

Top national honour for PSC chairman

Joanna Seow

Public Service Commission (PSC) chairman Eddie Teo has set the ethos for Singapore's public service over the past decade, said a citation for the 70-year-old, who received a top national honour last night.

Mr Teo also championed the drive for greater diversity among scholarship recipients, it said, crediting him for his strategic input in areas ranging from intelligence and security to defence and diplomacy throughout a career in public service that spanned nearly 50 years.

For his "sustained and outstanding contributions", Mr Teo was conferred the Order of Nila Utama (First Class) by President Halimah Yacob yesterday.

The only recipient of the honour this year, he was one of 497 people who received National Day Awards from Madam Halimah at the Institute of Technical Education College Central in Ang Mo Kio.

Mr Teo started his public service career in the Security and Intelligence Division in 1970. He later headed the Internal Security Department, and was permanent secretary for defence and permanent secretary in the Prime Minister's Office. He was also Singapore's high commissioner to Australia from 2006 to 2008 before being appointed to the PSC.

"In all his appointments, Mr Eddie Teo displayed the ability to get to the nub of an issue and to communicate this clearly and succinctly. He demonstrated sharp analytical skills, deep insights into complex issues and a keen sense of people's motivations and charac-

ters," said the award citation.

Only a small group of people have been conferred the Order of Nila Utama.

They include former deputy prime minister Toh Chin Chye, Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh and Mr J. Y. Pillay, chairman of the Council of Presidential Advisers.

Mr Teo told reporters he was grateful for such a high honour, and found special meaning in receiving it from Madam Halimah.

This was because the first national award he received – a President's Scholarship – was from Singapore's first Malay president Yusof Ishak. "And now my last national award is from President Halimah Yacob, the second Malay president. So that's really quite fantastic," he said.

Two people were awarded the Distinguished Service Order yesterday – former ambassador to Japan Chin Siat Yoon and Singapore Management University (SMU) board of trustees' chairman Ho Kwon Ping.

Seven others received the Meritorious Service Medal.

Mr Chin is credited with playing a key role in forging closer ties with Japanese political and business leaders. He was also the longest-serving ambassador to China.

Mr Ho, the founding chairman of SMU since 2000, has grown it from a pure business school to include other disciplines and research opportunities.

The National Day Awards recognise different forms of service to Singapore. More than 4,300 people received awards this year.

joseow@sph.com.sg



Public Service Commission chairman Eddie Teo receiving the Order of Nila Utama (First Class) from President Halimah Yacob at an awards ceremony at ITE College Central yesterday.
ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE