

Honorary Doctor of Laws

Dr Rimsky Yuen Kwok-keung

Public Orator Professor Matthew LEE Kwok-on

Mr Pro-Chancellor:

For Dr Rimsky Yuen Kwok-keung, his decision to study law at university was a natural and practical one since he was good at arts and the humanities at school, and the best students in his area would go on to study law in those days. At law school, he soon developed a strong passion for his chosen fields including corporate and commercial law. Subsequently, he built up an illustrious legal career spanning over three and a half decades. His choice to enter the legal field was right for himself and the Hong Kong community as a whole.

A barrister since 1987, Dr Yuen was appointed Senior Counsel in 2003 and was Chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association from 2007 to 2009. He became a Recorder of the Court of First Instance of the High Court from 2006 to 2012 and was Secretary for Justice of the HKSAR Government from July 2012 to January 2018.

During his tenure in the Government, Hong Kong faced unprecedented social and political challenges. Often under the international spotlight, Dr Yuen, as chief legal adviser to the Government, steered Hong Kong through many crises, displaying strong leadership and unwavering commitment to championing the rule of law. Far-sighted and strategic, he diligently fostered exchanges between the legal professions in Hong Kong and the mainland and promoted our city as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region. After leaving the Government, Dr Yuen resumed private practice as a barrister, arbitrator and mediator.

Since the early stages of his career, Dr Yuen has started to focus on commercial disputes including corporate disputes, insolvency, as well as banking and financial products disputes. In addition to acting as an advocate in court and other legal proceedings, Dr Yuen served as an arbitrator in international arbitration and as a

mediator in commercial disputes. To him, arbitration is a less formal but pragmatic approach to seeking a just, fair and cost-effective solution. As Secretary for Justice, he strove to make Hong Kong a leading international arbitration centre and helped to build capacity in this area with ASEAN countries and beyond.

Having grown up in a grassroots Wong Tai Sin public housing estate, Dr Yuen has transformed into a well-known figure in the legal profession. The breadth and depth of his perspectives, integrity, perseverance and his willingness to go that extra mile to complete a task more thoroughly earned him high praise. When asked to share the guiding principles behind his legal practice and personal values, he selected “mutual respect”, “macro perspective” and “long-term interest” as key words.

An accomplished barrister, Dr Yuen is currently the Co-Chair of the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre, and also a Committee Member of the International Commercial Expert Committee of the International Commercial Court of the Supreme People’s Court of the People’s Republic of China. In 2017, he was awarded the Grand Bauhinia Medal in recognition of his distinguished public service to the Government and the Hong Kong community.

Dr Yuen has gained trust and admiration in both the private and public sectors, and he is certainly an inspirational role model for our students, and indeed for all young people. He urges them to embrace diversity, avoid extremes, and learn to appreciate life from multiple perspectives. Only through harmony and vision with a macro holistic perspective can we foster the long-term overall interests of Hong Kong, a place we call home. Optimistic about the future of Hong Kong and the country as a whole, he encourages young people to adopt an international outlook, a positive attitude, and a keen eye for opportunities in the Greater Bay Area.

Dr Yuen has a long association with City University of Hong Kong (CityU), having served as a half-time lecturer in legal studies when our premises were still located in a commercial building in Mong Kok. Later, in 1997, he obtained a Master of Laws degree from CityU, too. He appreciates how the University is positioned and is glad that we can adapt to Hong Kong’s changing needs.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, Dr Yuen is a locally groomed legal expert with an international vision whose distinguished experience ranges from private practice to public service. In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the development of law and his dedicated service to the judiciary and the Hong Kong community, may I request the University to confer upon Dr Rimsky Yuen Kwok-keung the title of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.