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TNG YING HUI

NOT BORN
in
SINGAPORE

FIFTY PERSONALITIES WHO SHAPED THE NATION



EPIGRAM BOOKS

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PREFACE

It is a truism that the world does not owe Singapore a living. However, many foreigners have helped it, not only to make a living, but also to create the good life for its citizens. This book profiles 50 people who were not born in Singapore but who have contributed substantially to its progress from Third World to First.

This book aims to tell the stories of individuals who have made their mark in the fields of the economy, science and medicine, education and society, the arts, and sports. Their efforts have helped industries and businesses to grow; they have honed and polished the capabilities of Singaporeans in a common enterprise to place Singapore on the global map of success.

The choice of 50 individuals ties in with celebrations of Singapore's Golden Jubilee. The list is by no means exhaustive. The selection of individuals was based on their meeting three broad criteria. First, they were not born in Singapore but came here for a brief sojourn or to plant roots for the long term. Second, the contributions for which they are recognised were made after Singapore had achieved independence. Third, their accomplishments helped Singapore's star to shine, burnishing its reputation on the global stage or ensuring international recognition for a uniquely Singapore brand or character.

The 1960s were a time of economic and political uncertainty. Independence brought with it the challenge of providing jobs, housing and education to two million people. Countless individuals and groups played a role in laying the foundation of an economically robust nation with an efficient civil service, a capable workforce and the ability to protect its borders. Among them, G. G. Thomson educated civil servants on world affairs. Brigadier-General Yaakov Elazari helped train the army. The economist Albert Winsemius spent a few months in Singapore in 1960 to assess its economic potential but lived mostly in The Hague during the 23 years he served as an adviser to the Singapore government. The Chinese economist Tang I-Fang came as part of the United Nations Industrial Survey Mission in 1961 to assist with Singapore's economic development; he became a citizen in 1972. Ian Batey created the iconic Singapore Girl, which till today embodies the personalised service that Singapore Airlines offers passengers. Nobel Prize winner Sydney Brenner was instrumental in the development of biomedical research in Singapore.

Individuals who made Singapore a more cultured and compassionate nation are also featured in this book. Ann Wee raised the public's perception of social work and fought to introduce an honours year in the Social Work degree programme at the University of Singapore. Artistes like K. P. and Santha Bhaskar, and Kuo Pao Kun and his wife Goh Lay Kuan devoted their lives to the pursuit of their craft, inspiring Singaporeans to expand the aesthetic boundaries of the nation. The architect Krystyn Olszewski was imprisoned in Auschwitz before coming to Singapore to work on the first Concept Plan. Launched in 1971, it envisaged the development of Changi Airport, new

public housing townships and a network of expressways. These are just a few of the individuals celebrated in the book.

The book does not include those born in Malaysia. Given the symbiotic ties of history and culture between the two nations, it is difficult to think of them as foreigners. The Malayan-born members of the first generation of Cabinet Ministers provide symbolic proof of this relationship. Other examples would be librarian Hedwig Anuar, author Catherine Lim, economist Lim Chong Yah, theatre practitioner Huzir Sulaiman, and mountaineer Khoo Swee Chiow. Also, in the interests of selectivity, the book leaves out foreign workers who have built the city and who continue to play a crucial role in the construction, service and healthcare sectors. Their absence from these pages is not intended to diminish their everyday contributions to keeping Singapore going.

The content for the 50 profile pieces has been drawn from Internet sources, media archives, material provided by the families of individuals, and interviews where possible. Sources are acknowledged at the end of each profile.

Lynn Lee & Asad Latif
Institute of Policy Studies
October 2015

PASQUALE PISTORIO

The Fab Man

Italian Pasquale Pistorio, former CEO and president of STMicroelectronics, one of the world's largest semiconductor companies, saw the potential in Singapore as an entry point into Asia as well as having a pool of impressive "human capital". This convinced him to build a wafer fabrication plant here in 1982, paving the way for a vibrant semiconductor industry in Singapore.

Pasquale Pistorio started working as a Motorola salesman in 1963 after he graduated with a master's degree in electrical engineering from the Polytechnic of Turin in Italy. He took up the job because it paid well and "I was anxious to get married," said the Italian, who was born in 1936.

Over the years, he rose through the ranks in Motorola to eventually become corporate vice president of the company, in charge of the International Semiconductor Division. In 1980, Pistorio became the chief executive officer of Italian state-owned SGS Microelettronica (SGS). At that time, it was in the red and had survived only because the Italian government was paying for their losses every year. "Some people said we will die. Some were recommending that shareholders sell us out," Pistorio recalled. By 1983, Pistorio managed to steer SGS into the black

and the company has been profitable since. Other European semiconductor companies were still running a heavy deficit.

SGS's turnaround in fortunes was partly due to Pistorio's strategy to tap into Singapore's human capital. Foreign companies with interests in Singapore had preferred to conduct low-cost manufacturing in the city-state, and retain high-technology activities in their home country. SGS went against the grain by establishing high-end manufacturing activities here, even though shareholders were initially uncertain about this decision.

In 1982, SGS broke the ground for Singapore's first wafer fabrication plant and a research centre. The research unit designed electronic circuits to be manufactured on a silicon wafer. Two years later, the wafers were ready to be shipped.

Around this time, SGS also set up its regional headquarters in Singapore, shifting all components of its regional operations, which included the plant and research centre, here. It also developed a global logistics centre at Loyang. The success of Pistorio's plans convinced his colleagues that he had been right to see Singapore as a point of entry into other Asian markets. Other semiconductor firms were not as far-sighted—the next factory with comparable technology opened here 10 years after SGS, said Pistorio.

Pistorio always thinks big. This trait of his came through when he was being interviewed for this book. He expounded passionately on ideas about business management—how to ensure growth and expansion and encouraging a resilient company culture. Pistorio has honed his business management ideas over time. In 1987, he led SGS to a merger with French company, Thomson Semiconductor, to become SGS-Thomson Microelectronics. He wanted it to be among the top 10 in the world. Pistorio called



Pasquale Pistorio
Italy, b.1936

this Vision 2000. He achieved this earlier than envisioned—the company entered the targeted ranks in 1997.

In 1998, SGS-Thomson changed its name to STMicroelectronics. In 2001, STMicroelectronics surpassed expectations to rank among the top five semiconductor companies in the world.

Pistorio is also remembered for being a staunch advocate of environmental protection. From 1993, he began to integrate environmental protection into STMicroelectronics' corporate philosophy. The company produced an environmental decalogue, deliberately named as such to imply its non-negotiable quantitative environmental targets for all its firms. The decalogue was a set of commitments by the company towards several targets—reducing electricity use and water pollution, promoting recycling and the development of an environmental management system for all of its manufacturing sites. In Singapore, the government provided the company with incentives to be environmentally friendly.

By the time Pistorio retired in 2005, STMicroelectronics had invested in three wafer fabrication plants here. STMicroelectronics had hired 8,700 people in Singapore, becoming Singapore's third largest foreign employer.

Pistorio remembers vividly an exchange between the late Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi that gives an insight into his personal work ethic. "When Romano Prodi was in Singapore, he told Lee how nice it was to have flowers all year round. Lee then replied, 'But there is a problem. The bees stop making honey.' It is a lesson to say that if the food is ready, you stop working," he recalled.

Today, Pistorio continues to be a mover and shaker in his own way. He is founder and president of the Pistorio Foundation, a non-profit organisation which aims to better the lives of children by providing them with education, and by improving school infrastructure. Based in Switzerland, the foundation has a chapter in Singapore. It operates projects in Cambodia, Thailand, Morocco and Burkina Faso.

For his contributions to Singapore, Pistorio was conferred the Public Service Star in 1999, and the Honorary Citizen Award in 2003.

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) was established in 1988 as an independent think-tank to study and generate public policy ideas in Singapore. IPS became an autonomous research centre of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore in 2008. Today, IPS continues to analyse public policy, build bridges between thought leaders, and communicate its findings to a wide audience. The Institute examines issues of critical national interest across a variety of fields, and studies the attitudes and aspirations of Singaporeans through surveys of public perception. It adopts a multi-disciplinary approach in its analyses and takes the long-term view in its strategic deliberation and research. For more information about IPS, visit www.lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips/

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ying Hui has a master's degree from the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver, which she attended on a Sié Fellowship. She enjoyed hiking and skiing in the Rocky Mountains, and has been missing these activities ever since she returned home. Before graduate school, she worked at CNBC, where she produced the guest rundown for *The Call* and *Straight Talk*. Her by-lines have appeared in the Asian Correspondent and Al Jazeera. She is currently working as a research assistant with the Arts, Culture and Media research cluster at the Institute of Policy Studies.

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