

# **Honorary Fellow Mr Lau Ming-wai**

*Citation written and delivered by Professor Kelvin Yau Kai-wing*

Pro-Chancellor, Chairman of the Council and President:

A young entrepreneur born into a rich family, Mr Lau Ming-wai is nevertheless a man who leads a simple, straightforward life with no hint of affectation.

When he was a secondary school student, Mr Lau did not distinguish himself academically until his last year, when his mother, to whom he was devoted, fell seriously ill. Then, to make her happy and encourage her recovery, Mr Lau determined and applied himself diligently to his studies, graduating with excellent results. He went on to further his studies at the University of London in the United Kingdom, where he received his LLB at King's College and his LLM at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Returning to his alma mater King's, he was awarded a doctorate in Law in 2007 at an age of 27.

Mr Lau's doctoral thesis was on the common law institution of trust law, in which he is particularly interested. Its specific focus was the economic structure of trusts, which he treats with notable originality and clarity of ideas. It was published last year by Oxford University Press and is an important reference for the study of this subject. Mr Lau is a registered attorney in the State of New York, and a chartered financial analyst. Before returning to Hong Kong, he worked for the London arm of Goldman Sachs and for Longview Partners.

Mr Lau is currently Vice-Chairman of Chinese Estates Holdings Limited and is also in charge of his family's Joseph Lau Luen Hung Charitable Trust, which has made many generous donations to academic institutions in Hong Kong, mainland China, and overseas for the promotion of education. In 2007, for example, the trust disbursed a total of HK\$100 million to Peking University, China Education Development Foundation,

and the University of International Business and Economics. In 2011, City University of Hong Kong received a HK\$125 million gift from the trust. It is the largest donation the University has ever received from a private donor.

In 2008, after the great Sichuan earthquake, Mr Lau made a generous donation on behalf of his company to help with the relief work. It was in Sichuan, while on company business in Chengdu, that he heard of the existence of the so-called “stay-behind children”, meaning rural children who have been left behind at home while their parents are away working in cities as migrant labourers. With the assistance of the Sichuan authorities, he went on an expedition, which deeply touched him. He subsequently made a donation of RMB 5 million towards the establishment of 250 “Homes for Stay-Behind Children” in several places. The donation, used mainly for the purchase of books and equipment, is intended to contribute to making a welcoming and happy environment for these children. While an estimated 100,000 of them have benefited from his generosity, Mr Lau was not content with just donating money but personally visited these children in Mianzhu, a city of Sichuan.

Always concerned and willing to be of service to society, Mr Lau holds many public positions, enabling the best possible use to be made of his talents, expertise and experience. In mainland China, he currently serves as a member of the Sichuan Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and is a Council Member of Peking University and the University of International Business and Economics. In Hong Kong, he has served as an unofficial member of the Committee for the Promotion of Civic Education, and as Vice-Chairman of the Hong Kong United Youth Association. He is currently a member of the Greater Pearl River Delta Business Council, a Board Member of the Ocean Park Corporation, a member of the Education Sub-committee and Steering Committee of the Community Care Fund. He is also Vice-Chairman of the think tank Friends of Bauhinia, as well as a member of another, the Y Elites Association, and a member of the charity Centum Caritas Foundation.

Today, we often talk of “the Hong Kong spirit” in our efforts to sustain and strengthen the vitality of our society. The Hong Kong Spirit Ambassadors

Programme was founded to identify individuals whose deeds exemplify this spirit. It sends its Hong Kong Spirit Ambassadors into schools and communities to share their inspiring stories with the students and members. The aim is to foster a spirit of perseverance in the face of adversity and a determination to triumph over any difficulty. In recent years, Mr Lau has devoted himself to supporting the Hong Kong Spirit Ambassadors Programme, which represents an important contribution to the overall quality of Hong Kong society in its efforts to imbue the younger generation with a positive, can-do attitude.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, Mr Chairman of the Council, and Mr President, Mr Lau Ming-wai is a young man whose academic excellence and manifold achievements are complemented by a benevolence which shows itself in deeds quietly performed away from the glare of publicity. It is therefore with great pleasure that I present him to you for the conferment of an Honorary Fellowship.