistic learning experience and well-grounded approach to their research. SMU also offers a growing number of executive development and continuing education programmes. Through its city campus, SMU focuses on making meaningful impact on Singapore and beyond through its partnerships with industry, policy makers and academic institutions. [www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)