

SMU law school renamed after ex-CJ

Achievements of the late Yong Pung How still talked about globally today: CJ Menon

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Former chief justice Yong Pung How had such a profound and immense impact on the legal profession that, more than three decades after he set out to transform Singapore's justice system, his achievement is still talked about around the world today.

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon said this yesterday at a ceremony to mark the renaming of the Singapore Management University (SMU) law school after Mr Yong, who was Singapore's second chief justice and SMU's third chancellor.

The new name – Yong Pung

How School of Law – takes effect on Sunday, the day on which Mr Yong would have turned 95.

He was 93 when he died in January last year.

More than 200 guests – including Mr Yong's widow, Mrs Yong Wei Woo, 91, and their daughter, Ms Yong Ying-I, 57 – attended the event, either in person at the SMU Hall or virtually.

In the audience were Education Minister Lawrence Wong, Second Minister for Law Edwin Tong, SMU honorary patron Tony Tan Keng Yam, SMU senior management, as well as faculty, students and alumni of the law school.

CJ Menon said: "Many in this audience lived through the years



Mr Yong Pung How was Singapore's second chief justice and SMU's third chancellor.

when (Chief Justice Yong) led tirelessly from the front and, with incredible determination, fundamentally transformed and modernised the administration of justice in Singapore."

In his speech, he told of how, when he was in Jamaica recently to deliver a keynote speech to judges there, Mr Yong's work "was the subject of much attention".



The Singapore Management University law school's new name – Yong Pung How School of Law – takes effect on Sunday, the day on which the former chief justice would have turned 95. He died in January last year. ST PHOTO: GIN TAY

When Mr Yong took over as Singapore's top judge in 1990, he revamped court processes and implemented measures that cleared a backlog of over 2,000 cases.

CJ Menon also spoke of Mr Yong's "strong nurturing instinct" which led him to take a particular interest in the training and education of young lawyers and students.

Mr Yong started the Justices' Law Clerk scheme to enlist talented young officers into the legal service. "More than two decades later, several of them were among his most regular visitors in hospital during his last illness," said CJ Menon.

Ms Yong said her father was

happy to make gifts to establish the Yong Pung How Chair Professorship, two research centres in law, and the Yong Pung How Bursaries to benefit students with financial needs.

In his speech, Professor Goh Yi-han, current dean of the law school, said: "We want to fashion the Yong Pung How School of Law as an institution that prepares our graduates not only for the practice of law but also the future."

At the ceremony, SMU president Lily Kong presented to Mr Yong's family a specially produced pictorial book highlighting his key achievements.

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