

**CITATION BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KANG HWAY CHUAN,
DIRECTOR, NUS UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS PROGRAMME
PUBLIC ORATOR FOR MR CHUA THIAN POH,
RECIPIENT OF HONORARY DOCTOR OF LETTERS**

**NUS COMMENCEMENT 2019, MAIN CEREMONY
THURSDAY, 11 JULY 2019, NUS UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTRE**

President of the Republic of Singapore and NUS Chancellor Madam Halimah Yacob
Minister for Education, Mr Ong Ye Kung
NUS Pro-Chancellors
NUS Chairman and Trustees
NUS President
Distinguished Honorary Graduated
Graduates, Parents and Friends
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

You all know about IQ, EQ, CQ – intelligence quotient, emotional quotient, cultural quotient. University commencements worldwide celebrate IQ, because that's the staple for universities. At NUS, commencements have for many years already also celebrated the EQ and CQ achievements of our graduates through their accomplishments outside the classroom. Being a leading university in the world – sensitive to evolving roles of traditional institutions – NUS has been raising the bar with our continuing emphasis on a different kind of CQ – community quotient. This is less usually encountered, but no less essential today to graduates than IQ, EQ, and cultural quotient. Community quotient is the measure of a strong sense of responsibility and empathy, a commensurately generous commitment of effort and thought to improve your community.

Today, we honour a man whose work has contributed immensely to raising the community quotient of Singaporeans in general, and of NUS graduates in particular.

Mr Chua Thian Poh is the founder of Ho Bee Group. He is also a member of the Council of Presidential Advisors. He has been an active community leader and philanthropist for the past several decades, beginning with his work with Chinese community clans and chambers of commerce, and huay kuans decades ago. He is currently Honorary President Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations, Honorary President Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Chairman of Ren Ci Hospital, Immediate Past President of Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan, Chairman of Board of Trustee of the Chinese Development Assistance Council, Chairman of Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre.

This is only a shortlist of the many ways Mr Chua Thian Poh has contributed to the Singapore community. For him, community service is lifelong and on-going and hands-on. He has served on the Bishan East-Thomson Citizen's Consultative Committee as Honorary Chairman for 20 years. And even today, he personally interviews aspiring students for many different scholarship awards.

Already in 2004, he was conferred the Public Service Star (Bintang Bakti Masyarakat) for his broad and deep contributions to the community. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace by the Singapore President in 2005. He was also honoured in 2012 with an individual President's Award for Philanthropy. His long and continuing effort in community service was further recognised in 2014 with the Distinguished Service Order (Darjah Utama Bakti Cemerlang) and he was placed on the honour roll of Forbes Asia's Heroes of Philanthropy.

Mr Chua is recognised as a business leader of the very top calibre, receiving the 2006 Businessman of the Year award from Singapore Business Awards. It must be this leadership acumen coupled with his strong empathy for the community that led him, in 2011, to establish the Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Programme in NUS. This has now evolved into a research centre, the Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Centre, giving undergraduates incomparable opportunities to learn how best to grow community development efforts.

Mr Chua's idea is simple and effective, "if we get a powerful and empathetic group of students to work together, the good they can do for community is multiplied many-fold and the effects are sustainable". Students from the first batch of the Chua Thian Poh Programme, from almost 10 years ago, are still actively involved in conceptualising and contributing to community service in new and effective ways. To date, the approximately 400 student fellows from the Chua Thian Poh programme have worked with over 100 organisations in areas of healthcare, family services, vulnerable communities, and much more. Let me quote from one of the most recent fellows, Nur Haziqah Mohd Yazib (a rising Year 2 student from the Department of Malay Studies). She says, and I quote, "*The Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Centre is an enabler for students who are passionate about community work and about enacting positive change in society. I've learnt to humble myself down and realise other people's struggles.*"

Mr Chua is passionate about an education grounded in values, and which goes a long way in building a more caring, respectful and resilient society in Singapore.

Mr Chua thank you for being empathetic.

Madam Chancellor, may it please you to confer on Mr Chua Thian Poh, the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters.