

Ms Sophia Kao Ching-chi, GBS, JP

Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*

Citation

Ms Sophia Kao Ching-chi embarked on her career like most new graduates, uncertain of what to do or where to start. Freshly out of university in 1970, all she had was a degree in Business Administration from The Chinese University of Hong Kong. While full of hope for the future, young Sophia was not particularly ambitious, and most certainly did not have a well mapped out career plan. However, she was eager to learn and, deep in her heart, she wanted to serve and contribute to society. She was energetic, humble, persevering, and keen to enhance herself. These qualities have directed her down a career path which she found both rewarding and fulfilling.

Unlike her peers with a business degree who mostly settled into white-collar or civil service jobs, Sophia started out in a paint factory in Kwun Tong. As an Administrative Assistant to the General Manager, Sophia was involved in a wide range of work pertaining to running a manufacturing business, including the setting up of a personnel office. Her boss at the time opened her eyes to the importance of human resource management. It was a tough and demanding task for a young person but Sophia braved all the challenges with immense patience and empathy. Within just three years, Sophia was in charge of the office. What she had learned from her first job was that a sound human resource management strategy would benefit both the company and its staff. From the experience, Sophia came to understand an invaluable principle – to always strive to achieve a win-win situation for all parties, serving their interests and well-being. Her core belief is a people-oriented humanism which she has been practicing in every aspect of her life.

A career choice by chance had empowered her with the expertise for human resource management. For the next two decades, Sophia worked at major enterprises like MTRC and HK Telephone Co. Ltd. These career decisions were motivated by the satisfaction of embracing challenges, jumping hurdles, and accomplishing difficult tasks. Her appetite for new endeavours eventually led her to the directorship of human resources in the HK Airport Authority. She took on the challenge of mapping and implementing an organisational framework and building a team of global talents pertinent to the design, construction, and operation of the new facility.

Sophia has gained incomparable insights from decades of service in the human resources profession. She reiterated the importance of talent, saying that “it is the talent that makes or breaks the company”. Sophia is widely known for her astute perception of identifying the right person for the right job and of managing the mix. In her own words, the keys to her success in HR are patience, empathy and sensitivity.

After overseeing the completion of the new Hong Kong airport, she felt that it was time to give back to society; Sophia decided to pivot towards service, undertaking voluntary work in public and community sectors. For the past 20 years, she has served in numerous government advisory

bodies, as well as boards and committees of non-government organisations, in the areas of public policies, university governance, education, financial reporting regulation, hospital governance, social service and development, and philanthropy. Among others, she was Chairperson of the Women's Commission, Founding Chairman of the Financial Reporting Council and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Lingnan University. In particular, Sophia has been most energetic in the promotion of women's rights and status in Hong Kong. She believes that women should be given the chance to participate fully in society with due status, rights, opportunities, and responsibilities. She has made it her mission to advance women's well-being and interests.

Sophia's substantial experience in talent management and public service were put to good use in her appointment as a member of the Central Policy Unit of the HKSAR Government during the fourth term of its Chief Executive. In that capacity, she advised the Government on identifying, engaging and nurturing talents for public service. In recent years, she has widened her scope to include Greater Bay Area projects and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Sophia has certainly led a rich and rewarding life in both the private and public sectors, and has been rewarded and acknowledged accordingly. She was conferred Honorary Fellowships by Lingnan University, The Open University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in 2006, 2010 and 2011 respectively, and Honorary Doctorate by The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in 2016. She was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 2003, and honoured with a Silver Bauhinia Star in 2009 and a Gold Bauhinia Star in 2017 by the HKSAR Government.

From her experience in identifying and managing talent in a wide spectrum of industries, Sophia would like to share with our graduates her conviction that "the temperament, mindset, and character of a person count more than his or her skill sets and knowledge". Her emphasis on empathy, communication, and compromise resonates well with Lingnan University's ideals of liberal arts education.

Mr Chairman, in recognition of Ms Sophia Kao Ching-chi's contributions to tertiary education and various sectors in Hong Kong, may I present Ms Kao to you for conferment of an honorary doctorate in Social Sciences.

Citation written and delivered by Professor Rachel Lung Wai-chu

高靜芝女士

榮譽社會科學博士

贊辭

高靜芝女士完成大學課程時，與大部分畢業生無異，對應該從事甚麼職業沒有明確的意向。1970年，高女士獲頒香港中文大學商業管理學位。年輕的她雖對未來充滿憧憬，卻沒有甚麼雄心，更遑論精細的「事業規劃」，但她十分好學，心底裡一直希望能以所學服務及貢獻社會。高女士的工作魄力，加上她謙遜、堅毅和自強不息的個性，都有助她發展事業，並讓她從中取得豐碩的成果及滿足感。

大部分剛取得商業學位的年青人通常會選擇成為白領或投身公務員行列，但高女士畢業後進入了一家位於觀塘區的漆廠工作。作為總經理的行政助理，她的工作涵蓋眾多有關公司營運的範疇，其中包括成立人事部。當時，上司委以重任，讓她有機會從工作中了解人力資源管理是如斯重要。對一位年輕人來說，那是一件艱難且要求甚高的工作，而高女士卻能以過人的耐性及同理心克服一切挑戰；不到三年，她已是該部門的主管。從第一份工作中，高女士認識到：優良的人力資源管理策略，對機構及其員工同樣會帶來益處。這經驗亦啟發到高女士定下一個做事原則——時刻要顧及所有持分者的需要及福祉，製造雙贏局面。直至今日，她仍以這個以人為本、富人文主義情懷的信念作為座右銘。

一個機緣巧合的事業選擇，令高女士成為人力資源管理的專才。首份工作後的20多年，她先後於大型機構如港鐵及香港電話公司任職。高女士出掌這些職位，乃基於她勇於接受挑戰和善於解決難題。後來，她出任機場管理局人力資源總監。機場管理局工作的挑戰之一，是策劃及落實機場管理局的組織架構和制度，並建立一支來自世界多地的團隊，以配合新機場的設計、建造及營運的要求。

多年的經驗，令高女士對人力資源管理有獨到而深入的認識。她強調人才的重要性，指出：「人才可造就一家公司，但人的因素也可摧毀一家公司。」她於配對職位與人才，以及管理由不同背景人士所組成的團隊方面的專長，一直被廣泛肯定。對高女士而言，能在人力資源管理事業上取得成就，其主要憑藉的，就是耐心、同理心和對人與事的敏銳觸覺。

新機場落成後，高女士認為自己應該多做點事情以回饋社會，於是，她開始積極參與一些公職及社會義務工作。過去20年，她參與眾多政府諮詢組織的事務，並在非政府組織的董事局及委員會中服務，範圍涵蓋公共政策、大學管治、教育、財務匯報監管、醫院管治、社會服務及發展以及慈善事業。她曾擔任婦女事務委員會主席、財務匯報局創局主席、嶺南大學校董會副主席等要職。高女士以促進婦女權益為己任，在眾多

公務中，她對促進婦女權益及提高婦女地位的事務尤其不遺餘力。高女士認為女性應充分享有投入社會的機會，獲得應有的地位和權利，並擔負相應的責任。

高女士擁有的人才管理及公共服務豐富經驗，促使她獲第四屆香港特別行政區政府邀請出任中央政策組成員，為特區政府在物色、招攬及培育公共服務人才等事宜上提供專業意見。近年，她繼續致力為社會服務，包括參與大灣區及一帶一路有關的工作。

不論在私營或公營機構裡，高女士的人生無疑是精彩而充實的，而她的付出亦備受肯定。她於2006、2010及2011年，分別獲嶺南大學、香港公開大學及香港演藝學院頒發榮譽院士名銜，又於2016年獲香港演藝學院頒發榮譽博士名銜。高女士在2003年獲委任為太平紳士，並於2009年及2017年先後獲授銀紫荊星章及金紫荊星章。

憑藉於眾多行業中發掘人才及管理人才的經驗，高女士希望與我們的畢業生分享她的信念：「個人情操、思維及性格比技能和知識更為重要」。她特別著重同理心、人際溝通及人與人之間的包容，這些特質均與嶺南大學的博雅教育理念不謀而合。

主席先生，為肯定高靜芝女士對高等教育及香港不同界別所作的貢獻，本人謹恭請閣下頒授榮譽社會科學博士銜予高女士。

贊辭由龍惠珠教授撰寫及宣讀