

Trailblazing inventions from NUS honoured



Awak Technologies' chairman Gordon Ku (left) with its president and chief executive Neo Kok Beng.

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The Straits Times

Tuesday, May 21, 2013

SINGAPORE - Two inventions from the National University of Singapore (NUS) that were world firsts have won their creators honours for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Awak Technologies, which developed a wearable artificial kidney, received the Promising NUS Start-up Award while researcher Pete Kellock was named the Outstanding NUS Innovator for helping develop automatic video production software.

Awak president and chief executive Neo Kok Beng received the award, which came with a cheque for \$100,000, at the Innovation and Enterprise Awards ceremony last Thursday.

Dr Kellock was not in Singapore to receive his \$10,000 prize and trophy.

Awak, founded in 2007, developed a battery-operated dialysis device that weighs only 1kg and can perform more efficient dialysis with minimum fluid. It allows patients to move about, remain employed and live life as they used to before having to undergo dialysis.

Mr Neo said in a statement issued by NUS Enterprise that the company wants to help dialysis patients get home-based treatment that can be performed anywhere, any time.

"It will have a tremendous impact on the quality of life," said Mr Neo, who is also an adjunct associate professor at the NUS Business School and Faculty of Engineering.

Dr Kellock led the development of consumer video production software while working with Kent Ridge Digital Labs between 1999 and 2001. The technology allows users to create superior quality videos in minutes or seconds compared with hours or days using traditional manual editing software.

In 2001, Dr Kellock co-founded muvee Technologies - and became its chief executive - to commercialise the technology.

Muvee has earned about \$50 million by licensing its software to multinational companies, including Hewlett-Packard, Nikon and LG.

The software is being used in products now in the hands of hundreds of millions of consumers, said the NUS Enterprise statement.

Dr Kellock stepped down as CEO in 2007 to pursue other interests, including mentoring young entrepreneurs. Co-founder Terence Swee took over as CEO.

The awards presentation was part of InnovFest, an annual innovation conference and exhibition organised by NUS Enterprise. Support also came from the National Research Foundation's University Innovation Fund.

The event also announced the finalists of the Asian leg of InnotrIBE start-up challenge - Z-CRD, Passportfx, Pocketbook, Gieom and Vkey.

They will face off against other finalists from the Americas and Europe in Dubai in mid-September.