Scholars, professors reap rewards at SMU

THERE were several firsts yesterday as the Singapore Management University (SMU) celebrated its 8th Patron’s Day. Its patron, President S R Nathan, gave out inaugural scholarships set up by SMU alumni and current students, which were worth $260,000 with the Government’s matching grant.

Among these was the SMU Sports Scholarship, established last year by national sailors Renfred Tay and Koh Seng Leong, using part of their prize money from the 2006 Asian Games.

The $2,000 scholarship to recognise an outstanding sports-person in his or her freshman year was awarded to firstyear accountancy student Serene Ser (picture), 19, who led the national fencing team to its first gold medal in 16 years at last year’s SEA Games in Thailand.

SMU also received a $3-million endowment from Ho Bee Investment — the investment arm of the home-grown property group — to establish a professorship in Chinese Economy and Business, which the Government will match dollar for dollar.

SMU chairman Ho Kwon Ping said such professorships would help the varsity attract world-class academics and this would benefit its students. The contribution is Ho Bee Investments’ largest foray to date into education philanthropy.

Its chief executive Chua Thian Poh, who is also president of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said he expects to unveil another professorship endowment of a similar amount with the Nanyang Technological University later this year. — LOH CHEE KONG