

SMU Commencement for Class of 2024,

Opening Ceremony

SMU Hall, 30 July 2024

Citation for conferring Honorary Doctorate on Mr Ho Kwon Ping

Read by SMU Chairman Mr Piyush Gupta

Singapore Management University wishes to confer upon Mr Ho Kwon Ping the degree of Doctor of Laws (honoris causa), in recognition of his enormous and enduring contributions as its founding Chairman.

SMU, Singapore's first publicly funded autonomous University and the first to be modelled after U.S. Ivy League universities, welcomed its inaugural batch of 306 students with great promise and ambition in 2000. Under Mr Ho's visionary leadership and dedicated stewardship, the University has transformed from a single School of Business into a vibrant and dynamic institution, now home to nearly 14,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students, over 35,000 participants in professional and continuing education programmes, and more than 36,000 alumni across eight distinguished schools. These schools span diverse fields such as accountancy, computing and information systems, economics, law, social sciences, and the recently launched College of Integrative Studies and College of Graduate Research Studies.

Mr Ho's unwavering commitment to broadening the University's scope beyond business management to a more expansive notion of 'management' has been instrumental in establishing SMU's identity. His efforts ensured that SMU is internationally recognised for its world-class research, emphasising rigorous disciplinary research, strengthened further by high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary studies that address globally relevant issues, impacting business, government, and industry.

Having crafted SMU's first vision in 1998, Mr Ho remarked in 2013 that the University had reached a critical inflection point. It was timely for SMU to chart its way forward with a new Vision 2025, which was later launched in 2014. His passion for internationalisation also led to the establishment of the SMU International Advisory Councils from 2017, aimed at strengthening SMU's collaboration and engagement with government, academic, and business communities in the region. Today, seven councils with 70 members collectively have been set up in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Through these councils, SMU has made valuable contributions to

thought leadership and regional impact and benefitted from valuable insights and advice on working in the region. The Board, under Mr Ho's leadership, approved the establishment of SMU's first three overseas centres. In December 2022, SMU opened the first in Jakarta, followed by Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City, which were launched in 2023 and 2024 respectively, after he stepped down as Chairman.

In recognition of his invaluable contributions to the founding and establishment of SMU, Mr Ho was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in 2009. This was followed by one of the nation's highest honours in 2017 – the prestigious Distinguished Service Order (Darjah Utama Bakti Cemerlang) award – in the National Day Awards.

Reflecting on his journey, Mr Ho Kwon Ping once said, "It has been one of the most significant journeys of my life to have been part of the team of visionary people – from faculty to students, management to trustees – who believed that we could make a difference for young Singaporeans. My guiding principle from the very beginning to now is that nothing can hold us back from achieving our greatest dreams, except our own self-limiting fear of failure, innovation, and change. We created a vision of what an SMU education should be, and then day by day, piece by piece, we collectively executed that vision. I retire now with the deepest confidence that what we put in place over the last 25 years will be a solid foundation upon which an even bolder, idealistic vision can become reality."

In recognition of his exceptional achievements and service to this institution and for transforming the educational landscape in Singapore, Singapore Management University is proud to confer upon Mr Ho Kwon Ping the degree of Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*). He stands as an inspiration to us all, and we are truly honoured to recognise him in this way.