

A CONVERSATION WITH EUGENE THURAISSINGAM, ONE OF ALB ASIA TOP 15 LITIGATORS 2022 [BROUGHT TO YOU BY EUGENE THURAISSINGAM LLP]

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Eugene Thuraisingham



Litigators are valued for their ability to solve complex problems and adapt quickly to changing circumstances. As the second edition of the ALB Asia's Top 15 Litigators shows, these attributes have never been more valuable, particularly in the shadow of the COVID pandemic.

What were the highlights of the past 12 months?

We have a strong pro-bono public interest litigation practice that sits alongside a robust commercial disputes and criminal investigations practice.

We brought three important constitutional law challenges to the Singapore Court of Appeal. These challenges related to freedom of speech, the freedom to assemble, and Section 377A of the Penal Code, a law that criminalises sexual relations between male adults. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute in our small way to Singapore's jurisprudence on fundamental liberties through these cases.

Our criminal practice has savoured some sweet victories, including acquittals for clients who faced the death penalty for murder and drug trafficking, and two doctors accused of sexual offences.

It was also a busy year for our commercial disputes practice. We acted for the claimant in a large, multinational arbitration concerning the ownership of a lucrative oil and gas



large multinational arbitration concerning the ownership of a lucrative oil and gas concession. We also acted for the defendant in arbitration over claims brought by a large financial institution arising out of a shareholders' agreement for a listed company. In both matters, the claims exceeded USD100 million. After fighting long and hard, we were happy to have positioned these and other matters towards successful settlements.

What drives you?

Due to the nature of our practice, many times we find ourselves on the side of the 'little guy'. I am motivated to help the 'little guy' in tough arenas. We have been blessed to possess a particular skillset that enables us to alleviate the problems of others and I strive to use that skillset to the best of my ability. I strive to be in their corner, to fight with them, and to act in their best interests at every turn. That is what fighting in the litigation arena is.

What separates a great litigator from a merely good one?

One must be able to identify quickly what are the key issues in any dispute. Having identified the issues, one has to have a good grasp of the evidence and the rules of procedure so as to be able to develop a core strategy for positioning the case for trial.

Cases are often won or lost on a few documents or on the credibility of a single witness. One must be able to identify what is it that is going to win you the case and to bang hard on that instead of being distracted by issues which may not move the needle.

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