

# MP's Kate Spade to go on auction

Tin Pei Ling donating it to Aware's charity event; starting bid is \$500

By LIM YI HAN

THAT Kate Spade bag – yes, the very same one that MP Tin Pei Ling posed with while it was still wrapped in a gift box – is now up for grabs.

The yellow handbag, which Ms Tin said she has used only a few times, has been donated to the Association of Women for Action and Research (Aware) to be auctioned in a fund-raising charity event next month.

The starting bid for the bag is \$500; proceeds will go towards funding Aware's support services, which includes counselling and free legal aid for women.

Ms Tin said she was approached by Aware to put the bag up for auction in June. She said that while she was aware that the move may re-energise her critics, it was for a good cause.

"I hope that the attention will be drawn to the social cause that we are trying to push forth here... it's really to reach out and help women who are less advantaged and need our help," said the Marine Parade GRC MP.

The bag – or rather, a photo of Ms Tin happily posing with the gift box it came in – achieved Internet fame when it surfaced on Facebook during the General Election period last year.

It led to her critics throwing accusations of immaturity, materialism – even ignorance. They charged that a woman who appeared to flaunt an expensive fashion accessory could not understand the needs of Singapore's less-privileged class.

Singapore Management University law lecturer Eugene Tan said that although Ms Tin's donation would remind people of the inci-



This picture of Ms Tin posing with a Kate Spade box was circulated online last year. She said the bag is the only Kate Spade one she owns. PHOTO: FACEBOOK

dent last year, she still deserved to be commended. "I see it as her taking on the subject of the controversy head-on and tongue-in-cheek, fully aware that some flak may result."

Describing it as a "counter-intuitive move", he added that the bag has acquired "a certain reputation", and that it was a good gesture on her part to use that for a good cause.

Ms Pat Law, founder of social media marketing firm Goodstuph, said Ms Tin could have opted to auction something else.

"I think the intention is great, it's for charity. But the bag didn't come with positive connotation, it came in a bad light."

Ms Tin said the bag is the only Kate Spade bag she owns.

She added that she was unsure of how much it cost as her husband had bought it for her in a sale three years ago. "There is sentimental value obviously, because it's from my husband, but we thought that this is for a worthy cause and we are happy to be able to contribute," she said.

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