



Media Release

SMU celebrates the graduation of the Class of 2023

Mr J Y Pillay conferred honorary degree; pioneer batch of graduates in three programmes

Singapore, 25 July 2023 (Tuesday) – Singapore Management University (SMU) kicked off five days of graduation celebration for the Class of 2023 today at the Opening Ceremony of SMU Commencement 2023. The ceremony was graced by Guest-of-Honour Justice Judith Prakash, who addressed the graduates.

The event was held on SMU campus today with about 1,000 graduates, award winners, as well as family and friends of the graduates in attendance.

SMU Commencement marks the beginning of a new journey for SMU graduates. The 3,737-strong Class of 2023 comprises 2,292 Bachelor's degree graduates, 1,368 Master's degree and Juris Doctor degree graduates, and 77 Doctorate degree graduates. Among the Bachelor's degree graduates, 73 of them received double degrees. Altogether, they represent SMU's 20th and largest batch of graduates since the University was established in 2000.

The Class of 2023 comprised pioneer batch of graduates from the following programmes:

- Bachelor of Science (Computer Science): 46 graduates
- Doctor of Philosophy in Accounting: 3 graduates
- Doctor of Business Administration (Accounting and Finance): 2 graduates

The [Bachelor of Science \(Computer Science\) programme](#) welcomed its first intake in August 2019. Designed to equip students with an understanding of the interplay between computing knowledge and the development and management of IT solutions for business, the programme also offers specialisations in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and intelligent systems.

Ho Chia Chun Daniel, who graduates with double degrees – Bachelor of Business Management and Bachelor of Social Science – was named the University Valedictorian for being the most exceptional student in the graduating cohort. He received the [Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian Award](#) and [SPH Valedictorian Award](#). For being the second highest ranking graduating student, Yong Kit Lun Jared who graduates with a Bachelor of Social Science received the [SMU Salutatorian Award](#) and the [Kwek Hong Png-SMU School of Social Sciences Valedictorian Award](#). Both stood out with their outstanding leadership skills, significant contributions to co-curricular activities and the community-at-large, good character records and excellent academic results (both achieved Summa Cum Laude).

SMU also conferred upon Mr JY Pillay, the Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa) for his exceptional contributions to public service, business and education.

In delivering the citation for Mr J Y Pillay, SMU Chairman Mr Piyush Gupta noted that Mr Pillay is one of Singapore's most distinguished leaders and that his contributions to Singapore's development are immeasurable. "He has been widely recognised for his contributions to business, and his expertise in finance and investment has been instrumental in shaping Singapore's economy. In addition, Mr Pillay's contributions to education are equally impressive. He has been a passionate advocate for

education throughout his career and made significant contributions to the development of higher education institutions in Singapore. As Chancellor of SMU from 2015 to 2019, he took an active interest in SMU's development, and often engaged trustees, management, faculty, and students. His exemplary career and contributions to public service, business and education serve as an inspiration to us all, and we are most honoured to recognise him in this way," said Mr Gupta.

Justice Judith Prakash spoke to the graduates about the impact of technology on the legal sector. She said, "The key lies in our ability to discern and imagine, adapt and evolve. These are all qualities that AI does not have, and this is where your education at SMU comes to the fore. The university has provided you with curated courses on managing volatility, uncertainty and complexity in the business context so as to prepare you, as much as possible, for black swan events such as the global pandemic and the rise of an uncertain geopolitical environment. It has taught you critical thinking and judgement. It has also enhanced your knowledge of how to work with others to achieve a common goal... As you step out into the working world, carry with you the spirit of adaptability, the courage to embrace change, and the resilience to carve out your own path."

In addressing the graduates, SMU Chairman, Mr Piyush Gupta, said, "I want you to take a moment to reflect on the incredible transformation you have undergone during your time at SMU. You have worked tirelessly, overcoming challenges, and embracing opportunities, all in pursuit of knowledge and personal growth. Today, as you stand on the threshold of a new chapter in your lives, I encourage you to always embrace integrity, excellence and a passion for lifelong learning, and make a positive impact in whichever field you have chosen to build your career."

SMU President, Professor Lily Kong, urged the graduates not to neglect the exploration of their passions and interests beyond work. "Embrace opportunities that push you beyond your comfort zone, for it is through such endeavours that you will experience profound professional and personal growth... Maintain an insatiable curiosity, an open mind, and an unwavering commitment to learning. The world we inhabit is in a perpetual state of flux, and it is imperative that you keep pace with the latest advancements in your respective fields." She also reminded them that their journey of lifelong journey has only just begun and encouraged them to continually upgrade and update their skills and knowledge to remain ahead and relevant in this ever-evolving world.

Ho Kwon Ping CIRCLE Award

Each year at the Commencement ceremony, SMU also recognises students from each School who have embraced the values of Commitment, Integrity, Responsibility, Collegiality, Leadership and Excellence with the CIRCLE Award. In February 2023, the Awards were renamed [Ho Kwon Ping CIRCLE Award](#) (from SMU CIRCLE Award) to honour and recognise the distinguished contributions and visionary leadership of SMU's founding Chairman, Mr Ho Kwon Ping.

Aside from the CIRCLE values, award winners are distinguished by their all-round excellence in Student Life, Student Leadership, Community Service and Academic Studies. They have been actively involved in serving and giving back to SMU and the community at large; and demonstrated leadership abilities, are upright in character, and well-respected by peers, staff, and faculty.

Leave Your Mark 2023 – SMU's Annual Graduating Class Campaign

SMU's graduating class also comes together each year to make their first gift to SMU, in support of their juniors who require financial assistance. More than 400 alumni have supported this in the past four years, raising over S\$150,000 and funding the bursaries of 20 financially challenged undergraduate students. A graduating class tradition since 2016, graduands do not just give back monetarily, but also leave their inspiring words of wisdom and advice permanently engraved on

plaques in SMU seminar rooms for future generations. In support of Leave Your Mark 2023, creative and humorous quotes were collected through a competition organised by two student clubs, Communication Management Society and SMU Literati, which graduands can select for their plaques. Additionally, proceeds from the sale of graduation bears, mugs and SMU Alumni tee-shirts will go towards funding bursaries too. Please refer [here](#) for more information on Leave Your Mark 2023.

Enclosure:

- Annex 1 - Honorary degree recipients – past and present

Media Contact

Huang Peiling
Senior Assistant Director, Corporate Communications
Office of Corporate Communications and Marketing, SMU
plhuang@smu.edu.sg | (+65) 9845-3361

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 12,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU comprises eight schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, Yong Pung How School of Law, School of Social Sciences, College of Integrative Studies and College of Graduate Research Studies. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters', and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with its 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

Annex 1**Honorary Degree Recipients – past and present**

S/N	Student Name	Programme	Classification	Degree Award Date
1	YONG PUNG HOW	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	14 July 2007
2	LEE SENG GEE	Doctor of Humane Letters	Honoris Causa	14 July 2007
3	JOHN SEELY BROWN	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	25 July 2013
4	CHAN SEK KEONG	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	25 July 2013
5	RATAN NAVAL TATA	Doctor of Business	Honoris Causa	17 March 2014
6	SELLAPAN RAMANATHAN @ S R NATHAN	Doctor of Letters	Honoris Causa	15 July 2014
7	KATHERINE ANN SCHIPPER	Doctor of Accountancy	Honoris Causa	15 July 2014
8	JOHN RODNEY NILAND	Doctor of Letters	Honoris Causa	17 August 2018
9	TONY TAN KENG YAM	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	26 July 2022
10	J Y PILLAY	Doctor of Laws	Honoris Causa	25 July 2023