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ENTREPRENEURS EXTRAORDINAIRE WITH BIG HEARTS
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- by Lo Tien Yin

BINGO! These alumni from NUS have not only hit upon the right formula for entrepreneurship, but have also contributed greatly to society.

Eight such outstanding entrepreneurs were honoured at the NUS Centennial Entrepreneurship Awards 2005 held on 7 September. The Awards, organised by the NUS Students' Business Incubation of Global Organisations (BINGO) and the Faculty of Engineering, aim to encourage more NUS students and alumni to take up the entrepreneurial challenge.

The finalists gave stirring tales of perseverance and endurance at the awards ceremony. Mr Wee Kok Wah, President, Stamford Tyres Corporation Limited won the **Best Entrepreneur (Traditional Business) Award**. He lost a kidney to disease and had a brain tumour removed – but is still “selling tyres” today. He recalled the days he “cut classes in the university and took a pirate taxi to town and watched all the movies” – but he graduated in 1970 to work in his father’s tyre business. While other businessmen were driving Mercedes, he was driving a truck to Jurong to collect tyres. He learnt the ropes fast and by the 80s, his business had gone international.

Dr Bernard Leong, Chief Technology Officer of SimuGen took the **Genesis Award** which recognises young and aspiring NUS entrepreneurs with successful business startups. Majoring in Materials Science and Physics, he graduated with Merit from NUS in 1998. SimuGen developed a flagship kit that is able to predict liver toxicity cheaper and faster than existing ones. He has also just become an adjunct lecturer with NUS. For him, passion is paramount – and the route to success.

The **Grand Entrepreneur Award** went to Mr Teh Bong Lim, Managing Director of Micro-Machining Industries Pte Ltd (MMI) Holdings. He graduated from NUS in 1980 with an Honours degree in Mechanical Engineering. He started MMI in 1989, nurturing it from a startup to a regional group of companies engaged in precision engineering, contract manufacturing and factory automation with group revenues of over \$560 million. He is active in public service and has served in statutory boards and research institutes such as the Economic Development Board, the then Centre for Wireless Communications and the Governing Board of the Singapore-MIT Alliance.



GRAND ENTREPRENEUR AWARD: Mr Teh Bong Lim, Managing Director of Micro-Machining Industries Pte Ltd (MMI) Holdings receiving the award from the guest-of-honour, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports and Second Minister for Trade and Industry.

“My unwavering principle is to do everything with passion and a sense of purpose,” he said. “Reflection is very much a part of entrepreneurship. At the end of the day, you need to think about what you have risked and have you risked enough and what you could have done better.”

He said he has learnt from his father who also has a passion for business, that entrepreneurs should always be caring as well.

OTHER WINNERS:

Best Entrepreneur (Arts and School of Design and Environment)

Ms Jocelyn Chng Yee Kwong, Managing Director and CEO, Shin Hwa Dee Foodstuff Industries Pte Ltd, JR Foodstuff Industries Pte Ltd

Best Entrepreneur (Business and Law)

Mr Huang Chuan Sheng, Founder, Ma Kuang Chinese Medicine & Research Centre Pte Ltd

Best Entrepreneur (Engineering)

Mr Teh Bong Lim, Managing Director, MMI Holdings Ltd

Best Entrepreneur (Medicine and Dentistry)

Dr William Chong Lai Leong, Co-founder/Managing Director, Pacific Healthcare Holdings Pte Ltd

Best Entrepreneur (Science and School of Computing)

Mr Lim Teck Sin, CEO & Founder, KOOPrime Pte Ltd

Best Entrepreneur (Science and Technology Business)

Mr Steve Ting Tuan Toon, Group Founder & Executive Chairman, Frontline Technologies Corporation Ltd

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