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Senior nurse manager Rujia Ali Shahul Hameed Mohammed Feroz (left) won the award for being the most Inspiring, while A*Star scientist Sherry Aw won in the science and technology category at the Great Women Of Our Time 2018 Awards last night in Sinfonia Ristorante at the Victoria Concert Hall. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

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Great Women Of Our Time awards recognise women who inspire others

Jose Hong

While Dr Sherry Aw enjoyed her doctoral studies in developmental biology and embryology at Harvard Medical School, she realised that she wanted to do something that impacted real lives.

So, soon after returning to Singapore in 2010 to work for the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star), Dr Aw, 36, focused on diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

"The prevalence of these diseases increases with age, and it's a bigger problem in developed countries like Singapore," she said.

For her work, she won in the science and technology category of the Great Women Of Our Time Awards yesterday evening and received a plaque.

Dr Aw was among 18 trailblazers honoured by The Singapore Women's Weekly magazine, published by SPH Magazines, in its annual event recognising the achievements of inspiring women. This is the 13th year that the awards are being given out.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Indraneel Rajah, who was guest of honour at the party attended by about 150 people at Sinfonia Ristorante in Victoria Concert Hall, paid tribute to the nominees.

"Tonight's awards are for women who are trailblazers and game changers. These women inspire us with their actions and warmth and kindness. They have overcome personal challenges and... most importantly, given back to society," said Ms Indraneel, who is also the Second Minister for Finance and for Education.

Winning the most inspiring award, decided by readers of Women's Weekly, was Mrs Rujia Ali Shahul Hameed Mohammed Feroz, a senior nurse manager at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Mrs Feroz, 48, started working in nursing after graduating in 1993. And though she initially knew little about what life would be like as a nurse, she said she stayed all these years because of passion.

"My most memorable experience at Tan Tock Seng Hospital was going out into the community to help in rental flats. I encountered a couple eating stale bread, and that was an eye-opener because I... didn't expect to see that in our own backyard."

Photographer Sim Chi Yin, a nominee in the arts and media category, said she hoped to encourage younger women to achieve their dreams. Ms Sim, 39, a former Straits Times foreign correspondent and the first Asian Nobel Peace Prize photographer, said: "Being nominated makes me reflect and hope that there will be a day in the future when we might not need contests just for 'great women' - just as we don't have the same for 'great men of our time.'"

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