



# SCHOOL OF LAW ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2021 EDITION

School of  
Law



# ASSOCIATE DEAN'S MESSAGE



**Alvin See**  
Associate Dean  
(Undergraduate Curriculum  
& Teaching)  
Associate Professor of Law

Dear alumni,

As we welcome the new year, we bring to you another edition of the Alumni Newsletter. In the previous edition, we featured several alumni who had ventured into the law and technology space. For this edition, we look at a variety of other interesting and meaningful things some of you have done. Although we can only capture a small portion of your achievements in this newsletter, we want you to know that we are proud of all of you. If you are still striving to make a mark in your chosen field, please let us know if we can help in any way.

Please also join me in welcoming Assistant Professor Dorcas Quek Anderson, who will be taking over as the Associate Dean responsible for alumni matters. Please show her all the support you can! In my capacity as Associate Dean for undergraduate curriculum and teaching, I will continue to look out for opportunities to bring you back to the classroom. In the meantime, do follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn for news and updates about the school. Of course, you are most welcome to come back and visit us as often as you can!

Thank you very much for your continuous support. All the best for your future endeavours!



**Dorcas Quek Anderson**  
Associate Dean  
(Student, Staff & Alumni Affairs)  
Assistant Professor of Law

Dear alumni,

Greetings to you in this new year. I trust that you have started this year with optimism despite the challenges that you may have encountered last year. Having conducted many Zoom seminars, I have come to appreciate the value of the "human touch" in our relationships. I hope that you too have managed to forge closer relationships with your peers, colleagues and family in the past year.

As incoming Associate Dean responsible for alumni engagement, I am grateful to my predecessors, Associate Professors Tan Seow Hon and Alvin See, for their excellent work in reaching out to you. This newsletter is part of our overall efforts to forge deeper connections with you. Our overall goal is not only for you to keep in touch with us, but for you to develop new friendships within the wider alumni community. Each of you, in your unique season of life, has much to share with others who are on similar journeys. We hope that the alumni experiences featured in our newsletter will help you make new connections and remind you that you are not alone in any of your struggles.

As always, we welcome any suggestions to improve our engagement efforts. Please feel free to share with us any updates – not only on the professional front, but also in your personal and family lives.

Wishing you a wonderful year ahead.

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**School of Law Alumni Newsletter Team**

Adrian John Neo

Benjamin Joshua Ong

Chen Siyuan

Kenny Chng

Lau Kwan Ho

Dorcas Quek Anderson

Alvin See



News to share with us?  
Please drop us an e-mail at:  
[adrianjneo@smu.edu.sg](mailto:adrianjneo@smu.edu.sg)

\*We have attempted to cover news from 1 July 2020 till 10 January 2021. We are grateful to those who have responded to our call for information. For news that we have inadvertently left out, or for any errors in the reported news, please accept our sincere apologies.



Shim Eunkyung (JD, 2020) and Abigail Ong (LLB, 2020) received the Spirit of Pro Bono Award for having completed the most number of pro bono hours in their respective cohorts.

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# ALUMNI FEATURES

## THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYER



Chow Zi En LLB, 2017

Zi En recently concluded her time as a Legal Consultant with the World Bank in Washington, DC. She will be starting work with the Attorney-General's Chambers (Civil Division) in January 2021.

During her time at the World Bank, Zi En was placed in the Legal Vice Presidency's Operations Policy group, which advises the Bank on how international law affects its operation, internal policies and member states. Working at the Bank also allowed Zi En to witness first-hand the role of international organisations in shaping international law.

“**Working at the World Bank has been an incredible experience for me. Analysing prevailing international law norms and applying them to the Bank's projects and policies have sharpened my understanding of how international laws have a profound impact on countries and international organisations.**”

During 2020, Zi En had the opportunity to be involved in projects relating to COVID-19. She was closely involved in identifying entry points for the Bank to support countries fighting COVID-19. Further, she contributed analyses on the legal issues stemming from vaccine development and distribution on national and international levels. She particularly enjoyed learning about inter-disciplinary areas of law and policy and deepening her understanding of pandemic-related facets of international law.

Other notable projects Zi En was involved in at the Bank included:

- Helping to strategise the Bank's justice agenda as part of the Justice Working Group.
- Formulating a legal risk assessment for the Bank's involvement in criminal justice.
- Reviewing the Bank's model financing agreements.
- Analysing how the Bank should conduct itself in cases of political instability in member countries.



Zi En's interest in international law was sparked when she represented SMU at the Asia Cup International Law Moot Competition in 2015. Her team reached the championship final in Tokyo. In 2017, she captained the SMU team to victory in the national round of the Philip C Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition. Her team picked up several awards during the global rounds in Washington, DC.

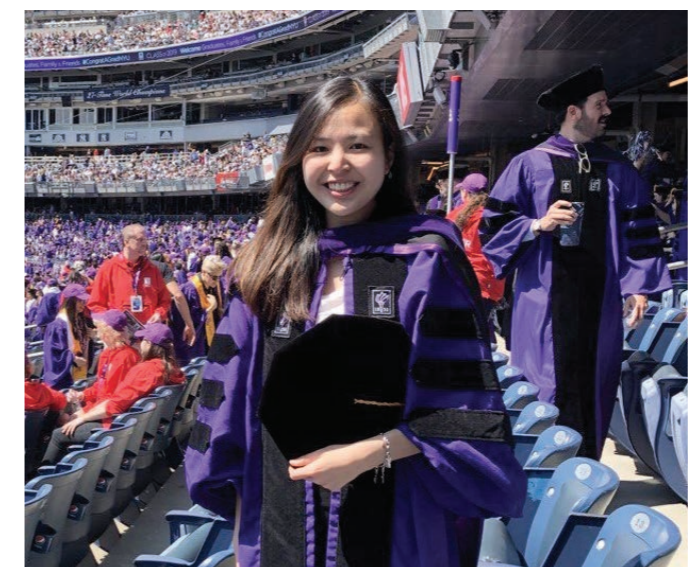
# THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYER

“It was the opportunities at SMU that helped me discover and develop my passion for international law. Participating in moots allowed me to grow my knowledge of this area of law and hone my advocacy and writing skills. I could not have learnt as much if not for the very supportive ecosystem of mooters and alumni at SMU.”

At SMU, Zi En also completed a Directed Research paper on international refugee law, which was later published as a full-length article in the Singapore Academy of Law Journal. This helped her appreciate international law from a different angle, as donning the hat of an academic was quite a different experience from that of an advocate. This proved useful in Zi En's role at the Bank, where she had to provide input on the Bank's policy positions.

After completing her practice traineeship at Rajah & Tann Singapore, Zi En decided to pursue an LLM degree at New York University (NYU). This was made possible by various scholarships, including the SMU School of Law's Postgraduate Scholarship, the NYU Dean's Graduate Award and the Kathryn Aguirre Worth Memorial Scholarship.

“**On hindsight, it is much easier to rationalise my decision to do an LLM, but at that point in time it was not easy taking that leap of faith to 'veer off-course'. But I told myself, if not now, when?**”



At NYU, Zi En had the opportunity to learn from international law giants whom she had read about while preparing for international moots at SMU, such as Professors Joseph Weiler and Philip Alston. She also served as Graduate Editor of the NYU Journal of International Law and Politics, where she contributed a publication.

Graduating with an LLM degree in 2019, she was a Human Rights Scholar at the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice. Having also sat for the New York Bar examination, she is now dual-qualified in Singapore and New York.

It was during Zi En's time at NYU that more career opportunities in the field of international law arose. Through NYU's highly selective international law fellowship program, she applied for, and was offered, a fellowship with the World Bank. She chose the Bank because she identified strongly with their twin goals of reducing poverty and promoting shared prosperity. She also wanted a taste of international law work at a leading international organisation. After her fellowship ended, she was offered a contract with the team with which she was working.

When asked whether she imagined herself living and working across the globe after graduating from SMU, Zi En replied in the negative. She shares that she is thankful for family and friends who have encouraged her to take the leap to fulfill her dream of practising international law.

Outside of work, Zi En is a keen amateur photographer. She likes street photography because it captures and preserves candid moments in people's lives. She enjoys shooting on her film camera, a Canon AE-1, because of the suspense and surprise that comes with seeing a photo only when it is developed.

Having taken the less-travelled path, Zi En has found her past few years meaningful and enjoyable. She has the following to say to her peers and juniors:

“It is worth thinking about what you are passionate about, because that is what will sustain you in the long run. Talk to as many people as you can to learn more about the choices they have made. While in law school, try different things to help you figure out what you find meaning in and what is important to you. I found this useful in helping myself understand what I enjoy and what my priorities are.”

# ALUMNI FEATURES

## THE LAWYER WHO TRIES TO BE HELPFUL



Jonathan Muk LLB & BBM, 2013

As Of Counsel at LVM Law Chambers, Jonathan focuses mainly on high-value commercial litigation, arbitration and mediation. He is also an associate mediator with the Singapore Mediation Centre and co-mediates financial disputes at the Financial Industry Disputes Resolution Centre.

After graduating in 2013, Jonathan joined the Singapore Legal Service, first as a Deputy Public Prosecutor at the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) and subsequently as a Justices' Law Clerk at the Supreme Court of Singapore.

Jonathan found his experience at the Supreme Court to be extremely enriching and fulfilling. There, the judges were excellent mentors and provided a different perspective to what the practice of law entails.

“**You learn that nothing really beats experience, which the judges have in spades. Experience matters, regardless of how well we perform in school, because it gives us perspective.**”

Jonathan's time in private practice has also taught him important lessons. The experience of working on a broad range of cases with clients from various walks of life has shaped him to be a more well-rounded and resilient individual. As he said, “you learn that you have to work with your client just as they are, and there are all kinds of clients”. Part of the formula of success is simply to learn to face setbacks.

“**You also learn to pick yourself up with every failure and try again.**”

When asked how his university education had prepared him for the working world, Jonathan said he learnt to be more vocal and assertive. Certainly, that did not mean shouting one's point across. Law school taught him the importance of how one should pitch his or her case in court. It is crucial to build a good narrative.

“**The narrative of one's case, which is very important, may sometimes be de-emphasised in favour of more technical points of law.**”

Even after graduating, Jonathan continues to maintain close ties with the school. He has taught Business Law and Company Law as an adjunct instructor.

Jonathan is a firm believer in giving back to the community. Once when he was distributing food as a volunteer, he noticed that there were children in the estate who were not receiving proper education. This prompted him to start ReadAble Ltd in 2014 with his then-colleagues at the AGC, Amanda Chong and Michelle Yeo.

ReadAble is a not-for-profit organisation that assists underprivileged families, especially their children, in enhancing literacy and numeracy abilities. It currently renders support to around 60 families. In doing so, ReadAble prioritises the building of meaningful relationships over one-time monetary donations. “Money is a poor substitute for time,” Jonathan explains.

# THE LAWYER WHO TRIES TO BE HELPFUL



“**Faith drives a lot of things I do. When I thought about serving in the area of educational inequality, it first began with a prayer.**”

The most important thing in building a relationship is to first listen to the stories of the families receiving help. In this regard, Jonathan draws on his ability to converse in multiple languages and dialects, including Malay, Mandarin and Cantonese. Speaking the same language allows Jonathan to build rapport with the beneficiaries as it signals to them that their language and culture is worthy of respect.

Jonathan's belief is that a child's ability to learn depends largely on having a conducive learning environment. The unfortunate reality is that some parents, especially migrant parents, are unable to find work or obtain housing benefits, which means that their children are disadvantaged. Clearly, the issue does not concern education policies alone but also employment and housing policies.



Jonathan observes that the effects of social inequality have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 circuit-breaker period. ReadAble, for instance, encountered challenges in implementing virtual 1-on-1 lessons as many of the families served did not have the necessary equipment. Thankfully, with support from friends, supporters and Engineering Good (a not-for-profit organisation seeking to bridge the digital divide), ReadAble was able to supply sufficient laptops with Wi-Fi connections.

Jonathan cites these top three lessons he has learnt from the ReadAble initiative:

*Empathy* (to be distinguished from sympathy) is underrated. “Empathy allows us to stand in the families' shoes and understand how they feel. It is only with empathy that we can build true friendships with them and really journey with them through difficult circumstances.”

*Grace* is under-recognised. “It is amazing how circumstances can play in your life. If you have been the recipient of undeserved grace in your life, consider what you can do to impact the lives of others.”

*People* are underappreciated. “We often do not value people as much as we should, and we should always remember that people are important and aspire to treat them as how we would like to be treated.”

When asked about his future hopes for ReadAble, Jonathan surprised us with his response: “I hope we'll have to shut down. That would mean we've done our job”.



This feature was prepared with the assistance of Claire Goh and Benedict Koh of the SMU Law Outreach Club.

# ALUMNI FEATURES

## THE CRIMINAL LAWYER



SUI YI SIONG LLB, 2014

Yi Siong is a Senior Associate in Harry Elias Partnership's Litigation and Dispute Management team. Having joined the firm as a general disputes trainee in December 2014, he now practises criminal law almost exclusively.

It is of little concern to Yi Siong that criminal practice may not be as financially lucrative or prestigious as other areas of legal practice. In his view, accused persons are often the ones who need legal assistance the most.

A case which reinforced this idea was a *pro bono* case Yi Siong undertook as a second-year associate. This matter proceeded up to the Court of Appeal, meaning that Yi Siong was in all likelihood one of the first SMU alumni to appear as lead counsel before Singapore's apex court.

That case concerned a single mother who had been charged with drug consumption and drug trafficking. Because she was a repeat offender, she faced a statutory mandatory minimum of 10 years' imprisonment for the trafficking charge alone, and, with the possession charge, she faced a potentially lengthy aggregate imprisonment term. However, her return to old ways was due to end-stage Hepatitis C, a potentially terminal condition that made even the

act of walking painful. Selling drugs was the only way she could make ends meet to support her three school-going children.

A sentencing court has no discretion to depart from a mandatory minimum sentence, but Yi Siong thought that his client's circumstances were sufficiently exceptional to attempt a novel argument based on the doctrine of judicial mercy. While the Court of Appeal ruled that the exercise of judicial mercy did not allow a sentencing court to depart from a statutorily mandated minimum sentence, the Chief Justice recorded the Court's appreciation to Yi Siong for acting *pro bono*. Ultimately, the client was only sentenced to the statutory minimum of 10 years' imprisonment.

Cases like this continue to fuel Yi Siong's desire and passion to improve access to justice. While there must be consequences to criminal behaviour, he believes that society should not be too quick to condemn accused persons. Some of them turn to crime not out of choice but out of circumstance. And even for those who commit crimes deliberately, any sentence imposed has to be proportionate and commensurate with the actual offence.

Besides his work as a criminal lawyer, Yi Siong also served as a Council member of the Law Society of Singapore for two years from January 2017 to December 2018. As a member of the "Junior" category (0 to 4 years' of post-qualification experience), he represented young lawyers in the profession's governing body and sought to advance their interests.



In August 2019, the Singapore Academy of Law awarded Yi Siong the Joseph Grimberg Outstanding Young Advocate Award. This prestigious award "recognizes young lawyers in good standing who exhibit professional excellence, service to the profession and the bar; service to the community; and/or a reputation for or the advancement of legal ethics and professional responsibility". The citation for the award noted:

*"Sui Yi Siong's achievement is testament that there is no fixed path to pursue a successful and rewarding career in the law. In fact, it demonstrates that young lawyers taking the path less travelled can strive for and achieve professional excellence as well. The award of this Prize to Mr Sui Yi Siong is indeed an affirmation that there are many routes to success."*

As a young lawyer, Yi Siong deeply appreciates the guidance he has received from many mentors over the years. In particular, Yi Siong is grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the late Mr Harry Elias SC. He fondly remembers Mr Elias as a gentleman-practitioner who represented all his clients vigorously but who was always unfailingly courteous to the court and opposing counsel. Despite his eminence and seniority, Mr Elias listened carefully to the views of his associates no matter how junior they were. Winning the Joseph Grimberg Outstanding Young Advocate Award was especially meaningful for Yi Siong as Mr Elias himself had been hired by Mr Joseph Grimberg SC many years ago.

To continue the spirit of mentorship within the legal profession, Yi Siong intends to pay it forward by mentoring junior associates and trainees with whom he works. Having benefitted from numerous advocacy opportunities from the early stages of his career, he strongly believes in giving young lawyers the chance to advocate.

Yi Siong credits SMU's International Moots Programme for equipping him with the advocacy skills that helped him in practice. As an undergraduate, he took part in the 2013 Price Media Law Moot in Oxford and the 2014 Red Cross International Humanitarian Moot in Hong Kong, winning the 4<sup>th</sup> Best Oralist and Best Oralist prizes respectively. Having been a beneficiary of the programme, Yi Siong has returned to coach various teams to success over the past six years.



# THE CRIMINAL LAWYER

The advice Yi Siong often gives to his students is that they should enjoy the time they have in university. Although academic grades are important, he cautions against spending too much time studying. University presents many opportunities for students to explore co-curricular activities which can further their development as young lawyers. Such opportunities also enable students to interact and network with their peers from different schools. This will help them to understand increasingly discerning clients and further their careers as lawyers.

In the future, Yi Siong hopes to return to SMU as an adjunct instructor to teach courses he feels passionate about. For example, he hopes to marry theory with practice by teaching a module on criminal law in practice, to demystify the process by which trials are conducted and offenders sentenced.

Outside his law studies, Yi Siong was an active member of SMU's wind band (now orchestra), SMU Symphonia. A saxophone player, he performed for various concerts and productions in his four years at SMU, and also served as saxophone section leader for two years. Over time, Yi Siong learnt to manage his time between studies and co-curricular activities, which he believes enabled him to be a more efficient lawyer.



To become a better lawyer, Yi Siong suggests looking at the bigger world beyond cases and law reports.

**“The practice of law is a marathon, not a sprint, and in the grand scheme of things graduating from law school is barely one metre from the starting line. To avoid burnout, we should unwind once in a while, and take the time to enjoy the simple things in life.”**

Yi Siong likes browsing books at the library in his free time, but feels that pursuing any hobby is a good way of alleviating the stress of work and study.

*This feature was prepared with the assistance of Julian Loke of the SMU Constitutional Law & Criminal Justice Club.*

# ALUMNI FEATURES

## THE LEGAL DESIGNERS



Marc Chia LLB, 2018  
Rodney Yap LLB & BBM, 2018

After graduating, Marc and Rodney decided to take the less travelled career path: embark on an adventure in entrepreneurship. Together with Shafiq Yussaini (BSc (Information Systems), 2018), they co-founded a number of exciting initiatives.

In 2018, they co-founded Regall Private Limited, a legal tech start-up that designs customised tech solutions for legal professionals and provides consultancy services on digital transformation, adoption and policy review. Although the legal industry is increasingly open to technological solutions, many of the initiatives are hampered by imperfect change management and digital transformation strategy. Therefore, in designing their products, the Regall team places particular attention on human-computer interaction.



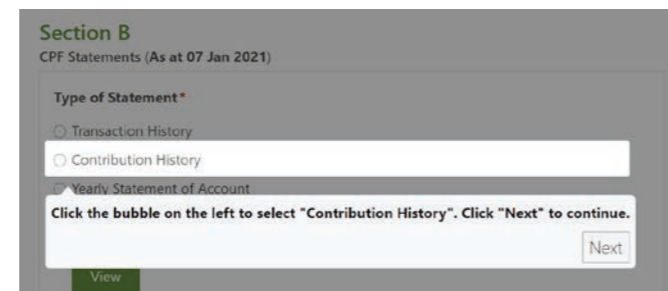
Participants undergoing a digital transformation strategy exercise.

As with most start-ups, things can change fast as the team moves from project to project. Each project requires a detailed understanding of differing contexts and needs. Although this has been challenging, working on different projects and with personnel of different levels—from managing partners to paralegals—allowed them to understand the needs of the different users.

“ **Any attempt to reimagine legal services requires a good sense of the situation on the ground.** *Marc*

**There is definitely a steep learning curve but every day I am inspired and motivated to work harder to help companies and other organisations ride the wave of digital transformation.** *Rodney*

One important aspect of digital transformation is the retraining of ground staff. This task, often repetitive, is often the most time-consuming aspect of implementation. The laborious task of manually managing such processes prompted the team to re-envision how digital transformation can be made scalable and accessible to all. The result: the inspired trio launched a second start-up, UserTip, in 2020.



Prompt guiding a user through the process of downloading a CPF Statement

UserTip is a no-code digital adoption platform that allows customer success/knowledge managers to create intuitive and simple walkthroughs to facilitate software learning. This is aimed at augmenting current learning processes such as front-loaded training, off-application manuals or resorting to customer support. Individual users can learn at their own pace, accessing walkthroughs as the need arises in a more natural and organic way of learning to use new systems.

# THE LEGAL DESIGNERS

The overall goal of UserTip is to enable users of any background to quickly come to grips with new technology and ensure that in the technology arms race, no user is left behind.

Much of what the pair do is inspired by design thinking (or legal design when applied to law), which is underpinned by the idea of human-centred problem solving. This means the ability to frame and manage problems in common terms for multi-disciplinary teams. This is a particularly important skill in an area that often brings together expertise from different areas, such as software developers and lawyers, to design solutions that are immediately intuitive to its users.

With a wealth of practical experience under their belts from working with legal organisations including law firms and government linked bodies, Marc, Rodney and Shafiq currently teach the Legal Design course at the SMU School of Law. Apart from their official work, they also explore and advise organisations on innovations such as legal chatbots and will generators that are aimed at broadening access to justice.

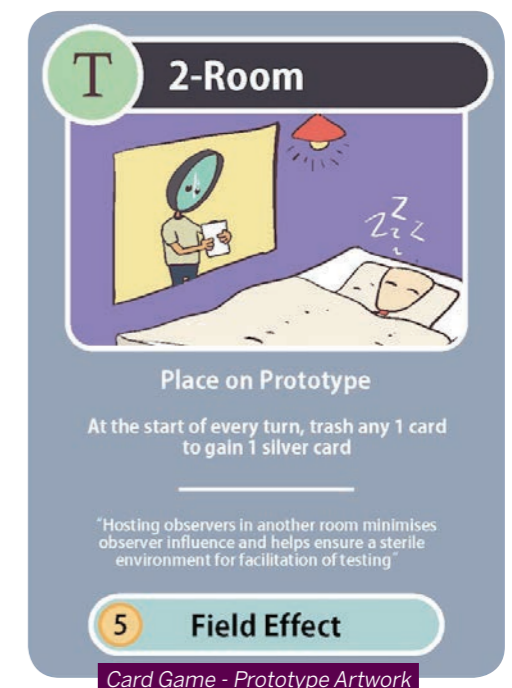
As the main drivers of legal technology solutions at Regall and UserTip, both Marc and Rodney recognise the importance of their legal education. In particular, the pair reflected on the importance of critical analysis and rounded perspective in anticipating issues and planning for contingencies. Legal agreements are also never far from the minds of start-up founders and the ability to negotiate with both legal and business perspectives has proven useful on multiple occasions.

“ **My legal training has made me more incisive and better at anticipating pitfalls and thus planning accordingly.** *Marc*

**Being able to break down problems that I face into different components and tackling them in a structured manner is something that is very similar to the hypotheticals that we faced in law school.** *Rodney*

In their free time the pair like to destress with rather diverse hobbies. Marc does “popping”, a type of street dance, which he picked up as a student at SMU.

Rodney enjoys cooking and experimenting on new recipes. Unsurprisingly, both share a common hobby: board games. When asked about their favourites, Marc named Dominion and Settlers of Catan while Rodney pointed to Dungeons and Dragons.



The pair have also been working on blending their interests with work and have been collaborating on a card game that teaches design thinking. The game is targeted at teenagers and adults and is designed to educate players on the basic principles, techniques and synergies of design thinking. The game is still in development and expected to launch in late 2021.

When asked what advice they have for current students, they had the following to say.

Marc shares his reflection that, while there are many things that are beyond our control, we do have control over how we react and respond. As he explains, “knowing that we all have a degree of control over our own destiny makes us stronger in facing whatever life throws at us”.

Rodney advises against being too fixated about “final goal” as plans inevitably change along the way. Sometimes it may be a small pivot, while other times, it may be a complete overhaul. “So always stay open to possibilities and iterate your plans, refining and redefining it each time”.

It will be exciting and busy times ahead for this intrepid duo but they certainly seem up to the challenge and we look forward to hearing more of their experiences.

# CLASS OF 2020



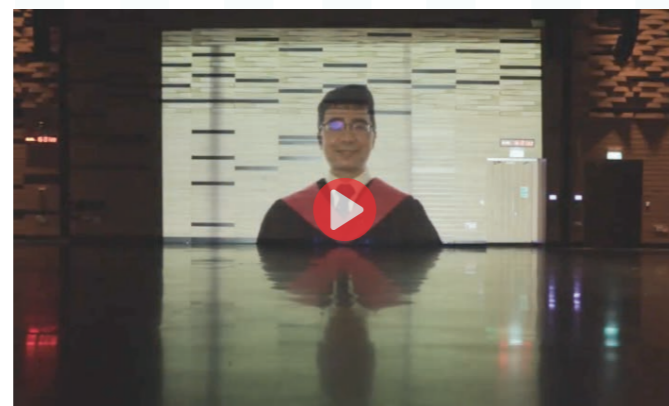
The making of the Commencement 2020 video



Commencement 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic. Instead, we celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2020 with a very special video. Taking inspiration from “[Onward Singapore](#)”, Esther Phang and Adrian Neo, who directed the video, went with a nostalgic vibe. The filming took place over two nights and in low light, with images and videos projected directly onto walls at various parts of the school building. When Prof Low Kee Yang’s video was projected onto the entrance wall, we could imagine passersby thinking that we were holding a concert! We hope you enjoyed the video. If you haven’t watched it, do check it out here.

Graduates who clinched top prizes include:

- **Gerome Goh** (LLB, 2020): Kwek Hong Png-SMU School of Law Valedictorian Award
- **Rennie Whang** (JD, 2020): Wee Chong Jin Prize for the Most Outstanding JD Graduate
- **Ian Mah** (LLB, 2020): Kwa Geok Choo Top Law Student Award & University Valedictorian for the Class of 2020 (Kwek Hong Png Valedictorian Award & SPH Valedictorian Award)
- **Nicole Ng** (LLB, 2020): SOL Top Academic Performance Award



Let us congratulate all of them and hope that their journey in the legal profession will be smooth-sailing.

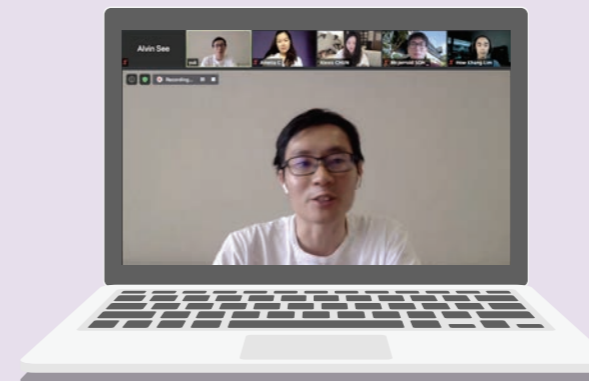


# RETURNING TO SCHOOL

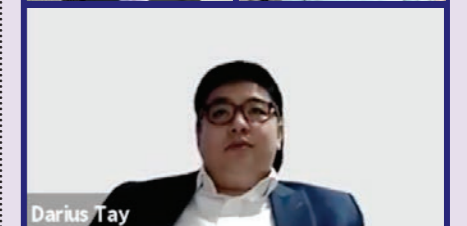
During Week 0 of AY 2020/21 Term 1, before the official beginning of the term, we launched the inaugural Introduction to Law programme to better prepare our freshmen for their new journey. **Fong Wei Li** (JD, 2012) taught a class on *Common Law Reasoning*.



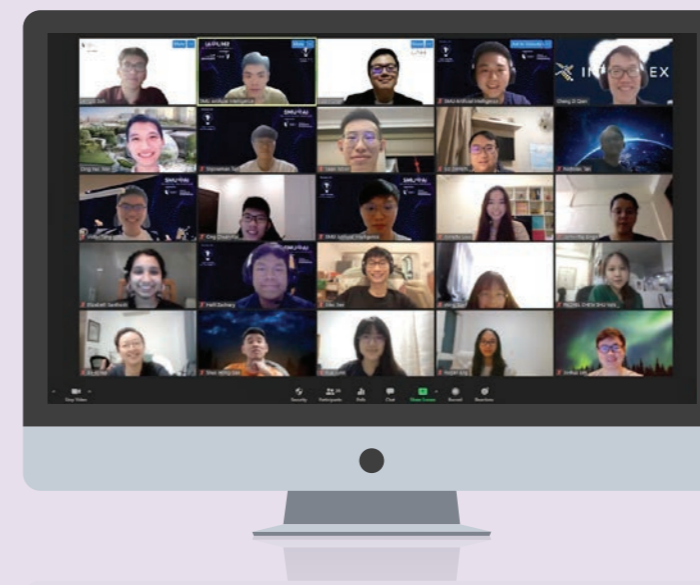
**Devathas Satianathan** (LLB, 2013), **Joshua Lim** (LLB & BBM, 2011), **Joshua Tan** (LLB, 2014) and **Nerissa Tan** (LLB, 2013) were panellists for the webinar *Tomorrow’s Lawyers I: Navigating the Different Pathways to Success in the Legal Profession*.



**Chan Yuk Lun** (LLB, 2014) was a panellist for the webinar *Tomorrow’s Lawyers II: Reading Law in the Age of Technology*. We thank them for taking time off from work to share their experiences with their juniors. We hope to invite more of you back when we do this again for the next intake.

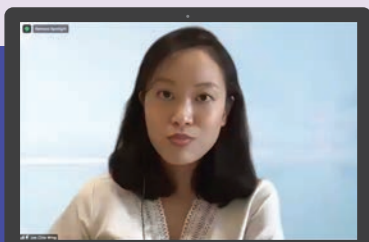


BlackOak continued to sponsor the BlackOak Transactional Negotiation Competition. The 2020 edition was held on 2 September. **Darius Tay** (LLB, 2011), who is co-founder and Director of BlackOak, served as one of the judges.



On 16 September 2020, the SMU Legal Innovation & Technology Club and the SMU Artificial Intelligence Club organised a webinar exploring the topic of legal technology. **Chang Zi Qian** (LLB, 2011) and **Justin Chan** (LLB, 2012) were invited as speakers.

# RETURNING TO SCHOOL



On 26 and 30 October 2020, **Lee Chia Ming** (LLB, 2013) shared, in the *Legal Theory & Philosophy* class instructed by **Kenny Chng** (LLB, 2012), about how legal theory relates to the practice of law and what being a good lawyer meant to her.



On 16 December 2020, the School held its first ever PG programme information session on WeChat which attracted nearly 100 attendees. Our LLM alumni **Dante Kexiao Huang** (LLM, 2015) and **Nicole Zheng Liming** (LLM, 2016), together with two current SMU JD students, shared about their study experiences at SMU and how the PG programme had contributed to their career development.

## INTERNATIONAL MOOTS ALUMNI

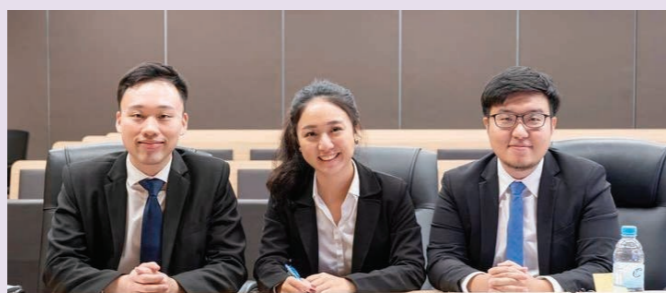
Our alumni continue to drive the success of our [International Moots Programme](#) (IM). SMU now participates in almost 20 regional and international moots every year, and we have more than 30 alumni coaches in addition to the 150 alumni who judge practice rounds in both International Moots electives. As IM approaches its tenth anniversary, it is well on track to attain its target of 100 podium finishes in major regional and international competitions, with 2019-20 alone delivering 12. This was only possible because of the time our IM alumni gave in guiding the next generation of young lawyers, not to mention the many financial contributions as well.

IM turns 10 this year, and while the pandemic forced all competitions to migrate online, it also presented an opportunity for a video team to follow our teams around, documentary-style, leading up to their conclusions of their competitions. The release of the short film will be around June 2021.

As mentioned in the previous issue of this newsletter, notable competitions we won in the first half of 2020 included Fletcher, Price and Air. The second half of 2020 saw many moot competitions moved online due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, but our students were just as adept mooting online, winning for instance SMU's fifth LAWASIA championship (coached by **Jayakumar Suryanarayanan** (LLB, 2020)), second Price regional championship (coached by **Dennis Saw** (JD, 2017)) and the first International Criminal Court regional friendly.



The opening scene of the short film, featuring iconic moments in IM history



## MEDIATION AND NEGOTIATION ALUMNI

Our alumni who have participated in international mediation and negotiation competitions have been collaborating with the newly formed SMU Mediation and Negotiation Club to coach students in local and international competitions and to share their mediation experiences.

**Shawn Wong** (JD, 2015) gave a webinar to law students entitled "Advanced Communication Skills: Leading the Conversation by Asking the Right Questions" on 5 October 2020.

**Yong Eng Wah** (LLM, 2014) coached our students who were awarded second place in the national round of the International Negotiation Competition. In addition, our students emerged as champions of Moot Shanghai (special edition) and first runner-up of the ICC Asia-Pacific Virtual Mediation Competition under the guidance of **Dhiraj Chainani** (LLB, 2015). Our students also excelled in the International Singapore Mediation Competition (6 gold awards, 2 silver awards and 8 bronze awards) and the Asian Law Students' Association International Mediation Competition (quarter-finalist and Best Mediation Plan Award). We are grateful to our alumni for devoting their time to guide our students.



## THE MENTORING NAVIGATOR

Formerly known as the SMU Alumni Mentoring Programme, *The Mentoring Navigator* provides a platform for students to connect with SMU's illustrious alumni community and learn from their seniors. As an alumnus, you are the perfect person to guide your juniors as they prepare to step into the working world. To date, there have been 134 completed law mentor-mentee pairings.

In July 2020, the Office of Alumni Relations launched its alumni-alumni track of the programme: The Mentoring Pinnacle. In the July 2020 to January 2021 cycle, 8 law alumni (all from the pioneer batch) signed up as mentors and 18 law alumni signed up as mentees. We are grateful to those of you who have volunteered as mentors and we trust that those who signed up as mentees have benefitted. We look forward to your continuing support.

“THE PROGRAMME PROVIDES A GREAT WAY TO BUILD AND FORM LASTING RELATIONSHIPS. ONE MEMORABLE MOMENT WAS WHEN MY MENTEE GOT VERY EXCITED ABOUT GETTING HER TRAINING CONTRACT AND HOW SHE EVEN GOT HER MOM ON THE PHONE TO SHARE THEIR JOY WITH ME.”

– SOL Alumni Mentor, Annia Hsu (LLB, 2015)

**Session 2020/2021 - Ongoing**  
Keen to participate? Join us at the next run commencing March 2021.



# ALUMNI NEWS

We now have 10 working cohorts who are making noticeable impact in the legal industry and beyond. Special congratulations to those who have made their mark in one way or another.

## Appointments

- **Adzfar Alami** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Partner at Rajah & Tann.
- **Aleksandar Georgiev** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Partner at Rajah & Tann.
- **Chan Wei Ling** (JD, 2019) was conferred the highest accreditation by the Singapore International Mediation Institute (SIMI): SIMI Certified Mediator.
- **Daniel Liu** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Partner at Wong Partnership.
- **Devathas Satianathan** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Partner at Rajah & Tann.
- **Geraldine Yeong** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Partner at Dentons Rodyk.
- **Gerome Goh** (LLB, 2020), **Ian Mah** (LLB, 2020), **Ivan Khoo** (JD, 2019), **Keziah Simon** (LLB, 2020), **Nicole Ng** (LLB, 2020) and **Rennie Whang** (JD, 2020) were admitted into the prestigious Justices' Law Clerk programme.
- **Jacqueline Chua** (LLB, 2011) was appointed Partner at Lee & Lee.
- **Jill Ann Koh** (LLB, 2012) was appointed Partner at WongPartnership.
- **Jo Tay** (LLB & BBM, 2012) was appointed Partner at Allen & Gledhill.
- **Kenny Chng** (LLB, 2012) was appointed Deputy Director of the SMU Law Academy as well as a member of the SMU Faculty Senate.
- **Lau Wen Jin** (LLB, 2012) was appointed Partner at Dentons Rodyk.
- **Lee Chia Ming** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Partner at Dentons Rodyk.
- **Lin Chun Long** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Partner at WongPartnership.
- **Marcus Liu** (LLB, 2012) was appointed Associate Director at Amica Law.
- **Michael Kwan** (BSc (Econ), 2009 & JD, 2013) was appointed Associate Director at Drew & Napier.
- **Nicholas Liu** (JD, 2015) was appointed Young Amicus Curiae in the case of *Public Prosecutor v Su Jiqing Joel* [2020] SGHC 233.
- **Niklas Wong** (LLB, 2014) was appointed Associate Director at TSMP Law Corporation.
- **Sally Lee** (LLB, 2014) was appointed Partner at Shook Lin & Bok.
- **Sean Lee** (LLB, 2014) was appointed Associate Director at BlackOak.
- **Sheryn Tan** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Associate Director at Quahe Woo & Palmer.
- **Stephanie Yeo** (LLB, 2012) was appointed Partner at WongPartnership.
- **Tan Ruo Yu** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Young Amicus Curiae in the case of *Effrizan Kamisran v Public Prosecutor* [2020] 5 SLR 747.
- **Vithiya Rajendra** (LLB & BBM, 2012) was appointed Partner at WongPartnership.
- **Wee Shilei** (LLB, 2013) was appointed Associate Director at Quahe Woo & Palmer.



Keziah Simon    Nicole Ng    Gerome Goh    Ian Mah    Rennie Whang    Ivan Khoo

## Other News

- **Abigail Ong** (LLB, 2020) and **Shim Eunkyung** (JD, 2020) received the Spirit of Pro Bono Award for having completed the most number of pro bono hours (138.8 for Abigail and 424.5 for Eunkyung) in their respective cohorts.
- **Chan Wei Ling** (JD, 2019) was recently featured in the Ministry of Law's *Faces of MinLaw* video series.
- **Chow Zi En** (LLB, 2017) and **Wong Yan Yee** (LLB, 2017) won the Essex Court Chambers-Singapore Academy of Law Moot 2021. **Jayakumar Suryanarayanan** (LLB, 2020) and **Andrea Seet** (LLB, 2020) were finalists. SMU alumni have consistently featured in the finals for seven editions of this moot and have been on the winning team for six.
- **Fong Wei Li** (JD, 2012) was the recipient of the SMU School of Law's Top Adjunct Award.
- **Joey Ng** (LLB, 2014) launched luia ([www.luialabel.com](http://www.luialabel.com), IG: @luialabel), a responsible fashion label that works with Afghan refugee artisans to produce women's clothing in micro limited runs.
- **Josh Lee** (LLB, 2015), chairperson of the Asia-Pacific Legal Innovation and Technology Association (ALITA), led ALITA to several achievements, including the establishment of the world's first [Legal Tech Observatory](#) as well as the publication of the "2020 State of Legal Innovation in Asia-Pacific Report" and Asia's first [Legal Innovation Strategy Toolkit](#). Furthermore, in July 2020, [LawTech.Asia](#), which Josh co-founded, was appointed a Consultant for The Commonwealth's Governance and Peace Directorate.
- **Kenny Chng** (LLB, 2012) was a recipient of the Lee Kong Chian Fellowship for research excellence as well as the SMU School of Law's Most Outstanding Teacher awards for both LLB and JD categories.
- **Lau Wen Jin's** (LLB, 2012) criminal pro bono work received the commendation of the Court of Appeal in *Public Prosecutor v GCK* [2020] 1 SLR 486. Delivering the judgment of the court, the Chief Justice stated: "we appreciate Mr Lau's pro bono representation of the Respondent under the Criminal Legal Aid Scheme, which he has valiantly and steadfastly maintained from the trial in the District Court, to the appeal to the High Court, to the present Criminal Reference and CM 7 before this court."
- **Loh Chun Kiat** (LLB, 2011) was featured in Asia Legal Business' 40 under 40 for 2020 and recognised for his Corporate Law expertise by the 2021 edition of Best Lawyers (Singapore list).
- **Lyndon Choo** (LLB, 2018) was joint winner of the YSIAC Writing Competition 2020. The winners from the last two competitions are also SMU School of Law alumni.
- **Nadia Ahmad Samdin** (LLB, 2013), **Pritam Singh** (JD, 2012) and **Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim** (LLM, 2013) were elected as Members of Parliament. **Pritam Singh** was also appointed Leader of the Opposition.
- **Victor Looi** (LLB, 2012) is the youngest lawyer recognised by [Singapore Business Review](#) as one of Singapore's most influential lawyers aged 40 and under in 2020. **Loh Chun Kiat** (LLB, 2011), **Nadia Ahmad Samdin** (LLB, 2013) and **Niklas Wong** (LLB, 2014) were also recognised in this list.

## TEACHING WITH US

In Term 1 of Academic Year 2020-21 (August to December 2020), several of our alumni returned to teach as adjunct instructors. We look forward to welcoming more of you back in this capacity when future opportunities arise.

**David Koh** (JD, 2018)  
(Business Law)

**Dominic Liew Jr** (LLB, 2018)  
(Business Law)

**Eden Li** (LLB & BBM, 2016)  
(International Moots I)

**Fong Wei Li** (JD, 2012)  
(Legal Research & Writing 1)

**Jonathan Muk** (LLB & BBM, 2013)  
(Company Law)

**Marc Chia** (LLB, 2018) &  
**Rodney Yap** (LLB & BBM, 2018) (Legal Design)

**Nick Chiam** (LLB, 2017)  
(Ethics & Social Responsibility)

**Samuel Ng** (LLB, 2012)  
(Ethics & Social Responsibility; Company Law)



# ALUMNI NEWS



Chow Zi En and Wong Yan Yee



Chan Wei Ling, 36  
**Mediator**  
Community Mediation Centre  
youngest SIMI-certified

Chan Wei Ling



Fong Wei Li



Kenny Chng



Loh Chun Kiat



Pritam Singh, Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim and Nadia Ahmad Samdin

## Publications

- **Aaron Yoong** (LLB, 2019) authored an [article](#) entitled "Zooming into a New Age of Court Proceedings: Perspectives from the Court, Counsel and Witness" in the SAL Practitioner series.
- **Avril Tay** (LLB, 2016) co-authored (with Ng Guo Xi) an [article](#) entitled "Demise of the Dual-Track Regime Under the Building and Construction Security of Payment Act" in the SAL Practitioner series.
- **Chong Shou Yu** (LLB, 2017) co-authored (with Professor Nadja Alexander) the inaugural [chapter](#) on Mediation and Appropriate Dispute Resolution in the Singapore Academy of Law Annual Review of Singapore Cases. For his other publications, see [here](#).
- **Claire Neoh** (LLB, 2020) co-authored (with Associate Professor Darius Chan) an [article](#) entitled "To Boycott Proceedings or Not? Recourse Against Arbitral Awards on Jurisdictional Grounds by Different Categories of Respondents Under the Model Law" in Arbitration International.
- **Daniel Ho** (LLB, 2017) and **Pesdy Tay** (LLB, 2020) co-authored a blogpost entitled "In Frustrating Times of Disruption and Uncertainty: The COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act 2020 and Beyond" on the Singapore Law Blog.
- **Dominic Liew Jr** (LLB, 2018) authored an [article](#) entitled "Finding Clarity Amidst Confusion: Cleaning up the Clean Hands Doctrine in International Investment Law" in the Singapore Academy of Law Journal.
- **Foo Cechao** (JD, 2020) authored an [article](#) entitled "Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act and the Roles of Internet Intermediaries in Regulating Online Falsehoods" in the Singapore Academy of Law Journal.
- **Gerome Goh** (LLB, 2020) authored an [article](#) entitled "An Arbitral Tribunal's Dilemma: The Plea of Financially Impecunious Parties" in the Journal of International Arbitration and a [case comment](#) entitled "Opening the Door to Fickle-Minded Guilty Pleas? - PP v Dinesh s/o Rajantheran" in the Singapore Journal of Legal Studies.
- **Ian Mah** (LLB, 2020) authored an [article](#) entitled "Revisiting the Presumptions of Resulting Trust and Advancement in the Context of Joint Tenanted Matrimonial Property" in the Australian Property Law Journal. He also co-authored (with Aaron Cheuk) an [article](#) entitled "Dispute Settlement System Under Attack: A Move Away from Multilateralism" in the Indian Journal of International Economic Law.
- **Jonathan Muk** (LLB & BBM, 2013) authored a [case comment](#) entitled "Here We Go Again: Acting Against the Same Defendants Twice?" in the SAL Practitioner series.
- **Josh Lee** (LLB, 2015) co-edited (with Assistant Professor Jerrold Soh) the "2020 State of Legal Innovation in Asia-Pacific [Report](#)". He also co-wrote (with Tristan Koh Ly Wey) a [research paper](#) titled "The Epistemic Challenge Facing the Regulation of AI".
- **Koh Wei Lun** (LLB, 2016) co-authored (with Ashok Kumar) an [article](#) entitled "Court-Ordered Mediation in Restructuring Proceedings: The Next Reform?" in the SAL Practitioner series.
- **Lim Sing Yong** (LLB, 2011) co-authored (with Professor Tang Hang Wu) an article entitled "Trust, Contribution and Equitable Accounting: Analysing Imbalances on Contribution Towards Mortgage Payments" in the Conveyancer and Property Lawyer.
- **Low Yan Lin** (LLB, 2020) authored an [article](#) entitled "International Regulations on Artificial Intelligence in the Military: Adequate or Outdated?" in the Singapore Academy of Law Journal.
- **Nicole Ng** (LLB, 2020) authored an [article](#) entitled "Illegally Obtained Evidence in International Arbitration" in the Singapore Academy of Law Journal.
- **Rennie Whang** (JD, 2020) authored an [article](#) entitled "The Tainting Doctrine in Singapore Conflict of Laws" in the Singapore Journal of Legal Studies.
- **Samuel Loh** (LLB, 2020) co-authored (with Assistant Professor Aurelio Gurrea Martínez) an [article](#) entitled "Singapore's Legal and Economic Response to the COVID-19 Crisis: The Role of Insolvency Law and Corporate Workouts" in International Corporate Rescue.
- **Shriram Jayakumar** (LLB, 2018) authored a [blogpost](#) entitled "When Will the Reflection Show: *Sevilleja v Marex Financial Ltd* [2020] UKSC 31" on the Singapore Law Blog.
- **Terence Lerh Guan Wei** (LLB, 2015) authored an [article](#) entitled "Mediation Confidentiality: Authentic or Delusory?" in the Singapore International Mediation Institute's annual publication, Contemporary Issues in Mediation (vol 5). His article was one of 12 entries shortlisted for publication under SIMI's annual mediation essay competition.
- **Terence Yeo** (LLB, 2020) authored an [article](#) entitled "The Hague Judgments Convention: A View from Singapore" in the Singapore Academy of Law Journal. He also co-authored (with Victoria Liu) an [article](#) entitled "To Good Purpose: Non-Charitable Purpose Trusts for the Specific Purpose of Holding Shares in Perpetuity in Singapore" in Trusts and Trustees.
- **Yao Qinzhe** (JD, 2014) co-authored (with Professor Wan Wai Yee and Associate Professor Andrew Godwin) an article entitled "When is an Individual Investor Not in Need of Consumer Protection? A Comparative Analysis of Singapore, Hong Kong, and Australia" in the Singapore Journal of Legal Studies.

# ALUMNI NEWS

## Donations

SMU 20th Anniversary Edition

# Leave Your Mark

Gift a quote, etched on campus.  
A legacy for generations to come.



SCAN ME



“When times are tough, always remember that a smooth sea never made a skilled sailor.”

Zhang Jie Thia  
(LLB, 2019)



In celebration of SMU's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, SMU launched the Leave Your Mark campaign. Alumni donating \$100 or more under this campaign will have his or her personalised message engraved on a commemorative plaque and permanently installed in earmarked seminar rooms. For law alumni, the plaques can be found in SOL SR2.01. All proceeds

raised will go towards the SMU Bursary Fund that aids financially challenged students.

We are immensely grateful to all our alumni for their generous donations and other forms of support. Each and every contribution will go a long way to helping us advance our educational, research and community service goals.

## Donations



**Jo Tay** (LLB & BBM, 2012) has kindly sponsored the Jo Tay Prize for the Top Student in Corporate Insolvency Law. We are sure this will inspire students taking the Corporate Insolvency Law course to do their best.

# THE SCHOOL OF LAW ALUMNI WALL



Our Alumni Wall has been updated with the names of recent donors! For a donation of \$300 or more to the School of Law, your name will be inscribed on our Alumni Wall.

For donation to the SOL fund, please contact our Manager, Mr Adrian John Neo, at [adrianjneo@smu.edu.sg](mailto:adrianjneo@smu.edu.sg)

For donation to the International Moots programme, please refer to this [link](#).



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