

Inaugural Edwin Thumboo Prize goes to RI student

Olivia Ho



A new annual academic prize, named for eminent Singaporean poet Edwin Thumboo (left), will recognise outstanding pre-university student writing on English literature.

Thumboo, who is Emeritus Professor at the National University of Singapore (NUS), is one of Singapore's earliest and foremost poets in the English language.

The inaugural Edwin Thumboo Prize will be presented on Friday to Raffles Institution student Gan Chong Jing, who will receive a cash prize of \$200 for his essay on forgiveness in William Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*.

The selection panel, which included Dr Jane Nardin of Yale-NUS College and Golden Point Award-winning poet Aaron Maniam, said his essay was "subtle, elegant and demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the play".

Mr Gan, 19, said: "I would not have gotten here without every single one of my literature teachers, who not only taught me everything I know, but also showed me how to love the written word for all its depth and beauty.

"Neither would I be here without my parents, who read to me when I was too young to read, stocked a house full of books and filled my childhood with stories."

Three merit prizes of \$100 each will also be awarded to Ms Jane Lee Jia Hui from Dunman High School, Ms Lim Yi Jun from River Valley High School and Ms Yew Jien Huey from Victoria Junior College.

The prize is administered by the National University of Singapore's Department of English Language and Literature with support from the Ministry of Education.

Ten pre-university institutions nominated a candidate each for the competition.

NUS department head of English Language and Literature Michelle Lazar said: "The award aims to promote excellence in the study of literature at the pre-university level. We are very encouraged by the quality of the entries and the high level of critical thinking displayed in the essays."