

## Honorary Fellow A Citation



### Dr Yung Kung Hing, MS, PhD

In his wise, modest and gentle demeanor, and in his lifelong loyalty and service to his alma mater, Chung Chi College, Dr Yung Kung Hing is the kind of man whose quiet, unheralded contributions have been the cornerstone of this University's rise to eminence in the past forty years.

Raised in Macau, Dr Yung became infatuated with science at Choi Kou Middle School. This school, named in honour of the first Christian in Macau, was Chinese-medium, which made the bilingual Chung Chi College the best choice for his tertiary education. When he entered the College in 1955 the academic staff made a deep impression on him, with their spirit of selfless service to the College, their commitment to education, along with their close relationships with the students. With its distinctive spiritual ethos, the College gave its students a strong sense of belonging. At this time the physical existence of College students was punctuated by the continual need to move from one site to another, first on Hong Kong Island and later by the move to the present Shatin campus, but this only seemed to strengthen their strong sense of identification with the College.

Dr Yung majored in Chemistry and minored in Biology, but in one respect by far the greatest impact on him was the College's Philosophy of Life programme -- forerunner of the University's General Education. This taught him to think more broadly about life. He can still recall vividly the introduction to Western philosophy, the lectures on the Old and New Testaments, as well the discussions on Chinese philosophy, Plato and the meaning of history. In these ways, Dr Yung was formed and imbued with the values of a Chung Chi education - strong academic foundation, broad humanistic wisdom and the culture of service. He left for postgraduate work at the University of California, Riverside, with a single-minded ambition to return to Chung Chi as a teacher.

In his Master of Science research he worked on the interrelationship of intermediary metabolic pathways in single-celled organisms. Happily he was able to work as a research assistant on this same topic in the laboratory of his professor. At UC Riverside he also did his PhD, this time on plant physiology, investigating the mechanism of the herbicidal action of barban. He then did postdoctoral work on post-harvest physiology in the Mann Laboratory at UC Davis.

In 1969 he fulfilled his dream of returning as a teacher to Chung Chi, when he was appointed Lecturer in the Department of Biology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He was also immediately made Chairman of the Department in Chung Chi College. As the University moved to greater and greater integration in the 1970s, and science teaching and research started to be concentrated on the Central Campus, he began to enjoy a close relationship with his colleagues from other colleges. One of these was his friend - and later Vice-Chancellor



- Professor Ma Lin and other colleagues, with whom he worked to found the University's Department of Biochemistry.

In the academic year 1974-1975 he won a Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship to be a Visiting Scientist in the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Cambridge, where he did research on cell wall regeneration. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1979.

In 1993 he became Dean of Students at Chung Chi, a position he held until his retirement in 1996. Here Dr Yung made very significant contributions. He was responsible for the renovation of the oldest College hostels, Ying Lin Tang and Hua Lien Tang, which dated from the 1950s. He did very much more, however, than simply updating the amenities of the buildings. As in everything he has done to develop the College's physical environment, he saw the task as an opportunity to advance Chung Chi's educational aims. In this case he found ways to create convivial meeting places in the hostels, spaces for student interaction where they could share ideas and work more closely together. He wanted to break down the isolationist tendencies he saw in some contemporary students, who spent far too many hours studying alone in their rooms. He could see the reasons for this, but thought it healthier if students could also share the same sense of community and belonging he had found himself in the early days of Chung Chi. He created pantries on each floor, roof gardens, and at the same time had the latest online computing facilities installed in each student's room. These became widely regarded as model student hostels within the University. He also started a hall for the benefit of the many non-resident students of the College.

Dr Yung initiated programmes for language enhancement that have become the signature programmes in this field in the University as a whole. In 1995-1996 he started the well-known Chung Chi English and Putonghua Tables. Anyone who has been to Chung Chi staff canteen on certain nights of the week will have seen these tables in operation - over a hundred students talking animatedly with native speakers and later on coming out to the microphone to address the whole room with a summary of the issues discussed at their particular table. This is language education at its best, vigorous, innovative and very practical, setting up meaningful contexts that encourage the students not only to talk in the target language but also to begin to think in it. Dr Yung's language enhancement tables draw in native-speaking academic staff and their spouses, as well as exchange students from China and English-speaking countries. Hosted by staff of the Chinese Language Centre and the Wellesley Fellows, these evenings have provided a model for language enhancement activities throughout the University.

In addition to this, Dr Yung has also pioneered language enhancement study tour programmes, for example in the United Kingdom and North America. These are subsidized by the College to a level commensurate with each student's participation in College activities, such as attendance at English Table. He has also started the first Toastmasters Club on campus so that students have a precious opportunity to develop their skills in public speaking.



But Dr Yung does very much more than initiate activities. In everything he does, he commits himself *personally* to seeing that the activities not only work but continue to improve. His language tables continued to flourish and grow in popularity because every Monday morning in the first three years Dr Yung was in his office ringing native speakers himself, rather than leaving the task to office staff. Throughout his retirement he has spent several nights a week keeping a quiet, fatherly eye on the language enhancement activities and in attending Toastmasters meetings on Saturdays. The language enhancement study tours have been such a success because for many years Dr Yung has taken the trouble to accompany the students to Vancouver or Seattle - until he is personally satisfied that all is going as well as it can. For Dr Yung, where the quality of a Chung Chi education is concerned, nothing is too much trouble.

The same deep personal commitment to quality education has characterized everything Dr Yung has done for the College. This is as true of his approach to improvements in the running of the Student Canteen as to his personal supervision of the renovation of the Staff Club, the development of Orchid Lodge and the Weiyuan Lake project. Again, the aim has been not simply the beautification of the physical landscape, but the realization of a cherished educational vision. By common agreement, the Lake is one of the most beautiful places on the whole Shatin campus, but no tree, garden, water plant or bridge is there without some carefully planned instructive purpose. The attention to every detail has been Dr Yung's, whose contributions of plants and even his personal honorarium, from his role as Director of Studies of a diploma course in horticulture and leisure management, have gone to the perfection of Weiyuan Lake.

In retirement, in the role of Senior College Tutor, Dr Yung is, if anything, even busier in his service of the College than he was as Dean of Students. He has been instrumental in bringing the eminent Harvard botanist, Professor Hu Shiu Ying, back to the College and the University. Together, Professor Hu and Dr Yung have organized weekly walking tours around Weiyuan Lake with the aim of introducing the various plantations to participants.

Institutions become great partly because they have the loyalty of people such as Dr Yung, whose quiet, behind-the-scenes work has made this University a better place for generations of students. Mr Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to present to you Dr Yung Kung Hing, devoted educator and dedicated contributor to Chung Chi College, for the award of an Honorary Fellowship.

*This citation is written by Professor David Parker*