

Honorary Fellow A Citation

Mr KWOK Chi-leung Karl, MH, BA, MBA

A true athletic champion braving the winds and the waves with skill, dedication and perseverance, he is a successful magnate who has ascended through keen insight and strategic vision.

Mr Kwok Chi-leung, Karl is one of Hong Kong's business elite. Currently, he serves as Chairman of Wing On Company International Limited, Director of Kee Wai Investment Company (BVI) Limited, and Independent Non-Executive Director of Tai Cheung Holdings Limited. Over the past three to four decades, Mr Kwok has made remarkable contributions in the finance, banking, and retail industries.

The forefathers of Mr Kwok, a prominent family originated from Zhongshan in Guangdong Province, have earned tremendous respect and esteem for their business success. The family's rise however, began overseas in Australia, where Mr Kwok Chuen—the grandfather of Mr Karl Kwok—and his older brother Mr Kwok Lok entered the fruit wholesale business. The brothers established the Wing On Department Store in Hong Kong in 1907, achieving notable results that allowed them to expand the business into Shanghai. Wing On rose rapidly to the pinnacle as one of the 'Four Great Companies' of Shanghai in the 1930s. The original Wing On building still stands on Nanjing Road as a testament to the golden years of old Shanghai. Today, Wing On is more than a hundred years old, glory still, its impact has never waned and it continues in Hong Kong as a leading department store. As the third-generation patriarch of the family, Mr Karl Kwok took over Wing On in 1991. Under his leadership, Wing On not only operates in its department store industry, but also developed into a multinational company with business being diversified in real estate, investment, finance, automobiles, etc.

Mr Kwok was born in Shanghai in 1948 and soon moved to Hong Kong with his family. He spent his early years at St. Paul's Co-educational College, and later studied Government and International Relations at Carleton College in Minnesota, United States. Carleton College is a small private college that emphasises liberal arts, cultivates talent, and encourages extracurricular activities and social participation. Such humanity education was pivotal in shaping his outlook on life and values. Originally wanted to be a medical doctor, Mr Kwok said, 'Attending Carleton changed my life.' While in Minnesota, the Land of 10,000 Lakes, he also discovered sailing, a sport which has then become his greatest passion and favourite sport. In 1971, Mr Kwok graduated from Carleton and was admitted to the prestigious Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania to complete his Master of Business Administration degree.

Mr Kwok returned to Hong Kong and entered the business arena, working in the finance, insurance, and banking industries. In the 1980s, he took the reins of his family business. The business world is like a vast ocean. Sometimes the water is calm and the surface is mirror smooth. At other times, the waves are high in the raging water of stormy seas. At the time Mr Kwok took over, the world economy was dwindling, and Hong Kong itself was facing an unstable political situation – a daunting challenge for any entrepreneur or businessman. In that turbulent period, he had to rely on his remarkable vision and relentless dedication to lead, persevere, and turn the tide to reinvigorate Wing On for a fresh start and a new journey.

Mr Kwok credits the perseverance, belief and team spirit behind his success to his passion for sailing and his experiences participating in yacht racing. Being

the champion of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race in 1997 and the Transatlantic Maxi Yacht Cup in 2009, he was the first ever Chinese skipper to have won these international races in history. He named his racing yachts 'Beau Geste' and, skippering them personally, he earned worldwide recognition in international sailing races, adding significantly to the reputation of the Chinese people. Yet, despite his many accolades, he has remained gentle and humble about his success. 'Winning a sailing race actually has a lot in common with operating a successful business,' he once observed. 'You need a good team and you must have prepared fully. You have to have the right horse for the right course. And you have to have a bit of luck.'

Mr Kwok is not only a veteran seafarer; he is also a distinguished athlete. For many years, he has contributed tremendously to the development of sports and athletic training in Hong Kong. In his capacity as President of the Hong Kong Sailing Federation and Honorary President of the Windsurfing Association of Hong Kong, he has been actively promoting sailing sports in Hong Kong. At the same time, he has also been a fervent fan of other activities –hiking in particular– and has left his footprints across the precipitous cliffs and mountain ranges of Hong Kong, Kowloon, the New Territories and Outlying Islands. Mr Kwok served as a member of the Fifth East Asian Games Planning Committee, 2009, and as part of the First and Third Hong Kong Games Organising Committees. Today, he serves as Vice-President of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Sports Institute. On numerous occasions, Mr Kwok has played the roles of Chef de Mission or Deputy Chef de Mission of the Hong Kong Delegation for the Olympic Committee and various major Asian sports events. In

2011, he received a Medal of Honour from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government for his contribution to sports development in Hong Kong.

While he is a passionate athlete, Mr Kwok is also an ardent supporter of youth education. He served as a Council Member of the City University of Hong Kong and Chairman of the Hong Kong-America Center. His close-knit relationship with The Chinese University of Hong Kong began when he joined the Board of Trustees of Chung Chi College back in 1982, serving as its Chairman from 2002 to 2015. He has guided the growth of Chung Chi College, advocated holistic education, and headed the celebration of the College's 60th anniversary. Mr Kwok was also a Council Member of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and has served as chairman or member of a large number of committees, including the Executive Committee of Council, the Committee on Bilingualism, and the Campus Planning and Building Committee, acting as the principal proponent of advancements and progress in various fields.

For his remarkable accomplishments in business, his internationally acclaimed success in global sailing competitions, his substantial contributions to sports in Hong Kong, and, even more, for his dedication and support to The Chinese University of Hong Kong, in particular Chung Chi College, Mr Chairman, it is my great pleasure to present to you Mr Kwok Chi-leung, Karl for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.