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Headline: Former chief justice Yong Pung How's daughter reveals reason for family's move to Singapore

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His daughter's education was one of the main reasons that former chief justice Yong Pung How migrated to Singapore from Malaysia with his family in the early 1970s.

This was revealed by his only child, Ms Yong Ying-I, in a rare public speech on Thursday (April 8) at a ceremony to mark the renaming of the Singapore Management University (SMU) law school after her father.

Ms Yong, 57, said that when she was due to enter Primary 1, schools in Malaysia were switching to teach in Malay, which her parents did not want for her.

She also shared why her father, then a banker, had accepted the request by founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in 1989 to lead the judiciary.

"My family was appreciative of becoming Singaporean. My father wanted to give back where he could to the country that had accepted us and gave us opportunities to contribute to something bigger than ourselves," she said.

Mr Yong was born in Kuala Lumpur in 1926. After World War II, he read law in Cambridge University. There, he struck up a lifelong friendship with Mr Lee.

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After moving here, he went into merchant banking and helped form Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC. He also led the Monetary Authority of Singapore before returning to OCBC Bank as chairman.

Ms Yong, a Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Communication and Information, said: "We were happy to take up Singaporean citizenship, which came with the GIC role."

She said her father believed in education and talent development.

"It wasn't just my education; he pushed for more undergraduate, post-graduate and in-service masters and diplomas for the legal service."

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Mr Yong was proudest of his Justices' Law Clerks scheme to attract the best and brightest to the legal service, she said. His alumni now includes Supreme Court judges, a deputy attorney-general and a Cabinet minister.

Ms Yong said her father also believed in service to others.

"Wealth is valuable - it gives you creature comforts, options, provides a safety net. But you can't take it with you. Your achievements can give the world new services and give you societal recognition and standing.

"But your legacy, after you have gone, is what you have done for others, how you have done your part to make the world a better place. Whether it's bursaries, research centres, stronger institutions or the next generation of leaders, these are what continue to have an impact after you go."