

Honorary Fellow Mr Armstrong Lee Hon-cheung

Citation written and delivered by Professor Julie Li Juan

Pro-Chancellor, Chairman of the Council and President:

Twenty-five years ago, a young man from a grass-roots family won a place at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He could never have imagined that one day he could become one of the pioneers in launching the “one-roof” superstore shopping concept in Hong Kong and the founder of PARKnSHOP’s Cyberstore, and a pioneer in promoting mobile e-Business in Hong Kong. He could never have dreamed either that one day he would start his own business and become Director of the Worldwide Consulting Group.

In 20 years, this young man has accumulated a huge body of knowledge about banking, building installation equipment, fast-moving consumer goods, pharmaceutical products, and telecommunications. He has advised renowned local and international companies in process re-engineering, market studies, financial planning, and strategy formulation and execution. In his thirties, he held senior executive positions at leading companies in retail, IT and insurance industries. Now, at the age of 43, he is a very successful business consultant in human capital management and strategic planning.

It is my greatest honour to present to you Mr Armstrong Lee, a visionary business leader and columnist. Clearly Mr Lee has made the right choices in his career and he has made significant contributions to society. But his success is not down to luck. It is the result of a deliberate and consistently implemented strategy and principle. His accomplishments are founded upon his “3H Principle”, i.e., being hands on, hardworking and humble.

Mr Lee believes a “hands-on” leadership style typically leads to management success. He not only coaches his team, but he also spends time interacting directly with employees. When he served as a senior manager at PARKnSHOP, he was involved in all the major tasks such as buying,

customer service and distribution. He and his team scrutinised shopping behaviour and then proposed a creative strategy to attract more customers by raising hygiene standards in the shopping environment and offering fresher items. His one-route shopping concept changed the habits of many shoppers in Hong Kong. They used to spend half their shopping time in supermarkets and half in wet markets, but now all their needs are under one roof.

In Mr Lee's view, nothing is impossible with hardwork. What some might regard as an insurmountable hurdle, he views as a challenge to be overcome through dedication, self-discipline and diligence. This was definitely the case in 2003 when the executive search business he set up with a friend the year before was impacted by the outbreak of SARS. He starts work at 8 a.m. every day and also works on weekends. His phone is on 24/7 because he needs to be ready to answer calls from clients at any time. For the past seven years, he hasn't had the chance to take a holiday. His strong work ethic and hardworking is a factor in his success.

Mr Lee doesn't believe a person will stay at the top forever, because there is always a downside to be conscious of. Hence, it is wise to treat everyone equally, whether they are employees or external parties, as a way of winning hearts and minds in anticipation of less rewarding days. His humble character and success have won him the respect and confidence of his business partners and employees.

Less well-known, but no less important, is that Mr Lee is a frequent contributor to major media outlets. He has published more than 300 articles about education, human capital management, economic development and career planning. Unlike many successful elites, he did not attend prestigious primary and secondary schools. Nevertheless, his schooling prepared him for the future, and he truly believes education and knowledge have substantially changed his life. He feels strongly that education enhances social mobility, which is why he dedicates a great deal of his time to voluntary work in education, and why he is highly supportive of CityU. He was a Council member from 2008 to 2013, serving on the Audit Committee as well as on the Human Resources Committee of the Council.

When he has the opportunity to address young people, he always makes a point of telling them that they should embrace the 3H Principle and seize opportunities of upward movement in our society.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, Mr Chairman of the Council and Mr President, I am greatly privileged today to present Mr Armstrong Lee for the award of Honorary Fellowship of this University.