NTU honours record 34 alumni

MPs Low Thia Khiang, Teo Ser Luck among those recognised for their achievements

Kimberly Spykerman

Workers’ Party secretary-general Low Thia Khiang and songstress Sefanie Sun may seem like an unlikely pair to be sharing a stage.

But the two found themselves under the same spotlight yesterday after they were honoured by their alma mater, Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Both were recognised, along with 32 other alumni, by NTU for the achievements in their respective fields. Among them were Minister of State for Trade and Industry Teo Ser Luck and Members of Parliament Inderjit Singh, Isman Azura Mokhtar and Low Yen Ling.

The university said this was the largest number of alumni awards given in a single year.

Education Minister Heng Swee Keat, who was guest of honour at the event last night, said a key measure of a university’s success is the accomplishments of its alumni.

He commended the university’s strong alumni base, which has made contributions to NTU’s programmes as well as helped financially needy juniors.

That tradition has continued, with 80 per cent of this year’s graduating class raising $105,000, more than the $97,000 raised by the 2010 cohort.

“I believe one reason NTU succeeded in encouraging fresh graduates to contribute back to NTU is the example set by the alumni members,” said Mr Heng.

Mr Low, who graduated in 1980 with a Bachelor of Arts, said that it was his time at NTU that sparked his political thinking and shaped his ideals of democracy.

“Government this (award) is a recognition of the work of the opposition and contributions to Singapore,” he added.

Veteran MP Mr Singh was one of four recipients of the night’s top award – the Nanyang Distinguished Alumni Award.

The MP for Ang Mo Kio GRC, who graduated in 1985 with an honours degree in engineering, said that his time as a student leader at NTU helped hone his entrepreneurial spirit.

He added that he was thankful for the award, and said: “I’ve always done what I could for the university and for my residents.”

Mr Teo, who graduated in 1992 with an accounting degree, recalled how courses he enrolled in at NTU helped him later in life.

“They had courses like entrepreneurship, which you don’t normally hear about in those days,” he said. “You learnt about not being afraid to fail (and) that’s what doing business is about.”

He added that it was important for former students to give back to their alma mater and said that he makes it a point to return to NTU to share his experiences with undergraduates whenever he can.

“School is like your second home. There is a need to contribute back wherever possible,” he said.

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