



Ambassador Gopinath Pillai

Outstanding Service Award

Ambassador Gopinath Pillai is an accomplished businessman, a distinguished diplomat and an outstanding alumnus of NUS.

Ambassador Pillai has had an interesting, varied and illustrious career, having been a journalist, teacher, an economist, entrepreneur and corporate leader, and a diplomat. In the 1980s and 1990s, Ambassador Pillai helmed various government enterprises. Most notably, he served as Chairman of the NTUC FairPrice Cooperative.

Following his successful stint in running government enterprises, Ambassador Pillai then decided to start his own business. With much foresight and acumen, he turned his attention to India, an emerging and populous country. The major companies that he founded, such as KSP Investments Private Limited, Gateway Distriparks Limited (India) and its subsidiaries, Snowman Logistics Limited and Gateway Rail Freight Limited - have flourished and are hailed as success stories in India.

Beyond the corporate world, Ambassador Pillai has served the nation in public service. He took on challenging diplomatic roles with flair and distinction. Ambassador Pillai was Singapore's longest serving Non-Resident Ambassador to Iran and later served as Singapore's High Commissioner to Pakistan. He is currently Ambassador-at-Large, and has just been appointed as Singapore's special envoy to the state of Andhra

Pradesh in India. For his manifold contributions to public service, Ambassador Pillai has been awarded the Public Service Star Award (BBM) in 1999 and the Public Service Star Bar at the 2009 National Day Awards.

In spite of his demanding schedule, Ambassador Pillai continues to give generously of his time to NUS. His role as the founding Governing Board Chairman of the Institute of South Asian Studies is especially noteworthy. A hands-on Chairman, he has steered the relatively young Institute to become one of the most influential think-tanks on South Asia. He took personal leadership to drive initiatives such as the South Asian Diaspora Convention and the Singapore Symposium in India - two high-profiled events which featured senior political and business personalities from Singapore and South Asia. For his instrumental efforts in bridging and advancing Singapore-India relations, the Indian government conferred Ambassador Pillai with the Padma Shri Award at the 2012 Republic Day.

NUS is honoured to recognise Ambassador Pillai's outstanding and longstanding service to the international community, to Singapore and to the University. I am pleased to confer Ambassador Gopinath Pillai the Outstanding Service Award.