

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FIFTY-SECOND CONGREGATION
Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*
A Citation



The Honourable Rosanna Wong Yick-ming, CBE, JP

The Honourable Rosanna Wong Yick-ming is a distinguished personality in Hong Kong's political and social service arenas. Born in Hong Kong of Fukienese descent, Ms. Wong completed her primary and secondary education at St. Stephen's Girls' College, where her mother taught. Brought up by broad-minded and liberal parents, she was already very active in voluntary work while still a secondary school student. Motivated by her genuine care for the underprivileged and empowered by her sincerity and ardour for service, she laid the foundations for the role she has been playing in welfare services.

Upon graduation from the University of Hong Kong with a Bachelor degree in Social Sciences in 1975, Ms. Wong became a front line youth worker. In the ensuing 21 years, she has dedicated her time, energy, and more importantly, her intelligence and love to thousands of young people in Hong Kong.

Ms. Wong believes that trust, respect, and sympathy for the way young people think and feel are prerequisites for engaging in youth service. To survive the rapid changes and fierce competition in Hong Kong, young people have to be persevering and optimistic. And in this ongoing struggle, Ms. Wong has been their comrade. As they mature together she deeply understands young people's joys and sorrows. She keenly feels the pulse of this society and the rhythm of life and living.

It is precisely this sense of mission and commitment to Hong Kong that drove Ms. Wong to re-enter academia after gaining years of working experience. She managed to make time out of her busy schedule to study for self-improvement, as a result of which she now holds three Master degrees — in Social Work, Social Policy and Planning, and Arts — from the University of Toronto, London School of Economics and Political Science, and University of California, Davis respectively. Ms. Wong's quest for knowledge and her perseverance make her an ideal mentor and example for young people. She was elected one of Hong Kong's Ten Outstanding Young Persons in 1985, and named a Global Leader for Tomorrow in 1992.

Apart from engaging in youth service full-time, Ms. Wong is heavily involved in public service. She was Legislative Councillor from 1985 to 1991, Chairman of the Social Welfare Advisory Committee from 1988 to 1991, and Chairman of the Commission on Youth from 1990 to 1991. In 1993, she became Chairman of the Police Complaints Committee. She is currently Executive Director of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, Convenor of the Executive Council, and Chairman of the Hong Kong Housing Authority, the Independent Commission Against Corruption Complaints Committee and the Children's Thalassaemia Foundation Limited. Each and every one of these posts carries great responsibility and calls for total dedication and commitment. And each and every one of these duties Ms. Wong performs with admirable ease and efficiency, thanks to her outstanding abilities and vigour.



Of all the years of Ms. Wong's career in youth service, which is the career of her choice, 1985 is the most memorable, for it was in that year that she became further involved in the local community by participating in politics. For 12 years now, she has been through thick and thin with Hong Kong citizens in her capacity as member of the Legislative Council and the Executive Council. Ms. Wong believes that, like money, politics per se is not evil. And if its participants keep open and positive minds, allowing public benefit from their foresight and optimism, Hong Kong will no doubt be a better place in the future.

Among her many public duties, Ms. Wong finds the chairmanship of the Hong Kong Housing Authority most challenging. As chairperson, she has to tend to each of the multifarious aspects of the organization, which can be most time- and energy-consuming. To discern the true needs of the population and to understand the plight of those at the grass roots requires a sympathetic ear. With limited resources on the one hand and huge demands for housing services on the other, she has to maintain a balance between empathy and principles. Decisions made have to be abided by despite criticisms and accusations. To be responsible for and to society, therefore, requires infinite courage and confidence.

However momentous the decisions are that Ms. Wong has to make in her different capacities, she is always calm and self-composed. This is indicative of her shrewd time-management and her ability to restore wholesomeness of mind and body under pressure. As a highly family-oriented person, Ms. Wong likes to spend the little free time she has at the weekends with her children. She also enjoys meditating as a means to explore the true meaning of life. Her book, *We've Walked along the Same Path: Letters to the Youth of Hong Kong*, written during her stay in America, speaks to youth in words of sincerity, truth and intelligence. It is every young person's guide and companion.

Graceful and elegant, Ms. Wong has the gentleness and subtlety of the traditional woman as well as the social consciousness and positiveness of the modern female. She is pacific amidst turbulence; she tempers hardness with a soft approach. For her, no coercion need be exercised to establish authority, no show-off of abilities is required to command respect. She debates with flair and eloquence; she writes with wisdom and insight. The glory of life shines through her as she persistently pursues truth and beauty and yearns for the consolation of Nature.

As a result of Ms. Wong's many achievements in local legislation, housing, youth service, and social welfare, she was appointed a Justice of the Peace (JP) in 1989, and made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1990 and a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1994. Because of Ms. Wong's ardent support of tertiary education, her concern for the development of young people in the territory, and her significant contributions to society, Mr. Chancellor, it is with great pleasure that I present the Honourable Rosanna Wong Yick-ming for the award of the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.