In the field of Hong Kong studies, Dr James Hayes' works are among the most significant. To the indigenous people of the New Territories, Mr Hui Shu 許舒), his Chinese name, was (and is) a courteous and respectful government official who spoke their language, Cantonese, and valued Chinese traditional and local cultures. Dr Hayes is a scholar-official.

Dr Hayes came to Hong Kong in 1956, as a Cadet Officer in the former Hong Kong government. He was a member of the Hong Kong Civil Service for the next 32 years, serving as the Regional Secretary, New Territories, when he retired in 1988. He was a government official, but at the same time a participant, observer, researcher, and recorder of Hong Kong's culture and society, during decades of rapid change.

During Dr Hayes' time in the government, he had been involved in many development projects which crucially affected people's lives. These were difficult jobs — bringing Hong Kong forward whilst preserving the local culture and society. When District Officer for the Southern District between 1957-1962, he was tasked with the relocation of indigenous villages for the Shek Pik Water Scheme, on Lantau Island, the largest capacity reservoir project of its time. Two villages were resettled on Lantau, while another chose to move to specially-built apartment blocks in Tsuen Wan. The village temples, dedicated to Hau Wong and Hung Shing, were also relocated. Though obliged to move from their old homes, the villagers were pleased that their communities were being kept intact.

From 1975 to 1982, Dr Hayes was Town Manager and District Officer of Tsuen Wan. One of his jobs was to assist with the development of the Tsuen Wan New Town, which also included Tsing Yi Island and Kwai Chung. This was before the present Kwai Tsing District was formed in 1986. This time, the resettling arrangements were much more complicated, involving not only indigenous villagers but also many thousands of immigrants, mostly living in squatter areas. New villages were built for the village populations, and the immigrants were relocated to public housing estates. Again, the old local temples, and a few well-established new ones, were given permanent locations within the new development. Today, these temples serve all residents of the New Town, including the former immigrants and their Hong Kong born children.

Although Tsuen Wan has become a very large urban center, the indigenous villages and their Rural Committee still play a significant role in the District. Between 1976 and 1982, Tsuen Wan was the first testing ground for what became Hong Kong's elected District Board system, when its three rural committees and their leaders made a great contribution to its success. When Dr Hayes was posted elsewhere in 1982, the former Tsuen Wan community made him "First Honorary Citizen of Tsuen Wan" (荃灣第一榮譽市民), whilst the rested Tsuen Wan villagers expressed their gratitude for his contributions to their resettlement by naming him the calligrapher of the village names on the "pailau" (牌樓) or entrance gateways of their new villages.

In 1964, Dr Hayes returned to Tsuen Wan to live and since then has been a dedicated member of the Tsuen Wan Community Association and an active participant in many community activities. He is well known for his contributions to the development of Tsuen Wan and the surrounding area.

In his leisure time, Dr Hayes enjoys reading, gardening, and playing golf. He has been a member of the Hong Kong Golf Club for over 40 years. He is also a trustee and treasurer of the Tsuen Wan Golf Club. Dr Hayes is married to Mrs. Shu, who is also active in community affairs.

Dr Hayes has been awarded many honours and distinctions for his contributions to the development of Hong Kong and the community. Some of these include the Order of Australia (British Empire), the Order of the British Empire, and the Order of the British Empire (Honorary). He has also been awarded the silver medal of the Royal Social Service of London.

In conclusion, Dr James Hayes is a distinguished scholar and a respected community leader. His dedication to Hong Kong studies and his contributions to the development of the territory are truly admirable.
While Hayes was in government service, his duties in the Home Affairs Department and the New Territories Administration took him to many parts of Hong Kong. He was diligent both at work and in his leisure hours. Prior to his retirement in 1988, he had published two books and dozens of articles. In the two decades since then, he has published four more books, including a survey of South China Village Culture, and an account of the New Territories and its People 1989-2004. His curiosity in local history and culture not only led village people to supply primary materials for his writings, but also made them realize the worth of their own traditional culture. Benefiting from Dr Hayes’ interest, many present-day village elites are proud of their genealogies and their ancestors’ historical records.

Dr Hayes is far from being a hermit scholar; he has contributed much of his time to the academic community of Hong Kong. For seven years, he was President of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, which organizes talks, overseas visits, and local field-trips, and publishes a prestige journal on Hong Kong and Asian studies. Between 1967 and 1980, he had edited fourteen of its yearly issues. Dr Hayes also gives high priority to helping students and young scholars who are studying Hong Kong’s society and culture. Over the years, many researchers have benefited from his advice, and as a former official he has been able to give them valuable hints on the availability and use of government records.

Dr Hayes has always realized the importance of folk materials in historical research, notably land deeds, genealogies, and business accounts. In the 1970s and ’80s, he purchased many such documents, all from Guangdong, from local dealers in the city. Besides helping the Hoover Institution at Stanford University to build up its holdings, he has made available his own collections for academic research. In addition to a Tokyo University publication on Guangdong lineage land papers, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has been able to publish four volumes in the South China Research Center’s documentary series. Together with other documentary collections deposited elsewhere, in Hong Kong and overseas, Dr Hayes has helped to create a greater awareness of these types of documents and their usefulness to students of Chinese society and culture.

In short, we may describe Dr Hayes as a sort of “maintenance engineer” who services the local as well as the academic communities. Yet in doing so, he has been ever mindful of his debt to others. As a scholar-official, it is fitting that the memoir of his working life in Hong Kong published by the Hong Kong University Press in 1996, is entitled Friends and Teachers, borrowing from Confucius’ saying: “When I walk along with two others, I am bound to be able to learn from them” (三人行必有我師). And he, in turn, has been our “Friend and Teacher”.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, I have the honor to present to you, on behalf of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Dr James William Hayes, a scholar-official specializing in the study of Hong Kong and her people, for the award of Honorary Fellowship.

許脛博士在民政事務署及新界民政署的工作使他有機會接觸香港不同的地方社會。無論在上班時或下班後，他都勤奮工作，在一九八八年退休時，他已經出版了兩本書及無數的文章。在繼後的二十年裡，他又再完成了四本著作，包括一個南中國鄉村文化的研究及一個一九八五至一九八六年間香港新界及其居民的報告。他對地方歷史與文化的好奇心，讓僑民認識到自己的傳統文化價值，亦為他的著作找到第一手資料。許脛博士對地方社會的興趣，令到很多鄉村精英對族譜及祖先歷史記錄產生了自豪感。

許脛博士絕對不是一位隱世學者，他把大部分時間都貢獻給研究香港的學術界，他曾經擔任香港從事學會香港分會會長七年，該會籌辦講座，海外及本地田野考察，亦出版一本有著崇高地位的，刊登香港及亞洲研究的學術期刊。自一九六七至一九八零年的十四年間，他擔任期刊的編輯。許脛博士亦為有興趣研究香港地方社會及文化的學生及年輕學者大開方便之門。多少年來，無數的學生均先受惠於他的意見及建議。作為一位前公務員，他為學者們提供了如何尋找和使用政府檔案的塡門。

許脛博士一直都重視民間資料，特別是地契、族譜及商業記錄等，對歷史研究的重要性。在一九七零年代及一九八零年代，他在坊間購買了大量的地方文獻，除了協助美國史丹福大學的胡佛研究所搜集館藏外，他更請個人的收藏開放作學術研究及出版之用。東京大學出版了一套兩冊有關東京族土地文獻的書籍，香港科技大學華南研究中心亦組織出版了四冊文獻資料叢刊。對從事中國社會與文化研究的學者來說，許脛博士存放在香港及海外的收藏品，提高了他們對這類文獻資料的認識和使用的關注。

總的來說，許脛博士可以說是地方社區及學術界的「維護工程師」。但他並沒有忘記別人對他的幫助，香港大學出版社在一九九六年出版了他的回憶錄Friends and Teachers，中文書名取自孔子的顯教：「三人行必有我師」。這道出了他感謝友人，特別是新界的朋叡，給予他學習的機會。這本回憶錄的書名亦貼切地描述了我們這位「亦友亦師」的學者官員——許脛博士。

副監督先生，本人謹代表香港科技大學，恭請閣下頒授榮譽大學院士予一位專注研究香港及香港居民的學者官員許脛博士。