

IMPRINTS: Appreciating our Contributors

Address by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon

11 August 2015

Ladies and gentlemen

1 We are here today first and foremost to express our appreciation to all those who have made vital contributions to Academy Publishing. It is because of your commitment, devotion and outstanding work that we at the Singapore Academy of Law are able to bring significant and important new titles to our readers. Hence, my first wish is to express on behalf of all of us at the SAL and at Academy Publishing our heartfelt gratitude to our contributors.

2 Today, we also gather to mark the launch of two titles which are the “Asia Pacific Arbitration Reporter” and “Singapore Law: 50 Years in the Making”.

1 SINGAPORE LAW: 50 YEARS IN THE MAKING

3 Let me take the second of these books first. The title itself resonates with the historic celebrations that we as a nation witnessed just 2 days ago when we marked the golden jubilee of our founding. I am told the timing was somewhat accidental but clearly it could not have worked out more appropriately had all

those concerned set out at the outset with this date as the one desired for its launch.

4 Singapore Law: 50 Years in the Making is a book that narrates the story of the birth of the legal system of independent Singapore and then analyses its subsequent growth both generally and by reference to specific subject areas. Of course, Singapore law tracks its roots further back into history. But law is foundational to every nation; and in that sense the story of a national legal system must begin with the birth of the nation. To provide an objective analysis of how our law has developed over the course of the last 5 decades, the contributors have sieved through a considerable volume of empirical data. Nearly 50 years' of reported cases were scrutinised so that consideration could be given to such matters as (a) the extent to which our courts have tended to rely on academic arguments, (b) or to what extent foreign judgments have been cited and even (c) to how the length of our judgments has varied over the years. Having assembled this considerable volume of data, the contributors have then meticulously curated it and also traced the developmental trends of our jurisprudence. In so doing, they have generated a highly educational and illuminating read.

5 The range of the issues covered is truly impressive. My judicial colleague and friend, former Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong has written a chapter that tracks the journey to legal independence that began much earlier but which in some respects culminated in 1993 with the passage of the Application of English Law Act. The account is fascinating.

6 Other contributions tackle such issues as the extent to which we have indeed developed a local jurisprudence; the common practice in the Court of Appeal of issuing single judgments instead of separate concurring or dissenting judgments and what might account for this; unique features of our rules of civil procedure; and the analysis of several specific areas of law. The editors conclude with a look ahead to where and how we might see the spread and development of Singapore law in the future. I have no doubt at all that this work is destined to become a classic. It is already an invaluable addition to the study of our legal history.

II. THE ASIA-PACIFIC ARBITRATION REPORTER

7 The other work we launch today is the Asia-Pacific Arbitration Reporter. This is the first of what, I hope, will in time emerge as a critically important series where significant developments from the region in the sphere of arbitration law and practice are reported, analysed and discussed. The Reporter is helmed by an

Editorial Board headed by John Savage, someone we all know as a highly respected international arbitration practitioner based in Singapore. Aside from the Editorial Board, a team of 10 country reporters and one international law reporter has been commissioned to undertake the responsibility of ensuring that the latest and most important aspects of arbitration in Asia are made available to practitioners throughout the world. I had observed some time ago that in spite of the considerable volume of arbitration literature that now exists, there was a gap in terms of a high quality journal that tracked important regional developments in this area of the law. I am absolutely delighted that Academy Publishing has now filled that gap and I am deeply grateful to the Editorial Board and the team of reporters for helping to make this a reality.

III. LEGAL HISTORY “APP”

8 Aside from these two excellent publications, I would also like to mention a new “app” that was spearheaded by the SAL Legal Heritage Committee entitled “The Old Supreme Court”. This is an “app” that is in keeping with the theme of appreciating our legal history. Designed by local artist Eugene Soh, the “app” takes the user on an interactive virtual tour of the Old Supreme Court. The user will be able to walk the halls of the Old Supreme Court and view items such as Sir Roland Braddell’s wig, the original copy of the second charter of justice and judges’ gavels of yester year. Users of the “app” will also be able to enjoy many

delightful nuggets of legal history. For instance, there is a recording of Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin recounting the challenges he faced when he became the first Chief Justice of Singapore who was of Asian ethnicity. I was shown the “app” a few days ago at a meeting and was so captivated that there was a real risk we would not be able to finish the other business that also needed to be attended to.

9 It is now my great pleasure to launch both these books and the “app”. Before I do so, let me once again express our heartfelt appreciation to all our contributors and to extend my warmest congratulations to all who have made these two publications and the “app” possible.