



**Ellen Wong Ching Ling**  
**Attained Bachelor of Landscape Architecture**  
**from the University of Melbourne.**

*Looking over the Old City of Jerusalem  
towards the Golden Rock*

**Why I took the National Parks Scholarship:**

The need to do something no one else I know have done, to be thrown out of my comfort zone, to see the world for myself and the desire to be constantly on the edge.

The scholarship offered me a once in a lifetime opportunity to leave Singapore, live overseas and to experience what this world has to offer, at the same time tackling a degree that is completely foreign to me. As Ralph Waldo Emerson says, "Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." The thrill behind not knowing what to expect is surprises at every turn which filled the last 3.5 years of my life.

**What I have learnt in my course of study:**

"You must become a perfectionist, if you are not already one. If you cannot become one, then you are not suitable as a landscape architect." I struggled in my first year to get decent grades, simply because I didn't know what was expected of me. Until the day I was told I had to become a perfectionist. Being a perfectionist didn't just mean doing my best. It means pursuing what is beyond my best and almost pushing that limit.

On the other hand, the beauty of designing lies in its endless possibilities and the space for imagination. Designing is not simply a sum of  $1+1=2$ . There is no right or wrong way to approach a project. The monochrome of a pencil sketch begins to fade away into a spectrum of colours. Inspiration comes not from staring at a blank sketch book but drawn from paintings, a movie, the motion of a leaf falling and the sound of footsteps. It simply requires me to experience my surroundings everyday, to be sensitive and to know the small difference between yesterday and today.

**What I learnt in a nutshell:**

Life has a lot to offer on a silver platter. It is a matter of whether I want to take it or not. It is better to have taken the chance to explore and experience than to be plagued with what ifs for the rest of my life. Humans are resilient. No matter how tough the move, no matter how big the change, it is possible to adapt and adapt we will.

**Advice:**

Do not have a pre-conceived notion of what this scholarship will offer you. Even before you ask what it can offer you, ask first what can you offer this organization and if you can and will make the best of what you are given.