

## Honorary Fellow A Citation

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### **Dr Leong Siu Hung, Edwin, DSc (Hon), BSc, MSc**

The time was more than fifty years ago. The respected and prosperous Hong Kong businessman, Mr Henry G Leong, had a serious problem. He was over 60 and not in good health. He knew he would not live to see his youngest son, who was still a child, reach maturity. How could he provide for the boy's future even when he would not be there to watch over the son as he grew up? After many sleepless nights the father came up with his solution: a two-stage inheritance, with one portion at 25 years of age, and the second at 30. This way any mistakes made after the first inheritance would serve the young man as lessons for the second. When the son was nine, sadly, the father did indeed die, and the boy was brought up by his devoted mother.

He grew up to learn his lessons well. After education in Hong Kong and Canada culminating in a Master of Science degree at Toronto, an earlier career in the Hong Kong financial sector ran into trouble during the 1998 crisis, only to be replaced by a highly successful property investment business, now much larger than the one left behind by the father. The son had learned that a second start could work even if the first one failed. Out of that second start came one of the most valued philanthropic enterprises in the city. The double heart of this enterprise is care for the elderly, and care for the young. When the boy grew up he wanted to honor the memory and the wisdom of the elderly father he hadn't actually known; while just like that father he wanted to care for young people even if he didn't actually know them.

That young boy was Edwin Leong Siu Hung. The successful property company is Tai Hung Fai Enterprise Company Limited, founded in 1977; and the philanthropic institution is Tai Hung Fai Charitable Foundation. Following are just some of the many achievements of the Foundation, or should we say the achievements of Dr Leong through his Foundation, in providing care not just for children and the elderly but for the poor.

In 2007 Dr Leong created the Henry G Leong Mobile Integrative Health Centre, which provides free health screening and monitoring services out in the community, for the benefit of needy elderly people around Hong Kong. In 2009 came the Circle of Care-A Holistic Community Care Programme for Elders with Dementia, which is attached to the Tung Wah Hospital and offers screening tests and home- and centre-based services, as well as boosting public awareness on dementia as it tours around the territory of Hong Kong. Many beds and mattresses have also been donated for elderly and rehabilitation residential homes. Professorships in neurology, social work and social administration, and eye health in the elderly, have all been created with the specific purpose of improving services for older people.

Tai Hung Fai Charitable Foundation has also provided a wide range of support to the Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation, since its foundation in 2005, in offering education, research and advocacy services, as well as financial assistance to over 1,000 low income women for mammogram screening, as part of the fight against this condition. Underprivileged children with

congenital heart disease are helped through the Adventist Pediatric Heart Fund. An alarming and debilitating condition often associated with ageing, Parkinson's disease, is addressed through the Hong Kong Parkinson's Disease Foundation, of which Dr Leong is an Honorary Advisor. The Foundation has also supported St James's Settlement, a government emergency food bank service, enabling a much longer period of assistance to those with special needs for whom the government subsidy was not adequate.

Beyond Hong Kong, Dr Leong through his Foundation has offered support to poorer mainland children through the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. Tuition fees and living expenses have been offered to 300 high school and 550 university students, while around 6,000 care packages have been offered to primary students. Dr Leong also runs programmes in China to repair and rebuild schools in remote villages. He has already donated over \$1,000,000 for earthquake relief following the 2008 disaster.

Even on a much smaller local scale, Dr Leong's lifelong concern for the elderly was reflected in his donation of a lift for elderly churchgoers who were having difficulty climbing the stairs to the Hong Kong Ling Liang Church.

And of course, closest of all to home, here at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Dr Leong established in November 2011 the Henry G Leong Gerontology and Geriatrics Endowed Professorship, for research into nutritional strategies for successful ageing and the impact of the living environment on health outcomes, and for the development of an ageing index and poverty index as population indicators of ageing well.

To this very day Dr Leong has remained true to the wisdom he learned and the gratitude he felt as a nine-year-old boy, arising from the decisions of a father he never really knew. And also from a mother he still knows: Dr Leong, famously, has dinner with his mother every evening, and has not travelled outside Hong Kong since 1996 so as to remain nearby. She it was who 36 years ago named the new company Tai Hung Fai after the brightness of her son; and she still lives as a reminder to him of two key Chinese values. One is the care for one's parents and for the elderly, which has been given such enhanced contemporary urgency by the worldwide social and demographic changes associated with our ageing populations. The other is the responsibility to give back, if one is able, to those from whom one has benefited. To give back—but not to dwell on one's giving. Dr Leong's philosophy of philanthropy is that you do good, but you don't remember the details. That would be to turn the act of giving into something self-regarding. A father who thinks only of how to look after his son long after his own death is the opposite of self-regarding.

It gives me great pleasure, Mr Chairman, in recognition of his exemplary services, on behalf of the elderly, the young and the needy to the Hong Kong and broader Chinese communities and to this University, to present to you Dr Edwin Leong Siu Hung, businessman and philanthropist, for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.