

Honorary Fellow A Citation



Professor Ma Lin, CBE(Hon), DSc, DLitt, LLD, DHumL, JP

As our second Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ma Lin played a pivotal part in the shaping of The Chinese University of Hong Kong as we know it today. Among his many major contributions was the achievement of the academic integration of the institution while at the same time recognizing the distinctive educational and pastoral mission of the constituent Colleges. Another major contribution was the central role he played in the setting up of the University's fourth College, founded from a munificent gift of Sir Run Run Shaw. A third major contribution was the establishment of a Faculty of Medicine with international standards in medical education and research. Under his leadership coverage of academic exchanges was extended to mainland China and several overseas countries. The first doctoral programme was launched. Part-time undergraduate degree programmes were introduced. A Provisional Acceptance Scheme was implemented, significantly enhancing the quality of the University's student intake. The undergraduate programme was reviewed and overhauled under a new credit system and with a strong emphasis on general education.

It was at secondary school that Professor Ma first developed an interest in chemistry and conceived the ambition of being a scientist. He did a Bachelor of Science degree at West China Union University and taught there for a period. He then won a scholarship to the University of Leeds to do his PhD. Leeds, being a centre of Britain's wool industry, was the perfect place to study the chemistry of proteins. During a period as Postdoctoral Fellow at University College Hospital, London, he became interested in clinical biochemistry, especially in a foetal condition brought about by hormonal changes in the mother. When he returned to Hong Kong in 1957, he was appointed to a lecturing post at Queen Mary Hospital, in the Department of Pathology of Hong Kong University.

His long and fruitful association with The Chinese University of Hong Kong began in 1964. He was instrumental in setting up the Department of Biochemistry. His outstanding research earned him appointment to the Founding Chair of Biochemistry. In the meantime, his outstanding qualities as an academic leader were also being recognized. He was elected Dean of Science in 1973 and then, in 1978, he was appointed the second Vice-Chancellor of the Chinese University.

When he was installed as Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ma first paid tribute to his predecessor, Dr Li Choh-ming, saying that the University now stood "on a solid foundation", but he by no means underestimated the difficult road ahead of him. "The task that confronts us today," he said, "is ... like going against the currents, which allows no rest and demands unremitting vigilance." The demanding "task" that Professor Ma saw ahead of him was not simply the merging of separate teaching departments into an integrated framework. His aim was, in his own words, "to make the University a truly modern institution of high standing with an international outlook, worthy of the grand tradition of Chinese scholarship and culture." To



this end, he presided over many key academic developments. He emphasized the importance of a bilingual and bicultural education, which is one of the philosophical cornerstones of the University today. He initiated the establishment of the Faculty of Engineering. He upgraded research and, through community support, ensured that there were buildings to house it. It is clear today that succeeding generations of students and staff have cause to be grateful for Professor Ma's "unremitting vigilance" in pursuit of his vision of the University.

A further challenge he wrestled with was how the University was going to accommodate the steady growth of student numbers during the 1970s. As Professor Ma himself tells the story, the solution came in an unexpected way. In early June 1985 Sir Run Run Shaw visited the University as a member of Council and Professor Ma arranged a tour of the campus for him:

We stopped at a vantage point ... Sir Run Run Shaw saw ... two platforms and asked me what they were intended for. I said they would be used for a fourth College when we had the resources to start one ... Sir Run Run Shaw didn't say anything. He came; he saw; and he left.

A few days later he called and said he would like to endow the University with a new College and would \$100 million be enough? This was in fact the largest endowment not simply in the history of the University but in the history of Hong Kong.

Before his retirement in 1987, Professor Ma took up the Chairmanship of the Board of Trustees of Shaw College, a position he still occupies. Right from the beginning he took the helm personally as Chairman of the Shaw College Planning Committee and guided every step of the new College's development. The first buildings of Shaw College opened their doors to staff and students in 1988.

Among the many other things that occupy his busy retirement, Professor Ma continues to play an important part in assisting Sir Run Run Shaw to support the development of education and medical services in mainland China and Hong Kong. Last year he also played a central role in helping the Shaw Prize Foundation to launch the Shaw Prize, to be awarded to "individuals ... whose work has resulted in a positive and profound impact on humankind." The Prize, which rivals the Nobel Prize in value, will greatly contribute to the international profile both of Shaw College and the University as a whole.

Professor Ma's services to Hong Kong include the role he played on the Drafting Committee of the Basic Law. Among his many honours and awards are honorary doctorates from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, the University of Sussex, the University of East Asia, the State University of New York and Tianjin University. He has been awarded the CBE(Hon), a Fellowship of the Royal Society of the Arts, a Commander's Cross from the Federal Republic of Germany and the Order of the Rising Sun from Japan. He is also a Justice of the Peace.

Professor Ma is a truly distinguished academic leader and it is a great honour, Mr Vice-Chancellor, to present him to you for the award of an Honorary Fellowship.