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## Media Release

### **Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong officially opens SMU School of Law building and Kwa Geok Choo Law Library**

*Singapore, 15 March 2017 (Wednesday)* – Singapore Management University (SMU) today celebrated the official opening of its new School of Law building and the Kwa Geok Choo Law Library. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was the Guest-of-Honour at the ceremony, which was attended by 800 distinguished guests, donors, faculty, students, and SMU's partners in the legal fraternity.

Completed in December 2016, the new School of Law building now stands as a distinctive landmark at the junction of Armenian Street and Stamford Road/Fort Canning Link. The 23,000-square-metre building contains modern facilities to enrich the learning and teaching experience of SMU law students and faculty. It will also enable the law school to deepen its engagement with its alumni, the community, as well as the legal fraternity. The building is designed to be contemporary in expression, while integrating with the architecture and urban fabric of the civic district. Additionally, it builds upon the porosity of SMU's city campus and further promotes public access to Stamford Green and Fort Canning Park.

The building features a law library and a moot court facility. The Kwa Geok Choo Law Library has been named in memory of the late Madam Kwa Geok Choo, wife of former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. It boasts a rich depository of knowledge and is designed to stay ahead of the changing patterns of knowledge acquisition and transmission through the broad and deep use of the latest digital technologies.

**SMU Chairman, Mr Ho Kwon Ping**, said in his speech, "The Library is expressed architecturally as a sculptural dome to represent an 'inspirational beacon' that seeks to illuminate the lives and minds of those who draw upon the library's centuries of legal knowledge. It is also symbolic of a 'moral compass' to remind students of the importance of ethical principles, truth and justice in society."

"In this way we truly honour Madam Kwa Geok Choo. Beloved by all who knew her graceful humility, genuine warmth and gentle wit, Madam Kwa was herself a brilliant student and accomplished lawyer. She also was key to the drafting of significant legislation which profoundly shaped Singapore in its formative years," he added.

The moot court facility has been named after Mr David Marshall, who was Singapore's first Chief Minister and a top criminal lawyer known for his great oratory. Besides being Singapore's first open-concept moot court, the facility also incorporates flexible furniture and movable walls, as well as state-of-the-art information technology and audio-visual infrastructure. It will serve to further support and enhance SMU's moot training programme, which has to date produced many outstanding mooters who have done Singapore proud in numerous global mooting competitions. A bust of Mr David Marshall, donated by the Marshall family to SMU in 2011, stands in the moot court, reminding all SMU law students to always strive towards the qualities of passion, courage and integrity.

In commending the project team for their professionalism and dedication, **SMU President, Professor Arnoud De Meyer**, said, “The building itself represents a real engineering achievement. Constructed on the slopes of the historic Fort Canning Hill, on a site encompassing heritage trees, and with several municipal and conservation buildings, and the Fort Canning Tunnel close by – it was imperative that its design and construction were handled with the utmost integrity, sensitivity, skill and care. Yet it was also important to make the most of this precious land. In this respect, the Architect has designed the building to achieve optimal gross plot ratio, while adhering to building height constraints.”

The building boasts a high gross plot ratio of 3.2 GFA. The development project also accomplished high standards of safety, recording over two million safe-man-hours. For this achievement, the project received the *2017 Workplace Safety and Health Award Recognition for Projects (SHARP)* presented by the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council and supported by the Singapore Ministry of Manpower; as well as the *Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) 2016 Silver Award* presented by United Kingdom-based ROSPA.

**Professor Yeo Tiong Min, Dean of SMU School of Law**, said, “Interdisciplinary knowledge is today becoming increasingly relevant in legal practice. In a world of growing complexities, the law graduate of tomorrow needs to possess a deep reservoir of knowledge and cross-disciplinary expertise and mental agility to think, analyse and communicate.” He expressed his gratitude for the foresight of those who were involved in shaping the curriculum and ethos of SMU and the School of Law right from the start, and affirmed that the School will continue to pursue a holistic, broad-based approach towards nurturing legal minds from its new ‘home’.

The SMU Pro Bono Centre, which was established in 2013, also finds a new home in the new building. The Centre will be supported by the RHT Rajan Menon Foundation for five years (commencing in Academic Year 2017-2018), with a gift of \$300,000 from the Foundation, which is the corporate foundation set up by the partners of RHTLaw Taylor Wessing LLP. Through its work, the Centre will continue to give back to the community while it instills legal professionalism and social responsibility in SMU law students and provides them with opportunities to appreciate and integrate academic work with real-life experience.

“Pro bono involvement, as well as the diverse community service activities and projects that our law students partake in locally and abroad, will nurture in students a strong sense of social mission as well as empathy for the less privileged among us,” added Professor Yeo.

The SMU School of Law building is designed by Singapore-registered architectural firm, MKPL Architects, and constructed by Kajima Overseas Asia Pte Ltd.

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Enclosure:

- Annex 1 – Images of SMU School of Law building and Kwa Geok Choo Law Library

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**About Singapore Management University**

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU’s mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and produce broad-based, creative

and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning, and for its technologically enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes.

Home to around 10,000 undergraduate, postgraduate, executive and professional, full- and part-time students, SMU is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector, through its research institutes, centres and labs. SMU's city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. [www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

### **About SMU School of Law**

SMU School of Law proudly welcomed its first cohort of 116 students in August 2007. Taught by a dynamic faculty with postgraduate degrees from renowned universities such as Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Oxford, Cambridge, Bristol and London, the School aims to nurture its students to become excellent lawyers who will contribute significantly to society. Trained with the ability to contextualise legal expertise and to think across disciplines and geographical borders coupled with SMU's interactive pedagogy, SMU's law graduates are confident articulate and analytically agile.

The SMU School of Law offers a four-year full-time Bachelor of Laws programme, a five-year double-degree programme which combines law with Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems or Social Sciences, and a Master of Laws programme. The School has also launched a full-time graduate programme, the Juris Doctor Programme which can be completed within three years, and in some cases, accelerated for completion within two years. [www.law.smu.edu.sg](http://www.law.smu.edu.sg)

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Photos of new School of Law building and the Kwa Geok Choo Law Library



[Photo: Kwa Geok Choo Law Library.]



[Photo: Kwa Geok Choo Law Library.]



[Photo: SMU mooters making a presentation to Prime Minister Lee at the David Marshall Moot Court. In the forefront of the picture is a bust of Mr David Marshall, donated to SMU by the Marshall family in 2011.]



[Photo: Kwa Geok Choo Law Library, reminiscent of a pearl, glowing softly into the night.]