

Honorary Doctor of Social Science

Sir Oswald Victor CHEUNG

Chairman:

Now allow me first to introduce to you Sir Oswald Victor Cheung, a distinguished lawyer, a legislator, and a public servant who has made significant contributions to the infrastructure of Hong Kong as a great metropolis. Born in Hong Kong, Oswald Cheung graduated from the Diocesan Boys' School and entered the University of Hong Kong in 1938 at the remarkably young age of sixteen. There he studied mathematics, chemistry and the other sciences with his characteristic diligence and insatiable intellectual curiosity. In December 1941, however, the War and Japanese occupation disrupted life in Hong Kong, and Mr Cheung and his family left Hong Kong for Macao, and then on to Guangzhouwan on the mainland. Leaving Hong Kong via Kap Sui Mun and "looking back on our city, which even then was impressive," Mr Cheung wrote in a recent piece of reminiscence, "I said to myself that if any opportunity arose to help the war effort to bring the Japanese down I would take it." And that was exactly what he did. He joined the British Liaison Office in China and India, which was part of British Intelligence, and helped monitor Japanese activity in South China and along the coast. He travelled frequently between Guilin and Qujiang by train or on foot, exposed himself to danger and uncertainty, always packed and ready to move at a short notice. He served well with confidence and great dexterity. When he recalled his wartime experiences some fifty years later, however, Mr Cheung described those extraordinary activities under extraordinary conditions in a gentle and unassuming manner, with a sort of cheerfulness and wit, but no heroic pretensions.

After the War, Mr Cheung was awarded a scholarship and went to Oxford in 1946. With its lush green and medieval architectural splendour, Oxford is of course very beautiful, so beautiful, in fact, that the poet W B Yeats once wondered whether "anybody does anything at Oxford but dream and remember." Well, Mr Cheung obviously did more than dreaming and remembering. University life in a quiet and intellectually challenging environment was most welcome after the disruption of

the War. Mr Cheung studied law, immersing himself in the All Souls Library with its comprehensive collection of legal authorities, and earning his Master's degree from University College, Oxford. He was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1951.

Returning to Hong Kong in the same year, Mr Cheung became a Magistrate and was admitted to the Hong Kong Bar in 1952. He practised law with great success and was appointed Queen's Counsellor in 1965. In the 1970s, Mr Cheung moved from law to public service and became a member of the Legislative Council and the Executive Council, and served on the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee. As a legislator, he showed his talent for cogent and elegant speech in many debates and deliberations, always striving for justice and the public good. Whether he was speaking about crime statistics, reasonable rent for properties, building development, long-term Government investment and economical growth, the telephone company, the KCR system, or the refugees from Vietnam, Mr Cheung was closely involved in all the important events in Hong Kong's development and recent history. As Directors of Hong Kong's highly efficient Mass Transit Railway Corporation and Hong Kong Electric Holdings Ltd., he proved himself a most capable executive with excellent skills of management. For nearly half a century, Mr Cheung has dedicated himself to the enhancement of the quality of life in Hong Kong and has helped make Hong Kong the great city it is today. His contributions to professional and public service are numerous, including serving as Vice-Chairman of the Hong Kong War Memorial Fund Committee, and a former Chairman and Steward of the Hong Kong Jockey Club. He has also been accorded many awards and honours. He was a fellow of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers. He was awarded the title of a Justice of the Peace in 1968, an OBE in 1974, a CBE in 1976, and a Knighthood in 1987. His *alma mater*, the University of Hong Kong, awarded him an Honorary Doctor of Laws in 1979, and we hope that his honour will be further augmented at our University here today.

Mr Chairman, now I present to you Oswald Cheung for the degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.