

Tête-à-tête with Jeanette

*SICC Member Larissa Tan meets
with one of SICC's longest female
Members, Jeanette Sim*

Larissa Tan
The SICC Heritage
Chronicles



Jeanette Sim will turn 80 in
September this year

As I stepped into the house of Jeanette Sim, the wife of the late Sim Kee Boon, she was sitting around the dining table laughing and having breakfast with her family. I wasn't sure what to expect from one of our longest female members of the Club, but I was made to feel very comfortable as she greeted me warmly and invited me to sit with her and her eldest son in the living room. The walls were adorned with numerous colourful Chinese brush paintings, showcasing Mrs Sim's artistic and creative talents, hanging above shelves filled with numerous golf trophies won by Mrs Sim throughout the years.

Jeanette Sim joined the Singapore Island Country Club, together with her husband in 1966. When asked why she joined SICC, she recalls that at that time, there were very few golf clubs. SICC was chosen due to its convenient location and it being the premier golf club in Singapore. As her husband was also an avid golfer, SICC fit right in with his love for the game.

How did Jeanette start playing golf? Her eldest son was a keen golfer at the tender age of 12, influenced by Mr Sim. With both husband and son playing golf every week, Jeanette wanted to see what the golf craze was about and decided to start taking golf lessons. Being naturally athletic and a lover of the outdoors, she has not looked back since taking her first swing.

Since then, Jeanette has been very active in the Singapore golf scene. She founded the Singapore Ladies Golf Association in 1979 and only stepped down from the association in 2008, having served for nearly 30 years. The Singapore Ladies Golf Association was set up with the aim of providing a governing body for ladies golf in Singapore. Through this association, she also started the Queen Sirikit Cup tournament and arranged for many Singapore lady golfers to participate.

Jeanette was very active in encouraging the SICC ladies to get involved in golf. At the time she started to play, she recalls that the SICC courses were filled

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mostly with men. Being one of the few lady golfers at SICC in the late 1960s, this spunky woman would persuade the male golfers to get their wives to play golf at SICC.

She not only organised ladies' golf socials, but also golf socials between the male and female golf committees. She remembers that during her reign as ladies captain, she started the junior golf section, organising golf lessons for junior golfers and arranging parent and child tournaments. She even had to find "adopted parents" for children whose parents did not play golf and "adopted children" for the adults who did not have children who played golf.

When asked for her fondest memories of SICC, she reminisces about the amount of time spent at SICC. She speaks about the numerous friendships she made, the golf games that she organised and the amount of time she spent at the Club with her family. At this point of our conversation her eldest son let out a chuckle and proclaimed that his father was the "golf widower" and that if you couldn't find his mother, she was more than likely on the golf course.

Mrs Sim also recalls the simpler times when the Bukit Clubhouse was just a single story clubhouse, where she gathered after golf games with her family and friends. She also speaks fondly of the SICC staff, citing a time where members were able to leave their belongings in the changing rooms without putting them into lockers and when they returned from their golf game, the members knew that their belongings would be there waiting.

Mrs Sim is still extremely proud of her hole-in-one on the Sime Course, Two years after picking up golf, something some people never achieve in a lifetime. She believes that Singapore still has the best golf clubs in the world with the best golf facilities. These days, Mrs Sim enjoys the occasional 9 holes of social golf with friends and does tai chi.

I asked Jeanette Sim what she would like to see for SICC moving forward and she expressed that not only is it important for all members, both old and new to know about the history and heritage of SICC. It is akin to learning about your own family history and heritage but she would like to see more activity between the different generations of the Club, where experienced golfers would play a few rounds with the beginners and our older members would golf with the younger members.



That perfect finish. Jeanette golfing in Jakarta in the early 70s



Jeanette with her late husband Sim Kee Boon in 1991