

November 2013
ISSN: 0219 - 6441

law link

EMBRACE YOUR
CHALLENGES
AMY LEE '82

WALKING WITH GIANTS
TPB MENON '61

AFFAIRS OF THE HEART-
MEDIATION & PRO BONO
GEORGE LIM '81

APPLYING THE LESSONS
LEARNT IN REAL LIFE
TEO GUAN SIEW '04

AWFULLY INSPIRING
LYN LEE '96

THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF
THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
FACULTY OF LAW

CONTENTS



2



4



6



10



16



23

2
Dean's Diary

Law School Highlights

4
Students Drive
Pro Bono Activities

5
Law Alumni
Mentorship Programme
Appreciation Evening

6
Class of 2013 Farewell Dinner
& Commencement

8
Launch of Centre for
Law & Business

aLAWMNUMS features

10
Amy Lee '82,
Embrace Your Challenges

14
George Lim '81,
Affairs Of The Heart –
Mediation & Pro Bono

15
Teo Guan Siew '04,
Applying the Lessons
Learnt in Real Life

16
Lyn Lee '96,
Awfully Inspiring

18
TPB Menon '61,
Walking with Giants

Reunions

20
NUS Law Reunion in Hong Kong

21
NUS Law Reunion in Shanghai

22
A Family Night Out

23
Class of '83 Reunion

24
Class of '93 Reunion

Welcome to the annual print edition of LawLink!

One of the great privileges of being at NUS Law is the tremendous history of which we are so proud. Our alumni have gone on to occupy the highest legal offices in the land – including the current and former Chief Justices, Attorneys-General, and Ministers for Law. We can also claim partners in all the major law firms in Singapore, as well as in New York and London, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

We celebrate the achievements of all our alumni who achieve significant milestones in the legal profession. In these pages you can learn more about our advisory council member Amy Lee '82, former Law Society President George Lim '81, and member of the first graduating class from NUS Law TPB Menon '61.

Other alumni follow paths less travelled. Some move into the public sector, such as Teo Guan Siew '04, who directs the enforcement division at the Monetary Authority of Singapore. Or they start private ventures, as Lyn Lee '96 did, when she launched Awfully Chocolate. Their stories are also to be found in this edition of LawLink.

But NUS Law graduates achieve in so many fields. For example, I was especially pleased this year to see our alumni featured so prominently in the National Day Parade. Selena Tan '94 was the creative director and Rani Singam '94 led one of the most moving renditions of Majulah Singapura that I have ever heard.

In their own way, all our alumni contribute to the multifaceted history of NUS Law.

And, every year, we add to that history with a new graduating class.



This year's ceremony received even more media attention than normal. This was partly due to the honorary doctor of laws degree that was conferred upon Singapore's founding prime minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew. The award recognised Mr Lee's extraordinary contributions to Singapore, but also the important role that law has played in Singapore's development.

There was also considerable interest in our graduate Darren Tan '13, who had spent more than ten years in prison before being admitted to NUS Law. Through his industry and dedication, he earned himself a second chance at being a productive member of society — a chance that he has embraced.

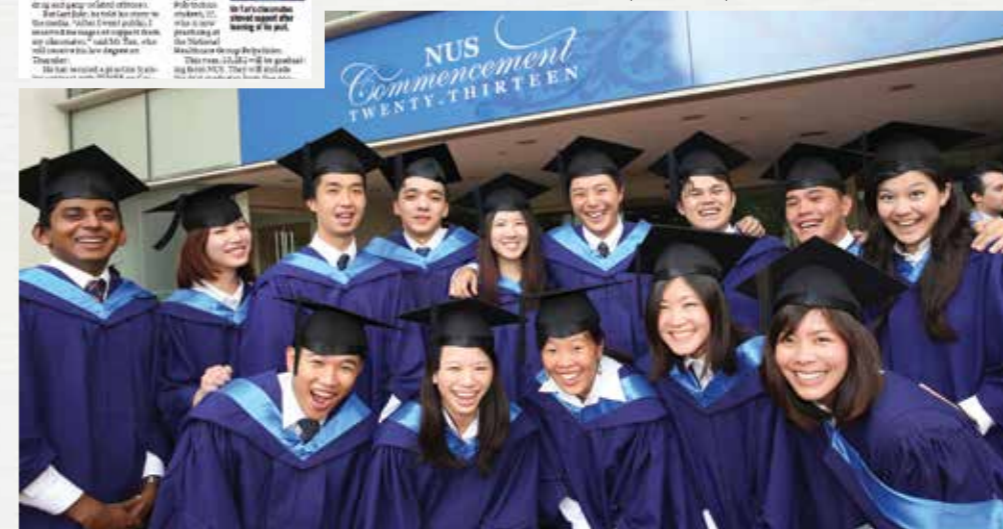
But to me, the most moving part of this year's ceremony was the fact that the Class of 2013 became our first to create a class gift as part of their graduation festivities. They explained this as an example of "paying it forward" — passing on good fortune from which they had



DEAN'S DIARY



Source: The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Ltd. Permission required for reproduction.



benefitted to others needier than themselves. None of the students were yet earning salaries, but I know that this support will be enormously significant to the students that it helps, and to all those who see it as an example of dedication to others.

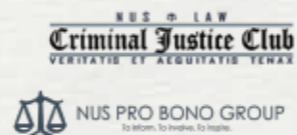
If you would like to explore how you can help future generations of students, please do not hesitate to contact Trina Gan '04 or myself. This could take the form of your own class gift, a scholarship in the name of a loved one, or a professorship in an area in which you would like to have a lasting legacy.

I hope you enjoy reading in these pages about the many activities going on at NUS Law. Do consider dropping by to learn more in person.

SIMON CHESTERMAN
Dean, NUS Law



Pro Bono Group President Denise Tay '16 and Vice-President Wilson Koh '16 explain Pro Bono Group activities to NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, NUS Board of Trustees Chairman Mr Wong Ngit Liong and Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong



STUDENTS DRIVE PRO BONO ACTIVITIES



NUS Law Students (from left) James Kwong '17, Jerrold Soh '18 and Clement Lin '17

The term *pro bono publico*, or as it is commonly known, pro bono, is a Latin phrase used for professional work provided voluntarily as a form of public service. Common in the legal profession, NUS Law has a long tradition of voluntary student involvement in pro bono that helps the disadvantaged, and opportunities will only get better with the Mandatory Pro Bono Programme.

Organised pro bono activities began at NUS Law in 2005 when the student-initiated Pro Bono Group (PBG) was formed to create pro bono opportunities for law students and raise awareness of the professional obligation to serve the community. Since then, PBG members have consistently taken leadership roles in pro bono activities, including winning the annual Student Volunteer Award for Subordinate Court volunteers. Current activities include assisting at legal clinics, teaching legal concepts to secondary school students in the home grown Legal Education and Awareness Programme (LEAP), and participating in research projects that support Singapore non-profit organisations such as AWARE, HOME and Project Law Help. The PBG's activities were recently highlighted when they were selected to present their work to the Prime Minister at the Student Showcase for the UTown Opening on Thursday, 17 October 2013. With more than 200 members and over 10 different projects running every year, the PBG's

goals are to involve, inform, inspire, and give back with the opportunities they have been blessed with.

The PBG is only part of the pro bono story at NUS Law, which is one of the few law schools in the world to offer pro bono placements as part of first year orientation, organized through the Freshmen Orientation Central Committee. The Criminal Justice Club (CJC), another student-driven group, has been instrumental in focusing attention on the criminal justice system. Formed in September 2009, the CJC initiated two key activities: the Innocence Project developed with the support of the Attorney General's Chambers, aims to promote just outcomes by examining possible cases of wrongful convictions; and the annual Criminal Justice Conference exposes secondary school and tertiary students to criminal justice issues. In development is the Courts Martial Project, which aims to render legal assistance to military servicemen. The CJC also supports several pro bono clinics, including HELP Centre and Remand Clinic, in collaboration with the Subordinate Courts of Singapore.

Since 2012, the NUS Pro Bono Office has been established to provide students with more support to develop and engage in pro bono work as part of the implementation of the Mandatory Pro Bono Programme in Singapore law

schools. At NUS Law, the programme takes the form of a second year module that requires students to do 20 hours of pro bono work. Students have already embraced the programme by initiating new projects and expanding on existing PBG and CJC projects.

For example, three first year students, Clement Lin '17, Jerrold Soh '18 and James Kwong '17, have already embarked on their personal project to help the elderly with legal issues. When asked how they intend to go about this initiative, Clement says "Right now we are getting in touch with organisations to find out more about the common problems they face with regards to the elderly and using that information, we will figure out how best we can help them. If possible, we will put them in touch with the people who are empowered to assist." The students hope to produce an information package which details information important to the elderly, such as the Central Provident Fund and housing matters. They intend to support lawyers who want to do pro bono work but who hesitate because information is not easily accessible.

Congratulations to all these students, who put their legal knowledge to use for the community from an early stage in their education, and who truly embody the pro bono spirit.

LAW ALUMNI MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME APPRECIATION EVENING



3 Oct 2013 was a memorable evening when about 140 mentors and mentees networked at Nine Thirty by Awfully Chocolate at the Esplanade. It was a night of appreciation for the outgoing mentors and a warm welcome for the incoming mentors.

The NUS Law Alumni Mentorship Programme (LAMP) is a collaboration between the Career Centre@Law and the NUS Law Alumni Office and it links first and second year NUS Law students with alumni mentors who can share first hand experiences, provide insights to the legal profession as well as practical guidance, encouragement and support. Student mentees will have the opportunity to become better equipped to make well-informed decisions about their professional development.

NUS Law Club President, Danial Hakim '16, shares "LAMP is undoubtedly beneficial, as it enables students to get up close and personal with current practitioners from a diversity of fields. The experiences and challenges shared by the mentors will give an insight into the profession and what life will be like after graduation and the options available within the industry".

If you are willing to share your valuable experiences with our students and would like to be updated on next year's LAMP, please do not hesitate to drop us an email at lawlink@nus.edu.sg



CLASS OF 2013 FAREWELL DINNER



CLASS OF 2013 COMMENCEMENT





LAUNCH OF CENTRE FOR LAW & BUSINESS

Early this year, NUS Law established a major centre for research on business law – the Centre for Law and Business (CLB). CLB is headed by Prof Tan Cheng Han '87 (CH) and Assoc Prof Lan Luh Luh '89 (LL). They share with Lam Pak Nian '14 (PN) their plans for CLB.

PN: HOW DID CLB COME ABOUT?

CH: CLB has its roots in the former Centre for Commercial Law Studies (CCLS). Unlike CCLS, CLB's research remit includes inter-disciplinary work, in particular the intersection between Law, Business and Economics in shaping commercial law.

Dean Simon Chesterman had asked me to lead CLB and I agreed, because senior faculty should all take a significant role in the work of the school beyond teaching and research. I've also spent most of my academic career in the area of business law so it seemed a natural fit.

PN: WHAT DO YOU ENVISION CLB TO BECOME?

CH: I envision CLB being a leading thought leader in the field of business law with a special focus on Asia. As such, our work will not only be inter-disciplinary but comparative as well.

PN: TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE TEAM THAT IS RUNNING CLB.

CH: CLB is managed by a board that I chair with Assoc Prof Lan Luh Luh as deputy chair. Prof Lan holds a joint appointment with the law and business schools, and provides a very valuable link to our business school colleagues. She also has degrees in law and business and is eminently suited to drive our inter-disciplinary projects.

The other board members comprise colleagues from the law and business schools. From the law school we have Prof Michael Bridge, Assoc Prof Ng Siew Kuan, Assoc Prof Stephen Phua and Assoc Prof Burton Ong who specialise in Commercial Transactions, Intellectual Property, Tax, and Competition Law respectively. From the business school, we have Prof Ivan Png who is an Economist, and Assoc Prof Mak Yuen Teen who is well known for his work in corporate governance. It is a very strong and diverse board.

PN: THE BUSINESS ARENA IS VERY WIDE. WHAT ARE SOME AREAS OF LAW AND BUSINESS THAT CLB IS MOST INTERESTED IN?

CH: As the law school is also establishing a Centre for Banking and Finance Law, CLB will try to avoid those areas though there will be some overlap in which case both centres are likely to collaborate. But the field is still a very wide one even without banking and finance. As such, the initial areas of focus will be Competition Law, Contract, Corporate Law and Governance, Intellectual Property, and Tax.

CLB also intends to work with the Centre for Asian Legal Studies on certain areas with an Asian focus.

LL: Together with the Centre for Governance, Institutions and Organisations (CGIO) of the NUS Business School, CLB also leads NUS to join the "Global Corporate Governance Colloquia" (GCGC) which is a series of annual world-class conferences on corporate governance research.

The other partner universities of GCGC include Stanford, Yale, Harvard and Columbia Universities in the US, Beijing, Tokyo and Seoul Universities in Asia and Frankfurt House of Finance, London Business School, Oxford University and Swedish House of Finance in Europe. Therefore, we will be sending participants to be involved in the colloquia from next year onwards.



PN: CAN YOU SHARE WITH US THE UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS AT CLB THAT WE SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR?

CH: CLB's programme over our first three years is shaping up to be quite exciting. We have just held our first major event on "Competition Law and Cartels – An Asian Perspective". This was co-sponsored by the Competition Commission of Singapore which also sent some of its officers to attend the sessions. It is envisaged that the papers presented will be published as a monograph.

Other events in the pipeline include conferences and symposia on Shareholder Remedies (organised with Vanderbilt University), Intellectual Property, International Insolvency Law, UNCITRAL Model Law on Arbitration, and Mergers and Acquisitions.

Prof Tan Cheng Han's current appointments include being Chairman of the Media Literacy Council, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Move-On and Filming Orders; Advisor to the Singapore Tae Kwon-do Federation, a Commissioner of the Competition Commission of Singapore, a member of the Governing Board of the International Association of Law Schools, a member of the Appeal Advisory Panel to the Minister for Finance, a member of the Singapore Youth Sports Development Committee, and a member of the Military Court of Appeal. He is also a director of several listed companies.



Assoc Prof Lan Luh Luh currently holds a joint position with both the NUS Business School and NUS Law School. She teaches Corporate Law and Finance, Corporate and Securities Law and Corporate Governance at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, including the joint-degree UCLA-NUS Executive MBA programme. She is currently the Co-Director for the Corporate Governance and Financial Reporting Centre. She is also the Area Chair for Law at the Department of Strategy & Policy, NUS Business School.



Amy Lee '82, who has just taken up post as CEO and Director at Steward Asia Investment, also sits on the NUS Law Advisory Council, and maintains ties with her alma mater, Nanyang Girls' High School as part of the School Management Committee. In a chat with *Desmond Chng '15*, she shares more about her memories of school, continuously challenging herself and the importance of exploring a life beyond the ordinary.

EMBRACE YOUR CHALLENGES

AMY LEE '82

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ASSOC PROF DAVID TAN



IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE A SET OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES. KNOW WHERE YOU'RE WILLING TO GO, AND WHERE YOU WILL NOT GO. THERE ARE NO EASY ANSWERS; IN FACT THERE ARE NO ANSWERS AT ALL.

AMY LEE '82 started out as a conveyancing lawyer, before moving into corporate practice with a focus on properties. From there, she had a hand in regulatory work and even drafted legislation for the Thai government. She had also carved a niche in project consultancy on a public and private partnership (PPP) basis. She was CEO of Hogan Lovells Lee & Lee, before her current role at an asset management start-up, Steward Asia Investment.

A straight talker – she is not one to mince her words. “I probably got that from my Peranakan heritage,” she says.

NOT CHALLENGING? SOMETHING'S NOT QUITE RIGHT

With such a wealth of legal experience, it is hard not to wonder why someone would want to make such a move so late in a career. “I didn't go out looking for this new job in asset management,” she explained. But she is always on the lookout for new challenges.

“If you're in your 40s and you don't feel a challenge, something is not quite right. I didn't think I could do the same old, same old – that might have been easy, but it just wasn't in my nature.”

So Amy leveraged on her legal experience to work on the Singapore Sports Hub PPP – which she describes as “Project Work 101”. She says of her time working on her first project, “Everything that could go wrong went wrong – from the financial crisis to hyperinflation. And because you work so closely with everyone, when things go wrong – that's when you learn the most. I learnt something new everyday.”

When a long-time client asked her to join him in setting up a new asset management firm, she accepted the challenge. “I couldn't have wished for a better opportunity,” she says.

“Anybody who works for me is given this spiel: every six months, stop and ask yourself what is it that you have learnt. I don't care what you've learnt, but you've got to learn something.”

“If you're in your comfort zone, you will end up farther back from where you've started. People don't like change; people like comfort zones. But it's bad for you.”

BEING YOUNG & IGNORANT

Challenges are something Amy is quite accustomed to. “I studied in Chinese schools in the 1960s and did all my subjects in Chinese. Then I went to Raffles Institution and I had quite a culture shock to have to do everything in English. I survived RI and got into law, only to have to deal with long cases – in English!”

But being a youth had its benefits. “When you don't know any better, when you're young and ignorant – you see, ignorance goes a long way – you flounder and you flail (not fail, thankfully), and then you get the hang of it.”

Happily, what seemed like a curse turned out to be a blessing. “When I eventually joined an international firm, guess what – finally, there was use for my Chinese education! I went to work on projects in Chongqing, China. The thing about going to a Chinese school is that you not only speak the language, but you also understand the culture. It's not something that is taught; it's just in your DNA.”

With youth on her side, there was the seemingly limitless energy that allowed her to be versatile and to learn as much as she could. “When you're young, it is easy to be versatile – you can do it all. When you're in your 20s, regardless of what others throw at you, you've still got the energy. That's your advantage – you just do everything, learn everything, and build up your practical knowledge,” she says.

BACK IN THE DAY

It was a very different time when Amy first started out in practice.

It didn't offer as many opportunities, but life was much kinder. I'm not sure I would have survived as well as I have if I were born in this

generation. It's a different world." For one, she feels that the world spins much faster. "In the past, when there was only the land line, clients cannot call you at home. But now, you're always contactable on your BlackBerry."

However, Amy observes that young lawyers today are lucky to have regional and international opportunities to do sophisticated work. "My one regret, when I came out as a young lawyer, was not being able to do regional work. These days, young lawyers get to do regional work, but in my time, that was not applicable to me. It wasn't a global world and the focus was on the local." Amy has since done her fair share of regional work – from airport projects in the Philippines, to water projects in Indonesia.

Legal practice in Singapore has also changed quite a bit.

"We were not born a financial centre. It was only when Singapore got more sophisticated that the lawyers here had to engage with the law at a more sophisticated level." But as lawyers and law firms become more sophisticated, there will be greater business pressures. Amy lets on that her philosophy is "regardless of what you pay me, I will do my best for you, and always look after you – because that is what I owe my family, my friends, and my clients". However, for her, things are now more complicated, with business and budget pressures.

This is why Amy feels strongly about professional ethics. "If you compromise your principles all the time, then you've got none."

"It's very important to have a set of guiding principles. Know where you're willing to go, and where you will not go. There are no easy answers; in fact there are no answers at all."

"It's only right or wrong in relation to yourself; and you are the one who has to live with it."

HER ADVICE TO YOUNG LAWYERS

"My father's advice to me was 'Work hard, and you'll get there.' These days, that's not enough – you've got to work hard, and work smart." For those still figuring out what to do with their careers, Amy suggests doing some reverse engineering. "You have to know where you want to end up, before you can figure out how to get there. You don't know what you'd like to do? If you know what you're not good at – that's the flip side to finding out what you like."

As it is, coming out fresh from law school and diving head first into practice is challenging. "When you come out as a young lawyer, it's not just about knowing the law. That's such a basic building block."

What is more important is whether you are someone people want to work with. "If you're competing with just your degree and your grades, it will be very difficult to distinguish yourself from others. There are a lot of clever people around, but what is it that will make people want to work with you?"

For Amy, she looks forward to working with people who have the intangible qualities like loyalty, honesty and being principled – people whom she can respect and trust. "The intangibles matter more because everything else, all things being equal, doesn't set you apart. I think it was the intangibles that brought me to where I am."

She also shares that she struggles with "working with people who have never had a hiccup in their lives. I'd rather work with someone who had a zero once because he or she had goofed off. Failure is not a bad thing."

Another piece of advice that Amy has for young lawyers is to "keep all your options open". This includes keeping an eye out for regional and international opportunities. "When you're in your twenties, you can afford to go overseas – your parents are healthy, and you don't have to worry about your car or condo."

However, she warns that for those contemplating working overseas for the rest of their lives, "you need to think of your parents and grandparents who have loved you your whole life, and how much of a difference you make to them, beyond how much you earn and what your title is in the firm."

Being on a lookout for new opportunities is important, especially since there is no longer a 'cradle to grave' practice. "You have to follow the market. It's like quicksand. You have to tiptoe very quickly to solid ground, build on it and then tiptoe very quickly to the next. Don't do what everybody else is doing. Find yourself a niche, something different."

"Don't start narrowing down your choices. If I had done that, I would have chucked my Chinese education aside and wouldn't have enjoyed the advantage when the opportunity came. Use all the knowledge that you have, whether it is lessons from your primary school days, or your language, culture – everything."

KEEPING IT REAL

Amy has never allowed her work to define her. "You need to have a sustainable model. If you were to give up everything – your family and your health – just to be the best lawyer around, I know I wouldn't describe you as successful."

"You will have to manage your career with your family. Even your family life doesn't stay the same – you may have kids, the kids grow up and fly the nest – there are different considerations."

Amy is a self-professed lover of travelling, trekking and photography. She shares that she was an avid scuba diver in her 20s and when she started her family, she moved on to snow skiing because that was what her children enjoyed.

These days, Amy spends her down time trekking. Last year, she completed a trek to the Annapurna base camp, a section of the Himalayas in north-central Nepal. In recent months, she has been training for an upcoming trek to the Everest base camp.

Amy also holds the record for being the Singaporean who has participated in the most Habitat for Humanity house builds, in places like Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Nepal. She also sits on the Board of Directors for Habitat for Humanity Singapore.

Going out to exotic, far flung places helps to keep things real for Amy. "There's a very big world out there, and your job doesn't define your world."

"On these trips, you see the real value of money. Even if you offered money, even if you have a whole stack of credit cards, it would be useless – there are no five-star luxuries for you to buy."

Amy recounts once having to scrimp on toilet paper because a few pieces were given out during check-in, and the inn would not give any extra. From then on, she always brings extra rolls on such trips.

It is from these experiences that she learnt to appreciate how sometimes the pain you feel is a mere inconvenience. Recently, Amy experienced a power surge at home, which blew out the electrical circuits. "At first, I was very stressed because, I'm not very good with equipment. But then I realised, if you have a problem that you can throw money at and it will go away – that's not a problem. You're just suffering a momentary inconvenience."

Her wanderlust is strong. "Before I die, I've got a huge bucket list – I'm going on a National Geographic expedition, one way or another. I'm going."



BEFORE I DIE, I'VE GOT A HUGE BUCKET LIST – I'M GOING ON A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPEDITION, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. I'M GOING.

FONDEST MEMORY OF LAW SCHOOL

"The study of the law, I will always encourage. The discipline of the mind – nothing compares." However, for Amy, a sense of humour is also important; the ability to see the lighter side of things.

"In my class of '82, there were a lot Malaysians who would take the train back home on the last day of school. So the Singaporean boys decided they would play a joke on their Malaysian classmates. They put up a notice saying that a class would be held during the holidays. The Malaysians fell for it, they did not go back. They ended up playing football together."

YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHERE YOU WANT TO END UP, BEFORE YOU CAN FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET THERE.

AFFAIRS OF THE HEART— MEDIATION & PRO BONO

GEORGE LIM '81



What is the most rewarding aspect of your work, both as an arbitrator and as a mediator?

Sitting as an arbitrator is interesting as you have to put yourself in the shoes of a judge. Parties look to you to be fair in the application of the law and the process, to listen and be open until all the evidence and submissions are heard. This is not as easy as it sounds, but if a losing party disagrees with your decision but tells you he had a good hearing, that can be very rewarding.

In my mediations, I try to create a safe environment for parties to have a dialogue and look for mutually beneficial solutions. Unconstrained by pleadings or formalities of law or evidence, the parties are free to come up with creative outcomes, which a court cannot order.

For example, in a mediation which I conducted involving a dispute between husband and wife over the division of their assets, the parties agreed to give the disputed portion of the assets to their children. So even though there was a divorce, the settlement paved the way for a better continuing relationship. It is very rewarding to see parties resolve their disputes having played a part in the settlement.

A discussion paper by the SAL proposed that lawyers should offer a minimum of 16 hours of free legal work per year. As the Law Society Pro Bono Ambassador, do you feel that Pro Bono work should be made compulsory?

My feelings are mixed. From the perspective of those of us who have been doing pro bono work, we will tell you that it has to come from the heart. However, the reality is that if there is no change, the work falls on a small group of volunteers. So I would advocate getting more law firms and lawyers to voluntarily commit to doing X hours of pro bono work each year that is backed by a system of reporting.

George Lim '81, SC, is a member of the Regional Panel of Arbitrators of the Singapore International Arbitration Centre, and a Fellow of the Singapore Institute of Arbitrators. He is also on the Arbitration Panels of the Singapore Institute of Architects and the Law Society of Singapore. A certified mediator with the International Mediation Institute based in The Hague, he has helped to set up the Singapore Mediation Centre (SMC) in 1997 and conduct mediations regularly. In an exclusive interview with LawLink, he talks about his role as arbitrator and mediator, plus his thoughts on pro bono amongst others.
By Tham Shen Hong '14

As a SC, you have arguably risen to the top of your profession. Has being a SC changed your life or your practice? How so?

Being a SC is a privilege, and involves a huge responsibility. You are expected to set a good example both in and out of court. It has made me more conscious of my role as a senior lawyer (especially to younger lawyers), and the need to give back to the profession.

What are some of your best memories of your days at NUS Law? How has your time at NUS shaped your career?

I graduated in 1981. My cohort was relatively small: about a hundred. I am grateful to our teachers at NUS Law for giving us a sound foundation. And because the class was small, many of us became friends. The main partners in my firm were my classmates in law school! Practice becomes easier when you deal with lawyers you know; this is one advantage NUS graduate lawyers have.

What are some things which, you would share with the younger members of the legal fraternity? Is there a secret to your success which you could impart to aspiring lawyers, especially those who wish to venture into the realms of arbitration and mediation?

I think there is no short cut to being a good lawyer. You have to know the law, and work hard. That said, you need a life. So pace yourself, and don't burn out. If you can find yourself a good mentor, that will help. Winning and money are not everything; there has to be integrity in the way we practise. Whether you want to be a litigator, arbitrator or mediator – read widely.

In your view, what are the major problems/opportunities facing the legal industry, and where do you see the Singapore legal landscape in 10 years?

I have concerns about the way practice is heading. How do we retain the principle of always acting in the best interests of the client? How do we practise with integrity and make law affordable to the common man or the poor? How do we stop our young lawyers from burning out? The profession (and policymakers) need to address these issues. Otherwise, in 10 years, we will have a scenario where the practice of law is seen only as a business and out of reach for those with less resources.

On the positive side, I believe many younger lawyers would like to practise law in a more meaningful way, for example through doing some pro bono work. Is the practice of law a business or a service? Can the two be married? It is a question of balance, but we can achieve it if we are willing to put our heads and hearts together.

YOU GRADUATED FROM NUS LAW WITH FIRST CLASS HONOURS, WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE?

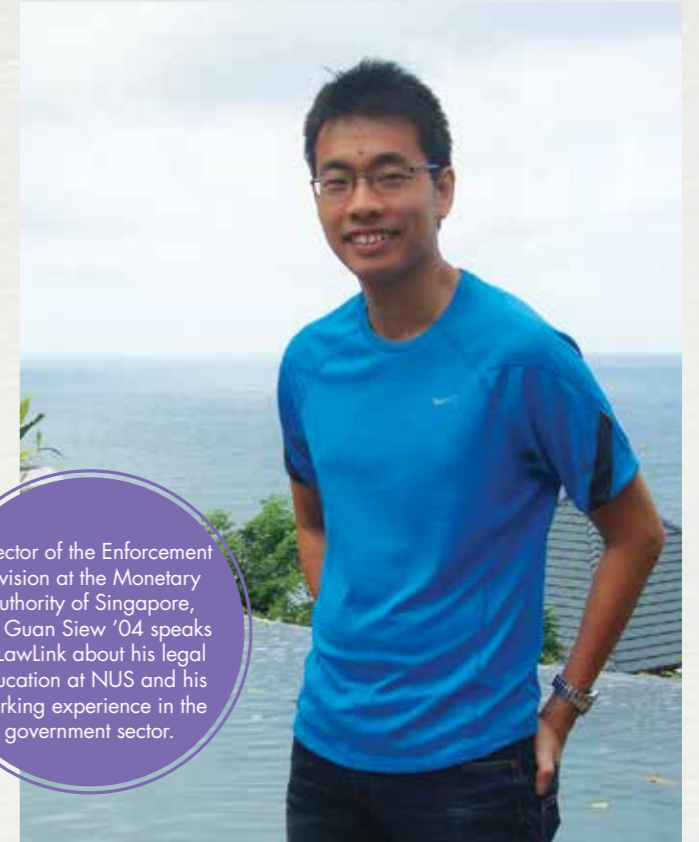
When I graduated, I had the opportunity to apply for the Justices' Law Clerk programme. Fresh out of law school, the possibility of clerking for appellate and High Court judges attracted me to join the legal service. I suppose the further question is why I decided to continue in the service after clerkship. The main reason is the immense scope and diversity in the job of a public sector lawyer. You can be exercising prosecutorial discretion, drafting legislation, debating on legal policy and engaging in negotiations, or even discharging judicial functions. The broad spectrum of work means constant challenges, as well as different and new areas in which to contribute. Also, the considerations at play can go beyond commercial interests of individual parties to broader questions of law and policy. This makes for an exciting, engaging, and fulfilling career.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU LEARNT IN LAW SCHOOL?

Law school of course equips all of us with the necessary legal knowledge, and the analytical and research skills, in order for us to practise the law. But what I find most crucial is to understand the purpose or rationale behind the law: not just what the law is, but why, and perhaps even whether it is right. My legal education at NUS developed an open, inquiring and independent mind. It taught me never to be afraid of challenging assumptions, and questioning whether the legal position is fair and just, and whether it achieves the desired objectives. I believe, and I think it's fascinating, that the panoply of rules that make up the body of our law, cutting across different subject matter and areas, can ultimately be distilled into certain universal and fairly basic principles. The practice of law is never solely about the application of black letter rules, but also its reason, rectitude and proportionality, and I'm particularly grateful for the four years in law school which prepared me well for the challenges ahead. It is only with a critical awareness of the underlying philosophies and motivations behind the law that we can apply it in a way that is sensitive and appropriate to the context, deliver submissions that are convincing to the judge because the arguments are ultimately grounded in good sense, and make policy decisions that are sound and underpinned by the mischief behind the law. In the course of my work, I still find myself sometimes referring to my notes in law school to remind myself of first principles, the history and the raison d'être of any given area of the law!

HOW DID YOUR EXPERIENCE AS ASSISTANT REGISTRAR IN THE SUPREME COURT AND SUBSEQUENTLY AS A PROSECUTOR WITH THE AGC HELP YOU IN YOUR CURRENT FIELD?

My experience as an Assistant Registrar and then as a Prosecutor allowed me to acquire knowledge and gain familiarity in both civil litigation and criminal prosecution. This is especially valuable for me in my present role, which is in the enforcement of laws penalising capital market misconduct. Civil penalty actions brought by the Monetary Authority of Singapore can be perceived as essentially a hybrid of the civil and



Director of the Enforcement Division at the Monetary Authority of Singapore, Teo Guan Siew '04 speaks to LawLink about his legal education at NUS and his working experience in the government sector.

APPLYING THE LESSONS LEARNT IN REAL LIFE

TEO GUAN SIEW '04

criminal legal processes. It is a rather unique area where the civil procedural mechanism is utilised to enforce the criminal law which sanctions misconduct such as insider trading and market manipulation.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE LOOKING TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS?

We should all decide for ourselves the path we wish to take in our pursuit of a career in the law. I encourage budding law students to start thinking about how best they can apply what they have learnt in law school in real life, be it in private practice advancing the interests of their clients, in the public sector, or contributing to scholarship in academia. Ask yourself: in which field can you excel, where can you make the most impact, and what would be the most meaningful to you?



AWFULLY INSPIRING

LYN LEE '96

Awfully Chocolate is now a household name, well known for its quality, and has stores in several major Asian cities.

By Allison Tan
Hui Ling '16

LAWLINK : WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO VENTURE INTO THIS INDUSTRY?

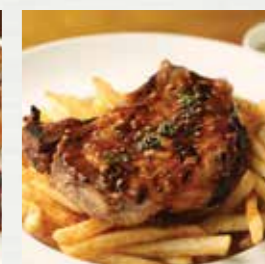
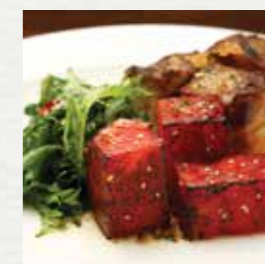
LYN: My friends inspired me! We were working full time in different industries, and thought it would be adventurous to try doing something new, something of our own. I didn't know anything about business, but I envisioned creating the perfect chocolate cake. A cake I could eat every day. And I still eat it almost every day!

LAWLINK : WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACED AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

LYN: Boy, where do we start? The business was a challenge from Day 1, but after 15 years, I've grown used to the ups and downs, and I've even grown to love them in a way. Although it isn't easy, I feel very alive doing what I do and I wouldn't want it any other way.

We started out selling only the whole All Chocolate Cake in a tucked-away location in the Katong area. And from the word go, people thought it was a crazy idea. But I think sticking with the unconventional approach made people sit up and take notice of us.

Today, the biggest challenge we face is a lack of manpower. Like many businesses in the service industry, we previously relied on foreigners to conduct much of our operations. And due to the recently enacted quota for hiring foreign workers, it has been very difficult for us, and many others, to continue operations, as most Singaporeans simply aren't interested in doing the work involved. I see this as a natural consequence of having a small, highly educated local population. But people do need to realize the cost of putting such rules in place. When we discourage enterprise, we discourage dreams and motivation, our nation loses some of its soul and character.



LAWLINK : HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE IN NUS LAW HELPED YOU MAKE AWFULLY CHOCOLATE A SUCCESS?

LYN: It made me aware of how many one-sided clauses are there in contracts and what I need to do to avoid such pitfalls.

LAWLINK : WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR BEST MEMORIES AT NUS LAW?

LYN: I remember singing with my friends in concerts and play acting at camps.

LAWLINK : IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT YOUR LAW SCHOOL DAYS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

LYN: I wish I had gotten to know my husband when we were in law school!

LAWLINK : WHO WAS YOUR FAVOURITE LAW PROFESSOR AND WHY?

LYN: I generally don't have favourites, except when it comes to chocolate! But I do remember many professors fondly. One example would be Prof Michael Hor, who gave me my first D grade for my very first law assignment. A few years ago, I bumped into him at the Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta and showed him how to get through immigration a bit faster. He seemed very impressed, so I think I have redeemed myself!

ONE MUST BE DISCERNING WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO DO CERTAIN THINGS.

LAWLINK : IF SOMEONE WERE LOOKING TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS AND PURSUE ENTREPRENEURSHIP, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THEM?

LYN: It's always healthy to be motivated and feel alive, but one must also be discerning when deciding whether to do certain things. You must know when it's a good time or a bad time and plan accordingly. Honestly, I don't have much advice, but we can always chat over chocolate cake. So see you at Awfully Chocolate! Or Everything with Fries and Sinpopo...*

* These are restaurants Lyn started with the staff from Awfully Chocolate.

Mr TPB Menon '61 graduated from the National University of Singapore (then the University of Malaya) with an LL.B. (Hons) in 1961. Since then, he has spent 50 years in an expansive and rewarding legal career, and is currently a Partner (Consultant) at Wee Swee Teow & Co, after holding various positions in the legal profession. LawLink is privileged to be able to interview Mr Menon, as he shares with us his experiences and memories throughout his notable career.
By Justin Ho '16

WALKING WITH GIANTS

TPB MENON '61

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A PLACE FOR HONEST, HARDWORKING AND COMPETENT LAWYERS.

In a speech made at the 50th Anniversary Dinner of the graduating LL.B. (Hons) Class of 1961, former Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong '61 described his classmate Mr Menon as "the most experienced property and trust lawyer in private practice".

Going back to where it all began, Mr Menon's interest in his field of expertise first stemmed from his teacher in NUS Law, Prof LA Sheridan, who was also the first Dean of the law school. He fondly recalls Prof Sheridan as a "difficult task master", but nevertheless one that first piqued his interest in equity and trust.

Mr Menon's pupil master and mentor, the late Eric Choa, further exposed him to the intricacies of trust law and the finer points of drafting pleadings, affidavits and various trust documents. Other practitioners like the late Wee Eng Lock, CC Tan and MJ Namazie, also played a part in imparting valuable knowledge and experience, shaping Mr Menon into the man that he is today.

Some of Mr Menon's notable works in the challenging area of trust law include the Sallim Talib Settlements, the Basarahil's Estate and the Chow Chor Poon Estate, all of which made headlines in the local legal sphere. Despite his wealth of experience, Mr. Menon acknowledges his predecessors, crediting the successes in his career to them, calling himself "lucky to have stood on the shoulders of these legal giants".

TIME IN THE BAR COUNCIL

Given Mr Menon's involvement and notable positions within various legal committees over the course of his career, he finds his time in the Bar Council to be the most fulfilling. Mr Menon was first elected to the Bar Committee in 1963 under the recommendation of the late Justice Punch Coomaraswamy and enjoyed 20 fruitful years in the Bar Council, with four years as its President (from 1980 to 1983).

When asked about his experiences in the Bar Council, Mr Menon was glad to point out senior lawyers (and former presidents of the Law Society) like CC Tan, Graham Hill and Harry Wee whom he had the advantage of working with and learning from. Mr Menon found his time in the Bar Council to be fulfilling for a number of reasons.

The first reason was the valuable advice of then Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin, who as a former member of the Bar appreciated its problems. The second reason stemmed from the close ties the Bar shared with EW Barker who was then Minister for Law. Third, then Attorney-General Tan Boon Teik, who though impatient at times, "appreciated the role played by the Bar in the administration of justice". Last but not least, the Bar Council was staffed by heavyweights, all of whom could be "relied upon to act reasonably and rationally". Mr Menon considers himself very fortunate to have worked alongside such valuable colleagues that made his time in the Bar Council memorable and worthwhile.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Not only was Mr Menon active in the local legal scene, he also made a name for himself in the international legal community. Besides being heavily involved in the Bar Council, Mr Menon also enjoyed being a member of the ASEAN Law Association (ALA), founded in 1980, which is made up of a good mix of people spanning the ASEAN legal sphere.

Alongside Mrs Tan Sook Yee (former Dean) and Justice Chao Hick Tin, Mr Menon was one of the founding members of the ALA. He was also its president from 1984 – 1986. Through this association, Mr Menon has fostered many ties and friendships in the ASEAN region, another hallmark of a successful pioneer and lawyer.

BETWEEN THE GOOD & THE BAD

Having been in the profession for over 50 years now, Mr Menon has witnessed firsthand the transformation of the legal profession from its early days to its current complex state today. The legal profession has seen a huge jump from 200 practicing lawyers to over 4,000 lawyers on the roll, and the comparative dilution of the legal profession then and now led us to wonder what separated the good lawyers from the bad.

Appropriately, Mr Menon opined that labeling a lawyer as either good or bad is largely improper. Quoting Lord Hailsham in his book "A Sparrow's Flight", "a lawyer with sufficient intelligence, hard work and industry can make a success of his career at the Bar".

However, given the superficial tendency to characterise a lawyer's success by his affluence or the car that he drives, the perception of lawyers has changed. Instead, Mr Menon prefers to refer to the age old qualities of "honesty and integrity", otherwise "moral strength or character", and strongly urges lawyers in this age and day to abide by those principles.

THOUGHTS ON PROPERTY & TRUST

As one of the oldest and most trusted professionals in his field of expertise, Mr Menon has this to say about the practice of property and trust. The harsh reality is that it takes plenty of hard work and time for any aspiring lawyer to make any headway in these specialised fields now.

Of course, this holds true across the board for almost any profession, but it manifests doubly in the areas of property and trust. Being in the know for the past 50 years, Mr Menon recognises the shortage of good law firms specialising in these areas. The problem is further exacerbated by the dearth of trust lawyers, especially after the passing on of eminent trust lawyers like Nasir Mallal, CC Tan, MJ Namazie and Eric Choa.

That said, Mr Menon is hopeful about the future of the legal profession and what the burgeoning influx of foreign lawyers may bring to our table, in terms of supplementing the current system with new perspectives and ideas.

The globalisation of the local legal field has led to an indubitable shift in mindsets as to how we can and should work, and though the future still remains largely unknown, Mr Menon leaves us all with this bit of pragmatic and heartfelt advice, that "there will always be a place for honest, hardworking and competent lawyers".

NUS LAW REUNION IN HONG KONG

Date: 25 October 2013, Friday
Venue: Wyndham the 4th



NUS LAW REUNION IN SHANGHAI

Date: 27 October 2013, Sunday
Venue: Xin Yuan Lou, Ruijin Hotel



A FAMILY NIGHT OUT

Close to 200 members of the alumni and their family members attended the very first NUS Law Alumni Family Day on 31 Aug 2013.

Fulfilling a promise to be an enjoyable evening of fun, food and games, adults and children alike indulged themselves in activities such as face painting, a game of Jenga blocks stacking and balloon modelling. And of course, a fun family day out is never complete without a bouncy castle, which some grown-ups would have loved jumping into as well!

With helium-filled balloons in red, orange and blue given out in generous numbers, the burst of colours at the Upper Quadrangle only added to the infectious festive mood. "Carnival" type bites were served to satisfy the appetites with offerings like popcorn, candy floss, and local favourites Ramly burgers, Roti John, fish balls and cheesy sausages. Wong Peck Lin '94 also supported the event by bringing in her very popular Udders ice cream.

The highlight of the event was the movie screening of comedy "Legally Blonde", which starred Reese Witherspoon as Elle Woods, the sorority girl who struggles to win over her ex-boyfriend by earning a law degree. Having a good laugh under the stars over some popcorn and the



company of their friends and family, we hope our alumni enjoyed their time back at the Law School.

Always looking at opportunities to strengthen the bond between the Law School and its graduates, the NUS Law Alumni team headed by Trina Gan '04, organises various activities such as class reunions, social events and networking sessions. Do contact Trina and her

team at lawlink@nus.edu.sg or like our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/NUS.Law) for updates on future events!

Only when our classmate, Bryan Ghows, sent a shout-out about a 30th year reunion did it dawn on most of us, that, yes, 30 years had passed since our graduation from NUS Law. After we had gotten over the initial disbelief, we readily agreed that a reunion would be fun. Bryan kindly agreed to helm the committee and co-opted a few of us into the effort. Locations were checked out, food tasted, menu chosen. Budgets were examined and re-examined to see whether the alcohol could be free-flow or not! Broad hints were dropped to owners of wine cellars and friends of wine distributors. Pictures were requested of our good old days as it was proposed to put together a picture montage to be displayed during the reunion. Emails flew fast and furious and the event finally took shape, with the help of the NUS Law Alumni Office. Classmates from Perth, Shanghai and Malaysia promised to come and did indeed attend.

The reunion was held on 17 Aug 2013 at the University Club and about half the Class of 1983 attended. The excitement was palpable that evening as former classmates greeted each other with cries of "You are looking good" and "You haven't changed one bit". People were fondly hugging and updating each other on all that had taken place in their lives – job switches, country migrations, number of children, ages of children. Classmates who had passed on were remembered. Even those who could not make it to the reunion were remembered in the many conversations going on simultaneously. Unsurprisingly, there was a great deal of reminiscing about our years at Kent Ridge.



The Class of 1983 was an animated crowd. One felt sorry for the other patrons at the club as our high spirits would have surely intruded on their evening. We were fortunate in that, both, our Dean then, Mrs Tan Sook Yee and the current Dean, Prof Simon Chesterman not only graced the occasion but stayed with us through the evening mingling and chatting. Our former lecturers, Mr Kim Seah Teck Kim, Assoc Prof Lye Lin Heng and Mr Bill Ricquier added to the merriment.

All in all, it was a great evening and was made all the more meaningful as we managed to raise more than \$45,000 for the Class of 1983 Bursary.

Contributed by *Kultip Gill '83*





CLASS OF '93 REUNION



20 years! 2 decades! Has it really been that long since we graduated? The youthful-looking members of the Class of 1993 exclaimed to each other on 20 Sep 2013. Indeed, it has been that long, but hand to heart, everyone looked good. Even better than they ever did in law school...

Led by our academic classmates, Alan Tan and Wee Meng Seng (these two have not left law school, you see), almost everyone in the class was contacted and promised to come. And those who couldn't attend sent their best wishes from afar. Stefanie Yuen, Mabel Ha, Michael Kraal and Koh Su Chern deserve special mention for their sleuthing skills – between them, they helped hunt down most of the class. Special thanks also to Burton Chen and Lynette Chan, Audrey Goh and Ho Seng Chee, and Regina Tay and Alex Ee. We were also delighted to see our professors, Lye Lin Heng '73, Michael Hor '84 and Tan Cheng Han '87, none of whom looked a day older than when we last saw them. It must be the air on campus. We would also like to thank the law school administrators for helping to organize such a great evening.



Amidst the good food and beer and great company, Stefanie Yuen, Steven Liew and Manoj Sandrasegara announced the Class of 1993 Bursary campaign and sought classmates' support to raise \$150,000 in aid of needy students in the law school. Stef has kindly agreed to lead the campaign with Steve and Manoj, and they have already raised upwards of \$30,000 for the Bursary. A great start indeed. In the next few months, they hope to reach out to as many classmates as possible, so Class of 1993-ers, if you're reading this, we're counting on your support!



Contributed by Alan Tan '93

E: lawlink@nus.edu.sg
T: 6516 3616
F: 6779 0979

Update your particulars at:
http://law.nus.edu.sg/alumni/alumni_update_particulars.asp
Law Link: NUS Faculty of Law
469G Bukit Timah Road,
Eu Tong Sen Building,
Singapore 259776

www.nuslawlink.com
www.law.nus.edu.sg/alumni