Philip Yeo conferred honorary doctorate by NUS

Distinguished service and outstanding contributions to S’pore recognised

By UMA SHANKARI

THE National University of Singapore (NUS) has conferred an Honorary Doctor of Letters on Philip Yeo, chairman of Spring Singapore, it said yesterday.

The conferment is in recognition of Mr Yeo’s distinguished service and outstanding contributions to Singapore, the community and the university.

"Mr Yeo’s outstanding contributions to the economic development of Singapore – particularly his pioneering role in the promotion and development of the country’s information technology, semiconductor, chemical and biomedical sciences industries – is widely admired and recognised," said NUS.

"The NUS community is also deeply appreciative of Mr Yeo’s efforts in establishing biomedical research in Singapore, as well as his passion in developing talents through the setting up of various scholarship programmes which have greatly benefited NUS faculty and students."

Mr Yeo is a former chairman of the Economic Development Board (EDB) and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star).

Under his charge, the EDB went into "overdrive", attracting multinational companies to develop the chemical, aerospace and semiconductor industries, and more recently, the biomedical science industry, said John Wong, dean of the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine in NUS, in a citation.

And as chairman of A*Star, Mr Yeo developed even stronger links with the universities, leading the efforts to develop biomedical sciences as Singapore’s next economic pillar, Prof Wong said.

In his speech, Mr Yeo advised the 2011 NUS graduates to pick a job that makes them "happy" and asked them to build up friendships and relationships.

He also shared that while it is good to seize opportunities for oneself, it is far more rewarding to create opportunities for others.

"This lesson came home to me at the age of 24 when I was given the responsibility of finding alternative jobs for the shocked and scared Singaporeans who were retrenched as a result of the withdrawal of British troops," Mr Yeo said.

"From then on, it has been a personal mission for me to identify and build new industries that would create jobs for successive generations of Singaporeans. This includes expanding our manufacturing base, promoting exportable services, investing in research and development capabilities, and identifying new and emerging industries such as biomedical sciences."