

## Dr CHOW Yei Ching

Citation

When visionary entrepreneur Dr Chow Yei Ching started his company in 1970, he sought a name to make it stand out while conveying the core principles on which the firm was founded. He decided an English word would not do. “How about French?” a multilingual friend suggested. “And how about *chevalier*?”

Just right, he thought. The adventurous fighting spirit and honorable behavior encapsulated in *chevalier* – 「其士」 (homonym of 「騎士」) in Chinese and “knight” in English – were the perfect match for the enterprise that the dynamic, engaging Dr Chow then built. His business grew from a seven-person enterprise based in Star House, Tsim Sha Tsui, into the Chevalier Group, an international conglomerate with over 370 subsidiaries and associated companies and about 9,800 employees worldwide. He is Chairman of the Group.

It has been a wonderfully daring and fast-paced journey for the boy from Shanghai, who arrived in Hong Kong at the age of 17 in the early 1950s with his love of machines and high-flying dreams. Indeed, entering his chairman’s office is like opening a door into his heart. Lined in disciplined ranks are rows of model planes, a reminder of his days as a swashbuckling member of the Republic of China Air Force Academy; and model motorbikes, a testament to his love of speed on the ground, in particular cool Harley Davidsons.

Yet it has also always been an odyssey tempered by self-discipline and adherence to the ancient

Chinese philosophical view known as the “Doctrine of the Mean”, where balance, harmony, and moderation have continuously guided his way.

Returning to Hong Kong with his air force training, a degree in mechanical engineering from Taiwan University, and his inner discipline, Dr Chow took up work for a Japanese firm, before seizing an opportunity to stride ahead with his own business. Always thinking how improvements could be made, as well as keen to embrace the new, his list of companies soon lengthened, steered throughout by the integrity he has made his watchword.

No bad debts. Punctual and respectful. Understanding of the fact that no one is perfect. Consideration and appreciation of others. Added together with his broad circle of friends and associates in countries ranging from Japan to the Middle East to North America, he kept alert to different ways of thinking and developing trends, creating an unbeatable combination of courage, integrity and foresight down the decades.

Beyond the business world, he is a committed philanthropist, who translates good intentions into action through the Chow Yei Ching Foundation and Chevalier Culture and Education Foundation, and believes firmly in quiet quests that go on to change lives. “If you want to let people know you are doing good deeds, then you are not doing good deeds,” he notes.

Learning about the proposed Lifeline Express Hospital Eye-Train, that sought to bring light back into the lives of cataract sufferers in the poorest parts of China, he became one of the founding supporters, setting off without fanfare to travel to those remote corners to see and meet for himself the people whom the train set out to help.

Education, which Dr Chow views as the cornerstone of personal growth and development, has been another beneficiary of his goal to foster meaningful lives. He has been a staunch supporter of universities in Hong Kong and Mainland China, and HKUST is very thankful to have had his support over many years. Two of our lecture theaters are named for his parents. More recently, the Library's Learning Commons was named the Chevalier Learning Commons. His wisdom has been shared as an honorary member of HKUST's Court, and he is now happy to see his son, Mr Oscar Chow, following in his footsteps as a member of the University Council.

A dedicated father, Dr Chow regards family education as important as formal education, seeking most of all to leave his seven children with "a legacy of good deeds", along with a contributing mindset and a willingness to help others. Good qualities of character introduced when young will remain with children for the rest of their lives, he believes.

His own public service is long and distinguished, applying his wide-ranging insight to many different roles, including Vice Patron of The Community Chest of Hong Kong, Chairman of Hong Kong Bahrain Business Association, President of The Japan Society, Counselor of the China-United States Exchange Foundation, and Founding President of the International Ningbo

Merchants Association. Since 2001, he has been the Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Hong Kong. His work and achievements have also been recognized in a series of prestigious honors, including a Gold Bauhinia Star from Hong Kong, The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon from Japan, and awards from the UK, France and Belgium.

Accomplished businessman, compassionate leader, active benefactor, concerned parent, wise friend of the community, Dr Chow, you are a true *chevalier*.

Mr Council Chairman, on behalf of the Council of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, I have the high honor of presenting to you, Dr Chow Yei Ching, GBS, Chairman of the Chevalier Group, for the award of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*.