

Honorary Fellow A Citation

Dr SIU Wing-tai

Dr Siu Wing-tai is a distinguished surgeon who in his practice has contributed greatly to the development of surgical techniques of minimally invasive surgery, and throughout his professional life to the training, encouragement and development of succeeding generations of medical students.

A graduate of the Faculty of Medicine of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Dr Siu excelled as a medical student. He was the recipient of many awards and distinctions, including the First Prize and Distinction in Medicine, and the City Lions Club Gold Medal Award for the best overall performance in professional examinations in his graduating year.

A young graduate of such distinction might well be expected to pursue a research career, and the young Dr Siu was encouraged to think about taking that direction. But he chose not to do so, and decided to embark on a career as a surgeon. His reasons for doing so are indicative of Dr Siu's character. Fundamentally, as he would put it, he 'just wanted to be a good doctor'. And, interestingly for many of us here today, he didn't think he was 'pushy' enough to be a professor.

For Dr Siu, surgery, despite its sometimes stressful nature, brings particular rewards. Other forms of medicine are of course important. But in Dr Siu's view, they offer less to the doctor than surgery does. Surgery gives greater opportunity to the practitioner to intervene and cure; whereas other forms of medical practice may be more limited to palliative effects.

Although Dr Siu decided not to pursue a career devoted to medical research, he did not turn his back on the opportunity to engage in research

where that was directly relevant to his practice as a surgeon. Rather, he undertook practice-based research in the emerging field of minimally invasive surgery, and became a leading practitioner and teacher in this major extension of surgical care. He has published extensively on various aspects of this technique, and he was instrumental in establishing and providing courses and conferences for the Minimal Access Surgery Training Centre at the Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital and the Department of Surgery at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. These Centres have developed as major training centres in minimal access surgery, training local doctors and nurses, as well as practitioners from beyond Hong Kong. It is a testament to his work in this respect that what was at one time an exceptional procedure is now regarded as 'part and parcel' of surgical training.

Dr Siu's distinction as a surgeon, and as an educator, has brought with it many forms of recognition from his peers and the community. He has held senior positions in various professional societies, including the Presidency of the Hong Kong Society of Minimal Access Surgery and the Hong Kong Society of Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeons. He is a Fellow and Council Member of the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong, and a Fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, to name just a few.

As a medical practitioner, Dr Siu has benefited Hong Kong society, whether directly, or through his training of other practitioners.

But Dr Siu has made important contributions directly to this University. He has taken a lead in the development of collective philanthropy in

support of the Faculty of Medicine, by personal donation, and by inspiring others to contribute. Wishing to give back to the University that laid the foundations for a successful professional career, he set about encouraging others from his graduating year to join him in donating to the Faculty. So successful was he, that in a space of only three months he had persuaded 50% of that class to contribute. Many professional fundraisers would, of course, be delighted to secure such an outcome. Many smaller contributions can add up, and can provide the means by which those who are of more modest means can make a difference in the world of philanthropy. And how did he achieve this? It seems that this is a reflection of his personality. He is, in his own words, rather easy-going; someone who is approachable; someone who does not seek recognition or reward; someone with the personality to get people to come together.

Those personal qualities have been deployed in a rather different way, again, in support of our Faculty of Medicine, through his work in support of our Medical Alumni.

Dr Siu was directly involved in the establishment of The Chinese University of Hong Kong Medical Alumni Association. He has been a Council Member of the Association since its foundation, and its President between 2011 and 2014. In that capacity he was instrumental in the establishment of the Faculty's Medical Alumni Buddy Programme, which was inaugurated in 2016. The Buddy Programme was established to provide an ongoing mentoring and support network for medical students and young practitioners, as well as helping to cement the relationship between alumni and the Faculty. The Programme provides a rich programme of events, which begin right at

the beginning – even before Orientation Camp – and carry on to provide different activities suited to students at different stages of their studies and training. As every University department increasingly recognises, the world of work is ever more challenging, requiring us to be imaginative in responding to our students' needs. The Buddy Programme is an outstanding example of what can be achieved by those who see the value in giving back to the University.

As we noted earlier, Dr Siu has said that he simply wants to be 'a good doctor'. He has indeed achieved that ambition, but he has done much, much more than that, to the great benefit of society and the University, and it is for these achievements and contributions that we rightly confer on him an Honorary Fellowship. Mr Chairman, it is my great pleasure to present to you Dr Siu Wing-tai for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.

This citation is written by Professor Christopher Gane