



MEDIA RELEASE

The Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian Awards - The Gift Of Education

Grandchildren of the late Founder of the Hong Leong Group establish the Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian Awards at Singapore Management University

Singapore, 18 December 2019 (Wednesday) – The grandchildren of the late Kwek Hong Png have all come together to make an endowed gift to set up the **Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian Awards** at the Singapore Management University (SMU). Pioneer entrepreneur Mr Kwek Hong Png was the Founder of the Hong Leong Group conglomerate which today has businesses in real estate, hospitality, finance as well as trade and industry around the world. The gift by his grandchildren is to mark the 25th anniversary of the Hong Leong Group Founder’s passing and to commemorate his life’s work and achievements. The timing of the endowed gift is especially fitting as it coincides with the year-end season that is not just about gift giving but a time to recall one’s blessings and give thanks. This year, the grandchildren would like to pay a special tribute to their late grandfather.

“He epitomises the courageous nature and unwavering determination that represents the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit and all the while, he never failed to emphasise the importance of education and giving back to society. By the time of his passing in 1994, he had touched many lives and inspired numerous people in the course of his long and remarkable life. The endowed gift by his grandchildren seeks to commemorate his achievements and perpetuate his legacy,” said Mr Sherman Kwek who is among the grandchildren who spearheaded the gift endowment and saw it to fruition at SMU.

“With these awards, we hope that the young recipients will take inspiration and learn valuable life lessons from all the forefathers of our great nation, and understand what it means to persevere and remain strong in the face of adversity. We hope the monetary rewards will provide a boost to these deserving students as they embark on the next chapter in their life trajectory,” Mr Kwek added.

Born in 1911 to a destitute family in his native Fujian Province in China, Mr Kwek Hong Png grew up under tough conditions on a farm. At the tender age of 16 and armed with only an \$8 ticket, a straw mat and a quilt for warmth but embodying big hopes and dreams, he boarded a cargo vessel in Xiamen and made the arduous journey over to Singapore.

After working at a hardware store and gradually gaining experience over the years, he started Hong Leong in 1941 as a general trading firm dealing in ropes, paints, ship and rubber estate supplies. Over several decades, he eventually grew Hong Leong into one of Singapore’s and Asia’s largest conglomerates and has contributed much to the development of our nation.

The Hong Leong Group Founder never received any formal education. Yet, he understood the importance of education and through his own sacrifices, made it possible for all his children and grandchildren to receive an education. These Valedictorian Awards in his memory represent an extension of the Founder’s wisdom and sense of equal opportunity.

Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian Awards

Commencing in Academic Year 2019-2020 and continuing in perpetuity, \$70,000 (split equally into seven awards consisting of \$10,000 each) will be presented to the top graduating students from each cohort. The first is the Kwek Hong Png University Valedictorian Award which will be presented to the top graduating undergraduate of the University. The other six awards, the Kwek Hong Png School Valedictorian Awards, will be presented to the top graduating undergraduates of each of the six Schools at SMU.

SMU President Professor Lily Kong said, "We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the grandchildren of the late Mr Kwek Hong Png for their generosity in establishing the Valedictorian Awards. The Awards will further encourage our students to scale new heights of excellence to become individuals with an enterprising spirit, equipped with deep knowledge in selected domains and industry capabilities required to thrive in the 21st century, as well as a passion to give back to society. This gift is a strong testament to their confidence in the quality of our graduates and will no doubt create a positive and lasting impact on SMU."

The Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian Awards are the most prestigious and eminent awards that graduating students can aspire to at the University and School level. Award recipients will have to embody the values of the late Mr Kwek Hong Png, namely diligence, tenacity, valour, compassion and humility. They must also have earned the respect of their fellow graduates during their time at SMU and have demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities and extraordinary articulation skills.

In addition to their diligent participation in co-curricular activities, recipients would have to embody a strong entrepreneurial spirit coupled with high levels of creativity and innovation. They would be actively involved in community development programmes and believe in giving back to the society and helping the less fortunate.

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About Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning

Home to over 10,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and post-graduate research programmes, SMU, is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg