A law school, more so than most professional schools at a university, is people.

We have no laboratories; our research does not depend on expensive equipment. In our classes we use our share of information technology, but the primary means of instruction is the interaction between individuals. This includes teacher and student interaction, of course, but as we expand our project-based and clinical education programmes, it also includes student-student and student-client interactions.

The reputation of a law school depends, almost entirely, on the reputation of its people — its faculty and staff, its students, and its alumni — and their impact on the world.

As a result of the efforts of all these people, NUS Law has risen through the ranks of our peer law schools to consolidate our reputation as Asia’s leading law school, ranked by London’s QS Rankings as the 10th best in the world.

Let me share with you just a few examples of some of the achievements this year by our faculty, our students, and our alumni.

**OUTSTANDING FACULTY**

Our faculty continues to grow in number and prestige. In 2012, we launched the new Centre for Asian Legal Studies, which is fast becoming a global centre of excellence for the study of law in Asia. Our aim is nothing less than to move the focus of Asian legal studies as a discipline from Europe and North America to Singapore.

NUS Law faculty, in addition to teaching, produced impactful scholarship — ranging from textbooks that define a field to insightful articles that reshape thinking about an issue. We continued to engage directly with the profession, notably through pro bono work that frequently involves students, but also on issues of law reform where our views are sought by government.

**HIGH-ACHIEVING STUDENTS**

Our students continued to excel both in the classroom and beyond.

Among many academic prize winners, this year’s valedictorian, Amos Toh ’12, topped the first class honours list at NUS Law and then found out the next week that he had also come first in the Traditional LL.M. at NYU, where he completed his NUS LL.B. under our concurrent degree programme with NYU.

**DEAN’S MESSAGE**

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We also had the opportunity to award new prizes and scholarships, notably our first Wee Chong Jin Scholarship in Law. The award is to support law students pursuing their undergraduate studies at NUS Law who embody similar values to the late Mr. Wee. In celebration of their 110th anniversary, Allen & Gledhill also made a generous contribution to support academically outstanding but financially needy students.

Another way in which alumni can contribute is through donating to NUS Law. We are lucky to have the support of government in offering a solid foundation for our law school, but our alumni contribute to the life of NUS Law in many other ways. In November we launched a new NUS Law Alumni Mentor Programme (“LAMP”). This initiative links first and second year students with recent alumni, who can provide insights and guidance to the practice of law. At the same time, the hope is that it provides an opportunity for greater engagement with our alumni.

Another prize established this year includes the David Ernest S. Chelliah Medal and Prize and the Roger Sundaresh Menon ‘86. Another senior appointment was that of Attorney-General Steven Chong ‘82, who also serves on our new Advisory Council, chaired by former Deputy Prime Minister Prof S. Jayakumar ‘63.

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Our alumni continued to make us proud, with many achievements worthy of recognition. Among these, we celebrated with former Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong ‘61 the end of an illustrious career on the bench. He is succeeded by another alumnus, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon ‘86. Another senior appointment was that of Attorney-General Steven Chong ‘82, who also serves on our new Advisory Council, chaired by former Deputy Prime Minister Prof S. Jayakumar ‘63.

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Our students also had great success in moots and other international competitions. Among other achievements, Benjamin Moh ‘12 and Eddy Hirono ‘13 won the International Negotiation Competition (INC) in Budapest, Hungary; second year LL.B. students Trent Ng ’15, Ramandeep Kaur ‘15 and Larisa Cheng ‘15 came in tops at the inaugural International Banking and Investment Law (IBAIL) Moot Court Competition 2012, held at Jaipur, India; while Kelvin Chong ‘15 and Xiao Hongyu ‘14 won the Asian Parliamentary Debating Championships 2012, held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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Congratulations to Emeritus Professor Koh Kheng Lian ’61 who has been awarded the 2012 Elizabeth Haub Prize for Environmental Law. Founded in 1973, the prize is administered by the International Council of Environmental Law (ICEL) and Stockholm University. Laureates in recent years have included Professors Edith Brown-Weiss, Laurence Boisson de Chazournes, and Philippe Sand. The Prize, which includes a diploma and a gold medal, will be awarded at a ceremony in Stockholm next year.

In its explanation of decision, the International Jury stated: “The Prize is awarded in recognition of her important and pioneering contributions to the development and evolution of environmental law in Singapore and in the whole ASEAN region. Her contributions have been particularly significant as regards both capacity building and scholarship in the field of ASEAN environmental law.”

Bryna Yeo ’07 and Louis Ng ’08 were married in a lovely solemnisation and dinner on 22 September, 2012. The wedding was well attended by family, friends and members of the bench and bar. Louis and Bryna are grateful for the love and support of family, friends and colleagues over the years, and look forward to a lifetime together.

Congratulations to Valerie Oh ’03 and Dean Cher ’03 on their cute bundle of joy! Here’s baby Claire celebrating her 1st month with proud parents Valerie and Dean.

The National University of Singapore’s Faculty of Law (NUS Law) leads the way for Asia, as it moves up the rankings to being among the top 10 law schools in the world. In the latest release of “2012 World University Rankings by Subject” by London-based Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), NUS Law is placed at 10th position in Law, shooting up from its previous ranking of 24th in 2011.

“NUS Law is Asia’s Global Law School and aspires to be one of the very best law schools in the world. This latest recognition of our achievements is testimony to the hard work of our faculty and students, but also the successes of our alumni,” says Professor Simon Chesterman, Dean of NUS Law. “I am particularly pleased that this news will create even more opportunities for our graduates to make an impact in their chosen field, in Singapore and around the world.”

Climbing up 14 places from last year to be placed among the world’s top ten law schools of 2012, NUS Law reaffirms its position as Asia’s Global Law School, being the only law school from Asia to join the likes of top universities such as Harvard and Oxford. Students of NUS Law are given rigorous legal training, together with personal and professional skills that allow them to expand beyond their boundaries. This includes an opportunity to spend a semester or more at partner law schools in over 15 countries, or completing the final year with a Masters of Laws degree from New York University or Boston University. Together with the NUS Centre for International Law, it also recently announced the creation of the Singapore International Arbitration Academy, which welcomed its first candidates in November this year.
NUS LAW ESTABLISHES CENTRE FOR ASIAN LEGAL STUDIES

In February this year, the National University of Singapore (NUS) Faculty of Law established a major new centre that will be a leading forum for research on Asian law. The Centre for Asian Legal Studies (CALS) is headed by Professor Andrew Harding.

The decision to launch the Centre is part of a strategy to position NUS Law as Asia's Global Law School. Legal developments in Asia are now of critical importance to Singapore and to the entire world.

“The Centre for Asian Legal Studies establishes NUS Law as a global centre of excellence for the study of law in Asia,” said NUS Law Dean Professor Simon Chesterman. “Andrew Harding is a renowned scholar in the field who has made major contributions in Asian and comparative legal studies, as well as law and development. Together with other NUS Law faculty working in the field and our network of partners, I am confident that he will move the focus of faculty working in the field and our network of partners, I am confident that he will move the focus of legal research, publications, and conferences since 2004. NUS Law has a strong track record in Asia-Pacific Legal Relations, and CALS will play a role in developing legal scholarship in the region. It will build on NUS Law’s capacity-building work in areas such as human rights and law and development.

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THE RECENT OPENING UP OF MYANMAR/BURMA HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH CALS WILL BE DOING

“The recent opening up of Myanmar/Burma highlights the importance of the research CALS will be doing,” said Professor Harding. “NUS Law has an unrivalled cluster of scholars with relevant expertise. Having CALS as a focal point will enable us to understand the role of law in such developments — and perhaps have an influence on the role law plays in shaping the country’s future.”

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THE IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH CALS WILL BE DOING

“The research being conducted by CALS will be of interest to practitioners, regional scholars to spend time in Singapore to research, teach, and participate in conferences.”

The Centre will also attract top students and researchers from around the world. But it is also likely to be of interest to practitioners, government, and the media for its expertise on country-specific and regional trends.

An upcoming event is the NUS-SMU-HKU Symposium 2013, which will discuss the topic titled, “Rights in Asia — Naming, Blaming & Claiming”. The event will take place from 10 to 11 January at NUS Law. To find out more about events by CALS, you are welcome to email us at calss@nus.edu.sg.

ASIAN LAW INSTITUTE CONFERENCE

NUS Law hosted the ninth Annual Conference of the Asian Law Institute (ASLI) from 31 May to 1 June this year, attracting participants from no less than twenty-eight countries ranging from neighbouring Asian countries to as far afield as Italy, Belgium and Brazil.

Launched this year, the Centre for Asian Legal Studies (CALS) will play a role in developing legal scholarship in the region. It will build on NUS Law’s capacity-building work in areas such as human rights and law and development.

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Participants presented research on matters as diverse as asset partitioning in China, tort law in Vietnam, anti-terrorism law in Indonesia, arbitration law in Malaysia and the law of evidence in Singapore. The sessions gave participants an invaluable opportunity to learn something of the experience of their neighbours and generated enthusiastic discussion, an engagement that we are sure will continue as participants go on to cultivate the many warm relationships initiated over the two-day conference.

At the Opening Dinner, NUS marked a new milestone by launching the Center for Asian Legal Studies (CALS). CALS was honored to have had our former Dean, Professor Tan Cheng Han SC ‘87, launch the centre. The Distinguished Lecture this year was delivered by Professor Tommy Koh ’61 (pictured above), Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Professor Koh’s lecture was titled “Law and Justice: An Asian Perspective”. Professor Koh drew from his own experience as a diplomat in his usual insightful and entertaining manner, to the great appreciation of the audience. The lecture was followed by an engaging question and answer session with the Director of ASLI, Professor Andrew Harding.

The conference was closed with a presentation by Professor R Venkata Rao, Vice Chancellor of the National Law School of India, Bangalore. The National Law School will be hosting the conference in 2013, a particular honour as the conference enters its tenth year. As Professor Rao put it to the audience: “Bangalore beckons.” We hope to see you there!
Law students now have an opportunity for greater engagement with the faculty’s alumni. A joint collaboration between the Career Centre@Law and the Law Alumni Office, the NUS Law Alumni Mentor Programme (LAMP) links first and second year law students with recent alumni who are willing to pledge their time to provide mentorship and guidance to student mentees on the practice of law.

Under this programme, student mentees will benefit from the shared experience of the alumni mentors, providing them with information that will better equip them in their professional development.

Officially launched on 8 November 2012, LAMP has 87 registered mentors and 133 mentees to date, a number that is set to increase. At the official launch held at the NUS Law Club, and a mentee in the programme.

“As an undergraduate, your exposure to legal practice is almost zilch — save of course if you do internships over the holidays, but even that is quite different. Having a mentor practitioner to share their personal experiences, to clarify doubts and answer questions, is an invaluable opportunity for students. The mentors, being recent graduates, are easy to talk to because there isn’t any communication barrier that normally accrues from generation gaps. I’m definitely going to tap on this platform to gain an insight into life as a practicing lawyer and be more prepared for what lies ahead of me!” said Kenny Low, president of the NUS Law Club, and a mentee in the programme.

Participants are required to commit to the programme for a period of one year, where they are expected to meet each other in person at least once a semester.

NUS Law Alumni Mentor Programme

SUNIL SUDHEESEAN, FROM RHT TAYLOR WESSING, WHO SIGNED UP AS A MENTOR, SAID: “I WAS VERY PLEASED TO LEARN OF AND PARTICIPATE IN LAMP. LAMP WILL HOPEFULLY GIVE THOSE STUDENTS PARTICIPATING INSIGHT INTO THE REALITIES OF PRACTICE AND WILL SIMILARLY GIVE MENTORS THE OPPORTUNITY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN LAW SCHOOL. AS A MENTOR, I HOPE TO ENRICH MY MENTEES WITH THE VARIED EXPERIENCE I ENJOYED IN LAW SCHOOL AND THE VAGARIES OF PRACTICE I HAVE SEEN AS A YOUNG (WELL MAYBE NOT ANYMORE) LAWYER. FINALLY, I AM HAPPY THAT NUS LAW SCHOOL IS TAKING AN ADDED STEP IN ITS PREPARATION OF ITS STUDENTS FOR PRACTICE. WE ALUMNI ARE PROUD OF WHERE WE COME FROM, BUT THE BATTLES THAT FOLLOW US WILL HAVE MORE TO BE GRATEFUL FOR WITH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMES SUCH AS LAMP.”

For more information on the programme, please visit: http://law.nus.edu.sg/lamp.html

The family of the late Mr. Wee Chong Jin, the Republic of Singapore’s first Chief Justice, has set up an endowed fund for students at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Management University (SMU).

With the gift, NUS will establish up to two Wee Chong Jin Scholarships in Law, while SMU will establish one Wee Chong Jin Scholarship in Law and the Wee Chong Jin Prize for the Most Outstanding Juris Doctor Graduate. “Chong Jin was loved and well-respected by many. My children and I felt that bequeathing scholarships for needy undergraduates in his name was a meaningful way to remember him by. We hope that present and future students in both law schools will be inspired by the qualities of integrity, passion and hard work which marked his lifetime achievements and legal career,” said Mrs Cecilia Wee Chong Jin, wife of the late Mr Wee Chong Jin.

NUS will award up to two Scholarships a year, valued at S$10,000 each. The award is to support law students pursuing their undergraduate studies in NUS Faculty of Law who embody similar values to the late Mr Wee. The candidate should be a law student who is active in community or charity work, and display a spirit of sportsmanship and collegiality.

“The Wee Chong Jin Scholarships in Law will help financially needy students who epitomise the very best qualities in a lawyer: young men and women of outstanding academic ability who are also deeply engaged in their communities,” said Professor Simon Chesterman, Dean of NUS Faculty of Law. “As NUS Law strives to be one of the very best law schools in the world, it is important that we do so without leaving deserving students behind. Through the generosity of the Wee family, these scholarships help us achieve that aim — while also celebrating the memory of an outstanding jurist and a role model for the next generation of lawyers and judges.”

The inaugural Wee Chong Jin scholar, fourth-year NUS law student Seng Han Ting, and second-year SMU law student Eugene Neo Zhi Wei, were announced at the Wee Chong Jin Scholarship Appreciation Event held on 26 September 2012, at the Supreme Court.

The appreciation event was graced by Guest-of-Honour, then Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong. Also present at the event was Puan Noor Aishah, wife of former President of the Republic of Singapore Yusof Ishak.

In 1961, Mr Chan was in the pioneer batch of law graduates from the then University of Malaya, the forerunner of the National University of Singapore. In public service, he was appointed Singapore's first judicial commissioner in 1986. In 1992, he was also the first local graduate to become the Attorney-General. In public service, he was appointed Singapore's first judicial commissioner in 1986. In 1992, he was also the first local graduate to become the Attorney-General. He had already been admitted into the arts faculty of the University of Malaya in Singapore — for the term of Sept 1957 — when Dr Lionel Astor Thio Su Mien and former law society president T P B Menon, former police commissioner Goh Yong Hong was also their classmate. Thio Su Mien and former law dean of the National University of Singapore.

The pioneer batch of local law graduates is widely-acknowledged as the most illustrious class ever. Mr Chan’s class roster reads like a list of “Who’s Who”. He said, “My English Literature teacher, Dr A Etherton, pulled me aside one day and told me that I should study law instead of some arts subject, like History or Economics, as I had a ‘crafty’ (in the good sense of the word) mind. I put the suggestion to my father, but he left it to me to decide. Since in those days, I thought that the teacher knew best about his students’ intellectual ability, I acted as advised.” He came to law school armed with a sharp memory, which he is legendary for.

DATE WITH DEATH
By his own admission, Mr Chan “became a law student by accident”.

He had already been admitted into the arts faculty of the University of Malaya in Singapore — for the term of Sept 1957 — when Dr Lionel Astor Sheridan, the first Professor of Law and Head of the Law Department, travelled to his school in Ipoh. The professor was recruiting students for the new law course. He said, “My English Literature teacher, Dr A Etherton, pulled me aside one day and told me that I should study law instead of some arts subject, like History or Economics, as I had a ‘crafty’ (in the good sense of the word) mind. I put the suggestion to my father, but he left it to me to decide. Since in those days, I thought that the teacher knew best about his students’ intellectual ability, I acted as advised.” He came to law school armed with a sharp memory, which he is legendary for.

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Professor Tommy Koh went on to become Singapore’s ambassador to the United States and the United Nations. There is former law dean of the National University of Singapore. Thio Su Mien and former law society president T P B Menon, former police commissioner Goh Yong Hong was also their classmate. In the book ‘The Law In His Hands: A Tribute to Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong’, he said, “I can’t recall that life in law school then was either difficult or was exciting. But social life in the campus was certainly exciting.”

He met his wife there.

“After staying (I wouldn’t want to use the word ‘living’) one week at the Dunearn Road hostel, a classmate recommended that I move to Kingsmead Hall where he was living. I was glad I did as Kingsmead Hall was an infinitely more peaceful and civilised place for somewhat disoriented students from up country. Incidentally, it was also during my stay in Kingsmead Hall that I met the girl (Ms Elisabeth Eber) that I was destined to marry a few years later,” he said.

CALLED TO THE BAR
An aim of many fledging lawyers is to have their court cases appear in the law reports and/or noted in the law journals. After he graduated, Mr Chan achieved just that — but as his own petitioner in applying for admission to the Malayan Bar.

The Bar Council objected to his application to abridge the period of pupillage he had to serve under the delayed legislation recognising the LL.B. (Hons) degree. He had in fact completed his six months’ pupillage. Mr Chan had already performed his pupillage with Bannon & Bailey in Kuala Lumpur. The sticking point was that the law recognising the law degree had been delayed.

He petitioned to be called once the legislation was passed. Girded for battle, the Bar Council of the Federation of Malaya, represented by its Chairman, then the leading advocate in the country, opposed the petition on the ground that the Advocates and Solicitors Ordinance required that the applicant to show that he had sufficient “reasons” to justify an abridgement of time. He argued that Mr Chan could muster up just one reason, ie: delay in the passing of the legislation.

The Bar Council’s objection was rejected by Justice H T Ong, a formidable judge who later became Chief Justice of the States of Malaya.

The experience would set the tone for Mr Chan’s career in the judiciary. He has been said to be a fair judge who keeps a close eye on fairness and justice as he navigates a field of legal technicalities.

Before he entered public service, Mr Chan practised with Braddell Brothers and then Shook Lin & Bok.

Over 25 years in private practice, he became Singapore’s leading corporate lawyer — the go-to guy for many banks, accountants and businesses.

So it was perhaps inevitable that he was called upon to lend his expertise in the aftermath of what may remain the largest corporate collapse in Singapore history.

Marine salvage company Pan-Electric sank into receivership after it failed to repay hundreds of millions in loans, dragging down with it scores of other businesses and bankrupting stockbroking firms that had been caught up in financing deals called forward contracts. This caused an unprecedented three-day closure of the Singapore and Kuala Lumpur stock exchanges.

But for Mr Chan, the closure in 1985 would have lasted beyond three days.

He said: “The Stock Exchange, which had closed for three days, had to open the next day, as otherwise it might have been a setback for Singapore’s goal to be a financial centre.”

On receiving instructions from certain officers of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, he set about drafting a lifeboat agreement (which he first dictated to a secretary) within a couple of hours, so that it could be signed by all the stockbrokers and funding banks by the wee hours of the morning.
The exchange re-opened for business on the fourth day.

Over the next few days, he helped the stockbroking firms to execute debentures — in the form of floating charges — as security for bank loans. As required under the law, he went on to register the details of the charges before billing the Stock Exchange for the work.

But to his “utter surprise, they refused to pay on the ground that I had overcharged them. So, I wrote them a polite letter and informed them that I would send a full bill for work done and could have it taxed, as the bill would be much higher than the one I had sent.”

After a few days, the Stock Exchange paid the bill, presumably after receiving advice from another firm of lawyers.

Mr Chan counts the episode as his most memorable experience as a lawyer.

“TIME AT THE BENCH

Mr Chan’s achievements as an attorney-general and judge are a matter of public record. Recently, Law Minister K. Shanmugam described him as one of Singapore’s greatest jurists. Still, it bears reminder that by the record. Recently, Law Minister K. Shanmugam general and judge are a matter of public Mr Chan’s achievements as an attorney—memorable experience as a lawyer.

“THEY ALWAYS HAVE YOUR INTEREST AT HEART AND WANT THE BEST FOR YOU.”

the law but of your own feeling about the consequences of your decision.

“Sentencing was particularly challenging and difficult.”

His experience has led him to conclude that judges are probably born and not made.

“I think the qualities of a judge are more innate than acquired. Some people have a judicial temperament. Some don’t. Some lawyers can tolerate a lot of tedium: some may not be able to adjust to an isolated existence,” he said.

EXPANDING LEGAL SCENE

Mr Chan leaves the legal limelight at a time when the industry is expanding, with more foreign law firms and law graduates entering the fray.

In his self-effacing manner, Mr Chan said he might not be able to do well if he had been a law student today.

He said: “Legal practice today is much more competitive and therefore more challenging and difficult.”

He has some advice for future lawyers:

“Listen to your teachers. They always have your interest at heart and want the best for you. Your success is their pride.”

He also urged practitioners to remember that law serves a social purpose — to hold society together.

He said: “The law is still a noble profession when it is used to fulfill its social purpose. Lawyers should use and apply the law wisely for their clients as a body of ethical and moral principles.”

THE ROAD AHEAD

Mr Chan said that he would stay in contact with legal practice “if my services are needed, and I can meet the need.”

Meanwhile, he will spend time reading “all the books I have collected but not read.”

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**A HISTORY-MAKING CLASS**

You were part of the Class of 1982. This is a class that Professor Robert C. Beckman remembers very fondly. (Editor: see Professor Beckman’s interview in the May 2012 issue of Lawlink.) This class has produced Judges of Appeal, Attorneys-General, Senior Counsel, Deans, professors and managing partners. What was it like to be part of that class? First, it was a very small class — no more than 80 of us. Because it was a small cohort, we knew each other quite well. So, if you ask me did we think we were special (laughing), I can say yes! (Laughs harder)

I think if you had asked me, when we were in Law School, that in thirty years’ time two of my classmates would be in the Court of Appeal, that I would be the Attorney-General, that Davinder (Singh SC ’82) would be the Managing Partner of Drew & Napier, I probably wouldn’t have thought that would happen!

But did I think that we would produce some great lawyers? I would say, “yes”. I think it was a very special class.

Several of my classmates became my colleagues. Davinder was my partner for 15 years at Drew & Napier. Jimmy (Yim ‘82) was my partner for close to 10 years. Leena Pinsler ‘82 was my partner for 15 years in the Jessups, definitely! Fantastic experience. Our win was a fluke!

We were fortunate: one of our former Law School lecturers, Ralph Tyler III (who taught us evidence) had returned to practice in Washington DC — we slept in his living room in the advanced stages of the competition because we couldn’t afford a hotel. That was because in those days, funding was limited to only two students. After our win, we wrote a paper to convince the faculty to send four members to have a better chance to do well in the competition. It was accepted. Subsequent teams benefited from our recommendation.

I was very fortunate to have worked with a number of my classmates.

In my new office as the AG, I work with government agencies like the Singapore Land Authority — Chief Executive Vincent Hoong ’82 was my classmate. Head of Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority, Juthika Ramanathan ’82, was also my classmate.

**HIS SHORT-LIVED FOOTBALL CAREER**

What do you remember best of your Law School days?

**Nothing to do with law. Football!**

Because our class was very small, we didn’t have that many sportsmen. Our soccer team was our squash team, tennis team and our captain’s ballteam. In short, our all-purpose sports team.

When we were in final year, we got to the finals of the inter-year soccer competition. In the finals we played the first year team and, if my memory serves me right, more than half that team represented the faculty and a number of them played for the university.

“I volunteered” to play goalie, even though I was more comfortable playing as a left-winger. (Laughs)

The whole game was in our half, because they were attacking us throughout the match. We had one shot where the ball crossed the other half, and Peter Ng ’82 scored the only goal of the match.

Through that miracle, we became unexpected and some would say underserving champions of the inter-year soccer. (Laughs) That was quite a coup.

**ALL-STAR JESSUP TEAM**

I suppose the most significant event, which defined my time in NUS, was my participation in the Jessup Moots. It was an incredible experience. Other Jessup mooters from my class eventually became my partners — Davinder, Jimmy and V K. I am the only member of the team who can say, “I was a partner with all three of them” (not at the same time).

So between football and the Jessups, if you had to choose…

The Jessups, definitely! Fantastic experience. Our win in football was a fluke!

We were fortunate: one of our former Law School lecturers, Ralph Tyler III (who taught us evidence) had returned to practice in Washington DC — we slept in his living room in the advanced stages of the competition because we couldn’t afford a hotel. That was because in those days, funding was limited to only two students. After our win, we wrote a paper to convince the faculty to send four members to have a better chance to do well in the competition. It was accepted. Subsequent teams benefited from our recommendation.

We were there to have a good time! We were watching movies, enjoying ourselves… we hardly spent anytime-sparring with each other. By then, we were either ready or not.

We didn’t have a coach with us at the competition unlike many of the other teams. While preparing in Beckman’s house overnight to finalise the submissions. Our Respondent’s memorial won the Richard Baxter prize for the best overall memorial. In the printing, we actually missed out part of a sentence. So when we reviewed it, we realised that the sentence ended abruptly… But we still won! (Laugh!) Best memorial of the entire competition! (Laughs harder)

**YOU KNOW YOU HAVE NO SAFETY NET WHEN YOU GO TO COURT, YOU TEND TO BE MORE PREPARED.”**

**MAINTAINING THE PASSION**

What advice do you have with regard to keeping yourself sufficiently motivated when you work?

Many lawyers from my generation will leave at some point. At every stage of your career there are challenges, but there are milestones for you to cross which would spur you to carry on.

It’s very important to maintain the passion because it is a stressful and demanding calling. As a profession, people expect high standards from you. They pay top dollar for you. And it’s not easy to always maintain the interest level if you don’t maintain your passion in the profession.

One thing I did, in my early years — I was very keen in shipping/admiralty practice — it was important to translate the enthusiasm in the practice to interest in the industry. I made it a point to keep myself updated on the commercial developments in the maritime world — the freight market, bunker prices, changes in the top management of leading shipping and insurance companies etc. In this way, I could speak the language of the industry. I regularly delivered papers at Conferences. This helps you to gain recognition amongst your peers and the industry leaders. The recognition will in turn motivate you to carry on, because you know that you are making a significant contribution to your practice.

I was glad when they did it, because I was there to guide them, to encourage them. That was my part in encouraging the young to participate in the trial process.

As a young lawyer, you take a lot more ownership and pride in your work if you are first chair, you know you have no safety net when you go to court, you tend to be more prepared. When you win a case, when you achieve a certain result, the satisfaction is infinitely higher than if you are second or third chair. You will also learn when the outcome is unfavourable by examining where you went wrong. I think the lack of opportunity to do independent work has contributed to the high attrition rate among the younger set.
PRISCILLA SHUNMUGAM ’06: DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

Known for its line of contemporary fashion infused with Asian influence for the stylish women of today, local fashion label Ong-Shunmugam was among the outstanding local names chosen to debut their latest selection at this year’s Paris Fashion Week. LawLink catches up with its founder, Priscilla Shunmugam ’06, who shares with us her experience, and a glimpse into the glamorous event.

How did you feel to be among those featured at the Paris Fashion Week?
Every designer dreams of having a show at Paris Fashion Week, you know? But making it there in less than two years is something else altogether. It was an incredibly humbling experience, yet at the same time it made me realise how much potential the label has, quite simply because we have a point of view that matters and matters well.

What inspires your selection of designs to showcase at the Fashion Week?
We showed our Spring/Summer 2013 collection which is essentially a ready-to-wear line of cheongsams in contemporary silhouettes and interpretations based on a field study of old architecture across Asia. It is sometimes as literal as referencing tiles, minarets, arches and turning these into design elements, and other times the references are more cognitive.

What are your upcoming business development plans?
The business has grown alarmingly fast and has left me playing catch up most of the time. In the next year or so we hope to become better and more efficient what we do and of course, to expand our presence to key fashion capitals across the world, if not Asia. The options are plenty — the trick lies is knowing how to say no.

How has your experience at NUS Law helped you?
I’m incredibly proud of my time at Law School and I always tell journalists that. While I struggled to find my footing in the beginning, I graduated with a kind of clarity and discipline that I doubt I could have honed elsewhere. The most important thing Law School taught me was to have the audacity to think about what I should do with the rest of my adult life.

"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING LAW SCHOOL TAUGHT ME WAS TO HAVE THE AUDACITY TO THINK ABOUT WHAT I SHOULD DO WITH THE REST OF MY ADULT LIFE."
Celebrating almost two decades of a career in law, Nicholas Aw, a lawyer with Clifford Law, divides his time between his career and serving as President of the Disabled People’s Association. He also recently became a father, and still finds time for sports and games with friends.

HIS portrait of an all-around lifestyle reflects his belief and ideals that has followed him since childhood - to live life to the fullest and to help those in need. Motivated by passion and determination, Nicholas shares with us how he overcame his challenges and his hopes for the future.

**Childhood Dream**

From the tender age of six, Nicholas knew that he wanted to be a lawyer, to serve justice and to be the voice for those who needed help. Growing up, he was well-known for his chatty manner and his grandmother would often comment on his sharp tongue.

His aspiration to serve as a lawyer was further fuelled by literature and media, such as the TV series “Paper Chase”, and drawing his inspiration from Harper Lee’s novel, “To Kill A Mocking Bird”.

“This may be a bit self-serving, but I really wanted to help when I was young. I grew up in quite a happy, middle-class family. But seeing that there were a lot of poor people around, I thought that by being a lawyer I could be of help to them,” he shared.

**Bumpy Road Ahead**

Driven by a passion to achieve his dreams and ideals, Nicholas never gave up on his pursuit, despite having an opportunity for a spot in NUSS Law’s LLB intake. He went on to do an external LLB course, and while there, he was offered a place to study law at Warwick University in 1987, after obtaining the grades needed for the enrolment.

**Financial Hurdle**

Studying overseas also meant an increase in financial needs, and the family pooled their resources together to fund the education. While there, Nicholas also worked part-time as a bartender, to supplement his allowance. “Finance was a big issue. I didn’t have a scholarship, and I had to really get help from relatives, and depend on my own ability to make money,” he quipped.

“I was an average student, and you didn’t get to apply for a scholarship (unless you had good grades). Which is why I always believe that if you want something, persevere and you will get it. I mean, I didn’t have the grades, nor did I have the money, but I really wanted to be a lawyer.”

**Tourette Syndrome**

Nicholas’ outgoing and cheerful personality makes it hard to believe that there was a time when he would shy away from the public. Until he was halfway through university, Nicholas was unaware that his condition had a name: Tourette Syndrome. Symptoms of the condition are characterised by involuntary movements or vocalisation, commonly referred to as tics. The condition made it extremely challenging to focus on anything at a time, and would often lead to bouts of self-pity as he would get upset with himself for not being able to concentrate on his readings. The symptoms were apparent since he was 12, and for a period of time, he would avoid going out for fear of being laughed at or stared at. Nevertheless, Nicholas persevered and with the love and support of family and friends, he continued to reach for his dreams.

He said, “When I first started my legal career, I didn’t know how the court would react, and I was very fearful based on past experiences with people.”

“I was confident but a bit apprehensive, and was taught to let the judge know of my condition before I start to present. They always tell me to take my time and not to worry. And surprisingly, no one laughed at me in court, things just proceeded. And that was comforting knowing that at the start of my career, he adds.”

To prepare himself, Nicholas would also pray and meditate to maintain a calm composure.

**NUSS Days**

Nicholas completed his LLB in Commercial Law with NUSS Law in 1997, and used it as a platform for his further works. “I really enjoyed it because it opened my eyes to a lot of business dealings. I also met interesting teachers there, like Prof George Wei. And I wonder if my career would have taken a different course if I had met them earlier, as I got into IP Law only after I met Prof George Wei,” he said.

Nicholas shared that Prof Wei was an eloquent speaker who taught him to keep things simple, and not use big words. The idea was to avoid confusing the client and at the same time to convince the court with the case. “He made me learn the art of persuasion, where it’s not just about the law, but about using the tools that you have to persuade. The way to do it is to persuade the court to see it with clarity, and based on facts. It’s the art of persuasion against confusion.”

**It’s the Art of Persuasion Against Confusion.**

After graduation, he continued to teach at the faculty on a part time basis for about five years before returning to practice.

Staying true to his childhood ideals of upholding justice, Nicholas started working on cases under the Legal Assistance Scheme for Capital Offences (LASCOS), and prior to that, he did his internship at Criminal Legal Aid Scheme, Law Society.

**Advocate for the Disabled**

Nicholas’ experience in practice has served him well in being an advocate for the group. In his capacity as President of the Disabled People’s Association, Nicholas acts as the spokesperson, voicing out and advocating the rights of the cross disabilities group in Singapore, such as those who are hearing impaired, wheelchair users and those with other conditions.

One of the items on the association’s agenda is public education. This would include making facilities meant for the disabled available for use (e.g. toilets, parking lots, etc), accessible transport and using the correct terms to address people with disabilities. He gives an example on how the term “wheelchair bound” is incorrect, as the user can still get out of a wheelchair, and so is not bound to it.

People also tend to abuse facilities meant for the disabled, such as parking lots, or even lifts at MRT stations, while people with disabilities wait for their turn to utilise facilities.” he said. “Though we believe that they (people with disabilities) should be treated equally, there are certain facilities that are meant for them, and so others should avoid using it.”

**Pro Bono:**

Part of DNA

Pro bono work should be part of a lawyer’s DNA. That is the advice given by Nicholas with regard to the importance of pro bono. This is also in light of suggestions of contributing money in place of carrying out pro bono work.

The purpose of being a lawyer is ideally to fight for justice. The idea is to give back and help. To be a good lawyer, it is essential that you do pro bono, whether helping a client in court, or advising companies on their corporate issues. It’s about time and passion. Anybody can give money, but how will it help someone to get justice?” he asked.

He continues to share that the new pro bono work is not just about legal work, but also providing assistance for those who are unable to afford professional services. He hopes that someday pro bono work will be so ingrained into the legal profession that there will be no need to label it as “pro bono”.

**Motivated by passion and determination, Nicholas Aw (LLM ’97), shares with LawMail his story on overcoming challenges and upholding ideals to help those in need.**

By Dlii Kottina
Managing a business that turns scrap metals into fashionable jewelry, Law graduate Pamela Yeo together with Ng Sook Zhen ’11 and Adeline Heng from SMU, has walked the road less travelled to promote peace and sustainable development in countries affected by conflicts.

Saught, a social business co-founded by the trio, creates jewellery from landmines and unexploded ordnance to support sustainability in post-conflict countries. The products are then up for purchase through an online store (http://saught.com.sg/) set up earlier this year, where the proceeds are reinvested into the company to further sustainability efforts.

The company’s vision is “to create a work integration model implemented across post-conflict countries. We want to create an international community of advocates through our collaborative model, championing for peace building efforts.”

While many law students look forward to starting their legal career after graduation, Pamela and her friends took a leap of faith in pursuing her calling.

Humble Beginnings

In 2011, they obtained the NUS Enterprise’s Innovation & Entrepreneurship Practicum Grant, established Saught and entered into partnership with the Cambodian Mine. The business seeks to provide a solution that is a result from international and civil conflict. According to the company, post conflict countries often find themselves in an active pursuit of peace. With landmines and unexploded ordnance continuing to plague the country, it becomes unsafe for locals to carry on their daily lives for fear of these explosive remnants of war. The destruction of infrastructure also leads to situations of poverty due to a lack of employment opportunities.

It was a challenge starting a business while juggling final year studies, completing Part B and training contracts. However, the thought of giving up never did come up, as the company focused on three main groups that stand to benefit from their social business model:

- The de-mining/munitions-cutting organisations in Cambodia — The jewellery pieces serve as a platform for advocacy for problems of indiscriminate weaponry used during war, and its repercussions
- NGO artisanal workshops — They support and help grow their social impact to fight poverty and build capacity
- Designers and design students — An opportunity to do good with their talents, and to have their work and inspiration showcased internationally

Backed By Legal Education

Recently nominated as a finalist of the “Yahoo! Singapore 9”, a campaign which honours young Singaporeans under the age of 35, Pamela attributes part of her success in pursuing her cause to her legal education background. She hopes that her legal background has honed her advocacy skills and abilities to translate that to the social business and the social causes that they campaigned for.

“In fact, Sook Zhen and I had much support from Prof Stephen Phua in the Business and Finance for Lawyers class in 2011! We were just getting Saught off the ground then, and used our work for the Live Business project under his module. He provided much guidance and insight for us as we started out,” she shared.

On her best memories of NUS Law, Pamela recalls fondly, “definitely around the beautiful campus grounds — the meaningful and insightful conversations enjoyed with friends, an environment where there is a genuine thirst for knowledge, and teachers so generous with their time and sharing their wisdom. I loved classes by Prof Thio Li Ann — her Human Rights, and Public International Law classes always sparked off great debates; and mediation classes by Prof Joel Lee, which were conducted in such an interactive manner.”

She hopes to see Saught grow and expand their impact to other post-conflict countries such as Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and Laos. All of us at NUS Law wish her the very best in her pursuit!
They say some things never change. The reunion of 77 law graduates from the years of 1974 to 1977 together with about 10 lecturers of that era was testament to that. After almost 38 years, and although some may have gone broad or bald, their characteristic attributes remained unchanged.

First there was Chandra Mohan ’76; the organised one. His reliable lecture notes helped many in his cohort of 1976 sail through law school. True to form, he headed the organising committee for the reunion with diligence and responsibility, ensuring that everything moved like clockwork and delivered on time.

Of course, he was ably supported by the organising committee comprising Mohandas Naidu ’74, John Abraham ’74, S Radakrishnan ’75, Aziz Tayabali ’75, Denis Tan ’75, Carla Barker ’75, Bernard Doray ’76, Bobby Chia ’76, Peter Low ’77, Sujatha Bhargavan ’77, Sarjit Singh ’77, Belinda Ang ’77, and NUS Law Faculty colleagues, Trina Gan ’04, Goh Mia Yang ’92, Zafira Yusoff, and NUS Development Office colleagues, Emilie Jouon and Gregory Lee.

Then there was Radakrishnan, a student unionist and USSU President who graduated in 1975. As always he had everyone cracking up with his recollections of the student union uprisings, cutting classes and yet finishing law school. (Were they much smarter then?)

John Abraham (formerly and fondly known as Mahinder) and once a great varsity and national athlete, graduated in 1974 but recalled how he almost ‘graduated’ after his first year in law school, if not for the kind intervention of the then Vice Dean Mrs Tan Sook Yee.

Then there was Kim Seah Teck Kim ’77; the serious one. From top student to Assoc Prof, and finally making it as law practioner. Deborah Barker and Edmond Pereira ’76 as MCs kept the tone of the evening reminiscent with their oratorical skills and never at a loss for words.

Everyone remembered them as our university debaters who made us proud and especially Edmond for his disc jockey skills by night at a local club to pay his way through law school. His raspy voice remained unmistakable notwithstanding long years at the Bar!

The Dean of NUS Law, Prof Simon Chesterman opened the evening with a warm welcome message. Prof Tommy Koh ’61, Dean to most of us in our undergraduate days, demonstrated his customary selflessness in delivering a message that touched the hearts of all. He highlighted the widening gap between the have and have-nots and urged the well heeled among us who have benefitted from a university education to give back to society.

Mrs Tan Sook Yee took the honours for the evening though. She appeared at the reunion brimming with unmatched eloquence reminding all the “boys” of their major crush as students. Undoubtedly, it was an evening where most of us relived wonderful memories, cutting classes and yet finishing law school. The photo montage put together by Bobby Chia and the accompanying mischievous jingles of yesteryear by the “Elderly Brothers” (recorded by the Class of ’72) was a hit.

While the reunion catered food and beer from the timeless NUSS Guild House, it also reminded us of our poorer undergraduate days when students hung out at the old Guild House at Evans Road to sniff out the best looking girls from Eusoff College, and concurrently attempt to scrounge a free beer from seniors who had made it on graduation.

And so the night ended remembering those who had passed on, thanking the organisers and those who had come from as far away as Europe and Australia and of course the many Malaysian friends who made up almost half the cohort of the ’70s.

At the end, as we move on to our autumn years it is all about our collective experiences and memories.

“AT THE END, AS WE MOVE ON TO OUR AUTUMN YEARS IT IS ALL ABOUT OUR COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES AND MEMORIES.”

May we always stay connected to our alma mater and give back to the law faculty, NUS and society with compassion and kindness. To all our friends who were there (and those who could not make it this time), hoping to meet again, sooner rather than later. Thanks for the memories!
Class Reunions

CLASS OF ‘92
REUNION:
THE EVENT WORTH WAITING FOR

By Judy Chang ‘92

Twenty years have flown by in a blink of an eye. The Class of ‘92 held our 20th year reunion on 2 November. This was preceded by many mass emails, Facebook posts, last-minute persuasions (read badgering) on the phone, voice-mails, instant messaging trying to round up everyone.

Almost 90 classmates, a number that is close to half of the class attended the reunion, and it was the biggest turnout of the three reunions we organised so far.

The Dean, Prof Simon Chesterman gave the opening speech, followed by our AV man, Andrew Chan speaking in remembrance of Winston Wong, our classmate who had suddenly passed away earlier this year and leading the group in a minute of silence in Winston’s memory. Gregory Vijayendran closed the serious part of the night with an exhortation of the pro bono grant the class is creating and shaping, and encouraged everyone to contribute.

The fun part was trying to recognise one another! Many have gone greyer, some have completely lost their hair, while a few lucky ones looked practically unchanged over the years, whether attributable to good genes or external help.

The best part about this reunion was not only that we had a chance to meet up, but that it served as a catalyst for many of us to renew old friendships that were developed during the best years of our lives and to arrange further catch-ups. For those who had missed this, the fun continues on our Facebook group page so check us out — “NUS Law Faculty — Class of 1992”!
ALUMNI DAY 2012 AT BUKIT TIMAH CAMPUS

NUS alumni flocked back to the Bukit Timah Campus for Alumni Day 2012.

Trina Gan ’04 reports

The 8th of July, 2012 saw a record number of 900 NUS alumni coming back to the Bukit Timah campus for Alumni Day @ Bukit Timah Campus.

Organised by the NUS Office of Alumni Relations, the annual event is always popular with our alumni, particularly those who spent their undergraduate years on the campus. Especially well-represented at this year’s Alumni Day was Law School's pioneer class, represented by then Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong ’61 (accompanied by his wife Elisabeth Chan ’64), S Rajendran ’61, Sachi Saugen ’61, and T P B Menon ’61.

Alumni were treated to a night of laughter and memories, with a programme that included performances by alumni, as well as a photo exhibition consisting of pictures contributed by alumni themselves.

Sounds like fun? It certainly was! Make sure to join us for Alumni Day next year!

NUS INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS LAW LL.M
ALUMNI RECEPTION

By Alexander Grafe, LL.M ’10

The fourth annual National University of Singapore (NUS) International Business Law (IBL) Masters of Law (LL.M.) programme alumni reception took place on 20th October, 2012. This year, the gathering was hosted on the top floor of the Four Seasons Hotel in Shanghai, China.

The reception became a forum for over 170 participants including both current and former students, prominent members of the local and international community, recruitment directors and head-hunters, and industry friends.

Guan Jian Jun, Deputy President of the Shanghai Bar Association, delivered one of two key-note speeches on the importance of developing the legal industry within China.

Doreen Jaeger-Soong, Managing Director of Hughes-Castel, delivered the second key-note speech identifying the ever growing demand for lawyers within China for both international and Chinese lawyers. As an added surprise, Professor Simon Chesterman, Dean of NUS Law, addressed the participants of the reception on the big-screen.

In 2005, the NUS, in partnership with the East China University School of Political Science and Law (ECUPL), established a unique opportunity for students and lawyers to pursue graduate legal studies in two growing global financial hubs, Singapore and Shanghai, with a focus on international business law. The alumni consist of a global network of highly-accomplished lawyers and students.

For more information, visit www.nusiblalumni.com
NUS Law is proud to celebrate together with our outstanding academics who received Long Service Awards this year. When LawLink asked our awardees to share their most memorable moment and what look forward to most in their work at NUS Law...here’s what they shared.

**Faculty Feature**

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**Name of Staff**

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"The years have flown by. It appears to be true that time flies when you enjoy yourself. I can say with some honesty that I look forward to work each day. There have been many good moments over the years but one that is memorable to me was when, fairly early in my career, Mrs Lu Sinclair who was a formidable Registrar of NUS in her time, telephoned me one afternoon. She told me that, having looked into the points I earlier raised with her, she agreed that married female staff members have the legal right to continue to use their own surname and that the salutation ‘Ms’ had become the appropriate one that is memorable to me was meeting my students in class — teaching and interacting with them.

"EVERY TIME WHEN I KNOW THAT I HAVE DONE GOOD TEACHING IN CLASS."

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"I came back to NUS after thirteen years away because I felt that this was my natural habitat. Contact with the students is what I enjoy most. They haven’t yet lost their idealism and become jaded or cynical. In any case, as a profession we are responsible for training the generations that come after. Senior lawyers have always been involved in professional education. This is the only way to ensure that the aspiring lawyers are properly fitted to survive in the real world."

"I FEEL THAT THIS WAS MY NATURAL HABITAT"

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"In 2002, a team of students I was coaching won the Vis Moot in international commercial arbitration in Vienna. They were the best of 108 teams from all over the world. They made me feel very privileged and proud of teaching at a law school that attracts such fantastic, smart and hardworking students. The corporate name of McGill University, where I went to law school and first taught law, is the ‘Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning’. Maybe that is why my former Dean at McGill used to welcome the first year class by addressing them as ‘Dear fellow students of the law’. It is a privilege to be an academic; I am paid to learn through research and teaching, and to share what I have learned through teaching and publications. To me, there could be no better job. I am looking forward to learning more, which is why I became an academic in the first place."

"I REMEMBER SUDDENLY FEELING THE WEIGHT OF RESPONSIBILITY"