

# [Webinar] Specialist Insight Series: Litigants in Person - Access to Justice in an Adversarial System

26 November 2020  
4.30pm - 6.00pm  
Webinar

## Introduction

Litigants-in-Person are a significant presence in Singapore's legal system. Within our adversarial tradition of adjudication, self-representation can raise multiple distinctive access to justice issues for Litigants-in-Person as well as other actors in the justice system.

In the first book on litigants-in-person ("LiPs") in the Singapore legal system, Associate Professors Jaclyn Neo and Helena Whalen-Bridge have employed different methodologies to analyse relevant issues, including a doctrinal legal analysis; a literature review of academic writings, policy papers, and official reports; an empirical consideration of written court judgments involving LiPs; in-depth interviews of a small group of LiPs, conducted with the Community Justice Centre's assistance; and a survey of lawyers, conducted with the Law Society of Singapore's assistance. The authors argue that any approach to LiPs must be multi-pronged, one that conceptualizes the administration justice as a legal ecosystem of interdependent actors.

In this webinar, the authors will share key aspects of their research by focusing on the perspectives of three main constituents: the LiPs themselves, judges and court staff, and lawyers representing other parties in a proceeding. The panel will then share their perspectives on issues and approaches in managing the heightened burdens in cases where litigants self-represent. Although the speakers focussed on civil and family law proceedings in their research, the panel will include an exploration of the Singapore's criminal justice system so as to offer a broader and holistic conversation on the practical issues in access to justice.

## Programme

04.00 PM	Participants to log in to Webinar
04.30 PM	Presentations by : Associate Professor Jaclyn Neo, National University of Singapore Associate Professor Helena Whalen-Bridge, National University of Singapore
05.15 PM	Panel Discussion/Q&A  Moderators: Associate Professor Jaclyn Neo & Associate Professor Helena Whalen-Bridge Panellists: Ms Jennifer Marie, Mr Leonard Lee, Ms June Lim, Mr Gregory Vijayendran, SC
6.00 PM	<b>End</b>

 Webinar	LIFTED by 	1.5 PUBLIC CPD POINTS
	Legal Practitioner  Specialisms In-House Counsel  Specialisms Legal Support  Others	Practice Area: Ethics and Professional Responsibility Training Level: General



## Speakers



### Associate Professor Jaclyn Neo

National University of Singapore, Faculty of Law

Jaclyn Neo is an Associate Professor of Law at the National University of Singapore (NUS). She specializes in constitutional law, as well as law and migration. Jaclyn has degrees from NUS Faculty of Law and Yale Law School. She is a recipient of multiple academic scholarships and competitive research grants. Her work aims to forefront Asian jurisdictions and mainstream them in comparative constitutional law.

Jaclyn has published in leading journals in her field, including the International Journal of Constitutional Law (I-CON), Oxford Journal of Law and Religion, Human Rights Quarterly, and the Singapore Journal of Legal Studies. She is the sole editor of Constitutional Interpretation in Singapore: Theory and Practice (Routledge, 2017) and co-editor of Pluralist Constitutions in Southeast Asia (Hart, 2019), and Regulating Religion in Asia: Norms, Modes, and Challenges (CUP 2019). Jaclyn has also served as a guest editor for the Singapore Academy of Law Journal, Journal of Law, Religion, and State, as well as the Journal of International and Comparative Law. Her article on domestic incorporation of international human rights law in a dualist state won the Asian Yearbook of International Law's DILA International Law Prize. Her work has been cited by the courts in Singapore and by the Supreme Court of India. In 2017, in recognition of her research on religious freedom in Southeast Asia, she was awarded the SHAPE-SEA Research Award.

Jaclyn has held visiting positions at the Cluster of Excellence 'The Formation of Normative Orders' at Frankfurt University, University of Münster, University of Trento, and Melbourne Law School. In AY 2019/2020, she will be a visiting professor with the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity.

Jaclyn currently serves on the Singapore Law Society's Public and International Law Committee and the Singapore Academy of Law's Law Reform Committee. She is an elected Council Member of International Society for Public Law (ICON-S) and the co-founder of the Singapore Chapter of ICON-S. Prior to joining the faculty, Jaclyn was a disputes resolution lawyer with WongPartnership and remains a consultant with the firm.



### Associate Professor Helena Whalen-Bridge

National University of Singapore, Faculty of Law

Helena Whalen-Bridge is an Associate Professor at the National University Faculty of Law. Helena teaches Legal Ethics and advanced skills courses such as Common Law Methodology and Legal Argument and Narrative. She received the NUS Teaching Excellence Award and is a longstanding member of the Law Faculty's Teaching Excellence Committee. Her research is in the areas of legal education, legal ethics and pro bono, and access to justice. Recent publications include Understanding Lawyers' Ethics in Singapore (LexisNexis, 2016 (with Alvin Chen), "Clinical Legal Education in Singapore" in S.P. Sarker (ed.), Clinical Legal Education in Asia: Accessing Justice for the Underprivileged (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) (with Rathna N. Koman) and "Conceptualising Pro Bono in Singapore" (2014) Asian Journal of Comparative Law. Helena is a founding member of the Law Society of Singapore's Project Law Help, and she worked with the UNDP Team that translated Lao laws into English. She has been the Faculty Advisor for the Law Faculty's student Pro Bono Group since its inception in 2005, and in 2016 she published a labor of love, an edited history of the Pro Bono Group (Pro Bono in Singapore: The PBG Story (Singapore: Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore, 2016).

## Panellists



### Ms Jennifer Marie

Deputy Presiding Judge, State Courts of Singapore

Jennifer Marie is the Deputy Presiding Judge of the State Courts (Singapore). She performs both judicial and administrative functions at the State Courts.

Ms Marie graduated from the National University of Singapore with a Bachelor of Laws degree in 1983. Subsequently, she obtained a Master of Laws degree from the University of London in 1990. She attended the Programme for Management Development at Harvard Business School in 2000. She joined the Legal Service in 1983 and was posted to the then Crime Division of the Attorney-General's Chamber as a Deputy Public Prosecutor and State Counsel.

There she rose to be a Chief Prosecutor at the Criminal Justice Division of the Attorney-General's Chambers and was appointed Senior Counsel in 2010. She was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Silver) in 1999 and the Public Administration Medal (Gold) in 2016 for her invaluable contributions to the administration of justice.

She has been appointed as a Principal Mediator at the Singapore Mediation Centre and also a Healthcare Mediator. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the International Consortium for Court Excellence and has delivered a number of papers at international conferences and meetings on the State Courts journey towards greater organisational excellence in the administration of justice. In addition to her judicial and administrative functions, she is also an Adjunct Professor at the Law Faculty of the National University of Singapore and co-teaches a course on Advanced Criminal Legal Process. She is also an Adjunct Professor for Singapore Management University (Clinical Law) Programme. She is also an Alternate Director in Community Justice Centre (CJC) which was set up in 2012. She is also currently the Executive Secretary of the Singapore After Care Association and has been a member of it since 1983.



### Mr Leonard Lee

Executive Director The Community Justice Centre

Mr Leonard Lee has been at the helm of the Community Justice Centre since its fledgling years in 2013. He has held various leadership roles at the non-profit sector over the past sixteen years. He was a scholar with a Masters' degree with the Singapore Management University's School of Social Sciences focusing on Tri-Sector Collaboration. The program was held in partnership with top US thinktank, the Brookings Institute, Washington DC. He is currently into the final stages of dissertation in his doctorate degree that focuses on technology adoption. As economic, cultural and social barriers to the justice system continues, the access to justice will remain a challenge. Under his leadership and strong beliefs, the Community Justice Centre has exemplified that by forming strong collaborative partnerships and drawing on the unique strengths of difference sectors, the CJC has closed this gap through its unique socio-legal approach.

## Panellists



### Ms June Lim

Managing Director, Eden Law Corporation

June Lim is the Managing Director of Eden Law Corporation, a low bono law firm committed to providing competent and affordable legal representation to clients of modest means and underprivileged communities throughout Singapore. June is primarily involved in matrimonial litigation, ranging from divorce to guardianship to cross-border custody and relocation matters.



### Mr Gregory Vijayendran, SC

President, The Law Society of Singapore; Partner, Rajah & Tann Singapore LLP

Gregory has considerable experience and expertise in various spheres of civil and commercial litigation and arbitration and dispute resolution. His present practice encompasses a specialization in banking and corporate insolvency as well as litigation and arbitration of commercial contracts to company and shareholder disputes and chancery matters. He is also a recognized expert in charities governance.

Gregory graduated from the National University of Singapore in 1992 with an LLB (Hons) and was placed in the Top 10 of the Postgraduate Practice Law Course of his batch. He was one of the main speakers in the university's moot team in 1992 that emerged world runners-up at the 1992 Jessup International Law Moot Competition in Washington D.C. Gregory was thereafter admitted to the Singapore Bar in 1993 and joined Rajah & Tann LLP after being in practice in two other leading law firms for 15 years (jointly heading the Banking and Insolvency Litigation Practice group of another leading law firm). Gregory was appointed Senior Counsel in 2019.

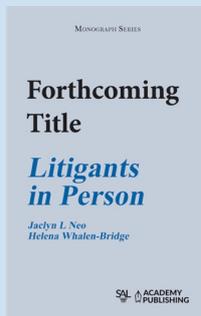
Among others things, he has been judicially commended by the Supreme Court in reported judgments for "meticulous professionalism", "demonstrating what it is (and ought to be) like to practice the law in its best (indeed, its highest) tradition." and being "valiant.

Gregory presently serves as President and Executive Committee Member of the Law Society. He serves as Vice President on the Executive Board of Singapore Academy of Law and is a member of its Audit Committee. He served for close to a decade as Law Society Publication Committee Chairman from 2005 to 2014. He has previously served on the Inquiry Panel of the Law Society of Singapore, as Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Insolvency and Practitioners' Association of Singapore ("IPAS") and as inaugural Subject Coordinator for the Part B Elective on Wills, Probate and Administrations (appointed Senior Teaching Fellow) of the Singapore Institute of Legal Education. He regularly conducts nationwide and professional wide seminars and counts as his personal teaching highlights being part of Summer School Faculty in Handong International Law School (teaching International Business Transactions in 2008 and 2009), a lecturer on company law developments to the ACCA Annual Conferences for several years and lecturing for the LKY School of Public Policy in 2014 on Non Profit Management for the 21st Century. He serves as a Member of the Tribunal for Maintenance of Parents as well as the Bioethics Advisory Committee (receiving the Long Service Award in November 2016).

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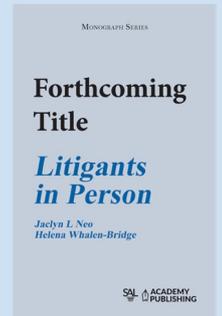
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Register by  
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