

Mr Cheung Wang-ngai Joseph

Honorary Fellow

Citation

Education is in some sense a lifelong calling for everyone, whether we acknowledge it or not. The world is continuously changing and we adapt accordingly: that adaptation is a form of lifelong learning. In the classroom, we are taught how to learn, and for some of us those skills will meet our lifetime needs. But others will feel a need to return to the classroom to learn more, from courses that are more formal and intentional than the courses that are offered by the University of Life. Joseph Cheung whom we honour today offers a striking example. He is a truth-seeker and passionate lifelong learner, whose curiosity and striving for truth brings him back to CUHK today, nearly 50 years after he embarked on a journey as an undergraduate at United College.

Six degrees of separation refers to the widely touted claim that everyone on the planet can be linked to anyone else in just six steps. Another six degrees – of connection, this time – have taken Joseph Cheung on an academic journey that started at CUHK in 1975 and continued via further studies at the University of London International Programme, The University of Hong Kong, The London School of Economics and Political Science, University

of Warwick, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, New York University Stern, and University College London in 2017. Let me expand on this a little.

The sequence I have just outlined spans over forty years. It began at United College, studying for a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (BBA) and graduating with First Class Honours. But why work towards just one degree when you could perfectly well work on two? Once the first year of his BBA had been completed, Mr Cheung commenced, and simultaneously pursued, his first Law Degree. Both degrees were consequently completed in the same year – and, indeed, during the same month. Over the next two years, Joseph Cheung qualified for practice in Hong Kong with a PCLL (in 1980) from The University of Hong Kong, obtaining a distinction in Practice and Procedure, while deepening his legal expertise with an LLM (in 1981), from The London School of Economics on the prestigious Sir Run Run Shaw Postgraduate Scholarship.

Joseph Cheung built an impressive and successful legal career through the

1980s and 1990s, becoming a partner of a prominent law firm, Messrs. C. Y. Kwan & Co., within six short years after graduating from college. He is qualified to practice law at various levels in multiple jurisdictions: Hong Kong, England and Wales, Australia, and Singapore. Our honorand's qualifications in accountancy extend even further than his qualifications in law, adding the state of Illinois in the US to that list of places in which he is professionally qualified to practice. In 1990, he obtained his MBA with Distinction from the University of Warwick. In the early 2000s, he further burnished his multifaceted economic credentials and skills with a prestigious CFA in financial analysis, US CPA and FCA (England and Wales) in professional accounting, a CFP in financial planning, an FRM in financial risk management, a CIIA in international investments, and a CAIA for alternative assets. Without any loss of momentum or ambition, he then received a Master of Science in Global Finance from NYU Stern and HKUST with the highest GPA in his graduating class and the history of the program, which admitted him to the exclusive Beta Gamma Sigma, HKUST Chapter. This was closely followed by a Master of Science in Professional Accountancy with Distinction from University College London. This pattern of gaining distinction by linking theory to practice and setting himself ever higher challenges, continued for over four decades right up to the present.

Mr Cheung has maintained parallel

development tracks of practice and of academic work, in law, business and finance. After founding Oasis Investment Management Limited, an SFC licensed asset management firm, he went on to become a co-founder and director of iIDEAS, a biotech company specializing in innovative AI and robotic medical devices.

All the above evidences an astonishing commitment to education and training, both in dedicating the time required and in terms of the distance he has covered – intellectually and geographically. The results can be seen in the depth of his learning as well as in the breadth of his qualifications, his interests, and his activities. Mr Cheung's mastery of so many fields marks him out as the product of a most exceptionally well-rounded education, coupled with an extraordinary drive and ambition that has compressed into one lifetime enough to fill several, more, ordinary lives.

As we honour Mr Cheung today, it is fitting not only to reflect on his many achievements in the fields of law, accounting, and finance, but his unwavering dedication to education and community service. Mr Cheung's professional achievements are exemplary, yet it is his commitment to giving back to society that truly sets him apart. Throughout his career, Mr Cheung has demonstrated a deep understanding of the reciprocal nature of education – we receive and we impart. He has not only sought to develop his own skills and knowledge but has

also generously shared his expertise with others. Whether by serving as a role model, offering guidance and support, assuming social responsibilities, or undertaking teaching obligations, Mr Cheung has made a lasting impact on countless individuals and organizations. His record of community service is extensive and diverse, reflecting his broad range of interests and expertise. He has served on numerous committees and advisory boards across six governmental departments, as well as contributing his time and dedication to institutions such as Diocesan Boys' School and the Community Chest. He has also been a longtime supporter and donor of his alma maters, NYU, HKUST and CUHK, serving as a trustee of CUHK's United College since 2016 and as a member of the academic advisory boards of NYU Stern/NYU Shanghai and CUHK Faculty of Law. Notably, he has been instrumental in establishing a research excellence award for young professors at both the Faculty of Law and the United College, as well as providing an initial grant to fund the development of the CUHK Law and Technology program. His unflinching commitment and visionary initiatives demonstrate his outstanding dedication to the academic community. His philanthropic deeds towards the less privileged members of our society, including elderlies in care homes, orphans in the Mainland, and students at local public primary schools, require no further commendation. It is this combination of professional excellence and dedicated service that makes Mr Cheung

such a deserving recipient of this honorary fellowship. We are honored to recognise his achievements today and look forward to seeing the positive impact he will continue to have in the years to come.

As we commemorate the 60th anniversary of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, we are reminded of the visionary leadership of our founding chairman, the late Sir Cho Yiu Kwan, who steered the University Council in its early years. It is a testament to his foresight that CUHK has become the esteemed institution it is now. Today, we are honored to present an honorary fellowship to an individual who has been a long-time partner of Sir C Y Kwan's law firm . This recognition is a fitting tribute to the enduring legacy of our founding chairman and his vision for a world-class institution of higher learning. It is a testament to the values and principles that have guided CUHK since its inception and that continue to shape our community to this day. As we look to the future, we can be inspired by Mr Cheung's example and the values he embodies – the pursuit of lifelong learning, the quest for truth, and the commitment to excellence and public service.

Mr Chairman, it is my privilege to present Cheung Wang-ngai Joseph, a man of many parts, and a most generous contributor in multiple ways to Hong Kong, to CUHK, to United College and to the Faculty of Law, for an Honorary Fellowship.

The citation is written by Professor Nick Rawlins