



Winners at the NUS Law Pro Bono Awards ceremony yesterday include (from far left) Mr Allen Sng, Ms Lim Boon Xin, Ms Hwang Soon Ae, Ms Sheiffa Safi Shirbeeni and Mr Prabu Devaraj. PHOTO: BERITA HARIAN

# Pro bono award winners lauded for making a difference

## PROUD MENTOR

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**MSHWANG SOON AE**, on the progress of law students she has mentored since 2014.

## Jose Hong

At the end of his second year in law school, Mr Will Jude Vimal Raj joined the migrant worker wing of the NUS Pro Bono Group.

During his first meeting with charities that help migrant workers, he was struck by how much assistance they need in Singapore.

The 26-year-old alumnus of the National University of Singapore set up the Law & You programme then, which aimed to give foreign domestic workers knowledge of their legal rights. Since launching it in January 2015, the initiative has helped about 200 people.

Yesterday, the NUS law faculty recognised him by giving him the Pro Bono Pioneer Award at the second NUS Law Pro Bono Awards ceremony.

Mr Will Jude, who is now a trainee policeman, said: "It's just humbling to receive this, to know that not just

the efforts of students are being recognised, but these programmes are also being recognised."

NUS said pro bono work, which is voluntary, is important for law students who gain real-world experience of practising law.

"And, hopefully, by being involved in pro bono work, our students can discover a sense of purpose and social responsibility as a legal professional and be aware of how they can make a difference to the lives of those in need of help," said Professor Simon Chesterman, dean of the NUS Faculty of Law.

Awards in three other categories were won by 17 other law students and mentors. The school also introduced two categories this year: the Pro Bono Pioneer Award and the Pro Bono Mentor Award.

The winner of the mentor award, Ms Hwang Soon Ae, has, since 2014, supervised law students who help voluntary welfare organisations and charities to bring their policies

in line with the Personal Data Protection Act. The 27-year-old lawyer said there was "something special" with helping these organisations and was proud of the students she mentored.

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Four pro bono projects also received financial grants through the RHTLaw Taylor Wessing Subhas Anandan Pro Bono Award and the NUS Law Class of 1992 Pro Bono Award.

One of those who received the NUS Law Class of 1992 grants, second-year student Sheiffa Safi Shirbeeni, will lead the launch of the Syariah Law Forum this May.

It will be a half-day event to educate all interested students and legal practitioners about syariah law.

Ms Sheiffa, 22, said she found there was a need for such an event after volunteering at the Syariah Court, which oversees matters related to marriage and divorce under Muslim law, among others.

She wanted to clear misconceptions and encourage a conversation on syariah law.

josehong@sph.com.sg