

# Rhodes scholarship recipient has a passion for social issues

Ng Wei Kai

Befriending elderly tissue paper sellers near his university campus in Clementi led Mr Nur Hazeem Abdul Nasser, 23, to consider the wider needs of Singapore's ageing population and start the non-profit Signpost Project in 2019.

The initiative works to fight social stigma faced by tissue paper sellers through social media campaigns.

Mr Hazeem also links those with difficulties – financial or otherwise – to social services.

His passion for social issues as

well as his leadership qualities landed him this year's Singapore Rhodes Scholarship, said the Rhodes Trust, which administers the award.

Mr Hazeem will pursue two master's degrees in public policy and public policy research at the University of Oxford in Britain with the scholarship.

The Rhodes Scholarship, which funds postgraduate study at Oxford, resumed in Singapore in 2018 after it was suspended in 2006 due to funding issues.

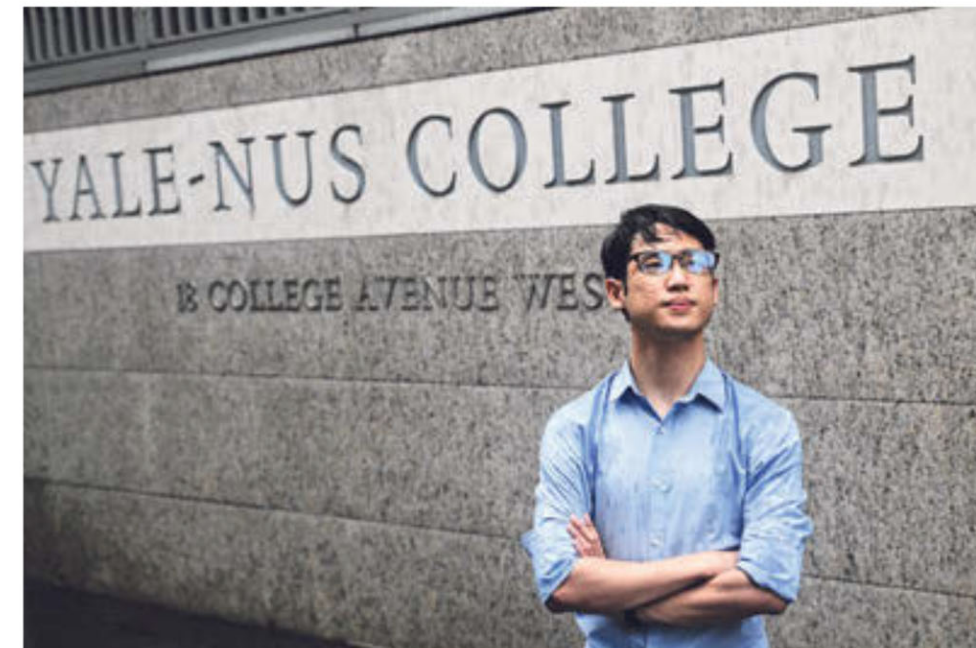
It was established in 1902 and counts former United States president Bill Clinton, former Australian prime minister Bob Hawke

and Singaporean historian Thum Ping Tjin among its alumni.

Mr Hazeem, who received a scholarship from the Public Service Commission for his undergraduate studies, said: "The other recipients of the Rhodes Scholarship globally are leaders in their fields, often in public service and non-profit work, and I hope to bring the connections and expertise back with me."

Knowledge gained about non-profit work will also apply to his goal of building support for the elderly in Singapore, he added.

"What I am concerned about and what I want to improve is not just the welfare of individual tissue sell-



Mr Nur Hazeem Abdul Nasser grew up watching his parents work in public service, which inspired his foray into community service. ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG

ers, but the whole support system around the elderly in Singapore, especially as our population ages."

Currently a final-year undergraduate studying politics, philosophy

and economics at Yale-NUS College, Mr Hazeem was also the seventh president of the student government there.

Yale-NUS College president Tan

Tai Yong said: "We are delighted that Hazeem is being recognised for his work in the community, and we hope this will inspire more Singaporean youth to actively serve our citizens."

"We are confident that this terrific opportunity will help Hazeem achieve an even greater impact."

Mr Hazeem grew up watching his parents work in public service, which inspired his own foray into community service.

His father Abdul Nasser Kamaruddin was once MP for Hong Kah GRC, while his mother is a former police officer.

"My parents were always looking out for others, giving out meals to people and always invested in having conversations and getting to know people," he said.

Mr Hazeem will begin his studies at Oxford in October next year, and plans to work on the Signpost Project from now until then.

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