

CITATION FOR C C TAN AWARD 2021

Lok Vi Ming, SC

The C C Tan award is named after the first President of the Law Society of Singapore, Mr Tan Chye Cheng. C C Tan had a long and illustrious professional career. He embodied the finest and noblest virtues of the legal profession – honesty, fair play, gentlemanliness and personal integrity. Since 2003, it has been the Law Society's tradition each year to recognize and honour a member of our profession who best personifies the model example and ideals set by our very first President.

Our CC Tan Award recipient for 2021 is Mr Lok Vi Ming, SC.

Vi Ming was appointed Senior Counsel in 2005. He was also elected President of the Law Society in 2013 and 2014.

For all of us who know Vi Ming in practice, he is known to possess an extremely disarming (sometimes downright charming) and non-confrontational personality but maintains a disciplined demeanor, ethical, tenacious and pragmatic approach to practice. In many ways, he personifies the values celebrated by the C C Tan award.

It is perhaps this non-confrontational nature of his that have seen him being appointed as Deputy Chairman of Singapore International Mediation Center.

For those of us who know Vi Ming personally, he is known to be a great admirer of the Japanese culture. In his final year at law school, he was selected for a scholarship/exchange programme offered by a Japanese multinational corporation, which also included enrolment at one of the universities in Tokyo. Such exchange programme was extremely rare back in those days. This, he said, opened his eyes to the diversity in cultures, philosophies and thoughts among his peers. His admiration for all things Japanese probably started from there. During his tenure as President of Law Society, he sets out to establish relationship between Law Society and the various Japanese Bar Associations. His tireless pursuit in this area saw numerous MOUs signed between the Law Society and Japanese Bar Associations, just to name a few – Daini Tokyo Bar Association; Osaka Bar Association; and Japanese Federation of Bar Associations. Not satisfied with just Japan, he also expanded the reach of the Law Society to other Bar Associations in Northern Asia, for example Korean Bar Association and Shenzhen Lawyers Association. These relationships will prove to be invaluable subsequently when the Law Society launched the “Lawyers Go Global” programme in early 2018.

Asked to describe himself in three words in an interview article, he said “Never say Never”. Whether he aspires to be James Bond aside, it can be said that Vi Ming really lives up to this description. One interesting anecdote shared by the Law Society’s secretariat is this – In preparation for one of Law Society’s mission trips, seats were all sold out for one of the more popular flights. The secretariat tried all means to secure a seat but was unsuccessful. When Vi Ming heard this – he told the secretariat – never say never – and went on to manage to get one in the end.

Growing up, he never wanted to be a lawyer, and preferred to be a doctor. But, never say never. Today, he is a well-regarded insurance and aviation lawyer/arbitrator.

In 2015, in his capacity as Immediate Past President, he pioneered the “Just” series of fund raising for Law Society Pro Bono Services, with the first held on 10 January titled “Just Walk”. This series would prove to be a popular fund raising events for Pro Bono Services. Vi Ming also showed a fair for interior design. He initiated the last renovation project, deploying cozy and contemporary ideas, to spruce up our No. 39 South Bridge Road premises.

When asked in an interview with the Singapore Institute of Arbitrators the person(s) who has had the greatest impact and/or influence on his career, he replied as follows:

“I have been extremely fortunate to have met fellow lawyers and teachers who have demonstrated to me what grace is in the midst of the harshness and aggressiveness of practice, what steel is in the face of withering criticism and pessimism, what beauty the words of the English language can convey, and what power the creative and skillful advocate in Court can do. I have learned so much by just observing, and by being inspired.”

Lok Vi Ming, SC personifies the values celebrated by the C C Tan Award and is a fine model for younger lawyers to aspire to. Council is pleased to present Lok Vi Ming, SC with the C C Tan Award for 2021.

Lisa Sam Hui Min
Vice-President
The Law Society of Singapore