

APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR COUNSEL

New career milestone for 'Singapore's leading arbitrator'

HE MENTORED one and recruited the other. Now, all three legal eagles have been given the highest accolade in the profession.

Former judicial commissioner Sundaresh Menon, his former pupil Lee Eng Beng and ex-subordinate Thio Shen Yi were among six new Senior Counsel appointed yesterday.

The others are Mr Cavinder Bull and Mr Hri Kumar Nair from Drew & Napier and Dr Jeffrey Pinsler, a law lecturer at the National University of Singapore.

Senior Counsel are Singapore's equivalent of the Queen's Counsel in the British legal system and are often those with the highest standing in the profession, an extensive knowledge of the law and outstanding ability as advocates.

Singapore introduced the appointment of Senior Counsel in 1997. There are now 54 of them.

Mr Menon, a senior partner at Rajah & Tann, is well known in the field of commercial arbitra-



MR MENON, a senior partner at Rajah & Tann, is well regarded as a leading figure in the field of commercial arbitration.

ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

tion and was recognised as "unquestionably Singapore's leading arbitrator" in various law journals in 2005 and 2006.

He served a year on the Bench

news

the Sunday Times January 6 2008



LEGAL YEAR
2008

4

The other five new Senior Counsel



Name: Thio Shen Yi
Age: 40
Admitted to the Bar: 1993
What people don't know about me: I'm a foodie. Whether it's a Michelin three-star restaurant or a stall by the side of a road, my wife and I will hunt it down.



Name: Cavinder Bull
Age: 39
Admitted to the Bar: 1994
What people don't know about me: I like to go mountain-biking with my friends in Bukit Timah... It's good to be out there since being a lawyer, I am in an office most of the time.



Name: Hri Kumar Nair
Age: 41
Admitted to the Bar: 1992
What people don't know about me: I just became a father... People have been asking, "Are you sure? 1 1/2 years ago you became an MP, five months ago a father, now a Senior Counsel."



Name: Lee Eng Beng
Age: 40
Admitted to the Bar: 1997
What people don't know about me: I play games on the Xbox 360 such as Halo 3. I'm just a casual gamer but I set games to the highest difficulty level since I only have time to play it once.



Name: Jeffrey Dan Pinsler
Age: 53
Admitted to the Bar: 1981
What people don't know about me: I like to kick a football in an empty field. The only way I can score a goal is probably when there is no goalkeeper playing.

in the High Court and presided over several high-profile cases, including the civil suit brought on by the National Kidney Foundation against its former chief T.T. Durai and three former board members.

Mr Menon said his experience on the bench had given him an insight of "what works and what does not work" in judges' minds.

"The challenge for me now is to put these lessons into practice," he said.

The appointment was also especially poignant for Mr Thio and Mr Lee, who both thanked Mr Menon for his guidance.

"He taught us invaluable lessons and set a good example for all of us," said Mr Lee, who is also from Rajah & Tann.

Mr Thio, TSMP Law Corporation's joint managing director, saw the appointment as a chance to set an example to younger lawyers.

Leading by example is also how Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong described the role of the Senior Counsel.

CJ Chan said that in the past, the selection committee focused

on advocacy skills, legal knowledge and professional integrity as the main qualifying criteria.

In future, they will also consider the lawyer's contribution to the law in the form of academic teaching, writing, research and committee work for the various law institutions, said the CJ.

Chong Chee Kin