

Grandpa of four earns master's degree from NUS

62-year-old is among 11,127 people being conferred degrees from the university this month

Jolene Ang

Mr Victor Lim finds it difficult to study at home, but for reasons different from most students.

"My grandson will always say 'yeye, play with me', or try to see what's on my laptop screen," the 62-year-old businessman said.

He received a Master of Science (Real Estate) at the National University of Singapore's second commencement ceremony yesterday afternoon.

The main ceremony in the morning, attended by President Halimah Yacob, who is also NUS Chancellor, and Education Minister Ong Ye Kung, saw 290 graduates from the NUS School of Design and Environment receive their degrees.

Mr Chua Thian Poh, founder and chief executive of Ho Bee Group, was conferred an honorary Doctor of Letters in recognition of his contribution to the community. He has donated more than \$20 million to local higher education causes since 2007, in his private capacity and as part of Ho Bee Land's corporate social responsibility programme.

Addressing graduates in a speech at the main ceremony, Mr Chua said: "Life will never be plain sail-



Mr Victor Lim (far left) and Mr Firdaus Hair at the University Cultural Centre in the National University of Singapore on Wednesday. Mr Lim received a Master of Science (Real Estate) yesterday, and Mr Firdaus will receive a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Political Science tomorrow.
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FIGHTING STIGMA

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MR FIRDAUS HAIR, a former Normal (Academic) student who is graduating with Honours (Highest Distinction). He is a recipient of the MOE Teaching Award.

ing. Do not be disheartened by any setbacks. Instead, learn from your mistakes and with determination and guts, you will find the light at the end of the tunnel."

Some 11,127 NUS graduates will be conferred degrees – 6,663 will receive bachelor's degrees and 4,464 will receive postgraduate degrees – at 24 commencement ceremonies held over eight days at the University Cultural Centre.

Mr Lim, founder and chief executive of Asian Micro Holdings, has an expansive real estate portfolio comprising residential, industrial, office and land assets.

He saw the real estate master's programme as a way to network with younger people, keep up with

new trends, and learn to make better decisions for his investments.

This is his second master's degree. The first was from the Master of Business Administration programme at the Singapore Management University in 2014.

"I'm always curious," said the grandfather of four. "Technology is always changing, and the list of new things you can learn is never-ending."

As for Mr Firdaus Hair, 25, he has come a long way since he was a Normal (Academic) student in Hillgrove Secondary School.

He is graduating with Honours (Highest Distinction), and will receive his Bachelor of Social Sciences in Political Science tomorrow.

He is a recipient of the Ministry of Education Teaching Award and the President's Book Award.

He will be pursuing a master's degree in Asian studies at the Nanyang Technological University's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. He will then go on to teach history and social studies in a secondary school.

He remembers the "crippling" stigma of being in the N(A) stream, and applauded the latest changes to do away with the Normal (Technical), N(A) and Express streams.

"I want to become that teacher who frequently tells students to ignore societal stereotypes," he said.

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