

## Dr Michael Hoi Hung MAK

Citation

From Dr Michael Hoi Hung Mak's childhood home in Sai Ying Pun to Central's medical hub of Tak Shing House may not seem far. However, the short distance he has moved geographically belies the light years he has traveled in life. The sole child of a grassroots family, Dr Mak's gateway to the wider world of opportunity was education. This in turn has become the area that the eminent pediatrician has championed down the decades, including serving as Vice-Chairman of the Council at HKUST.

Dr Mak looks to his school days at St Paul's Co-educational College as the shaper of the boy who became the man and believes others should be able to enjoy a truly formative school and higher education experience.

Materially, his family background made him one of the least privileged in his class at school. Yet he never felt this to be a barrier to achievement. Naturally gifted with an excellent memory, he took a prize-winning path from Primary One, ending his 13 years at the school as boys' head prefect alongside girls' head prefect Maria Wai Chu Tam. By the time he left to study medicine at the University of Hong Kong, perseverance, leadership skills, and an active contributing spirit were all firmly in place.

He made pediatrics his specialty rather than the more glamorous field of surgery following

his surgical houseman days at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. While there, a child suddenly passed away and the sadness over why this young life had so abruptly been halted became an enduring wish to try to stop this happening again.

In addition to professional capability and an ethical approach, a doctor, he believes, must possess a compassionate heart.

The belief in giving back developed at school and university, and through his own reading of Chinese history and literature, inspired Dr Mak to continuously work hard and seek improvement in order to serve his patients and the community more effectively.

In recognition of his academic endeavors, in 1991 he was elected a Fellow of the Hong Kong College of Paediatricians and in 1993, a Fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine. In addition, he sought to advance the medical profession as a whole, serving as a Council Member of the Hong Kong Medical Association and Vice-President of the Federation of Medical Societies of Hong Kong.

The education sector then became another beneficiary of his energy to drive change. As Supervisor of St Paul's Co-educational College from 1999 to 2010, he initiated and actively oversaw the school's conversion to the Direct Subsidy Scheme in 2002. In doing so, he helped to

set a new direction for traditional schools in Hong Kong, many of which subsequently joined the DSS system. He was also instrumental in launching a multi-million dollar fundraising campaign to support scholarships and subsidies at the school to enable students from all backgrounds to keep attending.

As Council Vice-Chairman of HKUST from 2008 to 2013, Dr Mak showed great commitment and genuine interest in supporting the University's advancement, working closely with the Council Chairman to facilitate development of the leadership structure and framework for strategic planning. He was supportive of the aspirations of students, faculty, and staff, dedicating time to establishing dialogue to better understand their needs and listen to feedback. With his strong belief in the importance of self-responsibility and altruism, he also became a patron of HKUST's REDbird Award Program that fosters character development and leadership in students. On joining the University Grants Committee in 2013, he stepped down from the Council to become a Court member.

Despite the thousands of hours he has devoted to public service, Dr Mak has remained first and foremost a family man, who talks with affection, delight and pride about his wife and children, all three of whom are also St Paul's alumni.

In 2005, Dr Mak was made a Justice of the Peace and, in 2013, his contribution to education and the community was recognized when he was awarded a Silver Bauhinia Star by the HKSAR government. And with a guiding philosophy of "never say 'best' only 'better'", it seems clear

he will continue to strive to keep Hong Kong progressing and serve as an excellent role model for developing the heart of a community.

Mr Acting 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 Michael Hoi Hung Mak, SBS, JP, former Council Vice-Chairman of HKUST, for the award of Doctor of Social Sciences *honoris causa*.