

Honorary Fellow A Citation

Mr WONG Yick-kam Michael, MH, BBA, MBA

'I have nothing in my hands, and my long journey seems unending. But on this chaotic path I've chosen, my flesh may be starved, but my soul is resolved.' Mr Ch'ien Mu wrote in the New Asia College anthem. 'Let's march through hardships and dangers, and be passionate in the face of adversity.' Over the years, these lyrics have become a motto for New Asia College students, encouraging them to thrive in difficult times. They also serve as a reminder for distinguished alumni to give back to their alma mater, contribute to society, and show their compassion for mankind.

In 1977, Mr Wong Yick-kam, Michael graduated from New Asia College's Department of Business Administration, majoring in finance. Born into a blue-collar family, Mr Wong's parents had to labour all day to make ends meet, but even in their harsh living conditions, the couple had high hopes for their sons. Mr Wong studied diligently to advance his studies and meet his parents' expectations. After gaining his degree, he joined Sun Hung Kai Properties as an Executive Trainee. However, he knew that only continuing study would let him excel in the constantly evolving world of business. He switched to an international trading company in 1980, then returned to CUHK the next year to enrol in a three-year part-time postgraduate programme. In 1984, he obtained his Master of Business Administration degree and returned to Sun Hung Kai Properties, as an Assistant Manager. At that time, Hong Kong's future seemed solid as the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed, and the real estate market prospered in the wake of the economic boom. Imbued with the passion, perseverance and spirit of New Asia, Mr Wong gradually worked his way up through multiple promotions at Sun Hung Kai Properties. In 1996, he was appointed the company's Executive Director, overseeing corporate development, strategic planning, investment, property research and analysis, and infrastructure projects. As Executive

Director, Mr Wong worked closely with his team to establish a brand for residences of the finest quality under the philosophy, 'Building Homes with Heart'. Under his guidance, the company was named Best Managed Company in Asia and Best Property Company in Asia for many years by international finance and investment magazines. Mr Wong achieved this illustrious career landmark through relentless hard work and passion for excellence.

Unfortunately, the smooth sovereignty handover in 1997 was followed by financial turmoil in Asia that left Hong Kong reeling: interest rates hiked, the real estate market crumbled, and the economy struggled. Ever forward looking, Mr Wong focused on the city's long term needs. He realised that since Hong Kong lacked natural resources, the best way to maintain long lasting stability, prosperity, and sustained development would be through fostering talent and supporting advanced education. Reflecting the New Asia spirit of bravery and determination in the face of adversity, Mr Wong devoted himself to volunteer work in the fields of youth development and education. In 2000, he joined the Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association, which helps provide countryside facilities for the young and promotes travel as a means of broadening horizons. He also took up numerous public service posts, including serving as a member of the Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service of the Social Welfare Department, the Steering Committee on the Child Development Fund, and the Social Welfare Advisory Committee. Mr Wong was appointed Chairman of the Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association in 2005, which was later tasked with revitalising Mei Ho House on the Shek Kip Mei Estate. Mei Ho House's history stems from Christmas night in 1953 when a devastating blaze in a Shek Kip Mei squatter area left over 50,000 people homeless. In the aftermath of the tragedy, the Hong Kong government

built the first batch of resettlement blocks, including Mei Ho House, marking the beginning of Hong Kong's public housing development. Not only did the Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association redevelop Mei Ho House into a youth hostel, they also set up Heritage of Mei Ho House, a museum that commemorates the old resettlement estates and their way of life. In addition, they published *The Memories of Mei Ho House*, a book that documented the vicissitudes of life in the local community and retold the stories of residents' struggle below the Lion Rock during the heyday of the resettlement estates. Both the museum and the book provide much-needed inspiration and motivation for present day youths seeking to equip themselves and strive for success. In those days, Hong Kong people were empty handed and unsettled in a chaotic environment, but were they afraid? Since its completion in 2013, the revitalised project has been visited by more than 500,000 people. In 2014, Mr Wong stepped down from the chairmanship of the Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association to become Chairman of the Jockey Club Mei Ho House Hong Kong Spirit Learning Programme Task Force, tirelessly promoting the tenacious Hong Kong spirit of the '50s and '60s to primary and secondary students through different tales of struggle. This work mirrors both his ideals of educating youth through inspiration and his wise and selfless contributions to society.

In 2009, Mr Wong retired from his post as Executive Director at Sun Hung Kai Properties to dedicate more time to volunteering and fulfilling his ambitions for education, but stayed on through 2015 as the company's Non-Executive Director and Group Principal Advisor. In 2008, he joined the Open University of Hong Kong as a council member, then became the Treasurer and Deputy Chairman, and was appointed as Chairman of the Council last year.

In gratitude for the education he received at New Asia College, Mr Wong has contributed immensely to his alma mater. To support students, since 2003 he has participated in the Faculty of Business Administration's Undergraduate and CUMBA Elite mentorship programmes, helping students define their life goals, and sharing his experiences and expertise with them. To support the College, in 2007 Mr Wong joined New Asia's Board of Trustees and has since made donations to set up scholarships. He later joined the College's Investment Sub-committee to help sustain New Asia's development. In 2011, he became a member of the CUHK 50th Anniversary Fund Raising Committee to help finance CUHK's Golden Jubilee celebrations. He has represented the T S Kwok Foundation in donations for the construction of University Gallery. Finally, Sun Hung Kai Properties supported the recurring Nobel Laureates Distinguished Lectures on campus. The teachers and students of CUHK are truly indebted to Mr Wong's outstanding contributions.

Li Shimin, the emperor Taizong of Tang once said, 'With history as a mirror, one can understand the rise and fall of a state; with good men as a mirror, one can distinguish right from wrong.' Mr Wong's life clearly reflects both inspirational achievements in Hong Kong's history, and the lofty aspirations of the Lion Rock Spirit. As a role model, he epitomises the spirit of New Asia College with his highest ideals. Mr Chairman, it is my great honour to present to you Mr Wong Yick-kam, Michael for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.