



## Media Release

### **SMU officially renames its law school Yong Pung How School of Law**

*Singapore, 8 April 2021 (Thursday)* – Singapore Management University (SMU) today held a ceremony to officially rename its law school after Singapore’s former Chief Justice Dr Yong Pung How. The new name – **Yong Pung How School of Law (杨邦孝法学院)** – will come into effect from 11 April 2021, which would have been Dr Yong’s 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The ceremony, which was graced by The Honourable the Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon as its Guest-of-Honour, was attended by over 200 guests, in-person and online. They included Dr Yong’s family; esteemed members of the Singapore Judiciary and the Attorney General’s Chambers; Ministers Mr Lawrence Wong and Mr Edwin Tong; SMU Honorary Patron Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam and Mrs Tan; SMU Chancellor Mr Lim Chee Onn; members of the SMU Board of Trustees; SMU senior management; as well as advisory board members, faculty, students and alumni of the SMU School of Law.

In his speech, **Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon** described Chief Justice Yong Pung How’s impact on Singapore’s legal profession to be ‘profound and immense’. He said, “Many in this audience lived through the years when the Chief Justice led tirelessly from the front and, with incredible determination, fundamentally transformed and modernised the administration of justice in Singapore. This was foundational to the system of justice that we are privileged to call ours today, and it is an achievement that is still talked about around the world today, more than three decades after the Chief embarked on it.”

“We in Singapore do not often name places after people... but occasionally, we make an exception – and in the context of our profession, it is difficult to think of a better case for doing so than for Chief Justice Yong. The school must now face the challenge of living up to the memory of the illustrious man after whom it is honoured to be named. I know that Dean Goh and his colleagues will work extremely hard to build on the Chief’s legacy and vision for a Singapore law school of the highest quality,” Chief Justice Menon added.

**Ms Yong Ying-I, daughter of Dr Yong** expressed her appreciation, “On behalf of my mother, I would like to thank Singapore Management University and the Government for honouring my family by renaming the SMU School of Law after my late father, Dr Yong Pung How. We are not only touched by your naming decision but that SMU chose to change the name of the school to time it with what would have been my father’s birthday on 11 April.”

Ms Yong shared a few insights from her father’s career and beliefs, which she hoped would be relevant to SMU’s law school. She spoke of how her father believed in education and talent development and his belief in inter-disciplinary learning, in practical problem solving, and innovating. She said, “My father liked SMU’s approach to education which includes interactive pedagogy, opportunities for

global exposure, opportunities for multi-disciplinary study such as double degrees, emphasis on soft skills, and compulsory internships and community service. The law school benefitted from this.” On Dr Yong’s belief in service to others, she shared, “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.”

**Mr Ho Kwon Ping, SMU Chairman**, who is presently overseas, spoke virtually at the event. He spoke about Dr Yong Pung How’s immense influence and contributions to Singapore through many legal and financial roles and responsibilities before he finally accepted Mr Lee Kuan Yew’s request to become Singapore’s second chief justice ‘out of a sense of duty to the country’<sup>1</sup> in 1989. “On three occasions, Dr Yong was appointed by the Cabinet as acting President of the Republic of Singapore<sup>2</sup>. Dr Yong was conferred the Distinguished Service Order in 1989 and Singapore’s highest Award the Order of Temasek (First Class) in 1999. The citation on the Order of Temasek in 1999 stated that ‘as Chief Justice since 28 September 1990, Justice Yong Pung How has made the Singapore Judiciary world class’. I can think of no better role model for students of our School of Law – and all of Singapore’s youth today – so it is a great privilege for SMU to have its School of Law renamed in his honour,” said Mr Ho.

**Professor Lily Kong, SMU President**, remarked that the University is indebted to Dr Yong Pung How for his vision, guidance and encouragement. She said, “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.”

“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 global connectivity and complexity... 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,” Prof Kong elaborated.

In his speech, **Professor Goh Yihan, SC, Dean of SMU School of Law**, spoke about the direction towards which the School is heading: “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; our role as a law school is to be continuously relevant in legal education for all legal professionals. In the spirit of Dr Yong Pung How’s passion for innovation, we want to produce cutting-edge legal research that is of practical relevance. Through SMU Law Academy and other programmes, we hope that the Yong Pung How School of Law will be partners with the profession in every sense of the word.”

“Dr Yong is one of the giants who personified a commitment to change for the future. The best way we can honour Dr Yong’s name and legacy is focusing on the future and continuing his legacy of effecting change in the hope of a better tomorrow. Yong Pung How School of Law will do this through

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<sup>1</sup> [https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_1199\\_2010-09-06.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1199_2010-09-06.html)

<sup>2</sup> [https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_1199\\_2010-09-06.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1199_2010-09-06.html)

preparing our students for the future, through innovative research, and service that advances the rule of law,” concluded Professor Goh.

At the ceremony, Professor Lily Kong presented to Dr Yong’s family a specially-produced coffee table book titled *‘A Life In Pictures – Chief Justice Yong Pung How’*. The pictorial book features a collection of photographs sourced from the National Archives; records of the Supreme Court, Singapore Academy of Law and SMU; as well as the Yong family’s own collection; and highlights the key milestones of Dr Yong’s lifetime achievements.

Guests attending the event were invited to view an exhibition which paid tribute to Dr Yong’s significant contributions to public service and to Singapore. In the coming months, the exhibition, together with a portrait of Dr Yong Pung How, will be adapted into a permanent exhibit at the School to inspire current and future students of the University to strive towards achieving the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and excellence, which marked Dr Yong’s life-time achievements.

- End -

**Enclosures:**

1. Speech by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon
2. Speech by Ms Yong Ying-I
3. Speech by Mr Ho Kwon Ping, SMU Chairman
4. Speech by Professor Lily Kong, SMU President
5. Speech by Professor Goh Yihan, SC, Dean, SMU School of Law
6. Press release (9 March 2021), titled [‘SMU will rename its law school Yong Pung How School of Law’](#), with Annexes ‘SMU’s association with Dr Yong Pung How’ and ‘About SMU School of Law’.

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**About SMU**

Established in 2000, Singapore Management University (SMU) is recognised for its disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research that address issues of global relevance, impacting business, government and society. Its distinctive education, incorporating innovative experiential learning, aims to nurture global citizens, entrepreneurs and change agents. With more than 11,000 students, SMU offers bachelors, masters and PhD degree programmes in Accountancy, Business, Economics, Computing, Law and Social Sciences, and executive development and continuing education programmes. Through its city campus, SMU focuses on making meaningful impact on Singapore and beyond through its partnerships with industry, policy makers and academic institutions. [www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

## **About SMU School of Law**

[SMU School of Law](#) proudly welcomed its first cohort of 116 students in August 2007. Taught by a dynamic faculty with postgraduate degrees from renowned universities, the School aims to nurture its students to become excellent lawyers who will contribute significantly to society.

Trained with the ability to contextualise legal expertise and to think across disciplines and geographical borders coupled with SMU's interactive pedagogy, SMU's law graduates are confident articulate and analytically agile. Owing to a rigorous moot

ing programme, SMU's law students have also shone on the world moot stage. SMU's international mooters have regularly placed in the Top-3 of the largest and most prestigious competitions in the world – known as the Grand Slam moots. More details [here](#).



*Image credit: SMU*

The School offers a four-year full-time Bachelor of Laws programme, a five-year double-degree programme which combines law with Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems or Social Sciences, a three-year Juris Doctor programme, a Master of Laws programme, as well as continuing legal education. From Academic Year 2020-2021, the School of Law also jointly offers a new [Bachelor of Science \(Computing & Law\)](#) with the SMU School of Computing and Information Systems. This new degree will produce IT and legal professionals who are adept at bridging technology and law.

Research at the School has a strong focus in three main inter-related areas – Law and Technology, Transnational Commercial law in Asia, and Dispute Resolution. The School has established [four legal research centres](#) focusing on A.I. and data governance, computational law, cross-border commercial law, and international dispute resolution.

Many of these research centres are funded through generous external grants. In 2018, the School was awarded a major grant of S\$4.5 million from the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Infocomm Media Development Agency (IMDA) to helm a [five-year Research Programme on the Governance of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) and Data Use](#). The Centre for AI and Data Governance (CAIDG) was set up in the same year to undertake focused efforts on the Programme.

More recently, in March 2020, the School also announced another major grant of S\$15-million from NRF to helm a [five-year Research Programme on Computational Law](#). The Centre for Computational Law (CCLAW) was set up later that year. Besides focusing on computational law research, CCLAW will also conduct research on the application of cutting-edge computational technology to legal, regulatory, compliance and governance problems. In addition to these two centres, the Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy (SIDRA) and the Singapore Global Restructuring Initiative (SGRI) (housed under the CCLA) also receive strong support from the Ministry of Law.

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