

Dr John Chan Cho-chak *GBS, JP*

DOCTOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCES *honoris causa*

Citation

Dr John Chan has an impressive record of achievement and service to Hong Kong. He worked in the government for 28 years providing leadership in such posts as Secretary for Education & Manpower and Deputy Chief Secretary. Dr Chan especially cherishes his role as Private Secretary to the Governor; from there he had a comprehensive perspective on the Hong Kong society as well as government. He contributed to the Sino-British negotiations that eventually led to our current “one country, two systems”. His participation in the Sino-British negotiations also means that he has access to secrets protected by the British Secrets Law!

Following his retirement from the civil service, he has become an important business leader, serving as a director of several listed companies. Perhaps his most important role was in transport, where he became Managing Director of The Kowloon Motor Bus Company, for more than a decade. There he enjoyed the challenge of making a good company even better.

The third leg of his career has been providing leadership in community service, particularly in the not-for-profit, charitable sector of Hong Kong. He is now Chairman of the Court of The Hong Kong University of Science & Technology after serving as its Council Chairman. He is also Chairman of the Council of the Sir Edward Youde Memorial Fund, a director of The Community Chest and a member of the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee.

He provided very significant leadership to The Hong Kong Jockey Club for some 15 years, including being its Chairman for four years. Again he was able to use his experience and influence to improve the quality of life of Hong Kong people. We at Lingnan particularly appreciate his leadership as he helped secure funding for the final two hostels that will make 100% residency of our students on campus a reality. When he studied at The University of Hong Kong, he lived on campus for three years.

So he knows first hand the value of the intellectual and social life of campus living. Like our own Lingnan graduates, he meets regularly with his old campus friends.

Given his record, it is not surprising that he has been well recognised, receiving the Gold Bauhinia Star “for his outstanding public and community service and for his significant contribution to the development of the securities market in Hong Kong”. Both The Hong Kong University of Science & Technology and The University of Hong Kong have conferred upon him honorary degrees.

As his life is a life for service, it is particularly fitting that Lingnan University, with our commitment to “Education for Service”, join in celebrating Dr Chan. Of all his accomplishments, one very dear to him is his work to make Hong Kong buses more accessible to the elderly and handicapped. With the provision of super low floor buses fitted with extension platforms, these people can now enjoy more mobility and enriched lives in a safer environment. These endeavours have helped Hong Kong people recognise that they are a caring community that crosses age and income boundaries. We can all share Dr Chan’s pride and happiness in giving our senior citizens and the physically disadvantaged more opportunities to lead robust lives in our city.

Looking back, Dr Chan is very happy to have served Hong Kong for many years in various capacities. He is also happy to retire in Hong Kong, where like millions of Hong Kong people, he enjoys the small restaurants and shops, the density, and the vibrant streets made accessible by one of the world’s greatest mass transit systems.

Mr Chairman, for his distinguished service to the government and people of Hong Kong, may I present Dr John Chan Cho-chak to you for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*.

English citation written and delivered by Prof Dean Tjosvold