

Mr Patrick Wong Chi-kwong

Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*

Citation

Mr Patrick Wong Chi-kwong has excelled in so many different areas, unceasingly demonstrating how a life of great accomplishments can be combined with humility and a mission of serving others. His humble beginnings are the best place to start appreciating and understanding this modern-day “Renaissance Man”.

Born into a hard-working grassroots Hong Kong family in the early 1960s, Patrick devoted himself in his mid-teens to learning and striving for excellence. As his strength at that time was in mathematics, he was on track to pursue further studies in mathematics, statistics and computing at another tertiary institution in 1979. But, a chance encounter with an inspired student leader from the Chinese Department of the then Lingnan College changed everything. Fascinated by the world of classical Chinese studies, he enrolled in Lingnan College instead and spent the next five years studying under the prominent Chinese Professor Chan Cham-chuen and famous Chinese poet-scholar Professor Leung Kan-nang, while also developing an interest in English literature. He graduated from the Chinese Department of Lingnan College in 1984 and was admitted as a member of the UK-based Institute of Linguists (now the Chartered Institute of Linguists).

After graduation, Patrick worked in the distance education sector and later became a Community Relations Officer at the ICAC. During this time he obtained a law degree from the University of London through part-time study. He then went to the UK for the final examination for solicitors in England and came back to Hong Kong to join the prestigious law firm of Johnson Stokes & Master (now Mayer Brown) in 1990.

Qualifying as a solicitor, he then chose a path less travelled by local lawyers and joined the firm’s corporate finance practice. This coincided with the profound entrepreneurial transformation of China and the rapid growth of Hong Kong as an international financial centre. So in addition to serving established Hong Kong and international clients of the firm, he had the opportunity to contribute to the vibrant development of contemporary Mainland China, where his earlier years studying Chinese literature in Lingnan helped him immeasurably. Patrick’s love of classical China’s literature and his eloquence in English garnered him professional accolades and trust from colleagues and clients alike.

In the beginning, working with top talent from around the world was a tough and demanding task for a young lawyer. But Patrick braved all the challenges with immense patience, dedication, professionalism, and an acute sensitivity to cultural difference. Much of his virtue and wisdom can be traced from his early classical Chinese training in Lingnan College. Within just three years, he had established a thriving practice and was soon promoted to partnership at his law firm.

His remarkable leadership qualities of positive thinking, sophisticated communication skills, strong willpower and commitment resonate with Lingnan University’s ideals of liberal arts education. It is not surprising that Patrick was appointed to various management and governance positions in Mayer Brown covering

its corporate practices and later its global operations. And it is even less surprising that he was called upon to chair and serve on many professional, civic and public bodies, including serving for more than 10 years as the Chairman of the Company Law Committee of The Law Society of Hong Kong. He was also invited by the HKSAR Government to serve as a member of the Standing Committee on Company Law Reform of the Hong Kong SAR.

He was also invited to chair the Advisory Group on directors and officers related provisions during the Company Ordinance Rewrite exercise of the SAR Government, which contributed to the enactment of the current Companies Ordinance of Hong Kong. Since retiring from active legal practice in 2015, he has served as the Deputy Chairman of the Hong Kong Productivity Council, and the Deputy Chairman of the Applied Research Council, to name but a few of his many endeavours. Although he is retired, he has continued to expand his learning horizons, earning a Master of Arts degree in Japanese Studies from The Chinese University of Hong Kong. But his love of education is best evidenced by his lifelong service to Lingnan.

As a Lingnanian, he is also best known for his devotion to Lingnan's educational mission and upholding Lingnan's Red and Grey Spirit and legacy from countless influential Lingnan predecessors over the past 135 years. His dedicated service to Lingnan began shortly after his return to Hong Kong from his legal studies in the UK. Since 1991, Patrick has been a Director of Lingnan Education Organization (LEO), and has served on various governing bodies of Lingnan University, including the Board of Governors of Lingnan College, and the Court and Council of Lingnan University at different times. Patrick became the Chairman of LEO from 2007 to 2010 and from 2017 to early 2023, and was one of the key Council Members in Lingnan College and, later on, Lingnan University for a total of 25 years. Recently, he was appointed by the SAR Government as the Chairman of the Court of Lingnan University, starting in November 2023.

In honour of his contribution to the legal profession and the financial sector of Hong Kong, as well as his dedicated service to Lingnan and the Hong Kong community, Lingnan University conferred an honorary fellowship on Patrick in 2011, more than a decade ago. Since then, he has continued to build his legacy and contribute to Hong Kong and Lingnan.

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, although people may not always remember the names of outstanding individuals and their extraordinary achievements, their contributions and influence are still deeply imprinted in our society and culture. Today, as we bestow an honour for service and dedication on one of many remarkable Lingnanians, let us resolve to preserve these most precious memories. Mr Chairman, in recognition of his professional achievements in law and contributions to Hong Kong as well as the Lingnan community, may I present Mr Patrick Wong Chi-kwong for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.

Citation written and delivered by Professor Li Donghui