

NUS Law Pro Bono Awards 2016

Pro Bono Champion Award

The Pro Bono Champion Award recognises young alumni of NUS Law who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and made significant contributions towards pro bono work that has spanned several years of their time in law school, who have continued with the work beyond graduation (up to the person being called to the Bar or 12 months after graduation, whichever is earlier), and whose leadership and contributions have led to significant developments in pro bono opportunities for law students.

Award Recipient: Mr Ng Bin Hong (Class of 2014)

Mr Ng Bin Hong is an NUS law alumnus who has demonstrated passion and commitment in pro bono work during his time at NUS, and has also inspired many other students to do the same. Bin Hong has played an important role in establishing opportunities for NUS Law students to assist at legal clinics co-located with MPS sessions around Singapore. He has also conducted his own research in legal matters, including spearheading a review of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) – a law protecting mentally incapacitated persons – and creating the NUS Adult Protection Research Team to conduct research on legal issues relating to vulnerable adults. Some of his recommendations on the MCA have found their way into the proposed amendments for MCA. Bin Hong was also a core team member of the Criminal Justice Club (CJC) and provided important inspiration and guidance to students on the establishment of the Court Martial Project, now renamed the Military Justice Project (MJP).

Pro Bono Leadership Awards

The Pro Bono Leadership Awards recognise law students who have shown outstanding leadership and commitment towards pro bono work on a sustained basis, and whose contributions have led to significant developments in pro bono work for law students.

Award Recipients:

Mr Lennart Ng (Class of 2016)

Lennart, currently a Year 4 law student, founded the Military Justice Project (then termed the Court Martial Project) in 2012. As the former Project Head, Lennart trained and inspired seven juniors to continue pursuing the purpose of MJP and expand its outreach to a wider audience. With the support of the Law Society's PBSO, Lennart led a team at MJP to publish a section in the Pro Bono Handbook on the basics of military law, standard protocols and frequently asked questions pertaining to summary trials and court martials, for use by pro bono lawyers as

reference during legal clinics. Lennart also organised the inaugural Military Justice Project Round-Table discussion in 2014, gathering legal practitioners for a candid discussion with law students on the role and function of military law in Singapore.

Mr Joshua Matthew Goh (Class of 2017)

Joshua, currently a Year 3 law student at NUS, took over Lennart as Head of MJP in 2014 (he is now former Head of MJP). The MJP is the first and only student-run project addressing military law in Singapore, in 2012. The project aims to increase access to justice in military law while working with the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and other stakeholders. Joshua oversaw the formation of the Military Legal Assistance Scheme, a project which facilitates pro bono legal assistance to servicemen facing charges at a General Courts Martial. To help increase public awareness and deepen engagement with stakeholders on the military justice system and its procedures, Joshua had also developed a brochure with the Law Society on military law, and organised roundtables with relevant stakeholders – including a dialogue with Minister for Defence, Mr Ng Eng Hen, in February 2015 to discuss national and defence issues as well as the military justice system.

Ms Lim Wei Zhen (Class of 2017)

Wei Zhen, currently a Year 3 law student, was the 2014/2015 President of the NUS Pro Bono Group – a student-run organisation dedicated to the promotion of pro bono work among law students in NUS Law. Convinced of the crucial role of law students and advocates in alleviating the legal issues plaguing migrant workers, she led a team of seven to pioneer Migrant Workers Awareness Week 2014 which was aimed at using interactive mediums to generate empathy and desire in participants to engage with legal issues involving migrant workers. Before helming the NUS Pro Bono Group as its President, Wei Zhen also played a key role in developing and expanding the Group's work with voluntary welfare organisations such as Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME) and Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2) to include a wide range of clinics, casework, research, manuals and legal workshops, and awareness events.

Ms Lye Yuan Jun (Class of 2015)

While pursuing her undergraduate studies at NUS Law, Yuan Jun led a team of fellow students to work on Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) compliance for the voluntary welfare organisations – HOME and Singapore Association for Mental Health, under the NUS-Rajah & Tann PDPA Compliance Assistance Scheme. The work involved studying the data collection needs and methods of the organisation, drafting of documents, and organising workshops for staff and volunteers of the organisations to familiarise them with the needs for PDPA compliance.

Mr Kenneth Wang Ye (Class of 2016)

Wang Ye was head of the Innocence Project (Singapore) from 2013 to 2014. The student-led initiative seeks to provide recourse to individuals who believe they have

been wrongfully convicted of crimes. Under his leadership, the team grew from a team of five student volunteers to a structured group-based system comprising more than 20 students. Together with other student group leaders, he oversaw the investigation of at least 30 live cases by student members including one which led to the overthrowing of a conviction due to DNA evidence.

Mr Mitchell Yeo (Class of 2014)

During his final-year as a law student, Mitchell helped to develop the NUS-Rajah & Tann PDPA Compliance Assistance Scheme and established a good foundation for the project. He played a key role in the success of the first PDPA project with HOME. After graduating, Mitchell stayed on to train a new team to run a PDPA workshop for HOME, and together with Yuan Jun, led the team in conducting a successful workshop.

NUS Law Class of 1992 Pro Bono Award

The NUS Law Class of 1992 has made a gift of S\$20,000 to establish cash awards – the NUS Law Class of 1992 Pro Bono Awards – to support law students in pro bono projects. Up to 3 awards of up to S\$2,500 each will be granted annually to sustainable pro bono projects with a catalytic effect – projects that galvanise attention and efforts towards a worthy cause to which students can provide significant contributions.

Award Recipients:

Innocence Project (Singapore)

The Innocence Project (Singapore) is an entirely student-led initiative that seeks to provide recourse to individuals who believe that they have been wrongfully convicted. It was conceptualised in 2010 and officially launched in 2013, after drawing inspiration from the global Innocence Network movement that spans across countries such as the USA, the UK, South Africa, Philippines and Taiwan, amongst others. The Project is a collaboration between NUS CJC, the Law Society, Association of Criminal Lawyers Singapore and the Criminal Legal Aid Scheme (CLAS). The Project receives support from the Attorney-General's Chambers and the Singapore Prison Service. The Project currently maintains a membership of 80 NUS law students. As of January 2016, it has received more than 100 applications from individuals to review live cases of conviction. The Project operates under the supervision of three experienced faculty advisors: Professor Walter Woon S.C., Associate Professor Chan Wing Cheong and Assistant Professor Cheah Wui Ling. It is estimated that in 2016, the Project will investigate at least 40 applications.

Military Justice Project

The MJP was conceived in 2012. An entirely student-run project, it aims to work with the Ministry of Defence to explore potential avenues for increasing access to justice in the military justice system in Singapore. MJP acts as a bridge that

connects servicemen in the Singapore Armed Forces, lawyers and law students who are interested in developing a stronger military justice system to defend those that defend Singapore. MJP does this using a three-pronged approach: Education, Engagement and Empowerment. MJP regularly publishes articles on military law that seek to answer questions that servicemen might have about their roles and responsibilities in the army. MJP is working with Mr Louis d'Souza, Director of Legal Aid Bureau and a prominent figure in the military law sphere, to work on a Military Law book that is targeted at the layman. In collaboration with the Law Society and with the assistance of practitioners and staff from MINDEF Legal Services, MJP produced a brochure on military law. The brochure seeks to answer questions that servicemen or defending officers might have. The brochures are currently placed in the State Courts. MJP has also been working with MINDEF Legal Services to assist in their Defending Officer Training Course. MJP has expanded its scope and is currently working with the National Police Cadet Corps (NPCC), the Ministry of Education's Character and Citizenship Education Branch, and Associate Professor Stephen Phua from NUS Law to review NPCC's Police Knowledge Course to make it more relevant and engaging for Secondary school cadets.

NUS Adult Protection Research Team

The NUS Adult Protection Research Team has collaborated with TRANS Family Services, a family violence specialist agency, on a research project on elder abuse in Singapore. Its efforts have culminated in a draft report that includes proposed elder abuse legislation and the proposed establishment of a multi-disciplinary centre dedicated to managing elder abuse. The report is intended to be circulated to a closed list of organisations and agencies that includes policymakers, the social services sector and other relevant stakeholders.

RHTLaw Taylor Wessing Subhas Anandan Pro Bono Award

The RHTLaw Taylor Wessing Subhas Anandan Pro Bono Award is a tribute to the legacy of RHTLaw Taylor Wessing's late Senior Partner – Mr Subhas Anandan, who was a prominent criminal lawyer in Singapore and a champion of pro bono work. The award will provide S\$25,000 over a period of 5 years, with a cash award of up to S\$5,000 given out yearly, to fund a deserving pro bono project or programme initiated by NUS law students.

Award Recipient:

Criminal Justice Club

The CJC was formed in September 2009. Its guiding motto *Veritatis Et Aequitatis Tenax*, is Latin for persevering in truth and justice, and this represents the club's spirit and dedication to criminal law and criminal justice in Singapore. The club currently has more than 100 members. The CJC has five main arms: namely the Events Team, Project HELP Centre, the Innocence Project (Singapore), MJP, and the Criminal Law Website Project (CLWP). In January 2016, the CJC launched the new CJC-CLAS Initiative in collaboration with CLAS under the Law Society. These

projects work cohesively towards the fundamental common goal of raising awareness of important criminal justice issues amongst the student body and the public alike whilst advocating positive change in Singapore's criminal justice landscape. Among the key successes of the CJC in past years are the work of the Innocence Project (Singapore) and the annual Criminal Law Conference.