

The Hon Ronald Joseph ARCULLI

Citation

He is a man with many roles. To the Executive Council of the Hong Kong SAR Government, he is a Non-Official Member. To the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing, he is the Chairman. To those trying their luck in the racecourse, he is the former Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club and the owner and breeder of the legendary Triple Crown winner River Verdon. To us, he is a voice of reason and a pair of safe and steady hands on which we can rely. His name is Ronald Joseph Arculli.

It has been said that highly successful people divide their lives into three parts: the first third for education, the second third for getting rich, and the final third for public service. Although Mr Arculli has done extremely well for himself, financially and otherwise, it was as if he had skipped the middle third, as we see him immersed totally in his multiple portfolios in public affairs. Above all else, Mr Arculli has been a consummate public servant to his beloved city, grateful for the opportunity to be of service.

Hong Kong's success has often been attributed to the rule of law and its independent judicial system. As an eminent legal practitioner and former law-maker, he started his legal career when he returned to Hong Kong in 1961 as a practicing barrister, became a solicitor in 1976 and now a senior partner of King & Wood's Hong Kong practice, said to be China's largest law firm.

For all his professional excellences, Mr Arculli is not best known as a lawyer to the man in the street. Some wonders how he finds time to do so, particularly as he must complete 15 hours of Continuous Professional Development courses each year. He must love the law!

To an uncommon degree, Mr Arculli is better known as a public leader. His background makes him a good listener and a resourceful problem-solver, perfectly cast for his multiple roles.

Few have the same opportunities to serve — first as an appointed and then as an elected Legislative Councillor in the years before and after the Handover. He was asked soon after he joined LegCo in 1988 what was the first lesson he learnt. He promptly responded: "There are different interests in this Council on any major issue. To move ahead we must build a consensus." Those words are even truer today.

Mr Arculli is everything a dogmatic politician is not. In the arena of public discourse, he has never been known to raise his voice, earning him the epithet of "a gentleman politician" and often described as "urbane". But when it comes to our core values, such as the rule of law, he is a vehement, vocal and unbending defender. In these roles, he had made quite a splash. Some of his more lasting contributions came after 1997.

Since 2005, he has been a member of the Executive Council, Hong Kong's cabinet. When it comes to the vital interests of the community, he does not hesitate to speak his mind. He has, for example, been calling for a drastic improvement in our city's worsening air quality, worried that it may be a serious threat to our competitiveness, as global talents require a clean environment for their families.

From 2002 to 2006, he was Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club. This is a unique Hong Kong institution. Other countries may boast their

own jockey clubs, but never the giant philanthropic concern that is uniquely ours. It is the largest dispenser of charity funds in support of a wide range of worthwhile causes: educational, healthcare and the alleviation of social suffering. This University is a notable beneficiary of the Jockey Club's generosity.

One role, however, stands out as his notable achievement. As Vice-President of the Hong Kong Equestrian Committee, he helped organize this city's much-praised equestrian events in partnership with the Beijing Olympic Committee, with the Jockey Club being the sole sponsor of the venue. This gigantic undertaking and historic honor was made possible by his persuasive presentation in London before the international equestrian fraternity which considers him one of their own.

Another pillar in our community is the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited, of which he has been Chairman since 2006. A center of global finance, Hong Kong has once again a vigilant protector of public interest in Mr Arculli. He hovers over our high finance as a stern uncle. Under his watch, the total market capitalization of the Hong Kong Exchanges rose from HK\$9.76 trillion in April 2006 to HK\$19.69 trillion in September 2010.

Mr Arculli has cast such a giant shadow over the city that his other significant roles in public organizations have often been overshadowed.

Mr Arculli has an overriding concern for the well-being and development of the young, perhaps influenced by his late mother, a devoted teacher. From 1991 Mr Arculli was Chairman of the Council of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme in Hong Kong. For seven long years, beginning in 2000, he succeeded the founder, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, as the Chairman of the International Award Association, with its program in over 100 countries. He wisely secured the consent of Prince Philip for him to chair board meetings in Buckingham Palace to maximize board members' attendance.

He also cares about public health. After the painful and terrifying experience of SARS in the first half of 2003, Mr Arculli chaired the Hospital Authority Review Panel on the SARS Outbreak. The Panel identified areas for improvement, which led to the establishment of the Centre of Health Protection, another initiative of the Jockey Club, in June 2004. Mr Arculli is also the Vice-Chairman of the Health and Medical Development Advisory Committee which hopes to map out the way forward for a sustainable healthcare system.

He is an active shareholder of the SVHK Capital, a non-profit organization which provides management and financial support to nurture social enterprises.

As the city looks towards tomorrow, Mr Arculli can be found serving her faithfully as a Board Member of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority which is developing the mammoth arts and cultural project on the West Kowloon waterfront. This is Hong Kong's future claim to fame as an international cultural center. His contribution in promoting arts and culture includes being an Executive Committee Member of the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society and a co-founder in 2000 of the internationally recognized Asian Art Archive, dedicated to archiving and documenting contemporary Asian visual art.

Through Hong Kong's transition from a British colony to the success story of the unique "One Country Two Systems" Concept, Mr Arculli has taken on different roles but has always served one master: the people of Hong Kong. He is our source of strength and intelligence, who never says no to a task for the public good. In 2010, the Hong Kong SAR Government bestowed its highest honor, the Grand Bauhinia Medal, upon Mr Arculli, a son of Hong Kong who belongs lock, stock and barrel to the city.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, on behalf of the Council of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, I present to you Mr Ronald Arculli, Chairman of the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited and Senior Partner of King & Wood to you for the award of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.