

Introduction

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Michael Hwang currently practices as a Barrister and Arbitrator, with his main focus on international arbitration and mediation.

Michael was educated at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at Oxford University, where he was a College Scholar and Prizewinner. After completing his legal education, he took up a teaching appointment at the Faculty of Law at the University of Sydney. He was called to the Singapore Bar in 1968, when he joined Allen & Gledhill and helped to build it into Singapore's largest law firm. He became a partner in 1972, and retired from the firm at the end of 2002 after serving as Head of its Litigation and Arbitration Department for 10 years. Michael has over 40 years of experience in the legal arena. His areas of practice have included banking, finance, company, real property, intellectual property, tort, criminal, administrative and family law as well as a general commercial practice both as a disputes as well as a transactional lawyer.

In 1991 he was appointed a Judicial Commissioner of the Supreme Court of Singapore, (a full time post equivalent to the office of a contract High Court Judge) for a fixed term which expired at the end of 1992. During his term of office, he dealt with a full caseload across a broad range of civil litigation, and 15 of his reasoned judgments are reported in the Singapore Law Reports. Several of these judgments have been cited to with approval by other courts and academic commentators. He returned to private practice at the beginning of 1993.

In 1997 he was appointed one of the first 12 Senior Counsel ("SC") of the Supreme Court of Singapore (a status equivalent to that of Queen's Counsel in England).

In 1999, he was elected a member of the American Law Institute, and also served as a Visiting Professor to the National University of Singapore teaching advocacy and commercial arbitration. He later served as an Adjunct Professor at the same University, in the areas of commercial and international arbitration.

Between 2000 and 2003, he served as a Commissioner of the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) based in Geneva, a body set up under the Security Council to assess claims against Iraq arising from the First Gulf War.

He has held office as:-

- (a) Vice President of the International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA)
- (b) Vice Chair of the International Bar Association's (IBA) Arbitration Committee
- (c) Vice Chairman of the International Court of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)
- (d) a Court member of the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA)
- (e) a Trustee of the Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC)

He is currently on the Advisory Boards of the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) and the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC)

Michael has been listed in the *Euromoney Guide to the World's Leading Experts in Commercial Arbitration (2000)*, *Euromoney Guide to the World's Leading Litigation Lawyers (1999 and 2001)*, *AsiaLaw Leading Lawyers Survey (2000)*, *The Asia Pacific Legal 500 (1999 and 2002)*, *Euromoney Guide to the World's Leading Insolvency and Restructuring Lawyers (2001)*, *Guide to the World's Leading White Collar Crime Lawyers (2010)*, *IFLR 1000: The Guide to the World's Leading International Business Law Firms (2000 and 2002)* and *An International Who's Who Legal Series (2000)*. The International Who's Who of Construction Lawyers (2010 - 2012)

The International Who's Who of Commercial Arbitrators (2005) rated him as "Singapore's leading lawyer for commercial arbitration expertise" and said "Mr Hwang received more nominations from clients and peers in the course of the research than any other commercial arbitration specialist in the country, and was described as 'sharp with a good mind' and 'number one' by respondents". **Global Arbitration Review** (June 2006) ranked him as Asia's top arbitrator. **Chambers Asia 2008** described him as "a world class arbitrator" who is "brilliant, popular, prominent, incisive and decisive" and "always one of the first name to be mentioned in.... regional arbitration". **Who's Who Legal 2008** described him as "the most highly nominated individual in the (Directory's) research" a "quite outstanding lawyer having received multiple nominations from within Singapore and overseas" and an "illustrious figure in the local market". **Asia Pacific Legal 500 2008/9** described him as "in terms of diversity of cases and sheer academic prowess there no finer Senior Counsel working in Singapore today". **The Best of the Best 2011** rated him as one of the top 38 commercial practitioners in the world. *Guide to the World's Leading Commercial Arbitration Experts (8th Ed)* described him as having received personal nominations for inclusion placing him in the world's top 15 in this field. **Chambers Asia Pacific 2012** lists him as one of three "Star Individuals" in the International Section of "Most in Demand Arbitrators" and describes him as "undoubtedly a star and in the A-League for arbitrators...he put Singapore on the map for arbitration and his practice crosses the globe...he wins universal acclaim for the precision of his legal analysis...he is very efficient and very clear in identifying the issues and keeping to sensible hearing times...he is rightly viewed above the rest; when you are before him, you always need to be prepared for intellectual questions which go beyond the immediate issues". *Chambers Asia Pacific Guide 2014* ranks him as one of two "Star Individuals" (i.e. top tier) and quote sources noting that "he is very much in demand" and "lucid in

judgment".

Michael is also our accredited arbitrator of numerous international arbitration institutions, having been involved in many arbitrations and mediations involving a host of countries both in the Asia Pacific region and beyond.

He has also conducted training courses for arbitration practitioners from time to time under the auspices of the ICC, the AAA/ICDR, the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, the Singapore Institute of Arbitrators, the Swiss Arbitration Academy and King's College, London, in Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Dubai and Zurich.

He has served as a director of various public and private companies and is currently a director of YTL Starhill Global Reit Management, the manager of the Starhill Global Reit (a listed Real Estate Investment Trust in Singapore) and Religare Health Trust Trustee Manager Pte Ltd (a listed business trust in Singapore).

He is also :-

1. Chairman of the Singapore Dance Theatre Limited (a non-profit public company)
2. Chairman of the Appeals Committee of the Singapore Stock Exchange (SGX)
3. A Fellow of the Singapore Institute of Directors
4. A former Member of the Supervisory Committee of the Asian Bond Fund (ABF) Singapore Bond Index Fund
5. A former Board Member of the Board of Legal Education (a statutory agency)
6. A former Member of the Ethics Committee of the Public Accountants Oversight Committee
7. A former Board Member of the Port of Singapore Authority (a statutory board)
8. The former Chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Law Society Of Singapore.
9. A former Vice President of the Law Society Of Singapore
10. A former Chairman of Lasalle College of the Arts (a non-profit public company)
11. A Fellow of International House, University of Sydney
12. A Member of the Senior Common Room, Pembroke College, Oxford University

In 2000 he was awarded the Public Service Medal (PBM) for services to the Singapore Dance Theatre.

Between 2004 and 2013 he served as Singapore's Non-Resident Ambassador to Switzerland.

In 2005, he was appointed the non-resident Deputy Chief Justice of the Courts of the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC Courts).

In 2006, he was nominated as a member of the International Council of Arbitration for Sports (based in Lausanne, Switzerland).

Between 2008 and 2010 he served as President of the Law Society of Singapore.

In 2010, he was appointed the non-resident Chief Justice of the DIFC Courts and in 2014 he was appointed as Head of the Dispute Resolution Authority in the DIFC. His judgments in the DIFC can be accessed at www.difccourts.ae.