

Tan Sri Fong Chan Onn, Council Member TAR College; Datuk Dr Tan Chik Heok, Principal TAR College; Mr Chong Yean Seong, Founding Head of SBS, fellow TARCians, friends, ladies and gentlemen.

I joined SBS in 1971 during its first intake of students. Time flies so quickly, 41 years have now passed. You can imagine my excitement this evening to be able to come back to the college and meet so many old and new friends.

Joining TAR College is perhaps the most significant event in my life. I was born in Dungun, a fishing village in Terengganu. Due to my family's financial condition, I left school to work at the age of 18. My mum, though illiterate, told me that if I wanted to break out of the poverty trap, the only way is through obtaining a higher education. I have never forgotten her words. My first job was as a school clerk, followed by an accounts clerk in a mining company. It was when I was working at a sawmill that I chanced upon a recruitment advertisement of TAR College for its first intake of SBS students. I applied to the college and had the fortune of being interviewed by Mr Chong Yean Seong, the then SBS college principal. I impressed upon Mr Chong my determination to study hard and desire to be qualified as an accountant. After Mr Chong decided to admit me, I asked Mr Chong for help to get me a part time job so that I can support myself in terms of living and study expenses. Mr Chong was so helpful that within a couple of days, he got me a part time job at an accounting firm. After several months of study, I found it hard to cope with the demands of work and the exams of ACCA, ACIS and the college diploma which were conducted every half yearly. I went to see Mr Chong for permission to sit for only one exam, ie the ACCA, as my real goal was to qualify as an accountant. After listening to my problem, Mr Chong told me something incredible, "if you sit for one exam and fail it, you will have nothing. On the other hand, if you sit for 3 exams, if you fail one, you will get two and if you fail two, you will have gotten one." He also added that if you find that the subject you studied is difficult, you should study its higher syllabus. By doing that, you will find the subject you are studying easier.. I took his advice, and guess what, not only did I pass both the ACCA and ACIS, I even came out winning First Place and Prize in the ACCA part II exam and a book prize in the ACIS exam. Even after all the mentorship he has given me at SBS, Mr Chong went on to help me get a job as a branch accountant in one of the Guthrie Companies which also had a significant impact on my life.

I owe Mr Chong in so many ways. From my college admission, getting me a part time job, removing my mental block and finally getting me a full time job. I can't say enough thanks to him. I believe I am not the only one benefitting from Mr Chong. I am aware he had helped many other students as well. So today, I am so happy to be here to have an opportunity to join all of you to launch this YS Chong SBS Fund in honour of this great man who sacrificed so much of his life, silently helping so many people and never asked for anything in return. Mr Chong has set an example of what a good human being should be.

The main objectives of YS Chong Fund are to finance needy SBS undergraduates so that they can complete their studies and also to promote good corporate governance and social responsibilities in the business world. Gaining wealth without social responsibilities is a selfish act. While we have benefitted from the community, we must not forget repaying the society.

May I appeal to all fellow TARCians, as all of us have benefitted so much from the College, to be generous and donate to the YS Chong Fund so that others who are less fortunate can benefit like we had in the past and also establish SBS to be a college not just able to achieve academic excellence but also re-instate 'conscience' to the business world through the promotion of social responsibility.