

**Remarks by  
Professor Lily Kong, SMU President  
At the SMU School of Law Official Renaming Ceremony  
Held at SMU on 8 April 2021**

Mrs Yong Wei-Woo & Ms Yong Ying-I,  
Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon,  
Ministers Lawrence Wong and Edwin Tong,  
SMU Honorary Patron Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam and Mrs Tan,  
SMU Chairman Mr Ho Kwon Ping,  
Distinguished guests,  
SMU faculty, staff, alumni and students,

A very good evening to all of you.

1. I joined SMU as Provost at the end of Dr Yong's five-year Chancellorship in 2015. Prior to that, he had served as the University's Pro-Chancellor from 2008 to 2010. Before I joined, I already knew of his immense reputation in public life, but it was after I joined that I came to observe and appreciate the deep warmth and respect felt for him by the SMU community.
2. As Pro-Chancellor and Chancellor, he gave his time selflessly, gracing SMU's Patron's Day Celebrations and Commencement Ceremonies through the years, engaging with many across the university – faculty, staff, students and alumni alike. He is fondly remembered by all who came to know him through the years.
3. In 2007, Dr Yong was conferred the Doctor of Laws honoris causa – SMU's honorary degree for special individuals whose insight and achievements contribute significantly to the study and practice of law. He had made significant contributions to the growth of legal education and research at SMU and provided inspiring leadership and invaluable guidance to the University.

4. Dr Yong's commitment as founding Chairman of the School of Law Advisory Board was critical to the School during its infancy, and its reputation in education and research continue to grow today because of the strong foundations he laid during those early years.
5. I believe Dr Yong appreciated – perhaps before most – that the law does not operate in the abstract. The Law School he helped to found is thus one that equips students with legal knowledge and skills, situated within a broader understanding of societal contexts, and in particular, of globalisation with its attendant changing impact on economies and societies, as well as the power and impact of technological disruption.

#### GLOBALISATION

6. With this conviction that Dr Yong propagated, the School of Law is today fully committed to ensuring that its graduates can thrive in a world of enhanced connectivity, and indeed, complexity. A competent lawyer must be acquainted with different laws across jurisdictions and be sensitive to cultural diversity. The School thus insists on global exposure for its students through both its curriculum and co-curriculum, including, for example, the opportunity to take courses on cultural diversity from the SMU Core Curriculum, as well as through student exchange opportunities, overseas Law Study Missions, and international Moot competitions.

#### TECHNOLOGICAL DISRUPTION

7. Dr Yong also believed in harnessing technology, and in his sweeping changes to reform court procedures, he did just that. Drawing from that same spirit, the School of Law has identified law and technology as one of its key focus areas, taking this emphasis into both its research and educational programmes. Its Centre for AI and Data Governance and Centre for Computational Law are conducting cutting-edge research on these topics, and the curriculum has been incorporating the latest in such research.

## RESULTS

8. The Law School that Dr Yong helped to found is now 14 years of age. It is by any measure a young school but its graduates are already highly sought after, and doing well in both the public and private legal sectors.
9. Many go on to make their mark in the profession, in industry and academia. Some have even struck out to establish their own private practices and legal tech start-ups.
10. SMU remains indebted to Dr Yong for his vision, his guidance and his strong encouragement. He was a source of wisdom and his legacy will continue to positively shape the growth of our University and the School of Law. We are humbled and privileged to honour Dr Yong by naming our School of Law after him.
11. Thank you and wishing you all a very good evening ahead.

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