

Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa A Citation



Dr Raymond Kwok Ping Luen, MA, MBA, DBA

Blending old and new, bringing together timeless Chinese wisdom and the latest Western know-how, Dr Raymond Kwok is one of Hong Kong's most respected and successful property developers. Dr Kwok is Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of Sun Hung Kai Properties (SHKP) and has played a significant part in transforming Hong Kong into an international centre of finance and commerce.

From his father, the late Kwok Tak-seng, Dr Kwok learned profound Chinese values: the importance of humility and hard work, of being inquisitive, of never ceasing to learn and to improve. At the University of Cambridge he read mathematics and law and saw the importance, for a Hong Kong businessman, of understanding society's legal framework. Law taught him to think logically and analytically; to focus on solving problems. His Harvard MBA exposed him to the culture of the world's leading business nation, with its flair for marketing and innovation. At Harvard he learned the importance of writing and communication. He came to understand the value of human resources, of knowing the macro-economic context and how to look at a balance sheet and to analyze it critically. The MBA case study method kept raising the question: if you were the CEO of that company, what would you do? He was challenged, for the first time, to think as a business leader.

Although he trained as a solicitor, Dr Kwok was destined for the family business. In the late 1970s, when he began to play his part alongside his father and his two elder brothers, SHKP was mainly focused on its core business of property development. Dr Kwok helped the company enhance its culture of innovation and dedication to high quality and customer service, which has won SHKP numerous international awards including being repeatedly named Asia's best property company. Innovations include concepts such as large-scale residential developments with full community facilities such as clubhouses and integrated shopping centres. Dr Kwok was also part of the SHKP management team that led the way in opening up the New Territories for our growing population and created many of Hong Kong's landmarks, including New Town Plaza in Shatin and what is now our tallest building, Two IFC on the Central waterfront. Under his leadership the company is now taking its accumulated expertise to the Mainland, helping to spur continued growth.

Initially, Dr Kwok's chief contributions were in the areas of law and finance. Then in the 1980s and 90s he began to make his mark as a skilful and imaginative entrepreneur. He led the diversification of the business into areas such as transport, infrastructure, mobile phone operations and information technology, and expanded into road traffic and car park management. Dr Kwok became a Vice Chairman of Kowloon Motor Bus, founded the mobile phone operator SmarTone and in 2000, launched SUNeVision, an umbrella organization of all SHKP's high technology ventures.



Dr Kwok's strategy was to diversify with caution, to grow the total SHKP operation organically from its core business, property. His entrepreneurial vision was demonstrated in striking achievements of innovative convergence and synergy between different parts of the business. For example, he developed the concept of the "intelligent home", which incorporated advanced electronic technologies in residential developments. Security systems were operated by multi-purpose smart cards; optical fibre networks brought high-speed multi-media connections to Hong Kong homes. He also discovered imaginative ways of using the Internet to keep in closer touch with clients and consumers. Such was his leadership in these areas that in the year 2000 Dr Kwok won a "Top Ten IT Achievers Award". This was just recognition for a decade of innovation and creativity that delivered some of the most advanced technical systems to Hong Kong business, commerce and ultimately into ordinary households.

Two key convictions driving Dr Kwok's outstanding success in business are the importance of being passionate about what you do and believe and the importance of lifelong learning. Both of these are reflected by the fact that he keeps reading and studying. At any given time he may be reading a book on management such as *In Search of Excellence* or *From Good to Great*, or taking lessons on reading ancient Chinese texts. At a time when much lip-service is paid to the importance of quality, excellence and continuous improvement, Dr Kwok stands out by the passion with which he pursues these things. Being passionate means being serious, being so committed to quality that you will not compromise on it. The high respect in which Dr Kwok is held in Hong Kong is in no small measure due to the fact that his customers, including individual homebuyers, know that he will listen to their concerns and ideas and that his people will respond quickly and efficiently to them.

Being passionate also means leading by example. It is not Dr Kwok's style merely to formulate the core values for his company. He literally walks the talk around his shopping malls, for example, listening to what retail tenants are saying. Being open to new ideas, and ready to respond to them, is another core value that Dr Kwok models to his staff. Some of SHKP's most successful innovations have come from this two-way communication. And staff, clients and tenants in turn respond. Earlier this year, SHKP recruited 500 anti-SARS Ambassadors to help prevent the spread of the disease. For this it won an Anti-SARS Achievement Award from Ming Pao Daily and RTHK. Similar awards for environmental protection, staff training and charity work have come from this capacity, created by Dr Kwok's leadership, to command the loyalty of staff, clients and tenants alike and to mobilize them for worthwhile ends. His vision is to enhance the SHKP brand further and raise levels of customer service to new heights.

For Dr Kwok, there is no sharp division between his corporate responsibilities and his public and community service. He gives new meaning to the old adage about charity beginning at home. The staff he recruits care for the community and participate actively in charity work, for example via the SHKP Volunteer Team. Over 700 volunteers have joined this year, including his own children, to work for the underprivileged and the handicapped.



Dr Kwok is deeply committed to the Chinese belief that it is a responsibility to give back to the community much of what the community has given to him. But to make a difference in the community, he thinks it important to be selective and to focus on those activities he feels most passionate about. He is a member of numerous professional, public and community organizations. He is a Director of The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong and a Non-Executive Director of the Securities and Futures Commission. He is Chairman of the Management Committee of the Police Children's Education Trust, as well as a Member of the Hong Kong Port Development Council and the General Committee of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce. His focus on education is manifest in his membership in the President's Council on International Activities of Yale University and the Asia Advisory Board of Harvard Business School. He is also an adviser to government, through his membership in the Advisory Council of the One Country Two Systems Research Institute and the Beijing Committee of The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Dr Kwok's many contributions to the Chinese University reflect the fact that it is an institution whose values he feels passionate about. A great admirer of former Council Chairman QW Lee, Dr Kwok has been a Council Member since 1994 and Vice-Chairman since 1999. He is Chairman of the Campus Planning and Building Committee, Chairman of the University Tender Board, Convenor of the Task Force on Sites B and F Development, Director of The Chinese University of Hong Kong Foundation and was Treasurer of the University from 1997 to 1999. Since 1994 he has been a Member of the Committee on Donations and since 2002 a Member of the Task Force on University Governance. His contribution to our 40th anniversary celebrations has been a major one. He has been a Member of the Organizing Committee and is Chairman of the banquet steering committee. We look forward to the culmination of this work on Saturday night. Dr Kwok has also been a munificent donor to the University supporting scholarships and academic activities, most notably the establishment of the CN Yang Archive.

Mr Chairman, Dr Raymond Kwok is a visionary entrepreneur, a distinguished contributor to the Hong Kong community and to this University. It is my privilege to present him to you for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.

This citation is written by Professor David Parker