

## **Annex – Recipients of the FASS Distinguished Arts and Social Sciences Alumni Award 2021**

### **Mr Peter Tan**

Mr Peter Tan was appointed Singapore's Ambassador to Japan in September 2019 and presented the Letter of Credence to His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito on 12 February 2020. He served as Deputy Secretary for Southeast Asia and ASEAN in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from January 2015 to September 2019. Mr Tan was the Singapore Ambassador to the Republic of Korea (concurrently accredited to Mongolia) from February 2011 to January 2015.

Since joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992, Mr Tan has served in various capacities on issues related to Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, United Nations and Technical Cooperation. Mr Tan served in the Singapore Embassy in Tokyo as First Secretary from 1995 to 1998 and in the Singapore High Commission in Kuala Lumpur as Counsellor from 2001 to 2002. He also served in the Singapore Embassy in Tokyo from 2002 to 2005 as Counsellor, and subsequently as Acting Minister-Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission. Mr Tan was appointed as Second Director of the Southeast Asia Directorate on 27 December 2005, and served as Director from October 2006 to August 2010.

Mr Tan graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with Second Class (Upper) Honours from NUS in 1992. He was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship and obtained his Master of Arts (East Asian Studies) from Columbia University, USA, in 2000.

Mr Tan was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Silver) in 2008.

### **Mrs Josephine Teo**

Minister Josephine Teo was appointed Minister for Communications and Information and Minister-in-charge of Smart Nation and Cybersecurity on 15 May 2021. She is also a member of the National Jobs Council and the Future Economy Council and has been concurrently the Second Minister for Home Affairs since May 2018.

Mrs Teo was the Minister for Manpower from May 2018 till May 2021. She previously served in the Prime Minister's Office and the Finance, Transport and Foreign Affairs ministries.

A member of Parliament (MP) since 2006, Mrs Teo was formerly Chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Education and Assistant Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC). Mrs Teo was concurrently Chief Executive Officer of the not-for-profit organisation Business China, a platform launched by then Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew and then China Premier Wen Jiabao to strengthen Singapore's bicultural foundation.

An alumna of Dunman High School and Raffles Junior College, Mrs Teo graduated from NUS, winning several honours including the Rachel Meyer Book Prize for being the Best Woman Student. She obtained a Master of Science in Economics from the London School of Economics on scholarship from the Economic Development Board.

She is married and has three grown-up children. She enjoys creating memorable experiences for family and friends.

## Haresh Sharma

Mr Haresh Sharma started writing plays when he was an undergraduate at NUS. Since becoming Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage in 1990, he has written more than 120 plays which have been staged in over 20 cities. Some of his plays have been adapted into telemovies and feature films. He has also written for National Day Parade as well as the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Southeast Asian Games (2015).

His play, *Off Centre*, was the first Singapore play selected by the Ministry of Education as a Literature text for GCE N- and O-Levels. He has participated in several writers' festivals including the inaugural Singapore Literature Festival in New York, the New Delhi World Book Fair, the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival and the Hong Kong Literary Festival.

Mr Sharma has 13 publications of his plays, and his works have been translated into Malay, Mandarin, Greek and Italian. He was awarded Best Original Script for *Fundamentally Happy*, *Good People* and *Gemuk Girls* at the "The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards" in 2007, 2008 and 2009 respectively. Mr Sharma also had the honour of having a selection of his works featured at the Esplanade's first playwright-centred season at "The Studios" in 2017.

Mr Sharma is the first non-American to be awarded the prestigious Goldberg Master Playwright by New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in 2011. In 2014, he was conferred the Southeast Asian Writers (or S.E.A. Write) Award (Singapore), which recognises and honours literary excellence in the ASEAN region. He was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2015.

Mr Sharma regularly teaches playwriting and devising theatre. He mentors Birds Migrant Theatre, a migrant-run theatre group in Singapore. He is also a Part-time Lecturer at the Department of English, Linguistics, and Theatre Studies at the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. In 2020, he published *Reading the Room: A Playwright's Devising Journey*, which documents his journey as a playwright and theatre-maker in Singapore.

## Denise Phua

Denise Phua is the Mayor of Central Singapore District and MP for Jalan Besar Group Representation Constituency (GRC).

Ms Phua is best known for her advocacy for those at risk of being left behind in Singapore. She frequently speaks up for the disabled and for Singaporeans with low-skilled and low-income backgrounds. She is one of the key architects behind three 5-year Enabling Masterplans for the Disabled in Singapore.

An active volunteer, Ms Phua is the President of the Autism Resource Centre (Singapore) and Chairman of the Autism Association Singapore, both of which are leading local autism charities. She is Vice-Chairman of the Eden School board and supervises the Pathlight School – Singapore's first autism special school which she co-founded.

Ms Phua also helped start The Purple Parade, an annual parade to support inclusion and showcase abilities. She is also the founder of The Purple Symphony, Singapore's largest inclusive orchestra comprising musicians with and without special needs.

Prior to her current portfolio, Ms Phua acquired more than 20 years of local and overseas corporate management experiences in Hewlett-Packard as well as the Wuthelam Group, and she also founded the Centre for Effective Leadership (Asia). She is a winner of the 2005/6

“Great Women of Our Times, Education and Public Service Category” awarded by Singapore Women’s Weekly.

Ms Phua gave up her corporate career in 2005 to become a full-time special needs volunteer before being approached to join politics in 2006. She is a member of the Government Parliamentary Committees (GPC) for Education and is a member of the GPC for Social and Family Development.

### **Low Thia Kiang**

Low Thia Kiang is a Singaporean former politician who served as Secretary-General of the Workers' Party between 2001 and 2018. He was first elected as the MP for Hougang Single Member Constituency during the 1991 General Election and became Secretary-General of the Workers’ Party on 27 May 2001.

He served as one of two opposition MPs between 2001 and 2011, and he was the de facto opposition leader between 2006 and 2018. He became one of five elected opposition MPs of Aljunied GRC in the 13th Parliament and represented the Bedok Reservoir–Punggol division between 2011 and 2020.

Mr Low stepped down as the MP for Aljunied GRC prior to the 2020 General Election, making him Singapore's longest serving opposition MP with 29 years in service.