

Honorary Doctor of Social Science

Dr Joseph LEE

Citation written and delivered by Professor Matthew LEE Kwok-on

Mr Pro-Chancellor:

Dr Joseph Lee, Chairman of Wofoo Plastics & Chemicals Group, is equally well-known in the world of industries, entrepreneurship, and public and social services. In addition to managing his business enterprise, Dr Lee is Chairman of Wofoo Foundation Limited and President of Wofoo Social Enterprises Limited.

Dr Lee had a peripatetic childhood and young adulthood. He studied and assisted in his family's plastics manufacturing business upon his return to Hong Kong after earning a bachelor's degree in management from Illinois Institute of Technology. Dr Lee then proceeded to set up his own business in 1980, and he soon established himself as an entrepreneur. His company became the leader in the production of PVC compounds and a supplier for the world's leading toy and cable manufacturers. Dr Lee then embarked on a journey of discovery to find out everything he could about Hong Kong, the place he chooses to call home, hoping to make it a better place for its people. Thus began his participation in social service, a process he calls "learning by serving" which gives him a profound feeling of contentment. At first, he took part in other people's efforts in social service, but soon began to offer programmes of his own. He is the founder and supervisor of W F Joseph Lee Primary School, Chairman of Grace Healthcare Limited, and Chairman of Warehouse Teenage Club Limited. These and many other associations indicate but a fraction of the scope of Dr Lee's extensive involvement in social entrepreneurship. In all these operations, Dr Lee combines corporate practices with the lofty goals of social service. Today, the name Wofoo is readily recognisable in the philanthropic world, especially in the field of education, care for the elderly, and nurturing of the young.

Throughout his career, Dr Lee has built an outstanding record in public service. Dr Lee is the Chairman of the Joint Committee for the Promotion of The Basic Law of Hong Kong, and Vice-Chairperson of the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund Task Force under the Commission of Poverty. He has served as the Chairman of the Hong Kong United Youth Association, District Governor of Rotary

District 3450, Chairman of the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education, Chairman of the Commission on Youth, Chairman of the Environmental Campaign Committee and Chairman of the Environment and Conservation Fund, Deputy Chairman of the Vocational Training Council, and as a Deputy of the Hong Kong SAR to the Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. From 2008 to 2013, he was a member of the Council of City University of Hong Kong and served as the Chairman of its Community Relations Committee from 2010 to 2013. He is currently a member of the Court of The University of Hong Kong.

For his contributions, Hong Kong society has paid tribute to Dr Lee. He was honoured with the Young Industrialist Award from the Federation of Hong Kong Industries in 1991 and the Outstanding Achievement Award of the Hong Kong Plastics Industry Council in 2014. He was appointed Justice of the Peace in 2003, Officer of the Order of Saint John in 2015, and awarded the Bronze Bauhinia Star and Silver Bauhinia Star in 2000 and 2008, respectively, and the Gold Bauhinia Star in 2013 by the HKSAR Government. Institutes of higher education have shown their eagerness in commending Dr Lee, too. He received an honorary doctorate in social sciences from Hong Kong Baptist University in 2011, and honorary fellowships from City University of Hong Kong in 2014, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Vocational Training Council, respectively, in 2015.

A profound sense of gratitude has prompted Dr Lee to give back to society. Social service is a human-centred activity. While it is important to keep up with the times, Dr Lee also sees the need for a set of core values that can help manage the changing tides. In addition to hardware and software, Dr Lee echoes the thoughts of our President, Professor Way Kuo, by referring to “soulware”, that is, the mindset that provides the heart and soul with the machinery for social entrepreneurship. Accordingly, he has turned his attention to the work of character-building among young people in order to produce for society not only smarter but better people. These future social leaders possess a willingness to learn different skills, a character imbued with the right values and attitudes, and heart that is sensitive to social and environmental issues.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, by introducing efficacious business practices to the management of social services, Dr Lee fully demonstrates the astuteness of a pragmatic business leader; by working assiduously for the welfare of others and by articulating a vision for a better world, he manifests the kindness and compassion of a social leader. I earnestly request the University to confer upon Dr Lee a Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.