SINGAPORE: Singapore's legal profession is giving its support to the new School of Law at the Singapore Management University.

It is doing so by awarding students book prizes and a prestigious law professorship to a legal luminary.

The new Yong Pung How Professorship in Law is made possible by a S$3 million donation from the Yong Shook Lin Trust.

The late Mr Yong Shook Lin was a prominent lawyer and was the father of former Chief Justice Mr Yong Pung How.

The scholar who gets this professorship will use his expertise to develop an undergraduate law curriculum to advance the research and teaching of law at SMU.

There will also be the David Marshall prize for the top student in criminal law.

The late Mr Marshall was Singapore's first chief minister and a top criminal lawyer.

Leading law firms like Rodyk and Davidson and Wong Partnership have also offered prizes to students who excel in legal research and writing, and corporate law.

Says Herman Jeremiah, Partner, Rodyk & Davidson, "One of the important traits we are actually looking for in making this award is the ability to actually relate the theory to its application in the business context - that certainly is an important criteria.

"In terms of SMU coming up with its own law school with its particular brand approach, we think that it is something which is very in tune with the business context, we find it exceedingly touching all the facets of our lives and we are very excited.

"It doesn't mean that [because] we support SMU, we would not support NUS, that is the furthest thing from our minds. We always think there is always room for both to co-exist and we would certainly embrace graduates from both schools to the extent that we can support... because that is for the good of the profession." - CNA/yy