

Show



TNP PICTURE: CHOO CHWEE HUA

VERSATILE: Former NMP Eunice Olsen is now learning more about acting while indulging in domestic activities like baking.

Eunice Olsen busy baking

Cheesecake

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AT 33, Eunice Olsen has already worn many hats. Miss Singapore Universe, Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP), talk show host, philanthropist, musician and, increasingly, a serious actress.

Sometime in the future, she hopes to add “baker” to that list as well.

Having served 4½ years in Parliament as its youngest NMP – vocal about everything from youth issues to the integrated resorts – Olsen now divides her time between multiple projects.

Over the last few months, she has travelled across South-east Asia to perform – she is a classically-trained pianist – for the launch of the latest BlackBerry phone.

She played a mum on the Okto children’s series, Before I Was Awesome, which ended in September.

When The New Paper met her last month, she was unveiling a self-designed pendant for pewter maker Royal Selangor, which had enlisted Olsen, Dick Lee and interior designer David Tay to celebrate its 125th anniversary with a special The Designer Collection.

Can’t keep still

She said: “There’s always something to do. I don’t really like not to do anything.”

That explains the manic list of activities she’s kept herself busy with, not least of all acting.

After vamping it up in Channel 5 drama Red Thread as a mysterious temptress last year, Olsen put on an apron for her mummy role in Before I Was Awesome.

Was she alarmed that she’s reached that age where she’s asked to read for mum roles?

“No! She was more of a kooky character anyway, so it suited me fine,” she said.

Olsen said she has also been in a few independent productions, mostly student films from local art schools.

She was paid only “modest amounts”, but does the work for the opportunity it gives her to hone her acting skills.

“I’ve been privileged to learn more about the craft,” she said. “To achieve believability in a role is amazing.”

So while she may jetset and appear at chi chi parties, she takes her acting seriously, getting excited over things like monologues.

She’ll take most projects, if it’s a “compelling enough story”, but stressed that there are certain things she won’t do, even if she’s looking to up her cred.

“Of course, no stripping,” she said. “Sleaze, definitely not.”

Although she has been away from the hallowed halls of Parliament for 1½ years, the former NMP still keeps on top of issues.

“I do miss the platform to bring up issues. Sometimes, when I’m flipping the papers, or checking through my news feeds from The Straits Times or Channel NewsAsia, I do kind of go, like, tsk,” she said, giving a look of resignation.



CLASS ACT: Eunice Olsen (right) and Brendon Fernandez in a still from TV show Before I Was Awesome.

PICTURE: OKTO

While talking about her NMP days, she suddenly stopped in mid-sentence and said: “Oh my, it’s been such a long time since I’ve had to do an interview about this!”

Missing Parliament?

But when asked if she was getting sentimental, she let out a big laugh.

“I don’t know about getting misty-eyed,” she said. “I was privileged enough to do two terms.”

The NMP role was “created for Singaporeans who represent different groups to have a voice in Parliament”, she said.

“Now, there’s another group of good NMPs who are there to bring up issues that are close to the heart of Singaporeans.”

These days, when she gets riled over an issue, she takes to Twitter instead and has discussions with her circle of friends.

She stressed that “you don’t have to be in Parliament to make a difference”.

“Everyone can make a difference in his or her own way,” she said.

“There are people who start conversations on the Internet, and then go out there and do something.”

Now that she has left politics to the new batch of NMPs, Olsen has time for domestic activities like baking.

Her partner in the kitchen is her 24-year-old cousin, a “sensitive new age guy”.

She tries out recipes with him and they may even start a small-time business some day. They have received praise – and orders – for their cheesecakes.

But what of other domestic pursuits, like marriage? Another hearty laugh.

“If it happens, it does. I don’t even think about it. Everybody’s sort of given up, I think,” she said.

Olsen said her parents are supportive of what she does and have not pressured her into getting married.

“They’re fine as long as I do what I love and get the best out of life.”

“I think they just want me to be happy and do something that makes other people happy, which is what we do in entertainment, right?” she said with a grin.