

Media Release (Embargoed until 5.30pm on 6 October 2017)

SMU and RHT Rajan Menon Foundation affirm commitment to cultivate pro bono spirit among law students and within the legal fraternity

Singapore, 6 October 2017 (Friday) – In conjunction with the official launch of the Singapore Management University (SMU) Pro Bono Centre's new premises at the SMU School of Law building today, the University announced a gift of S\$300,000 from the RHT Rajan Menon Foundation, which will support the Centre for a period of five years starting from Academic Year 2017-2018.

Both parties are also delighted to announce the appointment of Mr Chan Sek Keong, former Chief Justice and current Senior Judge of the Singapore Supreme Court as the Centre's Advisor. Mr Chan unveiled the new premises today at the launch ceremony today, together with SMU Provost, Professor Lily Kong, and Mr Tan Chong Huat, Chairman of RHT Rajan Menon Foundation.

Since its establishment in 2013, the SMU Pro Bono Centre, headed by SMU Associate Professor Rathna N Koman, has been instrumental in cultivating the pro bono culture at SMU and in sensitising students to social justice issues. By involving students in regular legal clinic work at the Centre which serves indigent members of the community, training students in client interviewing skills and managing legal clinics, and offering internship opportunities, the Centre exposes SMU law students to legal aid work and enables them to integrate academic work with real-life experience. At the regional level, the Centre also collaborates with Asian universities, such as through internships, to raise pro bono consciousness among students.

RHT Rajan Menon Foundation is pleased to support the SMU Pro Bono Centre to advance the pro bono spirit within the legal fraternity. RHT Rajan Menon Foundation, a Singapore registered charity and grant-making philanthropic organisation, is the corporate social responsibility vehicle of RHTLaw Taylor Wessing LLP (ranked 6th largest law firm in Singapore by the Singapore Business Review) and the RHT Group of Companies.

Mr Chan Sek Keong has kindly agreed to act as an advisor to the Centre. In his previous public roles, he had been a strong advocate of pro bono work by lawyers for the less fortunate in our society. He also advocated the establishment of a mandatory pro bono programme for all Singapore law students as a realistic and simple for law students to learn from first-hand experience the legal problems that the poor encounter in their daily lives. As Advisor, Mr Chan will provide counsel and guidance on the SMU Pro Bono Centre's activities and plans.

Mr Tan Chong Huat said, "This collaboration with SMU Pro Bono Centre came about naturally. Both parties shared a common objective of instilling social responsibility in law students and lawyers towards the underprivileged. The Foundation's support towards the SMU Pro Bono Centre embodies the philanthropic community spirit which we endorse. We are excited to work with and engage the students from SMU School of Law, guiding them to use their legal training to help those in need. We have already put in place a very exciting project to serve the elderly which we shall announce shortly.

The Foundation's work with the Centre will enable us to extend the impact of our pro bono initiatives by combining resources from the corporate world with the passion for pro bono that SMU, RHTLaw TaylorWessing and RHT Group of Companies exemplify."

Associate Professor Goh Yihan, Dean, SMU School of Law, said, "As stakeholders of the justice system, and in line with the University's ethos, our School advocates a pro bono culture among students through various pro bono programmes which we have nurtured since our inception in 2007. We are grateful to RHT Rajan Menon Foundation for their generosity and vote of confidence towards our efforts. I am confident that together, our work will go a long way in nurturing law graduates with a strong sense of empathy and service."

“We are also extremely honoured and humbled to be able to benefit from Mr Chan Sek Keong’s wealth of experiences. A highly-respected and eminent figure, he has 50 illustrious years of legal experience under his belt. I have no doubt that, under his guidance, and through the combined efforts of all at our Pro Bono Centre, we will be able to make an even greater impact,” Associate Professor Goh added.

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About RHT Rajan Menon Foundation

A Singapore registered charity and grant-making philanthropic organisation, RHT Rajan Menon Foundation Ltd (“Foundation”) enables RHTLaw Taylor Wessing and the RHT Group of Companies to carry out our philanthropic activities in a structured and more sustainable manner. Named after RHTLaw Taylor Wessing’s Founder-Senior Consultant Rajan Menon, the Foundation was set up in 2015, and was registered as a Singapore charity by the Commissioner of Charities and a grant-making philanthropic organization by the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore on 16 September 2016 and 28 November 2016 respectively. The Foundation seeks to establish, inspire and encourage a philanthropic culture among the corporate and legal fraternity of giving back to the community in a focused, hands-on and meaningful manner. Since its inception, the Foundation has raised more than S\$600,000, including proceeds from this year’s charity golf event.

For more information, please go to www.rhtrajanmenon.foundation

About Singapore Management University

Established in 2000, Singapore Management University (SMU) is recognised for its high-impact multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance, and for its innovations in experiential learning. With 10,000 students, SMU offers bachelors, masters and PhD degree programmes in Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems, Law and Social Sciences, and executive development programmes. Through its city campus, SMU enjoys strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community in Singapore and beyond. www.smu.edu.sg

About SMU School of Law

Singapore Management University (SMU) School of Law proudly welcomed its first cohort of 116 students in August 2007. Taught by a dynamic faculty with postgraduate degrees from renowned universities, the School aims to nurture its students to become excellent lawyers who will contribute significantly to society. Trained with the ability to contextualise legal expertise and to think across disciplines and geographical borders coupled with SMU’s interactive pedagogy, SMU’s law graduates are confident articulate and analytically agile.

The SMU School of Law offers a four-year full-time Bachelor of Laws programme, a five-year double-degree programme which combines law with Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems or Social Sciences, and a Master of Laws programme. The School has also launched a full-time graduate programme, the Juris Doctor Programme which can be completed within three years, and in some cases, accelerated for completion within two years. www.law.smu.edu.sg

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