

Academy Publishing 10th Anniversary Lunch Speech

Address by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon

11 August 2017

Ladies and Gentlemen

1 Good afternoon. I am delighted to welcome you to the 10th anniversary lunch of Academy Publishing.

History of Academy Publishing

2 Academy Publishing was founded on 18 May 2007 at the initiative of Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong. It was meant to consolidate the publishing work that the Singapore Academy of Law was already responsible for and to add some new areas of work. Today, its work covers three broad areas of publishing: law reports, academic journals, and law books.

3 Law reports and academic journals were two areas that were already under the purview of the Singapore Academy of Law (SAL) before the inception of Academy Publishing. In 2002, SAL took over the publishing of the Singapore Law Reports from the commercial publishers who had until then been responsible for this. We formed the Council of Law Reporting to oversee the publication of the Singapore Law Reports. The SAL had also been involved in journal publishing, having published the Singapore Academy of Law Journal since 1989. It had also, since 2001, published the SAL

Annual Review of Singapore Cases, a valued conspectus of analysis and commentary on the judgments of our courts.

4 What was perhaps the most significant new initiative in 2007, therefore, was the establishment of a publishing division for law books. At that time, law books published by commercial publishers were invariably expensive. Yet, with the development of Singapore law gathering pace, there were gaps in local legal literature which needed to be filled. A new publishing division was therefore established to fill this gap by providing affordable and authoritative local legal literature to the profession. A Commissioning Panel was also formed with a view to commissioning respected authors to produce a series of titles on Singapore law.

10 Years of Academy Publishing

5 In the 10 years since its founding, Academy Publishing has made great strides on the three fronts of legal publishing that I have mentioned. At this 10-year milestone, it is appropriate to recount some of the important highlights of that history.

6 Let me start with the law reports. In 2010 the current series of the Singapore Law Reports was launched. This is now the authoritative version of our law reports. It sits alongside the Singapore Law Reports (Reissue) series, the production of which was itself a herculean task. In the 7 years from 2002, when the SAL took over the task of law reporting from the commercial law reporters, to 2009, when the Reissue series was published, the SAL reported all cases going back to 1965 with new headnotes

and re-edited the cases to conform to the new SAL house style to enable better search results on LawNet. This was necessary for us to own the intellectual property rights to the law reports so that we could offer this on LawNet at an affordable price. Seven years and 84 volumes later, the SAL had ownership of the entire body of reported local cases from Independence to 2009. Annually, Academy Publishing now reports more than 6,000 pages of judgments in the Singapore Law Reports, which are published annually in five volumes. (It used to be four volumes until 2014 when that proved to be no longer sufficient given the output of our courts.)

7 The breadth of law reporting that Academy Publishing now undertakes can be seen in its creation of two specialist law reports. In 2012 the Singapore Syariah Appeals Reports (published by Academy Publishing on behalf of the Government) was launched. This is a five-volume compilation of the decisions of the Syariah Court Appeals Board from 1980–2010. That has proved to be a very useful addition for practitioners of Syariah law. A new volume, comprising decisions from 2011–2015, has since been published; and reflecting the importance of arbitration to our legal market, 2015 saw the launch of the Asia-Pacific Arbitration Reporter, which covers developments in arbitration law in the Asia-Pacific Region. As I said at its launch, the Arbitration Reporter fills an important gap for a high-quality journal that tracks important regional developments in arbitration.

8 The SAL Journal too has done very well under the helm of Justice Chao Hick Tin and Justice Judith Prakash. In 2009 it was accorded Tier 1 accreditation by the National University of Singapore's Office of Research in recognition of its high-quality

scholarship. Since 2006, it has put out, as one of the three issues it publishes annually, an issue dedicated to special topics. These have included, for instance, issues on Remedies and the Conflict of Laws in Arbitration. In 2016, Journals Online was launched which enabled journal papers to be published quicker via its e-publishing-prior-to-print publishing module.

9 As for law books, under the aegis of the Commissioning Panel led by Justice Andrew Phang, Academy Publishing has published 49 titles over the past decade. These books fall into different categories such as the Law Practice Series, Monograph Series, and the Heritage Series. The first title published under the Law Practice Series was Professor Jeffrey Pinsler's *Ethics and Professional Responsibility: A Code for the Advocate and Solicitor*. I am told that this remains the best-selling title from the Law Practice Series to date, with 2,771 copies sold. That seems entirely right given the foundational importance of this subject to the legal profession. While it is not a competition, I should also mention that in second position, with 2,278 copies sold, is *The Law of Contract in Singapore*, which was edited by Justice Phang and written by a team of eminent local contract scholars. That work has the added distinction of being the most cited work in Supreme Court judgments – 96 times, to be precise. The third best-selling book is Professor Gary Chan's *The Law of Torts in Singapore* – its first edition sold 1,602 copies. As a reflection of its well-deserved success, it is now into its second edition. A number of second editions of titles in the Law Practice Series are also in the pipeline.

10 In addition to these reference works, the publishing division also puts out monographs on specialist topics. The first title published under the Monograph Series was *Confidentiality in Arbitration*, by Quentin Loh SC, as he then was, and Edwin Lee. Since then a number of titles have been published spanning topics as diverse as juvenile justice, coroner's practice, and data protection.

11 Let me also mention some interesting titles that Academy Publishing has published on Singapore's legal history. The first title under its Heritage Series was a biography of our first Chief Justice by Mr John Koh, titled *The First Chief: Wee Chong Jin – a Judicial Portrait*. Attempts have also been made to document our pre-Independence legal history. In this regard let me mention a volume edited by Associate Professor Eleanor Wong, titled *Legal Tenor: Voices from Singapore's Legal History*, which contains interviews with 15 legal personalities on their lives in the law in the period up to 1959. This growing interest in legal history is encouraging, as it points to the maturation of our legal system.

10th Anniversary Initiatives

12 To mark this 10th anniversary of Academy Publishing, two initiatives are being launched. The first of them is in front of you. It is a complimentary commemorative work titled *Imprints of Singapore Law: A Brief History of Legal Publishing in Singapore*. This publication was a labour of love by the Academy Publishing Secretariat and a number of contributors. It traces the history of legal publishing in Singapore from the 19th century to the present day. It is a trove of historical information and old

photographs of such landmarks as the Government Printing Office and the Old Supreme Court Library. I hope you enjoy reading it.

13 The second initiative is the Academy Publishing Awards. Today we honour seven contributors whose untiring efforts – authoring or editing books, writing articles and book reviews, refereeing journal papers or providing advice – have helped build up Academy Publishing’s corpus of work over the years. The magnificent seven are: Justice Choo Han Teck, Dr S Chandra Mohan, Professor Jeffrey Pinsler SC, Mr Chan Leng Sun SC, Professor Yeo Tiong Min SC (*honoris causa*), Professor Teo Keang Sood, and Associate Professor Goh Yihan. We will, later in the course of today’s lunch, be presenting their awards to them.

14 Academy Publishing would not be what it is today without the efforts and support of numerous other people. Allow me, before I close, to express, personally and on behalf of Academy Publishing, our heartfelt gratitude to the following for their contributions. First, the chairs of the publishing committees in the SAL for their leadership – former Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong, Justice Chao Hick Tin, Justice Andrew Phang and Justice Judith Prakash. Next, all members of the SAL publishing committees for their advice over the years and for having charted the course of legal publishing in Singapore. Third, all authors and contributors for their invaluable time and energy in completing their work. Their efforts over the years quite literally speaks volumes about their commitment to the development of Singapore law. Finally, the members of the Academy Publishing secretariat, past and present, for their

professionalism in ensuring that the titles are published to the highest editorial standards.

15 Thank you all very much.