



Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam, former president, receiving the Order of Temasek (First Class) award, the nation's highest civilian honour, from President Halimah Yacob yesterday. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR



Mr Hsieh Fu Hua received a Meritorious Service Medal for being "a strong advocate for arts education and community engagement".



Mr Philip Ng Chee Tat, who was awarded a Distinguished Service Order, "played a leading role" in developing Singapore's fourth autonomous university.



Mr Leo Yip Seng Cheong, who received a Meritorious Service Medal, has "infused the public service with purpose and drive".



Mrs Tan Ching Yee received a Meritorious Service Medal for her "outstanding contributions and leadership" in many areas of the public service.

## Tony Tan heads list of National Day Award winners

Seow Bei Yi

Nearly 10 years before the National Gallery Singapore opened its doors to the public in 2015, then chief executive of the Singapore Exchange Hsieh Fu Hua was asked to join a committee in charge of shaping it.

It turned out to be one of his longest engagements. This year, Mr Hsieh, 68, marks his fifth year as chairman of the iconic gallery, which houses the largest public col-

lection of modern art in South-east Asia.

For his contributions, Mr Hsieh received a Meritorious Service Medal yesterday.

He was one of 518 recipients conferred awards by President Halimah Yacob, with former president Tony Tan Keng Yam heading the list. The ceremony was held at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College Central.

Mr Hsieh's citation says he "ral-

lied corporates and philanthropists to support the gallery's permanent galleries, exhibitions and programmes".

Speaking to *The Straits Times*, Mr Hsieh said: "The building of a museum is a very long journey. You only have to look around the world to realise that good or great museums come about over decades, and with the work of generations of people."

Yesterday, Dr Tan, 78, the Republic's former president, became the ninth Singaporean to receive the nation's highest civilian honour – the Order of Temasek (First Class) – "for his lifetime dedication to public service and his stellar service to his people and country".

Dr Tan, whose public service career spanned nearly four decades, helped transform Singapore's education system, armed forces, reserve management, and research and development efforts.

"The breadth and sweep of his service have been equalled by

few," his citation reads.

He left his job as OCBC Bank's general manager in 1979 to enter politics and went on to helm five ministries. He has been credited with revamping the school system as education minister, championing the development of higher education, as well as laying the basis for Singapore's universities to raise their international standing. He was elected Singapore's seventh president, serving from 2011 to last year. The last to be conferred the Order of Temasek (First Class) was former minister S. Dhanabalan, in 2015.

The next highest award given out yesterday was the Distinguished Service Order, conferred to the Singapore University of Technology and Design's former chairman Philip Ng Chee Tat, and National University of Singapore Board of Trustees' former chairman Wong Ngit Liong.

Mr Ng, 59, is chief executive of property giant Far East Organiza-

tion while Mr Wong, 77, founded and heads electronics manufacturer Venture Corporation.

There were five other Meritorious Service Medal recipients besides Mr Hsieh this year.

They are: Co-chairmen of the Religious Rehabilitation Group, Ustaz Ali Haji Mohamed and Ustaz Mohamad Hasbi Hassan; Permanent Secretary for Finance, and Permanent Secretary (special duties) in the Prime Minister's Office, Mrs Tan Ching Yee; Head of Civil Service Leo Yip Seng Cheong; and Centre for Liveable Cities executive director Khoo Teng Chye.

Mrs Tan helped enhance the accessibility, affordability and quality of the country's healthcare system and played a role in developing multiple pathways for students, among other things.

Mr Yip, similarly, made "distinguished contributions to Singapore in his 33 years of public service", and held a series of appointments

in the police force before becoming principal private secretary to Mr Lee Kuan Yew when he was the Republic's Senior Minister.

Mr Khoo contributed to making Singapore's urban planning and regulatory regime more transparent and responsive during a 20-year career in the Urban Redevelopment Authority. The 66-year-old held key leadership positions in the Public Utilities Board and Ministry of National Development as well.

Former chief of defence force Perry Lim Cheng Yeow, 46, received the Meritorious Service Medal (Military).

The 2018 National Day Awards also paid tribute to two groups which had separately worked on the recent Trump-Kim Summit, as well as the Pedra Branca case – which saw the International Court of Justice award sovereignty to Singapore in 2008.

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