

**CITATION FOR MS KAY KUOK OON KWONG
RECIPIENT OF NUS HONORARY DOCTOR OF LETTERS**

**PUBLIC ORATOR
PROFESSOR SIMON CHESTERMAN
VICE PROVOST (EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION) AND DEAN (NUS COLLEGE)**

**NUS COMMENCEMENT 2026, MAIN CEREMONY
THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2026
NUS UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTRE**

Ladies and Gentlemen, may I present Kay Kwok.

President of the Republic of Singapore NUS Chancellor, Mr Tharman
Shanmugaratnam;

NUS Pro-Chancellors;

NUS Chairman and Trustees;

NUS President;

Distinguished Honorary Graduand Professor Lim Pin;

Distinguished guests, graduates, parents and friends;

Ladies and gentlemen

There is a kind of person who, when asked to help, simply does. No fanfare, no conditions: just a quiet and sustained commitment to making things better. Kay Kuok is such a person, and we are fortunate that, over many decades, she has directed that commitment towards Singapore and this University.

Trained as a barrister at Gray's Inn, London, Kay's career took her not to the courtroom but to the boardroom. In business, she has brought judgement and integrity to

institutions, from the Kuok Group's Singapore entities to Shangri-La. Anyone who has experienced a well-run hotel knows that success lies in making the difficult look effortless. Indeed, that may also be a fair description of Kay herself.

Yet no boardroom was big enough to contain her capacity to serve. As Chair of the National Healthcare Group, she helped guide Singapore's largest healthcare systems through years of transformation. Her foresight supported the creation of the National Centre for Infectious Diseases; her stewardship during COVID-19 reflected steadiness at a time when steadiness was itself a form of courage. The Distinguished Service Order she received in 2023 recognised not a single achievement, but a lifetime habit of responsibility and commitment.

For NUS, Kay's service has been especially profound. As a member of the Board of Trustees, and founding Chair of the Yale-NUS College Governing Board, she helped bring into being Singapore's first liberal arts college—an institution whose legacy continues in NUS College, which I now have the honour to lead. She shaped Yale-NUS, challenged it, and held it to account. Her questions were often gentle, which did not make them easier to answer. Whatever good NUS College now does in the world, much of it traces back to her.

Kay Kuok reminds us that leadership is measured not by offices held, but by trust earned; not only by decisions made, but by people enabled to flourish.

Mr Chancellor, for her outstanding service to education, healthcare, business, and the nation and beyond, may it please you to confer on Ms Kay Kuok the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters.