

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

THIRTY-THIRD CONGREGATION

Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*

A Citation

**Mr. William Charles Langdon Brown, OBE**

Until as recently as two years ago when election to the Legislative Council was first conducted, Hong Kong's legislature was made up entirely of men and women who had been invited by His Excellency the Governor to serve. In the normal course of events, such people would have distinguished themselves earlier in life not only within their chosen professions but also in community service. Be that as it may, the position of Legislative Councillors was not and is not an easy one. In any normal year, the legislative programme by itself would have been quite daunting even when consensus politics was the rule rather than the exception. During the two years when Hong Kong's future was under negotiation between Her Majesty's Government and the People's Republic of China, the amount of work which came the way of Legislative Councillors and the amount of pressure they were put under would have proved too much but for men of stamina and dedication.

We were fortunate indeed in having William Charles Langdon Brown in the Legislative Council when the local currency was put to the most severe test, when the insolvency of certain banks was threatening to throw the whole banking system into crisis, and when issues which could affect the general prosperity of our community were put before the House. As a member of the Banking Advisory Committee and of the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee, he made a significant contribution by keeping a steady hand and a level head during some of the most trying times in our history.

William Brown was particularly well placed to give advice to the Hong Kong Government when it needed it most. Born in London in 1931, he has made a life-long career in banking, mostly in this part of the world, and had become the chief executive of the Standard Chartered Bank in Hong Kong when he was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1980. Bringing with him the pragmatism of a banker and the liberal disposition of an arts patron, he was able to steer a middle course within the Council Chamber, the voice of reason and reasonableness that has won him many friends and supporters, both inside and outside Government circles.

William Brown's list of public office and community service would fill a number of pages if one were to do him justice in this citation. Besides serving on the Legislative Council and many of its committees from 1980 to 1986, he has also contributed much time and effort to the Council for the Performing Arts, the Community Chest of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Mass Transit Railway Corporation and the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association. During various times, he had served as Chairman of the Hong Kong Association of Banks, that body which regulates interest rates, the Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation Advisory Board which determines the policies of the HKECIC, the Special Committee on Land Supply and the Hong Kong Academy of Ballet, all of them major public offices which demanded of him both time and close attention.

William Brown's association with the University started in 1979 when he was appointed to the University Council. From 1982 until 1986, he was Chairman of the Appointments Board and in that capacity gave invaluable guidance to the University's appointments service in the provision of career advice to our graduates and students. He was also a member of the University's Finance Committee which looks after the University's finances, among them the one thing which is very close to my heart - the superannuation fund of all members of staff. When Mr. Brown left Hong Kong to become the Senior General Manager of the Asia Pacific Region of the Standard Chartered Bank, the University missed his good sense, good humour and ready counsel. We are glad, however, to be able to honour him today in a way which is open to the University.

Mr. Chancellor, it is our pleasure to present before you William Charles Langdon Brown, respected banker, former Legislative Councillor, public figure who has devoted much time and energy to enhancing the quality of our artistic life in Hong Kong, and above all, a friend and supporter of the University, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.

March 26, 1987