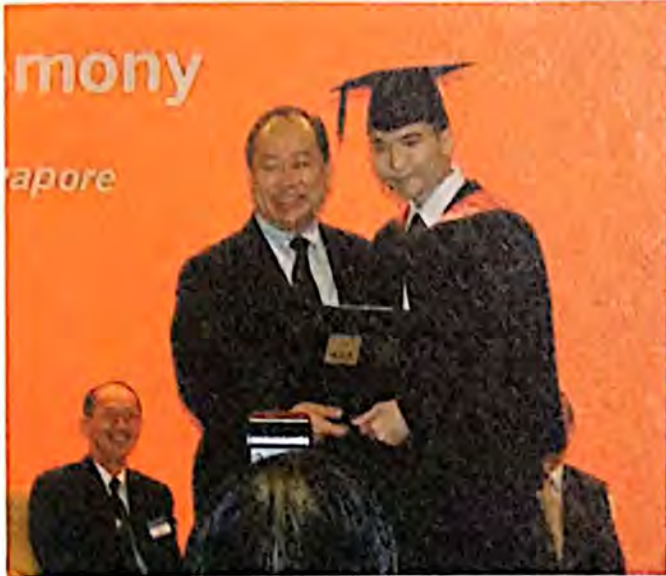


## A Family Affair



Creating memories: ACCA Singapore Branch's Immediate Past President, Mr Don Ho presents his son, David with his ACCA certificate.



David Ho stands proudly with his father Mr Don Ho after receiving his certificate from the latter at the ceremony.

■ It was indeed a special day for all as more than 270 graduates gathered at the Ritz-Carlton, Millennia Singapore on 6 May 2004 to deservedly receive their certificates at the end of a long and trying journey towards their ACCA qualifications. For one graduate in particular, the day proved to be the perfect opportunity to collect a rather special memory.

As the son of ACCA Singapore Branch's Immediate Past President, Mr Don Ho, David Ho experienced the unprecedented pleasure of being presented with his certificate by his father. Following in his father's footsteps, David embarked on the ACCA qualification due to an avid interest in the world of finance and accounting. This interest is underpinned by his practical belief that a good, sound knowledge of the basics of accounting and finance is instrumental in any individual's future undertakings.

Confident in ACCA's sterling reputation as a leading accountancy body which provides excellent and up-

to-date financial knowledge to its students, David was also attracted to the flexibility which the qualification offers, not to mention the opportunity to take up the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Applied Accounting degree with Oxford Brookes University.

Citing parental support as a key factor to his success, David expresses gratitude to his parents for providing vital inspiration and guiding him towards his goal. Happiness and pride emanate from his father, who fully supported his son when the latter expressed his desire to walk down the same path. Mr Ho emphasized the importance of passion in one's chosen profession and advises his son along with other young professionals to be flexible, street smart and adopt Continual Professional Education in their approach to life and work.

While the next step for the future involves gaining the necessary experience in honing his skills, David is certainly up to any challenge the future brings. ■

# It takes two

To coincide with ACCA's 'power of connections' theme, we spoke with three married couples who met through studying for their ACCA Qualification



 Kailin Toh and Lay Lay Leow

Kailin Toh, APAC retail controller at Amadeus GDS Singapore, and Lay Lay Leow, financial accountant at Mott Macdonald Singapore, married in February. They had their pre-wedding photographs taken at the library where they spent most of their time studying together for their ACCA exams while they were dating.

**Q** How did you meet?

**KT:** I first met Lay Lay at the ACCA scholarship presentation event at Hotel Fairmont in Raffles City. It was held concurrently with the 2008 ACCA annual conference. We happened to be the only two scholars from the batch so had the opportunity to speak to each other more.

**LLL:** We met each other at an ACCA event and hit it off well. We happened to bump into each other again at the public library when studying for the ACCA exams and that's when we started to know each other better.

**Q** What was it like studying together?

**KT:** We had a common goal, which was to complete the ACCA exams and work towards our professional membership. We were able to share what we had studied and help each other on the modules we were taking. Part of our dating time was actually the time we spent on exam revision.

**LLL:** Our greatest accomplishment has been to successfully

pass our ACCA exams together through support and encouragement for each other. We hope to continue supporting and encouraging each other in our private and working life.


**Q** What is it like to both work as finance professionals?

**KT:** We recognise the demands required for finance professionals and we are more understanding towards each other in terms of the pressures. We share experiences with each other that could be useful to avoid repeating the same mistakes. We also learn from each other about how to improve work efficiency and effectiveness, as well as some approaches to people management.

**LLL:** It can be beneficial as it enhances our mutual understanding of working conditions and increases our support during stressful times. We are specialists in different areas; I am strong in auditing and financial reporting, and Kailin is good in management accounting and has good business acumen. We are glad we have a balance to our private and the boundaries between the home and the office are not blurred.

Idowu Ismaila Ayodeji, group finance and reporting manager at Flour Mills of Nigeria, and Adelaja Sikirat Adebola, strategy and finance manager at FrieslandCampina WAMCO, are based in



 Adelaja Sikirat Adebola and Idowu Ismaila Ayodeji



Mr Chaly Mah, CEO and Country Managing Partner, Deloitte & Touche, presenting Mr Wu Yanbin, Senior Management Associate, PSA, his award

*'To become a truly brilliant leader, the accountant must be able to elevate himself or herself above the jungle of numbers, see the big picture and inspire the team.'*

## On the Road to Success

At only 28 years old, ACCA affiliate Wu Yanbin is a boy wonder. After attaining an undergraduate degree in Economics followed by a masters in Management Science & Engineering, you would think that this friendly and soft-spoken young man would be contented with his achievements and concentrate on building his career. This was not the case.

Yanbin's pursuit of the ACCA qualification began in December 2003, six months after completing his studies at the prestigious Stanford University in the US. He attended Stanford University on a PSA scholarship and after graduation, returned to Singapore to work with PSA. He is currently a Senior Management Associate and his work involves pricing/contract structuring for PSA's customers as well as project evaluation. At PSA, Yanbin realised that his educational journey could not end with his masters degree. 'Once I started work for PSA, I realised the importance of finance and accounting knowledge', he says. Taking the ACCA also meant embarking on an internationally-recognised qualification.

Though Yanbin only obtained one exemption for Paper 1.3 Managing People, he was not deterred and was determined to meet the challenges of the remaining 13 papers. Due to a heavy work schedule, Yanbin mostly self-studied. Most of the time, he studied while commuting to work. 'If you noticed a nerd staring intensely at a book with a calculator in hand on bus service 153, that must have been me', he says with a chuckle.

After two years of juggling work and studies, Yanbin completed the ACCA course with a remarkable feat, winning two big awards. He won the ACCA/ICPAS Joint Examination Scheme Gold Medal Award and was also the worldwide winner for Paper 3.7 in Strategic Financial Management, scoring an impressive 91 marks. Here, he beat close to 14,000 other ACCA students worldwide who sat for the same paper. He was honoured with both awards at the ACCA /ICPAS Graduation Ceremony held in April 2006.

The ACCA qualification has prepared Yanbin well. It has given him a proficient level in accounting and finance. 'ACCA covers many diverse topics ranging from the qualitative discussion in Strategic Business Planning to the technically rigorous number-crunching in Strategic Financial Management.'

His success is due to the ability to strike a happy medium between work, studies and enjoying a healthy social life. Yanbin enjoys reading, jogging and playing and watching soccer. It is not always easy to manage this, so what advice does he have? 'Discipline and judicious use of time.'

Yanbin hopes to be rotated to the business development and commercial functions. To him, finance is certainly a useful tool in understanding business and is the lifeblood of all businesses. 'To become a truly brilliant leader, the accountant must be able to elevate himself or herself above the jungle of numbers, see the big picture and inspire the team.' Without doubt, Yanbin is well on his way to becoming a very successful professional.

# Young and ambitious

**[**Chinnu P Velu, 35  
Audit manager, BDO

**Q How would you describe a typical day?**

**A** As an engagement manager, I spend quite a bit of time motivating and guiding my team in terms of completing assignments efficiently, managing client expectations and reviewing the progress of our reporting line. Auditing is not as straightforward as what you see in textbooks. Practical experiences, coupled with alternative viewpoints, are required to resolve complex issues. I am also pretty actively involved in community work, serving on various advisory committees and boards.

**Q Why did you want to become an accountant?**

**A** When I was young, my ambition was to follow in my father's footsteps and be a community leader or a politician. But when I reached junior college, I realised that I wasn't exactly cut out for the political scene and decided to major in accounting instead.

**Q What are your main priorities for next year?**

**A** In the age of the global village, information exchange happens at a quicker pace. As such, meeting and surpassing our clients' ever-changing expectations never ceases to be a key challenge. BDO has also provided me with an excellent platform to stretch my capabilities and has further instilled in me an incessant thirst for improvement. This is why I am challenging myself by pursuing my MBA.

**Q What advice would you give to young accountants starting out in their career?**

**A** Continued learning and self-motivation is key. Everyone has the potential to make it to the top but to get there you need to start from ground zero. So when you first set out to carve your niche, put your ego aside and prepare to plunge into a world of uncertainties. I won't deny that the going will definitely get tough, but you have to believe in yourself and never give up if you ever want to succeed in this field. Keep the fire burning and always have the passion to learn and explore.

**Q Where would you like your career to be in five years' time?**

**A** I'd like to see myself as a team leader managing a group of audit professionals, generating revenue of S\$2m per annum.

**FAST FACTS**

Lives: Singapore

Average hours per week: 70

If I wasn't an accountant I'd be a... politician



07/2011

## \* WHAT ARE THE MOST SATISFYING ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB AS A CFO?

Talent building and team playing seem to be at the heart of many CFOs' job satisfaction.

**Yeo Mui Sung, CFO, MediaCorp**

'I've had the privilege of executing many projects ranging from mergers and acquisitions to business integration, public listing and fundraising, which I consider milestones in my career.

...However,



I also attribute these successes to the team I work with. Therefore, personally, the most satisfying aspects of my job are grooming and developing a new generation of CFOs, building a strong and cohesive team of thinkers and establishing lasting friendships.'



**Ramlee bin Buang, group CFO, Cerebos Pacific**

'Building teams, engaging employees,

developing talent and being able to be part of an excellent organisation.'

**Quah Ban Huat, CFO, Rickmers Trust Management**

'Every business has its own set of issues and challenges. Being able to resolve them and being part of a team that steers the organisation is very satisfying.'



03/2011