Growing up in poverty

Child of an impecunious store-keeper, he learnt first-hand the difficulties of growing up in poverty. -ST

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PROFESSOR Lim Chong Yah was born in Malacca in 1932. In 1951, he won a Malacca Settlement Scholarship to study economics at the University of Malaya in Singapore. He also holds a doctorate from Oxford University, which he did on a British Commonwealth Scholarship.

His main aim then was to help eradicate global poverty. As the child of an impecunious store-keeper, he learnt first-hand the difficulties of growing up in poverty.

Related link: He is perhaps best known as the founding chairman of the National Wages Council from 1972 to 2001.

He is also the author of two A-level economics textbooks, Elements Of Economic Theory and Economic Structure And Organisation.

'I owe my life to education'

He was with the Singapore Administrative Service from 1955 to 1959 and began lecturing at the University of Malaya in 1959. He has since lectured at and headed the Department of Economics and Statistics at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and is now the Albert Winsemius Chair Professor of Economics at Nanyang Technological University.

Prof Lim is married to former teacher Nana Lim and they have two sons and two daughters.

His hobbies include golf, gardening and writing poetry. He is also known to quote poetry while teaching economics.

His elder daughter, lawyer Lim Suet Fern, is married to Mr Lee Hsien Yang, chairman of Fraser & Neave and son of Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew.