

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

TWENTY-NINTH CONGREGATION

Conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Science, honoris causa

A Citation

Professor Lyle Boyce Thrower, OBE, FLS, JP

It is rare to find an academic with exceptional skill in each of the three main responsibilities of the profession - research, teaching and public service. Yet in Professor Lyle Boyce Thrower this is the case. Nor have his contributions been limited to the University, for his talents have been utilized in a number of activities that have benefited the community at large.

Born and educated in Australia, Professor Thrower received four degrees from the University of Melbourne - BSc, MSc, PhD and DAgrSc, after first serving from 1941 to 1946 with the Australian Imperial Force (Infantry). He served as a Plant Pathologist in Papua New Guinea from 1954 to 1957 and then taught at the University of Melbourne from 1958 to 1965 when he came to Hong Kong University as Professor of Botany. At Hong Kong University in addition to teaching and research activities, including supervision of student research for advanced degrees, he was very active in administrative matters. These included service as Dean of the Faculty of Science, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, and membership on the University Council from 1966 to 1971.

In 1973 Professor Thrower assumed a new professional affiliation when he became Professor and Chairman of the Department of Biology at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Once again his ability to organize, administer, collaborate with others, and simply to get things done was recognized. He served on the University Council, was Dean of Faculty of Science from 1979 to 1982, Chairman of the Science Centre Management Committee from 1977 to 1985, and was a member of various important committees including those dealing with budget, academic equipment, grants, and senior staff matters. He was extremely active in the formation of the Medical School and the recruitment of senior appointees to the Faculty of Medicine in the period of its early academic activity.. He even served as Acting Dean of the Faculty of Medicine for a brief period. More recently he has been a member of a group considering the future development of engineering studies at this University. Numerous are the activities at The Chinese University of Hong Kong that have profited from his experience, his willingness to help, and his democratic attitude. Since Professor Thrower has participated in many of the discussions that will determine the direction the University is to take, his influence will be with us for many years to come.

As an educator, skilled in science, proficient in matters of organization, able to communicate with people in all walks of life, Professor Thrower was a logical choice for committee work for a number of community service activities.

In the area of education he has served as Member of Council of Hong Kong Polytechnic, Member of the Planning Committee for City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, and subsequently Member of Council of City Polytechnic of Hong Kong. Since Professor Thrower has also been a member of Council of both Hong Kong University and The Chinese University of Hong Kong, he has served both of Hong Kong's Universities and both of its Polytechnics.

Professor Thrower was Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Field Studies Centre from 1979 to 1984, indicative of his professional interest in ecology. It was natural, in view of his ecological expertise, for Professor Thrower to be concerned about environmental and conservation matters, and he served on a number of community committees dealing with the environment and conservation including the Hong Kong Island Advisory Committee for Recreational Development and Nature Conservation, the Country Parks Board, for which he was Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee, the Advisory Committee on Environmental Pollution, and the Appeal Board for Air Pollution Control Ordinance.

By training and inclination Professor Thrower is broad in his scientific pursuits. Far from being a specialist who could talk about science only to fellow scientists, he has a grasp of the overall scientific picture and can communicate this to a wide audience. He was a member of the following committees: Advisory Committee on Science and Industrial Research, Committee for Scientific Coordination, and the Hong Kong Kidney Foundation.

Professor Thrower's contributions in Hong Kong have been recognized by the Government and the community. He was made an Unofficial Justice of the Peace in 1970 and an Officer, Order of the British Empire in 1977.

It does not detract from the achievement of Professor Thrower to suggest that in no small measure the abundance and excellence of his accomplishments may be due to his having a wife who was a colleague in research and who understands the rigorous requirements of a full academic life and the consequences of accepting community responsibilities, besides bestowing upon him all the benefits one can expect from a devoted spouse.

Though saddened by the departure from campus of an esteemed colleague, we at The Chinese University of Hong Kong rejoice that the University Council has just awarded the title of Emeritus Professor to Professor L.B. Thrower who now becomes a permanent member of the University. To further strengthen this link, Mr Chancellor, I request Your Excellency to confer on Professor L.B. Thrower the degree of Doctor of Science, honoris causa.

October 17, 1985