

Singapore's five polytechnics kicked off their graduation ceremonies last week. **Calvin Yang** speaks to two graduates, who, despite rough starts in life, overcame the odds and emerged among their polytechnics' top students this year.

# NYP ace set on being an industrial designer

Ask Mr Goh Han Wei about his growing-up years, and the 21-year-old vividly recounts a story that unfolds much like a drama serial.

At the age of 13, due to financial problems at home, the only child was placed in a children's home run by The Salvation Army.

The former Yuhua Secondary School student also started working in his teenage years to support himself, and took on jobs such as a fast-food worker, barista, waiter and retail assistant.

He would eat instant noodles with an egg almost every day to stretch his dollar. "Eating the same, simple food helped me to save money compared with eating out," he added.

But the young man has not let these setbacks derail his plans of be-



Mr Goh Han Wei graduated with an industrial design diploma from Nanyang Polytechnic, scoring a near-perfect grade-point average of 3.92 out of 4.0. Mr Goh, who plans to pursue an industrial design degree at the National University of Singapore, received the HP Innovation Design Award for his feat. ST PHOTO: LAU FOOK KONG

coming an industrial designer.

Last week, Mr Goh graduated with an industrial design diploma from Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP). He scored a near-perfect grade-point average of 3.92 out of 4.0, and received the HP Innovation Design Award for his achievement.

After secondary school, Mr Goh took up a Nitec course in product design at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE).

Despite pressures to quit school early to earn a decent salary to support his family, he persevered.

"My performance was pretty rocky at the start because I was trying to build my foundation in my first year," he said. "I started putting in more effort in my second year, and that was when my passion started to grow."

Mr Goh subsequently graduated among the top of his cohort at ITE

and was accepted into NYP, where he continued to shine. For five semesters, he made it to the director's list by excelling academically.

"I was very excited when I got into the industrial design course at NYP, because I am passionate about design. So I worked as hard as possible," he said.

Mr Goh, who plans to pursue an industrial design degree at the National University of Singapore,

added that his polytechnic years were not easy. He recalls, for instance, how he often stayed back in school till late to complete his work.

"It was a challenging experience for me," he said.

"I had no idea I would make it this far. But my plan in life is to give my best shot at everything, to work hard and play hard."

calyang@sph.com.sg

## WORK HARD, PLAY HARD

It was a challenging experience for me. I had no idea I would make it this far. But my plan in life is to give my best shot at everything, to work hard and play hard.



MR GOH HAN WEI, on his polytechnic years, which were not easy for him.