Isaac Newton once wrote: “If I have seen further than certain other men, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants.”

In 2004 we commemorated the 45th Anniversary of the Law School, and in 2005 the whole of NUS is celebrating our Centennial Year. Our Faculty has gone from being a small Department of 30 students, to an internationally-acclaimed Law School, sending out hundreds of fresh-faced young lawyers into the profession every year.

In this issue of LawLink, we look back at where we have come from, and consider those who came before us and built the foundations of what we have today.

Our ‘cover girl’, Professor Tan Sook Yee, has been with the Law School since 1964. Now a Professorial Fellow with the Faculty, she reflects on the developments in Law School over the past 40 years, and her memories of students and staff through the decades.

Also featured in this issue are two prominent senior alumni. Attorney-General Chan Sek Keong ’61, one of the many luminaries from our pioneer batch of Law School graduates, casts his eye forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead for today’s Law graduates; while Hendon Binte Haji Mohamed ’62 (former President of the Malaysian Bar Council) looks back and recalls fondly the days of the “Nutshell series”, “cracker wars” and other highjinks on the Bukit Timah Campus.

As Professor Tan says in her interview: You think of those in the past who started it, and along the way those who have helped to shape it, and we are all glad to have been able to play some small part in the shaping of the Faculty.

Adeline Ang ’96
Editor,
Assoc Director,
Alumni and Development
DEAN'S MESSAGE

Although the NUS Faculty of Law may be the only law school in Singapore that confers a degree recognised for practice in Singapore, it operates within a globally competitive arena. We compete with other good law schools elsewhere for the brightest Singaporean students interested in reading law, many of whom can easily afford to study overseas. We compete with other schools to attract good foreign students. And we also compete with the best law schools to hire excellent academics and to retain our own faculty, many of whom would have no difficulty finding positions in leading law schools elsewhere. For this reason, the NUS Law School cannot afford to rest on its laurels; we must continue to innovate and develop. At the same time, we must be conscious of developing our brand equity through our engagement with the legal profession in Singapore, visits to schools, as well as promotional trips to major overseas cities, particularly in Asia. That these efforts are bearing fruit is evident from the large number of good students we have in our graduate programme today and the number of overseas academics who wish to spend time at the NUS Law School.

In addition, the Law School must continue to make innovative additions to its curriculum. As such, the Law School has been pushing strongly for the right to offer double degree programmes with some of the other Faculties within NUS. This has culminated in the university's first undergraduate double degree programme in Law and Economics which will admit its first group of students in the next academic year beginning August 2005. I am optimistic that a second double degree programme in Law and Business will also be given approval in time for the next academic year. Another double degree programme that should also perhaps be developed is one in Law and Science. Through such curriculum developments, I am confident that the NUS Law School will continue to attract very bright students. At the same time, as lawyers are ultimately solutions providers, a meaningful broader base of knowledge will provide a professional advantage.
As in many ways our students are our raison d’etre, the Law School is continuing efforts to make student life at the Law School even more pleasant. Classrooms have been upgraded, more seating has been provided throughout the school, and a new student lounge designed by the student body has been provided. Occasions for students to meet alumni are also organised. A meeting has also been held with student representatives to discuss ways to enhance the social life in the Faculty. We don’t want students to remember the Law School only for the classes and the library. We also want them to enjoy other aspects of life at the Law School.

As we begin a new calendar year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank many of our stakeholders for their support and encouragement. In particular, I would like to thank all those who have donated money to the Faculty or who have given of their time, in particular the members of our steering committee, and our adjunct and part-time teachers. My colleagues and I are grateful for your support and we hope you will continue to work with us.

On a sad note, the Law School conveys its deepest condolences to the family of Edlyn Yap ’96 who perished at the end of last year in Sri Lanka. She was a bubbly and vivacious person who was an active member of the Law School community during her student years from 1992 to 1996. We know that she is in a better place and we look forward to renewing our friendship with her one day.

I wish all of you a peaceful and joyful year ahead.

Dean Tan Cheng Han SC ’87
It is a little-known fact that – contrary to popular belief – not all Law students are well-off. The Law School has, over the years, seen students whose class attendance and performance are affected by their need to work in order to earn their tuition fees or pay for their living expenses. In some cases, these students’ families are dependent on them to contribute to the family income.

With this in mind the Class of 1984, when organising their 20th anniversary class reunion, decided that the occasion would be more than just an opportunity to see old friends and relive their memories of Law School.

With the agreement of all present at the reunion, the Law School Class of 1984 Bursary Fund was established. Very appropriately, the seed money for the fund consisted of the remainder of the class fund, which Class Treasurer K Shanmugan SC ’84 had held in trust for 20 years! (Proving that here is one politician you definitely can trust …)

Thanks to the generosity of these classmates in making further pledges and contributions, the Bursary now stands at $12,000. A representative from the class will work with the Law Faculty on the granting of the bursaries to students who apply for financial assistance.

If you would like to make a contribution to the Law School Class of 1984 Bursary Fund, please contact the Law Faculty’s Alumni and Development Department at Tel: 6-874-1305, Fax: 6-872-1937, Email: lawlink@nus.edu.sg

To see photos from the Class of 1984 reunion, turn to pages 22 and 23 of this issue!

The 2nd ASLI conference will carry the theme “The Challenge of Law in Asia: from Globalization to Regionalization?” and will be hosted by the Faculty of Law of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok on 26 and 27 May 2005. Interested paper presenters are invited to respond to one of the panel themes below. Details of sub themes in each panel can be found on the website.

a Law and the Human Face of Globalization in Asia
b Global Economic Rules, Regional Integration and FTA
c Harmonization of Commercial and Taxation Law
d Key Legal Developments in the Asian Region
e Open Forum for Topical Interest

The conference will be an excellent opportunity for scholars in Asian law to meet and exchange ideas and to form closer working and personal relationships. All scholars are invited to attend and present papers. The conference is also open to participants who are not presenting papers.

More information about ASLI and the conference (including the registration form) can be found at www.law.chula.ac.th/asli. Enquiries may be directed to asli@law.chula.ac.th.
Remembrances of Things Past

HENDON Binte Haji Mohamed ’62 Shares Her Memories Of Being An NUS Law Student In The 1960s. This Article Is A Transcription Of Her Speech At The Law School’s 45th Anniversary Reunion On 03.10.2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
I had chosen to read Law at the University of Singapore (NUS) or more specifically its precursor, the University of Malaya in Singapore (“the University”), NOT by design. I had, in what was I thought my ideal state, associated Law and lawyering to only the Inns of Court in England and had targeted Lincoln’s Inn as the only institution that would fulfill my future need. I even took a course in Latin in preparation for the entry.

However, having obtained my Higher School Certificate (HSC), I was faced with reality that there was no money to fund even the thought of any study overseas. My dentist brother and mentor told me to wait awhile. He would, he said, send me — eventually.

With my HSC qualification, I was offered an attractive (monetarily) teaching position in a primary school. I accepted it because I knew I would be able to save enough to finally get to Lincoln’s.

It had been slightly more that a year since I began earning my keep. It was the beginning of the Sixties — and it was the long December vacation. At home in Johore Bahru, I was reading the Straits Times one morning, and chanced upon the invitation to apply to the newly-established Faculty of Law of the University. I merely glanced at it, but having read the whole paper, gave it a second glance. More for reason of something to do, rather than real interest, I put pen to paper and hand-wrote my application to the Faculty.

Exactly eight days later, the post brought a reply from Mr. Young Cheng Wah, the Registrar of the Faculty. It was a reflection of the times — it was not a straight forward “Yes” or “No”. It asked if I would, since I was living just across the Causeway, just drop by the University to clarify a few details. With the same sense of reluctance, I took the Green Bus from Johore Bahru to Singapore to the University campus at Bukit Timah. I met a most gentle and caring Registrar, Mr. Young, who in later years turned out to be everyone’s good friend. It also was my first meeting with the man who became synonymous with the Law Faculty in Singapore — Professor Lee Sheridan. The formality over, I returned to Johore Bahru, conscious of a new overall feeling of awe, but still feeling somewhat reticent.

Ten days later, I received a second letter post-marked the University. I left it unopened for two days. I had told no-one about the application, not even the family, and I was alone. It was a combination of both anxiety and could-not-care feeling, yet not knowing what to hope. There were moments of confusion because I was still thinking of Lincoln’s Inn. On the third day, I opened the letter: I had been accepted into the Faculty for the new term and would I report to the University four weeks from the date given. I recall that numb moment of total inner silence as I stared at the stark reality of what I had done, and the consequence: what was I going to do for money?

The rest, of course, is history.

My years at the University were, in the words of Charles Dickens, “The best of times, and the worst of times”. The worst, because of the money constraints, which I struggled through with the help of a wonderfully supportive family. (It was not an era for women aspiring to do Law — I had been told: “Women don’t do Law”). But all else besides, they were the best of times, and amongst the happiest years of my life.

I found not just the Law. I found ME, myself, and I found survival and discipline. I found a common cause amongst fellow-students. I found a fraternity of friends and colleagues — who became a fraternity of professionals who are second to none.

How can I forget the years? Missing lectures, trying to skip tutorials, never on time with assignments, holding on to the ‘Nutsheil’ series, bribing the Jaga (caretaker) at Eusoff College so we could slip in after midnight. How do I forget the cracker war (one pack landed in my room but failed to do any damage) and the beautiful bouquet of flowers that came the next morning brought personally by the culprits! And how do we forget standing on the Campus hill one Saturday morning (the aftermath of the ‘pantry raid’ the night before) looking up a the bras and panties hanging on the branches of the huge tree, and asking whose was what, which was whose...

They were the best and most memorable years. The bond and the friendship we created and formed have stood the test of time. I cannot think of a greater and a more rewarding sense of belonging.

Did I ever think of Lincoln’s Inn? Now and again — when I wanted to imagine what it might have been.

But there are no regrets. The bond, the fraternity, is very alive and stronger than ever. Indeed, looking around and measuring members of the Alumni in terms of professional quality and standard — we have not done badly at all. Non-alumni members have said so, to which I have readily concurred! I am very proud to be a member of these Alumni.

Editor: The following paragraph is an addendum to Puan Hendon’s speech, penned later in the year.

In September 2004, I was invited to the launching of the Malaysian Chapter of the Lincoln’s Inn Alumni here in Kuala Lumpur. It was spearheaded by Justice Dato Gopal Sri Ram, and well-attended by the blue-blood of the age-old Inn and others who graduated from the other Inns of Court as well. Looking around that night, I wondered if members of Lincoln’s Inn felt as deeply about the institution as I do for NUS. And to think that NUS is relatively new compared to Lincoln’s, and yet it already has an established Alumni. I think we should drink to that!
To commemorate our 45th year, we organised a reunion in Kuala Lumpur, attended by Singapore-based and Malaysia-based alumni across the years—from the Class of 1961 to the most recently-graduated Class of 2004. It was an evening of renewing old ties, as well as forming new ones.
Attorney-General Chan Sek Keong '61 shared his thoughts on the future of the Legal Profession, at the Graduate Diploma In Singapore Law Graduation Ceremony on 15 July 2004.

The future is very bright for you. You can and should look at it with great optimism. But, as they say, the law is a hard mistress.
Dean of the Law Faculty, Teaching Staff, Future Lawyers,

I am very pleased to be able to attend today’s graduation ceremony this afternoon, after failing to attend the first two graduation ceremonies, not through design of course. I congratulate all of you for having successfully completed the DipSing Law Course.

I hope that you do not feel that we have wasted 12 months of your time in having to complete this course. I think this would be a mistake as 1 year is a very short time in the life-long career of a lawyer. I am already in my 43rd year as a lawyer and I am still here. The NUS Law Faculty has taken great pains to devise a diploma course (for which the Board of Legal Education is greatly indebted to the Faculty) to achieve its primary object, that of introducing overseas law graduates into a Singapore law environment that appears to be the same as that prevailing in England or Australia, but is actually quite different in significant areas of law and in the legal philosophy, such as it is, of our judges.

Your next course is the PLC. You will know, if you care to study the graduation statistics on the PLC for the last 10 years, that it is extremely difficult to fail the PLC. The reason is simple. The PLC is not meant to be an obstacle course for high quality graduates like you. It is meant to facilitate your entry into the legal profession. It will introduce you to the basic feature of law practice in general, that is to say, the law in action. There are many pitfalls in law practice and the PLC is designed to familiarise you with some of these pitfalls. To be a successful lawyer, you have to understand the law in action. So I would advise you to take the PLC seriously.

After the PLC, you take the first step into the real world of law practice as a pupil. Some of you might have already started this phase. The world of law practice has changed radically since the globalisation of legal services. The nature and substance of pupillage have changed. During my pupillage in 1961, I had almost daily interaction with my pupil master. I was allowed to sit in meetings with clients and to assist him in court trials. Today, there may not be too much personal interaction. Pupillage in large firms has become specialised. It is difficult to say whether pupillage today is better or worse now than in the past. The process of learning has to change with the change of the nature of practice. But do not fret if your pupillage seems routine or pointless. Even dotting the “i”s” and crossing the “t”s of financial documentation can be an extremely useful way of learning corporate law, if you are prepared to analyse and deconstruct each document to find out what the provisions mean and why they are there. Everything in the document has a function or a purpose. Many provisions are critical to the legality or objectives of transaction. Others may be peripheral and seem to add bulk by setting out what the law is. To the client, bulk looks like serious work: to the lawyer, it justifies the fees.

After pupillage, you would have to get a worthwhile job. Singapore is undergoing a dramatic, even revolutionary, change in its future economic prospects. We have had many good years. Our economy is one of the most competitive in the world, but the competition for direct foreign investments gets more intense and becomes more difficult with each passing year. We can only hope that the remaking of the Singapore economy will bear fruit. But, in the next few years, it should be easy enough for law graduates to get legal jobs in Singapore. Here are two of the reasons.

First, the economy is recovering, and with it the need for more legal and other related services. Although the Bar has not been able to arrest its declining numbers during the last 5 years, this decline has begun to stabilise. It is likely that in this year, and certainly in the next, more law graduates will enter the profession than leaving it. Secondly, there are many more career choices and opportunities for law graduates now than ever before. Today, you can choose to be a domestic lawyer either as a litigator or a solicitor or both; as an international lawyer with an eye towards the financial centres of the world, London, New York, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. You can choose to be a domestic or an international in-house counsel, or a legal officer, an academic, a public officer (civil officer) or work in the many international agencies that require the services of lawyers. The choices are actually vast, as you can also sell ice cream, etc.

Singapore law graduates, such as graduates like you, have a deservedly high reputation among the international legal community. Not only do you work hard, but the structural changes we have made to the legal profession more than 10 years ago have ensured that today we probably have the highest quality Bar in the Commonwealth, in terms of average academic entry standards. This factor and our lower salary expectations make them highly marketable to foreign law firms in the global legal services sector. You, with overseas law degrees, are able to enjoy a degree of international mobility that is the envy of many professionals in Singapore.

So the future is very bright for you. You can and should look at it with great optimism. But, as they say, the law is a hard mistress. You have to start re-learning your academic law as well as some aspects of other disciplines from day one until the day you retire if you hope to be a truly successful and well educated lawyer. Do not get stuck in the groove of being a lawyer good only in the technical aspects of law. Knowing the political and social values of the law will make you a better lawyer. But you should aim to be more than that in life. Read widely. You want to lead a satisfying, if not a happy, life as a lawyer. For that you need to know and understand the moral and ethical values embedded in the law that true lawyers should live by.

I returned last night from Shanghai after attending the China-ASEAN Prosecutors-General Conference in Kunming. There, I was told that in 2003 more than 370,000 Chinese law graduates took the equivalent of our Bar examination, but only 7% managed to pass it. There was also an article in a current magazine about the flood of university graduates in China, so much so that PhDs are employed to do the work normally done by Masters degree holders and the latter are employed to do the work of Bachelors degree holders, with corresponding decrease in salaries. The writer describes the situation with a Chinese saying: “Too many people crossing a one-plank bridge”. Its equivalent in Singapore would be “Too few people crossing Merdeka Bridge”. This is an apt metaphor: we have a limited number of law graduates each year, the career choices are vast, and you are free to choose the career in law or outside law that suits you. Although there is a hole in Merdeka Bridge at the moment, it is so big that it is not possible for any one of you to fall into it.

I wish you all the best.
commencement
2004

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST ALUMNI - THE CLASS OF 2004!
It is a Law School tradition for the Faculty to welcome our freshmen with a dinner, hosted by our lecturers. Submitted for your consideration: the Class of 2008!
100% love
soak in
warmth
treat gently
to guarantee
smile
When lunch was done, the children made the final touches to their clay figurines and painted them in all the colours of the rainbow. Then, it was time to give vent to their pent up energies with sports and games at the atrium. Finally, it was time to gather at LT19 for the performances by the councillors. The excitement level was at its highest and there was no silencing the children. They were given balloons, treated to a video of the day’s activities and also baffled and thrilled by a magic show. But the highlight was no doubt the entrance of Santa Claus and Santarina as the children caroled “Santa Claus is coming to town!” While the councillors helped to give out presents, the children were called up to have their picture taken with Santa Claus and Santarina. All too soon, it was time for the kids to go home. Phone numbers were exchanged and promises not to forget each other were made, as the councillors waved goodbye and watched the buses of excited children pull away. Through the Christmas Charity, the committee hoped to encourage Law students to volunteer, bring awareness to the missions of the children’s charities, as well as spread festive joy and cheer to all participants in the event. Through the abounding enthusiasm, generosity and love of Faculty members, Law students and our sponsors, we were able to do all that - and more. The Faculty greatly facilitated the planning process and special thanks must go to Assistant Dean Goh Mia Yang ’92 and Ms Adeline Ang ’96. The committee would also like to thank our big-hearted sponsors - Colin Ng & Partners, Leonard Loo & Co, Oei & Charles and Lucas Foods Asia.

The 6th of December 2004 finally came, and the children arrived in their buses and gathered outside the Law Library. 47 kids and 92 councillors packed the area and filled it with their chatter, laughter, shrieks and shouts. The first activity was station games, and the different groups of children walked, ran, and rode on the backs of the councillors to and from each station. After all the running and shouting, it was time for a more restful activity. The children were brought to the benches outside Lecture Theatre 19 (LT19) and given clay to mould into whatever shapes they liked. The councillors were on hand to advise, assist and be astounded by the creativity of the children. Their works ranged from snowmen to gingerbread men, from an angel by a star to a spider in its web.
A CONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR TAN SOOK YEE
LAWLINK HAS THE PRIVILEGE OF SPEAKING TO PROFESSOR TAN SOOK YEE, WHO HAS CELEBRATED 40 YEARS OF TEACHING AT THE LAW SCHOOL, AND IS NOW A PROFESSORIAL FELLOW AT THE FACULTY.

HOW DID YOU COME TO JOIN THE FACULTY IN 1964?
I would really have loved to have been a medical doctor, but could not stand dissection … So I read Law, qualified, read in Chambers (at M’s Rodyk & Davidson), and got called to the Bar. Then I happened to meet Professor Harry Groves, who was then Dean of the Law Faculty, at a private dinner party. He said to me, “We have a couple of vacancies.” And I said, “Me, teach?” I’d always been in awe of my professors and never dreamt that I could be one of them. But I thought, “Why not?”, and so I went for the interview. At the antechamber to the interview room, I sat next to one very serious-looking young man, each of us ruminating in our own thoughts. He turned out to be Professor S Jayakumar.

WAS THERE EVER A TIME WHEN YOU CONSIDERED LEAVING ACADEMIA, AND GOING INTO PRACTICE?
Who doesn’t? Conventional thinking is that someone with a Law degree should practice law. But I liked the atmosphere of the Bukit Timah campus, it was very collegiate – we enjoyed the work and each other’s company. Imagine exchanging that for an office in town; it would have been completely different. The money even then was much better in town, but that wasn’t sufficient to pull me away from the environment and the luxury of being able to work in the area that you want to work in. And in those days you fashioned your courses as you liked. You were left pretty much to do your own thing, as it were. Also, I started everything in the same year – got called to the local Bar, began my working life, got married, all within the same 6 months! And then I started a family. I was really kept rather busy, and teaching provided a more flexible working life.

YOU HAVE BEEN WITH THE FACULTY SINCE 1964 – JUST OVER 40 YEARS – AND HAVE SEEN IT EXPAND BOTH NUMERICALLY (FROM GRADUATING CLASSES OF JUST 30 PEOPLE, TO MORE THAN 200 IN PRESENT TIMES) AND IN STATURE (FROM A MERE DEPARTMENT OF NUS, TO AN INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNISED LAW SCHOOL). WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE OVER THE YEARS?
We have done very well. We have met our various objectives along the way, and have a lot to be proud of. You think of those in the past who started it, and along the way those who have helped to shape it, and I am very glad to have been able to play some small part in the shaping of the Faculty.

WHAT DO YOU NOW MISS, OR WHAT CHANGES DO YOU WISH HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE?
People always think things were so much better in the past. They say “Oh, remember Cold Storage Creamery, you could go there for a Knickerbocker Glory or Banana Split, and life was simple.” I regretted moving from Bukit Timah; it was very conveniently located. You could nip down to town and back, the whole Faculty (which then consisted of 6 people) could cram into 1 car and go to town for lunch. These sorts of things you can’t do so easily from here at Kent Ridge. But you forget the more unpleasant aspects of life in those times – lecturing in Physics theatres, and in Nissen Huts (tin-roofed semi-cylindrical huts made of corrugated metal, meant to be used as temporary housing for military personnel), with air-conditioners roaring away. Acoustics were terrible, the lighting was very bad, there were no textbooks … those were the working conditions then. Nevertheless, those who have been there remember the camaraderie. When you struggle through less-comfortable times together, you have a sense of togetherness, of bonding.
WHEN YOU WERE DEAN FROM 1981 TO 1987, YOU SPEARHEADED MANY INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE TEACHING OF TRIAL ADVOCACY (WITH INSTRUCTION BY MEMBERS OF THE BAR), THE APPROVED GRADUATE PROGRAM, AND THE CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Those were exciting years. We were then under a new Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Tony Tan, and in his time a lot of projects were initiated university-wide. We were told: If you have good ideas or want to do something that you think is worthwhile, there is money. And that is the greatest thing that a Dean can be told. All you need to do is think up programs and plans, and if they are good, you will be supported. And we were. Take for example the Jessup International Law Moots. We appreciated the benefits that such an experience would bring to the participating students and when our teams did so well we felt so proud and I am sure that the University which backed us financially felt good too. So after the first successes the money came more easily. Whatever we started has borne fruit, and I am very glad for that.

YOUR STUDENTS OF ALL VINTAGES RETAIN VIVID MEMORIES OF BEING IN YOUR PROPERTY LAW LECTURES AND TUTORIALS. BUT A LOT OF PEOPLE FIND THE SUBJECT OF LAND LAW QUITE DRY. IT’S NOT BLOOD-AND-GUTS LIKE CRIMINAL LAW, HOW HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO MAINTAIN YOUR ENTHUSIASM AND PASSION FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF PROPERTY LAW?

I didn’t start out with the intention to teach Land Law in particular. When I joined the Faculty, I started out teaching a course called “Precedent, Courts and Legislation” – the precursor of what is now the course on “Singapore Legal System” and the Legal Writing Program. It was tough, as we were teaching from primary materials, but good. I was one step ahead of the students, and we all learned together! When the Faculty needed someone to teach Land Law, I was asked to do it. I had no choice. We started out with just a mimeographed collection of cases. At that time we did Malaysian Land Law too, as half of our student body was from Malaysia, and our degree was recognised for practice in Malaysia. We felt an obligation to teach Malaysian law as well as Singapore law. Students had to know the English System pre-1925, the Singapore Torrens system and the Malaysian Land Code. All without textbooks! (That’s why when students complain now, I’m not terribly sympathetic …)

It’s a sort of affection. Like an arranged marriage – you grow to understand and have a regard and affection for the subject. You learn a lot about the interplay between private wants and public demands. You are dealing with human emotions and human wants, very basic human feelings of wanting to control who gets your property and under what circumstances and when – you see it being played out, and how the law reacts to it: accommodating it, and when it gets excessive, curtailing it. Land law is far from being a dry subject. I grew to appreciate and like it, and I try to convey some of that appreciation to my students too.

ON A MORE FRIVOLOUS NOTE – MANY OF YOUR FORMER STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE YEARS (BOTH MALE AND FEMALE) ALSO MARVEL AT THE FACT THAT YOU DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE AGED A DAY SINCE THE TIME WHEN THEY WERE IN LAW SCHOOL! I HAVE BEEN ASKED BY SOME OF OUR FEMALE ALUMNÆ TO FIND OUT THE SECRET BEHIND YOUR CONTINUING YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

There’s no secret: I think a combination of good genes, and good luck, balance in life – nothing to excess. My skin is sensitive and forbids me to indulge in making my skin more pink, more red, more white by adding this and that – maybe that saved me, by keeping me natural! How to give yourself pink cheeks if you can’t use cosmetics? You exercise, to give yourself that glow! And I never take anything too seriously – least of all myself – that helps!

WOULD YOU SHARE SOME MEMORIES WITH US, OF YOUR EXPERIENCES TEACHING OVER THE YEARS?

I remember very clearly one lecture at Bukit Timah. In those days they didn’t have slides and power-point presentations so I had my memory cards with me. There I was, holding my cards in one hand and playing with my necklace of beads in the other, trying to project my voice in the Nissen hut, when suddenly my strand of beads broke! Scammer, scamper, I had to go, picking up beads! After the advent of audio-visual aids and overhead projectors: I went to give a lecture, I had some papers to show the class. I placed the piece of paper on the projector – and nothing happened. I remember very clearly one lecture at Bukit Timah. In those days they didn’t have slides and power-point presentations so I had my memory cards with me. There I was, holding my cards in one hand and playing with my necklace of beads in the other, trying to project my voice in the Nissen hut, when suddenly my strand of beads broke! Scammer, scamper, I had to go, picking up beads! After the advent of audio-visual aids and overhead projectors: I went to give a lecture, I had some papers to show the class. I placed the piece of paper on the projector – and nothing happened. I didn’t know that I couldn’t just use paper, and that I had to use transparencies! The next time, I knew better … Because I was by then already quite long in the game, it didn’t really faze me. But had I been a young teacher, I’m sure I would have been thrown:

LOOKING BACK ON YOUR YEARS OF CONTRIBUTION TO THE FACULTY, WHAT GIVES YOU THE GREATEST SENSE OF PRIDE? Actually, I am grateful for the chance that I had, to add my 2 cents’ worth to the shaping and development of the Faculty; to have been part of this continuing team. I’ve found it very fulfilling.
dean strengthens relationships with chinese law schools

Our Dean’s visits to Nanjing University and Peking University’s law schools, and the China University of Politics and Law

On 14 October 2004, Dean Tan Cheng Han S.C. ‘87 and Associate Professor Li Mei Qin visited the Nanjing University Law School at the kind invitation of Dean Shao Jiandong to discuss potential areas of collaboration. Dean Tan also delivered a lecture to the faculty and students of the law school titled “Challenges for Legal Education in Asia”. In his lecture, Dean Tan said that law schools in Asia (and probably elsewhere) have to overcome 4 challenges to become world-class institutions.

The first challenge is the need to formulate well thought out strategies to the challenge posed by globalisation. While law schools will continue to play an important role in the teaching and research of national law, they must go beyond that.

Secondly, law schools in Asia must improve their teaching methodologies. There is still too much rote learning in many Asian law schools. Law schools must do more to ensure that their students develop the necessary mind skills for a fast changing world where what has been learnt either becomes less relevant more quickly and/or needs to be continuously supplemented on a scale greater than before.

The third challenge is to ensure that law is not taught in a vacuum but as a discipline that is influenced by other bodies of knowledge. For example, would it not be more meaningful for Family Law and Criminal Law students if sociological perspectives could be integrated into such courses? Would not Company Law, Contract Law and Competition Law students benefit from the insights of economics? Law is after all not an autonomous discipline.

Finally, Dean Tan said that while many enlightened academics recognise that there are shortcomings, the resources available to law schools are often inadequate to bring about significant reform. The challenge of ensuring adequate resources for law schools is a difficult one.

A lively question and answer session followed with Dean Tan fielding many questions from the enthusiastic Nanjing University students.

From 16 - 25 November 2004, Dean Tan accepted Peking University Law School’s invitation to take up a visiting professorship and teach an intensive course to graduate students titled “Fundamentals of Business Law in the Common Law Tradition”. Around 100 students attended this course, which was taught principally in English.

To make the course more relevant to the students, comparative perspectives highlighting the differences and similarities between the common law and Chinese law approaches were discussed.

Dean Tan with the kind assistance of Miss Thian Yee Sze (who is currently on leave from the Singapore Legal Service to attend courses at Peking University Law School) also delivered a lecture on legal education at the China University of Politics and Law on 22 November 2004, which was attended by almost 300 students and faculty. The lecture was once again followed by a lively question and answer session on a wide range of topics. In particular, the students were interested in Singapore’s legal system and the differences between the civil law and the common law. Dean Tan and Miss Thian also met Dean Wang Chuan Li and several of her colleagues from the School of International Law at the China University of Politics and Law to discuss possible ties.
class of 1979 25th anniversary reunion
24.07.2004
Class Reunion

TAKE THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASEAN, A RAFT OF SENIOR COUNSELS, MANY HIGHLY-ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL AND BUSINESS FRATERNITY, MIX WITH CLASSMATES THEY HAVEN'T SEEN FOR 25 YEARS. STEP BACK AND ENJOY THE REUNION!

Sharon Tan '79: A good presenter always uses interesting visual aids!
The hilarity of the evening was matched only by the generosity of these classmates. This reunion witnessed the birth of the Class of 1984 Bursary!

class of 1984
20th anniversary reunion
20.08.2004
Lee Kuan Yew Distinguished Visitor Drops By the Law School

Prof Gustave Speth, Dean of the Yale Forestry & Environment School, and the 2005 Lee Kuan Yew Distinguished Visitor, visited the Faculty on 18 January 2005, in conjunction with his speaking engagement in NUS. Dean Speth headed the United Nations Development Project for many years, founded the World Resources Institute which is now a global research and think tank on the environment, and is a world leader in the environment field.

University Excellent Teacher Awards

Our very own Associate Professors Lim Chin Leng, A Kumaralingam, Eleanor Wong ’85 and Helena Whalen-Bridge LLM ’02, were officially named Excellent Teachers by NUS. The Excellent Teaching Award is given by the University to about a hundred of its best teachers each year in recognition of their high level of commitment to, and achievement of, good teaching. Selection is based on peer and student feedback, and information derived from teaching portfolios.

Hong Kong University Joins the Asian Law Institute (ASLI)

ASLI welcomes the Faculty of Law, Hong Kong University, as one of its founding members. In December 2004, the Board of Governors of ASLI unanimously approved the admission of the Faculty of Law of the University of Hong Kong as a member of ASLI. HKU is the 12th member of ASLI. To find out more about ASLI, see their website at: http://law.nus.edu.sg/asli/

On a related note, congratulations are in order to Assoc Prof Margaret Fordham, who has been appointed Deputy Director of ASLI.

Congratulations and Citations

Our Dean, Assoc Prof Tan Cheng Han SC ’87 was appointed a Board Member of the Competition Commission of Singapore; and was also made a Member of the Military Court of Appeal. He was appointed Visiting Professor at Peking University in November 2004 (for a more detailed report of what the Dean did at Peking University, turn to page 19).

Prof Lye Lin Heng ’73 has been appointed Visiting Associate Professor to the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, where she will teach an intensive course on Comparative Environmental Law over 2 weeks to their graduate students. She was there in the same capacity last year, on sabbatical leave for the spring semester.

Assoc Prof Stephen Phua ’88 was appointed Visiting Associate Professor at Kyushu University in December 2004. He conducted lectures in International Tax Law to the English postgraduate law programme.

Assoc Prof Joel Lee, currently on leave, was appointed Visiting Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. He is teaching courses on Conflict Resolution and Management.

Assoc Prof Hans Tjo was appointed Visiting Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of Auckland in June 2004; earlier in the year, his book ‘Principles and Practice of Securities Regulation’ was published by Lexis-Nexis. The book discusses the still-evolving legal framework for securities regulation and corporate governance in Singapore.

Associate Professors Victor V. Ramraj and Michael Hor ’84 were both appointed Distinguished Visitors at the Faculty of Law, University of Toronto, in September 2004 and co-taught an intensive course on Comparative Anti-Terrorism Law and Policy.
Assoc Prof Simon Tay ‘86 has been appointed by the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP) as a member of a supervisory council for an international, multidisciplinary study on the environment and global climate change.

Dr. Ian McEwin was appointed to a Working Group of the International Bar Association. The focus of the Working Group is competition law in China.

Assoc Prof Lim Lei Theng ‘92 has been appointed Editor of the Asian Journal on Mediation, a new journal published by the Singapore Mediation Centre. In June 2004, together with Assoc Prof Eleanor Wong ‘85, she conducted a course in Interactive Teaching Methods for the National University of Laos, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency. In the same month, she also ran a workshop on Mooting for Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. In January 2005 she taught at the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program, supported by Harvard University in Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam.


Assoc Prof Yeo Hwee Ying ‘80’s article entitled ‘Post-contractual good faith - change in judicial attitude?’ (published in the Modern Law Review in 2003) was cited by the United Kingdom Law Commission.

Congratulations to Assoc Prof Debbie Ong ‘89, who was awarded the 2004 Subordinate Courts Benchmark Award for Volunteerism. Debbie was selected by the Subordinate Courts as the winner of the individual Award, for her outstanding contribution to the work of the Family Court.

Assoc Prof Yeo Tiong Min ‘90 published a book entitled ‘Choice of Law for Equitable Doctrines’ with Oxford University Press, as part of its Private International Law Series. Tiong Min has also been appointed Editor of the Singapore Journal of Legal Studies. The Singapore Year Book of International Law was launched, succeeding the Singapore Journal of International and Comparative Law. The Editor of the Year Book is Assoc Prof Lim Chin Leng.

FACULTY ALUMNI

Assoc Prof Tan Keng Feng ‘71 retired from the university at the end of 2004. In his many years of service at the university, this dedicated teacher has held many positions, including the Vice-Deanship of the Faculty, as well as the editorship of the Malaya Law Review (now named the Singapore Journal of Legal Studies). He has also written many highly-cited articles on Tort Law. His legacy at the Faculty and in the development of the law is assured.

Warmest wishes also to Assistant Prof Kelvin Low, who left us at the end of 2004 to join the Hong Kong University Faculty of Law. Kelvin’s work with our two journals – the SJLS and SYBIL – was invaluable.

Prof Tan Sook Yee officially retired at the end of 2004, and was appointed Professorial Fellow. (LawLink’s interview with Prof Tan is published on page 16.)

VISITING PROFESSORS

A very warm welcome to the following Visiting Professors: David Vaver, Professor of Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford, is the inaugural Yong Shook Lin Visiting Professor in Intellectual Property Law. He will be teaching an intensive course in Topics in Intellectual Property Law. Francis Reynolds, Professor Law at Worcester College, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford, will be an MPA Distinguished Visitor in Maritime Law. He will be teaching Carriage of Goods by Sea and International Sale of Goods by Sea. George Fletcher, Cardozo Professor of Jurisprudence, Columbia Law School, will be coming to NUS as the David Marshall Visiting Professor, and will be teaching an intensive course in International Criminal Law. Total Law Team of Experts on European Union Law. A team of experts on European Union Law who are affiliated with the Jean Monnet Center for International and Regional Economic Law & Justice at the NYU School of Law will be offering an intensive 8-credit course in European Union Law in Semester 2 of the 2004-2005 Academic Year. The members of the Total Law Team are: Joseph H.H. Weiler, University Professor at NYU and the Joseph Straus Professor of Law and European Union Jean Monnet Chair at NYU School of Law. Professor Weiler serves as Chairman of the NYU Global Law School Program and is, too, Director of the Jean Monnet Center for International and Regional Economic Law & Justice. José M. de Areiza, Professor of European Union Law and Vice Dean of Legal Studies at Instituto de Empresa, Madrid; Damian Chalmers, Reader in EU Law, London School of Economics and Political Science; Miguel Polaiores Maduro, Advocate General at the European Court of Justice, Luxembourg; Imola Streho, Jean Monnet Center, NYU and référendaire in the cabinet of the Estonian Judge, European Court of Justice. She is coordinator of the course. Lou Jianbo, Professor of Law at School of Law, Peking University, will be teaching an intensive course in Chinese Real Estate Development & Land Law. Ian Macduff, Director of the New Zealand Centre for Conflict Resolution, Faculty of Law, Victoria University of Wellington, will be offering courses in Mediation and Negotiation. He will be visiting NUS for calendar year 2005 under a joint appointment with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. Rob Merkin, Professor of Commercial Law, School of Law, University of Southampton, will be teaching an intensive course in Reinsurance Law. Neil Morgan, Director of Studies at the Crime Research Centre and Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law, University of Western Australia, will be teaching Criminal Law and Administration of Criminal Justice. Stanley Yeo ‘76, Professor of Law, School of Law & Justice, Southern Cross University, Australia, will be teaching an intensive course in Comparative Criminal Law. Zhang Qianfan, Professor of Law at School of Law, Peking University, will be teaching an intensive course in Chinese Public Law. Gerald Dworkin, Professor Emeritus of Law at King’s College, University of London, and Director of the IP Academy, Singapore, will be teaching an intensive course on International and Comparative Copyright and Patent Law.
In 1997, I obtained my Master’s degree in Comparative Law at the National University of Singapore. As a citizen of Denmark, this was - at least in the opinion of some people - an unusual choice. Although Danes are generally considered friendly and informal, people in general also tend to be slightly inward looking and suspicious towards foreign influence. Nevertheless, due to the increasing trend towards globalisation, many Danes choose to add an international element to their education. It is not unusual for young lawyers to spend one year in the US or UK, taking an LL.M. or a similar international degree. So why did I go to Singapore? - Well, my boss at the time urged me to do something different from what young lawyers usually do in Denmark! However, the most important reasons were that I wanted to take a different approach compared to other lawyers and because, based on the courses available, the MCL programme at NUS was very attractive.

I was certainly not disappointed with my choice. Apart from enjoying studying again after 3 years of working, I found that the courses attended by me had a very practical approach to the problems. The courses attended by me may roughly be divided into two categories: Firstly courses which were truly international in nature such as "International Business Transactions" etc. and, secondly, courses which were more regional, such as "Chinese Business Law". Although I must admit that I have not been working with Asian issues very much since I left Singapore in 1997 due to the fact that I have been working with transactions with parties in Eastern Europe, I find many of the problems to be the same and, consequently, the regional (Asian) courses have still been beneficial to me.

Needless to say, I also very much enjoyed the cultural and social experiences gained during my year in Singapore and, from time to time, I certainly wish that I could return to Singapore for a longer period.

Presently, I am practising in Denmark’s largest law firm, Bech-Bruun Dragsted. Prior to my stay in Singapore, I spent most of my time on more traditional legal work, such as the law of torts, insurance cases and bankruptcy law. After returning from Singapore, my career took a turn towards performing more corporate work, especially cases of mergers and acquisitions, preferably including a cross-border element. I became an equity partner in the firm in 2003, and I am quite sure that this would not have happened if I had not invested 1 year in Singapore.

During my summer holidays in 2004, my wife and I together with our two children, Anders (5 years) and Iben (3 years), had the opportunity to visit the law faculty at NUS and I must say that I was a little disoriented because of all the rebuilding activity - which, however, does not come as a surprise when you travel in Asia. For so long as my children permitted I had the opportunity to talk to Professor Gary Bell and I got the impression that the MCL programme (which has now become an LL.M programme) is of an even higher quality than the programme in 1996/97. Basically, this did not surprise me at all because one of the characteristics of Singapore is that the road from idea to action is usually quite short; and there is a constant desire to improve the quality of whatever is being done.

And would I recommend others to go? Of course! Since my year in Singapore, at least two other Danish students have obtained their MCL/LL.M there, of course on their own initiative, but with my warmest recommendations.

And would I go again myself? Perhaps … I have several times thought about obtaining a PhD. If I choose to do it, I am almost sure that I would not do it in Denmark - I would rather spend a year or two in Singapore again!
One of the most interesting aspects of learning must be seeing theory being put into practice. Hence, for us students taking the Introduction to Indonesian Law course, nothing beats a field trip to Jakarta - the busy capital city of Indonesia with a population of over 10 million.

Upon touching down at the Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, we were greeted by three Universitas Indonesia (UI) students (Leonardo, Bharata and Ricardo). Typical of law students who enjoy talking, we soon warmed up after a little chit-chat at the airport followed by a 40-minute drive (inclusive of a few detours courtesy of Bharata’s ‘amazing’ driving skills) to our hotel in Central Jakarta. We settled in quickly and soon, we were all off to a nearby bar for some drinks with Professor Gary Bell and the UI students. The conversations were really interesting, with topics ranging from international law to “guessing an Indonesian’s parentage” and even speaking English. For the record, Indonesians mostly learn English on their own through reading and watching television programmes, and it’s remarkable how well they speak the language.

The next day, we visited the Central Jakarta District Court where we witnessed the proceedings of two cases. The first concerned eight police officers who were involved in quelling some riots. When the hearing was adjourned, the accused police officers went forward to shake hands with all three judges, before leaving the courtroom! That was something new to us and we were pleasantly amused. The other trial involved a corruption case. What impressed us at this hearing was the main judge who was very pro-active. As only a few of us understand Bahasa Indonesia, we were quite noisy translating the proceedings for our course-mates, as a result of which the pro-active judge requested that we kept our volume down ...

We then headed for a visit to Pusat Studi Hukum & Kebijakan Indonesia (PSHK). PSHK is an NGO actively involved in legal research, publication and law reform in Indonesia. It was indeed heartening to learn of the burgeoning influence of independent NGOs in the process of legal reform in Indonesia. Our fourth stop for the day was a law firm called SSEK, named after its four female founding partners. Established in 1992, SSEK is now the second largest law firm in Indonesia with about 50 lawyers and advisors.

The next day started with a visit to the Mahkamah Agung (Supreme Court) where we were given a comprehensive presentation by one of the Supreme Court judges. We also toured the premises and worth mentioning here is the Grand Chamber of the Supreme Court which looked more like a grand ballroom, with a grandiose chandelier, no less. This was followed by a visit to the Singapore Embassy in Jakarta where we had a discussion with the ambassador on issues concerning bilateral ties between Singapore and Indonesia. The third and final stop for the day was UI, a beautiful campus with fascinating architecture, a big lake and lush greenery everywhere. We met the Dean of the UI Law Faculty, Professor Hikmahanto Juwana briefly and spent the rest of our time there touring the campus.

We spent our last night in Jakarta listening to two fabulous live bands at the Avenue lounge at Sari Pan Pacific and the Circa at Shangri-la Hotel. It was really enjoyable although we were absolutely underdressed for these posh places because we expected the UI students to bring us to some roadside stalls for supper - which we eventually did later that night, for ‘Nasi Goreng Gila’.

Before we knew it, we were back in Singapore.

The few days we spent in Jakarta have been a real cultural exchange. It is amazing how every time you park or reverse your car in Jakarta, someone will be there to direct you, and you will tip him with 1000 Rupiah; it is depressing that every time you stop your car at a traffic light, there will be children begging at your door. I really cherish the diversity offered by life in Jakarta. The UI students had been most hospitable, chauffeuring us everywhere and taking time off to bring us around. For me, I’m missing the fun of converting Bahasa Melayu into Bahasa Indonesia. In fact, I felt quite at home in Jakarta because it somehow reminded me of Malaysia (I’m Malaysian) – it is reminiscent of a type of social network you seldom see in Singapore today.
class action

It is nearly impossible to imagine energetic women’s rights activist Anamah Tan ’63 as falling within the category of “senior citizen”, but in a ceremony on 16 November 2004, she was declared NTUC FairPrice Active Senior Citizen of the Year. When interviewed by the Straits Times, she said: “If you have passion in you, it keeps you young.” In an earlier interview in September, the Straits Times dubbed her “Spice Girl”, for her love of Peranakan food! In August 2004, Dr Tan became the first Singaporean to be elected to the United Nations’ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); she is also a committee member of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Singapore Chapter, which works towards women’s empowerment and gender equality. To find out more about UNIFEM, go to: www.unifemsingapore.org.sg/

There’s never a dull moment with Francis Yeoh ’63. He has been (in his own words) a busy body! He writes from London to tell us: “I submitted my dissertation in July 2004, and have passed my MA from Roehampton University. It took two and half years of part-time study but I very much enjoyed the process as it made me study dance its socio-cultural context. The Royal Ballet and the National Resource Centre for Dance in Guildford have asked for and been given copies of my dissertation: Copyrighting Dance: the challenge of postmodernity. As you know, I have achieved much in the hobby of dog showing and judging. However, the showing and breeding of dogs are no longer pursued as I have decided that there are other priorities that deserve to be enjoyed … I am now back at my desk in College after a lovely break in Gran Canaria where it was sunny and warm. I really did need the leisurely pace of this Spanish resort. Mind you, I can still recall my days in Singapore and remember the highly pressurised conditions at work particularly when I was Senior Legal Officer of the PUB from 1975 to 1978. Life in London is less so, particularly in a theatre school or perhaps it is a different kind of madness or passion!”

Kanta Wadhawan ’80 says ‘hello’ from Toronto, Canada. “I currently reside in Toronto, Ontario, and practise with the international law firm of Baker and McKenzie. My practice focuses on advertising, marketing, anti-trust, and consumer protection issues. I have two children, aged 12 and 14.”

Joanna Lee ’88 and Eileen Khoo ’95 got together recently to start Sapere Art Management & Consultancy. Despite their common Law School experience, Joanna and Eileen only met in 2003, during the preparation for a travelling art exhibition organised by the Singapore Art Museum. A year later, Sapere was born. The name means “to be wise” in Latin – you can take the lawyer out of the law, but you can’t take the Latin out of the lawyer! Joanna and Eileen provide art collection management, art publications and art project services. Their clients include museums, galleries and publishers, to whom they provide a range of services including curatorial advice on artworks, project management for art events or exhibitions, and developing art books or exhibition catalogues. You can find out more about what they do at: www.sapere.com.sg.

Norul Huda D/O V. Mohamed Rasahid ’91 has had quite an eventful career to date! She was a prosecutor for some eight years at the Attorney-General’s Chambers in Singapore, before being recruited by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) based at the Hague, Netherlands. She was an appeals counsel and legal adviser for about four years at the ICTY. She has been asked by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, based in Geneva to be the special assistant to a commission of experts for a few months, and will leave for Geneva in early 2005. We wish her our very best, and are looking forward to hearing more from her very soon.

Reunions!
Are you celebrating a landmark year in 2005? If you are from the following classes:
Class of ’65 – 40th Anniversary
Class of ’75 – 30th Anniversary
Class of ’80 – 25th Anniversary
Class of ’85 – 20th Anniversary
Class of ’95 – 10th Anniversary
we would like to help organise (and subsidise) your reunion! If you would like to find out more, drop us an email at: lawlink@nus.edu.sg or give us a call at: 6774-1305
The Ho Family: Seng Chee ’93, Audrey ’93 and Gabrielle, send greetings from Washington DC, and would like to introduce the latest addition to their family: Clara Jia-Ye Ho! Clara was born on 15 January 2005, and weighed 7 pounds 7 ounces (that’s 3.37 kg to us metric types). It’s been a year of new beginnings for the whole family. Gabrielle started nursery school 3 times a week in September 2004 (and loves it), and Seng Chee has taken up a temporary assignment to be speechwriter for the management of the International Monetary Fund, starting January 2005. While it is a departure from legal work in the Fund, he is nevertheless excited at the prospect of working with the management and seeing things from a wider perspective.

Our very own Law School lecturer Alan Tan ’93 was interviewed for the November 2004 issue of Young Parents magazine, on the topic of paternity leave. The proud papa of Kai Ryn (featured in the Jan-June 2004 issue of LawLink) spoke of the need for time to bond with the newborn baby, over and above the practicalities of being the family driver, playing receptionist by fielding phone calls, buying baby supplies, etc. His ideal duration for paternity leave: 10 days, as well as transferable maternity leave so that fathers can take leave after the first month. He also suggested that there be a scheme for parents to have partial salary for maternity and paternity leave taken beyond the fully-paid period. Now that’s thinking outside the box!

Honey Ng Mei Chuen ’94 sends her greetings. She is legal counsel for the advertising agencies of Y&R and Wunderman, covering their legal matters for Asia. She has been blissfully married for more than 5 years now and has a bubbly little tot called Caitlin.

Jason Lee ’95 has moved to Sydney, Australia, from London, England, and dropped us a note to tell us that he is enjoying life and practice there.

S.B.Sivaganesh ’95 has been very busy. Now a teacher at Canberra Secondary School, and Head of Department for Pupil Welfare, he is “trying not to spoil the minds of the future. Still maintaining close links with many in the legal fraternity, especially through soccer (still the ailing goalkeeper for M&A Law Corporation). I am trying to develop a career guidance programme to give aspiring students insights into a career in law; and would appreciate it if any firms out there could contact me if they are willing to help.” In October 2004, Siva organised a Mock Trial conducted by M&A Law Corporation, to highlight the rigours and common practices in the Civil Court. “The kids enjoyed the exposure and the lawyers from our Law School alumni provided the right doses of humour and knowledge which was lapped up eagerly by my kids. The Q&A session was frantic but the lawyers answered every question put to them and were great with the kids, staying behind to entertain further questions.”

Sherman Ong ’95 had a screening of some of his short films at the Substation Guinness Theatre in October 2004. ‘Minor Issues’ showcased three of Sherman’s short films: ‘The Ground I Stand On’ (his documentary about the tenacity of a 75 year-old Malay lady) ‘State of Things’ (about the marginalisation of a minority language in Singapore) and ‘Exodus’ (the story of a relationship between a working-class Chinese shampoo girl and Javanese court dancer). Sherman has also won another film-making award - ‘Exodus’ was awarded the “Best Experimental Film” in the International Competition category at the 6th International Panorama of Independent Film- and Video-Makers, organised by the Cinema Club of the Trades Union Centre of Thessalonica, Greece. The International Panorama of Independent Film- and Video-Makers provides a “platform for the free expression to directors both from Greece and other countries of the world without censorship and control, respecting the culture and the principles of every people and every film- and video-maker separately.”
Nicholas Song ’96 says ‘ni hao’ from Vinson & Elkin’s Beijing office in China. He writes: “Beijing is an interesting challenge. It’s a large, sprawling city that has a lot of pollution, crazy traffic and lots of people. The pace of development is incredible.” He reports that classmate Lian Chin Chiang ’96 is also working in Beijing, having been posted there by his firm, Shearman & Sterling.

Sabine Lichtenberg ’96 sends greetings from Longmeadow, Massachusetts. Sabine left Singapore in August 1998, and over the next couple of years had a stressful but wonderful time as a stay-at-home-mom with her 3 little boys back in Germany. She writes: “In February 2003 my husband’s job brought our family to Massachusetts. We now live in a typical New England small town with milk bottles delivered to your doorstep in the morning. I am now back to work part-time with a big American Insurance Company working internationally. I am still profiting from my experience at NUS.”

After five years in the world of magazine publishing, Suzanne Lim ’96 has moved on (yet again). She can now be found at the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre, where she is the Marketing and Communications Manager. And yes, she does get paid a salary, in case anyone is wondering...

Lean Min-tze ’96 wrote to tell LawLink about his very special Christmas present: Baby Isabel Victoria Lean Yi Wei arrived on Christmas Day 2004 at 3:05 p.m., weighing in at 2.915 kg. “We had to wait a long while for her to come – 36 hours! We thought she was coming on Christmas Eve but she decided to wait to surprise us on Christmas Day instead.” Congratulations to Min-tze, and his lovely wife Amanda – 36 hours of labour, ouch!

... And another baby: Proud Papa Edmund Kronenburg ’96 writes: “I am pleased to announce that on 19 July 2004, I became the proud father of a beautiful baby girl - Athena Kirsten Kronenburg. Diana, my wife, and I love playing with her.” Yes, Edmund, we can tell from the photo!

... And yet another baby! The Class of ’96 sure are a productive bunch! Alex Yew ’96 says: “It has been a good year for us. Our bundle of joy, Jodie Yew, arrived on August 15 2004. I have also accepted a position with the project finance team of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) in London. CICB is the biggest bank in Canada, and in London they have a substantial investment banking team. My team will be a subset of this team and I will be doing infrastructure/project finance. For all the government projects which are to be done by the private sector, we will work with the consortiums to structure their package for the tender. The UK government is a pioneer in this area and the Singapore government has recently announced that it is also going down this route, called the Public-Private Partnership Scheme. My family and I are looking forward to more of the gloomy London weather and expensive, bland food.”

Watch out for Kelvin Tong ’97’s next movie, “The Maid”, which is slated for release in early 2005. His works were last seen on the small screen, when he executive-directed and wrote for Channel U’s comedy series “Durian King”.

Thiruchelvi A/P Periasamy ’98 passed away on 4 October 1999, from leukaemia. Her father, Mr. T Periasamy, wrote to the Law School on the fifth anniversary of her passing to let us know, and to say: “Kindly inform her friends who were so dear and near to her during her 4 years in NUS. I wish to thank all the wonderful people of the Law Faculty, who were so caring, loving and concerned about my late daughter.”

Karnan Thirupathy ’01 writes to tell us that he and classmate Johanna Tan ’01 got married in 2004. Karnan is practicing in a local shipping law firm, M/s T S Oon & Bazul. Johanna is at M/s Drew & Napier. Congratulations to the happy couple!
Send us your updates and photos! Email us at lawlink@nus.edu.sg or call us at 6-874-1305.

Edlyn was the very essence of compassion, of selflessness and of generosity. Her friends could always count on her to provoke laughter with her unique sense of humour. In fact, I do not know of any other person who could make us cry and laugh all at the same time. She had boundless energy that could barely be contained. In fact, I often wondered how someone as small as herself could summon so much energy and passion for life. She took it upon herself to make sure that she lived life without regrets.

I remember when she came to stay with me in London in the middle of my bar exams, and she would be watching “X-Files” while I was trying in vain to mug for my exams. I said I would blame her if I failed. She told me then that friendship was more important than anything else in the world, and I should be grateful that she even graced me with her presence! If I did not understand what she meant then, I fully understand it now. Looking back, I cherish those times even more.

She loved travelling and saw more things than I could ever hope to see in a lifetime. But wherever life took her, she made sure that she shared her experiences with all her friends. After she moved to Hong Kong, she constantly kept in touch with her friends in Singapore. And when she came back to visit, she would take pains to meet up with everyone. It was as though she knew that her time on earth was limited and she could not bear to waste a single minute.

My wife and I owe our happiness to her, as we met through her. We will always remember the message she gave us when she spoke at our wedding: That it is not the destination in life that is important but the journey, and who we took the journey with. And what a fulfilling journey it has been for Edlyn!

We will forever miss her smile, her laughter, her kindness and most of all her friendship. And we give thanks for the life of a special person that we are so proud to have as a good friend: the unique, the complex, the extraordinary and irreplaceable Edlyn; whose beauty, both internally and externally, will never be extinguished from our minds.

EDLYN YAP ’96… ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM

Our own Edlyn Yap ’96 was a victim of the 26 December 2004 tsunamis which devastated so much of this region. A bubbly and vivacious person, she will be remembered in Law School for her enthusiastic various Law Club activities during her years as a student here. Close friend Terence Koh, who first met Edlyn in Law School, shares his memories of her.

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We will forever miss her smile, her laughter, her kindness and most of all her friendship. And we give thanks for the life of a special person that we are so proud to have as a good friend: the unique, the complex, the extraordinary and irreplaceable Edlyn; whose beauty, both internally and externally, will never be extinguished from our minds.

George Sampson Akpan ’03 sends his greetings from Yokohama, Japan. He is currently at the United Nations University’s Institute of Advanced Studies. “My time at the Faculty was a wonderful one! A lot has happened since I left the Faculty. I taught at the University of West Indies Law Programme in the Bahamas for two years. I loved the SUNSHINE and the beautiful beaches of the Caribbean. I am now doing my Post-Doctorate with the United Nations University in Japan. I love it here too. The best part is that I had a baby girl early in the year and she has brought us so much joy! I miss Singapore though.” George, with your exciting life, we are surprised that you even had time to think about us!

Roger Tan LLM ’04 juggled his LLM course while maintaining an active full-time practice, as well as family life, and still managed to complete his LLM within the minimum 1 year period. He was kind enough to send LawLink a photo of himself with his proud family. Congratulations, Roger!

Roger Tan LLM ’04 and his very happy family.

If you would like to write a tribute in memory of a Law School alumnus, please contact us at: lawlink@nus.edu.sg or tel: 6-874-1305.