

**2025 Global Outstanding Overseas Compatriot
Alumni 【 Business and Enterprise Award 】
Mr. Ong Soon Ho**

Once a determined student studying in a cramped rooftop rental, Ong Soon Ho worked as a dockside laborer to pay his tuition. With only a letter of recommendation in hand, he made his way from NTU to Scotland - and from selling pesticides to ultimately founding one of Malaysia's largest agrochemical enterprises. A business magnate who rose from adversity, Ong has become a philanthropic role model who transforms success into service.

Born in 1947 in Klang, Selangor, Malaysia, Ong Soon Ho grew up in an impoverished household, sharing a small upstairs space above a shophouse with his family. To help make ends meet, he often took on temporary labor jobs - hauling, lifting, doing whatever was needed. Despite these hardships, he firmly believed that education was the key to changing his destiny. In the 1970s, with the help of a student loan and scholarship, he left for Taiwan to study in the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology at the College of Bioresources and Agriculture, National Taiwan University (NTU), graduating in 1974.

During his time at NTU, Ong stood out for his diligence, strong self-discipline, and thirst for knowledge. He actively participated in science activities and international affairs forums on campus, building connections with fellow overseas students that later proved foundational for his entrepreneurial network and global outlook. After graduation, he pursued a master's degree at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, completing the program in just nine months with distinction - setting a record for the shortest completion time in the university's history.

Upon returning to Malaysia, Ong started at the very bottom as a sales representative. Through integrity and expertise, he steadily gained a foothold in the agrochemical market. In 1985, he founded Hextar Holdings Sdn Bhd (Hextar Group), specializing in pesticides, fertilizers, and related chemicals. Today, Hextar Group operates in over 30 countries, with 10 publicly listed companies, more than 40 manufacturing sites, and a workforce exceeding 10,000. It stands as a leading name in Malaysia's agrochemical industry.

Ong has long adhered to the principles of integrity and grounded leadership, while also preparing the next generation to take the helm - making Hextar a model of sustainable, family-owned Chinese enterprise. According to Forbes Asia, Ong was named one of Malaysia's emerging billionaire founders in 2023, a testament to his global standing as a prominent figure in the international business community.

Beyond business, Ong has dedicated immense time and resources to public welfare and education. By 2023, he had received more than 40 honors and awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Malaysia-China Forum, the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Award (Malaysia), and the Asia Pacific TOP Excellence Brand Award, underscoring his wide-ranging impact in business, society, and culture.

Though he officially retired in 2020, Ong continues to focus on causes close to his heart - education, healthcare, and youth empowerment. He actively serves as an advisor and driving force behind various overseas Chinese associations, alumni networks, and charitable foundations. With a vision of resource integration through platform-building, he seeks to create more equitable opportunities for young people. He is also planning to establish a nonprofit agricultural park that combines education and

agriculture - a space for vocational training and food education that addresses the needs of the times.

This award honors a man who defied the odds and transformed hardship into greatness. Ong remains deeply grateful for the education he received at NTU and the steadfast support from the overseas Chinese community. He firmly believes: “Success in business is not the end goal. True success lies in helping others carve their own path in life.”