Facebook tributes to late SMU don pour in

By MELISSA PANG

TRIBUTES are pouring in for the late Singapore Management University (SMU) economics professor Winston Koh, who died during a diving trip in Malaysia.

The Facebook page, In Loving Memory of Winston Koh, has garnered more than 2,500 “likes” since it was set up last Friday.

“I set up the in memoriam page for my dad because I wanted to allow people to share and read stories about my father, as these are testimonies of a life well lived,” said his elder daughter, 23, who declined to be named.

The collection of memories so far bear testament to just that, with Prof Koh, 50, widely described as an inspiring and caring educator who had a zest for learning and a passion for endurance races, ballroom dancing and photography.

Mr Ashley Liew, the top local runner at last year’s Standard Chartered Marathon Singapore, called the father of two’s dedication to daily race training “amazing, considering his ongoing responsibilities at SMU”. “He showed many of us how we could challenge our physical and mental limits, and showed a great example of how we could pursue what we love, no matter how busy we were,” Mr Liew wrote.

Mr Soon Kian Yong, who knew Prof Koh from SMU’s ballroom dancing club, recalled him rushing from a ballroom dancing competition in the morning to a marathon in the evening. “I remember that he jokingly shared that he had to wear the same compression tights for the ballroom competition and the marathon,” he wrote on Facebook.

Prof Koh, on his first scuba diving trip to obtain his basic diving certification, was reported missing at sea on March 10 at Pulau Dayang, off Mersing. His body was found four days later.

When contacted, his wife declined further comment, citing the need for privacy.

Mr Dennis Quek, a close friend of Prof Koh’s, said a simple cremation ceremony was held for him in Johor Baru last Saturday and his ashes were brought back to Singapore.

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