

Ms Deng Xiaohua

Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa*
Citation



There is a yellow mud street on the outskirts of that city, my vivid memory recalled. But they all say there is no such street in the area.

I went looking for it, wading through the golden hazed paths, passing by the fleeting shadows veiled in dust, in search of the yellow mud street.

I asked everyone I met, "Is this the yellow mud street?" They all just stared back with dead fish eyes, and no one answered my question.

My shadow moved aimlessly on the scorching asphalt road, while the blazing sun parched my eye sockets, making my eyeballs feel like glass beads stuck in my eyes and turning them probably into dead fish eyes, too; while I was still struggling in search of the yellow mud street.

The above text includes several I's: the I treading on the asphalt road and leaving footprints behind; and the shadow of I (me) leaning on the asphalt road. But how does the author describe from 'what I saw' to 'the world around I (me)' at that particular scene; and how does the author apprehend what the person I then was thinking? Specifically, how does she, through the narration of the text, help unlock the mystery of I, thereby helping explain the awakening echoes upon our souls? All these narrations of the aforesaid I are the genius craftsmanship of Ms Deng Xiaohua.

Ms Deng Xiaohua, originally named Deng Zemei, adopted the pen name Can Xue when she first started her literary

odyssey. Deng, whose ancestral roots are in Leiyang, Hunan, was born in Changsha, Hunan. A renowned contemporary writer in China, she has dedicated herself to novel writing and literary critique. Her pen name, Can Xue, has dual, contrasting meanings: one symbolises 'the pure white snow atop the mountain', while the other represents 'the polluted, trampled snow'. She aims to harmonise these two elements in her writings, expressing her unwavering pursuit of life experiences, her ceaseless exploration of the spiritual realm, and her desire for allure, all ultimately creating a distinct quality in her work.

Ms Deng was born in the courtyard of the New Hunan Daily (now known as the Hunan Daily). She spent her childhood in the dormitory and kindergarten of this media organisation. She was thus often tied to the cultural community in Changsha through her nickname the 'newspaper child'. In the embrace of lush green trees and the lingering scent of printing ink, the courtyard contained her earliest memories. Since childhood, Deng nurtured a deep love for reading, wandering through enchanted realms of fairy tales and the timeless whispers of classical literature from both East and West. In the company of her father, she delved into profound philosophical texts, absorbing the art of thoughtful contemplation and the wisdom of ages. Despite the hardships of her early life,

she persevered, labouring during the day while dedicating her nights to learning English by herself. She once worked as a supply English teacher while additionally taking up translation work on original English literary works, and immersing herself in a wealth of classic Western masterpieces, including those from the world-renowned Franz Kafka, whose works have greatly influenced her. As for Chinese literature, she particularly loved reading *Dream of the Red Chamber* and Lu Xun's *Wild Grass*. In her quest to weave together the threads of Eastern and Western cultures within her literary tapestry, Deng embarked on a profound and expansive journey, uncovering the timeless elegance of the charm of culture.

Deng's first short story *Soap Bubbles in Sewage* was published in the magazine *New Creation* in 1985. However, her actual debut work was short story 'Yellow Mud Street' which she began writing in 1983 and completed the following year. *Yellow Mud Street* swiftly captured the attention of the writers' circle in Changsha. However, the path to publication was far from smooth. Although several local writers offered their support, it was the renowned author Ding Ling whose assistance proved pivotal. Ultimately, *Yellow Mud Street* was published in the literary journal *Zhongguo (China)*, making its debut in 1986 and garnering

considerable acclaim in the literary world. The excerpt quoted at the beginning of this citation is taken from this short story.

By the mid-1980s, Ms Deng had already published over ten short stories in various national magazines. Since then, writing has become her primary profession, fulfilling her childhood dream. Since the publication of *Yellow Mud Street*, she has released nine novels, more than a hundred short stories, several dozen novellas, essays, critiques, and more. Early works such as *The Cabin on the Mountain*, *Old Floating Clouds*, and *Dialogues in Heaven* pioneered a new literary and artistic trend, carving out a unique path. As a result, Deng's works were celebrated as the representative of avant-garde literature, marking the dawn of avant-garde fiction in China and leading a new literary movement across the country.

Ms Deng values the spirit of exploration and innovation, focusing on uncovering the inner self and employing literature as a medium for philosophical inquiry and reflection. Her work often delves into the depths of the human soul. With a unique approach to both her creative style and writing techniques, she has cultivated a distinctly personal style of new experimental writing. Through literature, she aims to achieve

breakthroughs in motifs and styles, crafting stories of China rooted in authentic experiences and envisioning a new type of identity for the future. As she said, 'Literature as a form of art is mostly in harmony with the complexities of human emotions and experiences; and reflects the ideals of humanism. It possesses a quality that resonates across different cultures and societies, making it relevant and meaningful to a wide range of people. At its core, literature fundamentally revolves around love.' She further stated, 'Precisely because literature embodies human fraternity, it allows individuals to transcend and elevate themselves within the realm of art.' Ms Deng hopes to inspire, through her literary creations, 'a yearning for life and the ideal'.

Ms Deng's novels have always drawn the attention of overseas readers as soon as they are published. Some of her novellas have even been translated to upwards of ten foreign languages, casting a significant impact in the literary world. They have been translated and published by many well-known overseas publishers, such as Northwestern University Press, Yale University Press, Henry Holt Publishers, New Directions Publishers, and Open Letter Books in the United States; Éditions Gallimard in France, Ruhr University Press in Germany; Editore Teoria in Italy;

Kawade Shobō Shinsha and Heibonsha in Japan; and Fitzhenry & Whiteside in Canada, among others. Deng's literary works have also been translated and published in overseas journals and magazines, including *Bungei Shunjū* and *Quarterly Chinese Modern Fiction* in Japan. A literary study centre, Can Xue Research Society, was even established in Japan, along with the launch of an academic journal titled *Can Xue Studies*.

Ms Deng's works have made a significant impact on the international literary scene, as reflected in the global recognition she has received. For instance, in 2015, she won the Best Translated Book Award in the United States, becoming the first Chinese writer to have received this award. That same year, she was longlisted for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, a literary award inaugurated by British newspaper *The Independent*. She was also longlisted for the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in the United States. In 2019, she received another nomination for the Best Translated Book Award in the United States, and was longlisted for the International Booker Prize in UK in 2019 and 2021. In 2021, she received the Literary Lifetime Achievement Award. The following year, she won Malaysia's Huazong World Chinese Literature Award in Malaysia, and received a nomination for

Germany's Haus International Literature Prize. In 2024, she received the American Literature Award, becoming the first Chinese writer to be honoured for her lifetime achievement.

Mr Chairman, the literary works of Ms Deng Xiaohua are infused with light, which allows her to inspire, transform, and uplift others. They invite readers to embark on a journey of spiritual exploration, motivating them to embrace love, life, and ideals, thus allowing them to benefit from the enlightenment of her works. After decades of hard work, she has cultivated a unique literary style and presence, making a profound impact on the literary landscape both domestically and abroad, and bringing a distinctive charm to the global literary world. In recognition of her lifelong commitment to literary creation, Mr Chairman, I have the honour to present to you Ms Deng Xiaohua for the award of the degree of Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa*.

Professor Victor Joseph Dzau

Doctor of Science, *honoris causa* Citation



Medical researchers work across an extraordinary range of different levels – from the subcellular to massive population studies – because discoveries anywhere across that range may have profound implications for human health. The resulting interventions themselves extend across that same, vast, landscape – they could be genetic manipulations or individually tailored biochemical therapies for diseases, common or rare, or an increased tax on sugary drinks – and the better we connect those dots and enrich that landscape the more compelling the work becomes.

Yet however detailed our maps of science, there is a further dimension that the maps cannot capture, but that nonetheless determines whether all that cumulated knowledge delivers its real potential. We are fortunate that some scientists see that bigger picture and have the skills – diplomacy, advocacy, an awareness of the nuances of politics and society – to bring it to life for the world outside their research labs: they connect key ideas to key people and weave discovery into daily living. They are the communicators who shape our future for the better.

Professor Victor Dzau, whom we are delighted to have with us today, elected to work on cardiovascular disease – the world's single greatest cause of mortality – and has become one of the world's pre-eminent scientist-clinicians in that field. He also illustrates the kind of scope and breadth that I have just outlined. At the molecular and genetic level, he isolated the proteins and subsequently cloned the genes that cause hypertension, coronary

artery disease, and congestive heart failure. That work laid the foundation for the development of some of the lifesaving drugs now used to treat them, most notably including the ACE inhibitors which are now used globally to help millions to lead longer and better lives. He also pioneered gene therapy for vascular disease, and was the first to introduce DNA decoy molecules in humans *in vivo*, among many other breakthroughs.

Such contributions would be remarkable enough on their own. But alongside them he has, for decades, taken on important leadership roles within and beyond his specialist field, both nationally and internationally. In the 1990s, he chaired two pre-eminent university departments of medicine, first at Stanford and then at Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital. Within his own specialty, but with a broader reach, he also chaired the National Institutes of Health Cardiovascular Disease Advisory Committee. In 2004 he became Chancellor for Health Affairs at Duke University, and President and CEO of the Duke University Medical Center. Over the next decade he built it into one of the world's leading health systems while also radically extending its global influence by establishing the

Duke Global Health Institute and Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore. Outside academia, he co-founded, in 2011, the non-governmental organisation Innovations in Healthcare, in partnership with the World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company, while his advice has been increasingly sought after by governments, in the United States and around the world, on health and medical strategies and risks.

Professor Dzau has a tireless resolve to help build a better, healthier world, so you will not be surprised to hear that stepping down from his administrative leadership at Duke in 2014 was far from the end of his extraordinary career. In that year, he was elected president of the US Institute of Medicine, reconstituted as the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) in 2015. He led its restructuring within the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and developed its current strategy for "innovation, action and equity", and global perspective. He uses this platform to further his conviction that health and science leaders can contribute significantly to solutions for broader social challenges, under the model of "bench to bedside to population to society" that he promotes and exemplifies. This is reflected in the

many initiatives NAM has launched under his leadership, such as the Commission on a Global Health Risk Framework; the International Human Gene Editing Initiative; the Committee on Emerging Science, Technology, and Innovation in Health and Medicine; and on women's health.

As a leader on global health, he serves on the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board, co-convened by the WHO and World Bank; co-chaired the Global Health Summit Scientific Expert Panel established by the G20 and European Commission; and been a member of the Board of Health Governors of the World Economic Forum, chairing its Global Agenda Council on Personalised and Precision Medicine. Currently, he co-chairs the Science and Technology Expert Group of the International Pandemic Preparedness Secretariat, initiated by the G7 in the wake of COVID-19 health catastrophe, as part of the "100 Days Mission" to stem future pandemics, at speed – the monkeypox virus that has broken out in Africa firmly in his sights. Retirement is clearly not an option.

Meanwhile, Professor Dzau and NAM have set the US health sector the grand challenge of addressing climate change. This involves it needing to acknowledge and reduce its

own carbon footprint (estimated to amount to as much as 8.5 per cent of the US total carbon emissions), and be well-prepared for the medical consequences of us living in a hotter world, amid increasingly violent weather events.

This is all a long way from the one-room home in Hong Kong in which his family lived after moving from Shanghai when Professor Dzau was five years old. He had been born in 1945, and his father had owned a chemical manufacturing company, but the move to Hong Kong meant leaving all their material prosperity behind. Life was hard in the aftermath of the ravages of World War II and civil war in China. That early hardship and the sacrifice his parents made to rebuild their lives and give the young Victor and his two sisters a good education in Hong Kong helped shape his belief that out of adversity could come opportunity to move forward – and his resolve to train as a medical doctor. Unable to do the latter in Hong Kong, he successfully applied to McGill University in Montreal, Canada, where he completed a BSc in Biology, and then began his medical training. It was not a smooth passage. Facing multiple stresses, he even dropped out of a training programme, but managed to land at Harvard's Brigham and Women's

Hospital. A fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University followed, from which he built the multi-stranded career that I have already outlined. But Hong Kong had nonetheless left its own mark.

Professor Dzau remains proud of his Chinese heritage and his upbringing in Hong Kong, and has never forgotten his childhood friends. Among them is Dr Edgar Cheng Wai-kin, CUHK's former council chairman. With Dr Cheng's encouragement and support, in 2018 Professor Dzau launched NAM's first-ever International Health Policy Fellowship Program that enables early to mid-career CUHK scholars to gain experience in the academy's policy-shaping operations.

Moreover, the poverty he witnessed in his childhood, and the social values he developed in Hong Kong, also helped shape his deep concern to tackle the inequities experienced by poorer communities, women, and minorities, which is reflected in his many national and global health missions. This is a quest he shares with his wife, Ruth, whom he met at McGill and is a community leader, including as

past president of Second Step, a charity that provides housing and support for the victims of domestic violence. With two daughters, Jacqueline and Merissa, and now grandchildren, family has been central to their lives.

One mark of global impact is global recognition. In recognising Professor Dzau today, we are in very good, and highly international, company! His many awards – far too many to be able to list here today – have been bestowed by distinguished institutions that currently span three continents. But beyond this, I wish to highlight the fact that he is not only a recipient. He is also a donor, in yet another domain. His determination to focus the best minds on global health challenges led him, in 2017, to establish the Victor J. Dzau Global Health Lecture Fund, which supports annual distinguished lectures at Duke, Harvard and McGill universities. He also has a distinguished lecture in cardiovascular medicine in his name at Stanford, and a professorship of medicine at Harvard.

Professor Dzau is exemplary for the breadth of his vision and tireless accomplishments, in revolutionising the understanding and treatment of cardiovascular diseases,

providing vital leadership for scientists to address wider health and social challenges, and informing global health policy around the world. Mr Chairman, it is my great honour to present to you Professor Victor Joseph Dzau for the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.

Citation is presented by Professor Nick Rawlins, Pro-Vice-Chancellor / Vice-President (Student Experience) and Master of Morningside College

Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell

Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*
Citation



Portrait of Professor
Nancy Jane Rothwell
by The University of Manchester

Universities as we know them – secular, independent communities of the mind – first emerged almost a thousand years ago. Their underlying foundations stretch back much further still, to classical Greece, but their core concerns lie with today and tomorrow. We curate, interpret and extend what is known, and we train emissaries to send into the future. And yet the past on which we are built can constrain, rather than inspire and liberate us if it becomes a source of dogma or unexamined and unchallenged habit, so that in some areas we do not lead, but slowly follow.

England had universities long before it had a queen, let alone a woman as Prime Minister. But at the end of the year 2010, centuries after the coronation of its first Queen Elizabeth, and decades after Margaret Thatcher's appointment, the country's elite Russell Group of 24 universities still had only one woman Vice-Chancellor, and the country's largest university had just appointed its own first to that role. We are honouring that woman today: Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester in 2010 and held that post with great distinction for 14 years. This summer she became a Professor Emeritus and Ambassador for the University.

The under-representation of women in senior roles in academia and science is not a uniquely British failing. Just six years ago women accounted for under 20% of Hong Kong's senior academic staff, according to University Grants Committee's data. And across the world, only

17% of the top 200 universities in the Times Higher Education (THE) international rankings were led by women. Overlooked talent abounds; we have a lot of ground to make up.

Professor Rothwell is a physiologist and neuroscientist who has become a role-model and champion for science, innovative leadership and women. Yet she has also candidly reflected on what could have held her back. In addition to the time demands of academic leadership that make work-life balance almost impossible, and some deeply ingrained biases, women have tended to be more ready to think that if they do not meet all the specifications for a job, they shouldn't apply; identically qualified men are more likely to give it a go. When Professor Rothwell was urged to apply for the post of vice-chancellor in 2010, after three years as deputy vice-chancellor, she overcame that obstacle, impelled by her passion for the university that had been her academic home for more than two decades.

She went on to become one of the country's longest serving vice-chancellors, overseeing a community of 50,000 students and staff and an annual budget of £1.3 billion, with significant growth in student

numbers, research income, and the fabric of the university. Her tenure is also marked by elevating the university to become ranked among the top three in the world for its commitments to social responsibility and sustainability. The latter includes concrete action to achieve net zero by 2038: a solar farm will produce 65% of its electricity needs when it opens in Autumn 2025 – just one example of how this commitment will be achieved.

Professor Rothwell is no stranger to CUHK. Last year our two universities established a range of teaching and research collaborations, including the launch of a study option allowing our School of Biomedical Sciences students to earn both a CUHK BSc degree and a University of Manchester Master of Science in four years, the latter spent in Manchester in either Infection Biology or Tissue Engineering for Regenerative Medicine.

Her career journey has been far from conventional. The young Nancy Rothwell grew up in rural Lancashire in the north of England, loving the outdoors and playing on her uncles' miniature steam railway and farm. She has described her father as an eccentric biologist who kept the props of

his science, such as skeletons and “pickled things” in bottles, around the house, and a number of fast cars outside. He made biology interesting at home, but that didn’t cross over into school, which managed to make the subject so boring that she gave it up at the age of 14 and took A-levels in maths, physics and chemistry, whose teachers related the subjects to the world outside, plus art, for which she took herself to art school. She toyed with the idea of a career in art, before realising that she was unlikely to make a serious living from it – although, as a doctoral student, she did help support herself by drawing and selling cartoons. Still further in the future, interest in the arts helped her to win respect beyond Manchester’s science community. And those fast cars clearly had their own, lasting influence as well: the racetrack remains one of her passions.

From school, she applied to Queen Elizabeth College, which was later merged into King’s College London – a place whose purely academic credentials were seriously enhanced by its location on Kensington High Street – followers of London fashion at the time will know it as so convenient for Biba. She also juggled her time to manage to captain the women’s rugby team, play

darts, spend three nights a week doing bar work, as well as holding down a part-time job in a market garden: excellent training for a top university leader!

By her third year, following completion of a research dissertation, she knew her future lay in academia, convinced that there was nothing more exciting than trying to understand the things around us, not least the human body. She achieved a first-class degree and at the same college went on to complete her PhD in just two years, focused on the physiological mechanisms involved in the regulation of body weight, which became her area of specialism for the first chapter of her career. There seemed no end to her enthusiasm for her research, even volunteering herself for over- and under-feeding experiments to explore the role of metabolism in body weight. She recalls eating over 3000 calories a day over a three-week period, but only putting on 10kg, unlike some other participants who loaded on much more.

Yet in 1987 she did something rare in science: she switched fields, to neuroscience. This was prompted by her unexpected discovery that the protein molecule interleukin-1 (IL- for short), which

she had found to trigger weight loss during infection and disease, was also active in the brain's response to a stroke, or other injury, and in its bad-cop role extended the damage. Moreover, it could be controlled through the IL-1 blocker that occurs naturally in the body and has been manufactured synthetically as a drug to treat arthritis. The finding was a shock within the neuroscience community, and was initially dismissed.

When she relocated in 1987 to Victoria University of Manchester, which later formed part of the University of Manchester, she completed her transition to neuroscience and built on this research. Recognition followed. She rose to professor of physiology in 1994, was awarded a highly competitive Medical Research Council Chair from 1998 to 2010, and in 2004 was appointed by the university as vice-president for research, and later as deputy president.

Throughout her tenure in senior leadership she remained active in research, as she is now. Her current focus is on the role of inflammation in brain disease. Having patented the use of IL-1 inhibitors to prevent acute neurodegeneration she is leading

the first clinical trial of their use in stroke treatment.

Professor Rothwell's charisma and passion for science has made her a sought-after science communicator, most famously in 1998 in delivering the Royal Society's Christmas Lectures, on "the secrets of life", involving live experiments on stage and filmed by the BBC. Her commitment to both science and civic engagement has led her to take on numerous leadership and advisory roles: she was the founding president of the Royal Society of Biology, a co-chair of the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology, chair of the Russell Group (and the first woman to hold that chair), and a council or board member of the Medical Research Council, Cancer Research UK, the Royal Society and the UK Biobank Board, among others. Beyond academia and public service she was also a non-executive director of AstraZeneca, from 2005 to 2015. Her achievements and contributions have been recognised at the highest levels. Amongst her awards she has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society and appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

The city of Manchester will not forget her

many contributions. This summer her portrait was unveiled in its Whitworth art gallery, and the university's new engineering research and teaching facility – the largest in Europe – was named after her. She has also been invited to be an ambassador for the university and expects to continue to engage in issues facing higher education, locally and globally. Manchester's fame of course extends beyond the arts and education and here, too, she has made her contribution, as a member of the Old Trafford regeneration taskforce established by the owners of Manchester United Football Club, who have themselves invested heavily in the university. Now that is surely a virtuous circle.

Mr Chairman, it is my great honour to present to you Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, who has been a visionary beacon as a university leader, scientist, and science communicator, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

Citation is presented by Professor Nick Rawlins, Pro-Vice-Chancellor / Vice-President (Student Experience) and Master of Morningside College

Dr Tong Ka-shing Carlson

Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*
Citation



Hong Kong's status and future as a leading financial hub depends on opportunities connecting China and the rest of the world for the one part, and on the integrity of its business environment, and asset management and banking ecosystem for the other. Indeed, China's national plans recognise that Hong Kong is ideally placed to build on such a role, thanks to the quality and maturity of its services.

Today, despite an economic downturn in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, its stock market remains one of the largest in the world, with a market capitalisation of HK \$36.9 trillion at the end of September, and average daily turnover of HK\$169.2 billion. And supporting the business world, from the largest listed companies to small market stalls, are the city's accounting services, with the 'big four' global accounting firms – household names such as KPMG – enjoying the scale and experience to lead the way. Yet these firms, totalling close to 7,000, large and small, would be empty shells without their leadership and the 35,000 people they employ.

Beyond the commercial world, accountants have huge contributions to play on the boards and committees of any organisation that has a significant budget to manage – whether that be in education, sports or even music as three examples – as well as with regulatory authorities, or serving directly within the corporate sector. Chartered accountants operate in a far more colourful landscape than their typically monochrome reputation implies.

Today's honoree, Dr Carlson Tong Ka-shing, a chartered accountant and former chairman of KPMG in Hong Kong and the Asia-Pacific and currently chairman of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited and director of the World Federation of Exchanges, has had key leadership roles in public service, across all these sectors and more. Since his retirement from KPMG in 2011, he has strengthened Hong Kong's asset management, as chairman of the Securities and Futures Commission from 2012-2018; supported the development of its higher education as chairman of the University Grants Committee (UGC), from 2016 to 2022; and as chairman of the Hong Kong Sports Institute from 2012 to 2017, contributed to a greatly improved ecosystem in which Hong Kong's future Olympians could be nurtured and thrive.

Carlson Tong's mentor at KPMG was its former chairman for Hong Kong and China the late Marvin Cheung Kin-tung. He had taken on many, major, public service roles himself, and encouraged Carlson to use his own accounting knowledge for the public good by doing likewise. Cheung put him forward for various service roles, notably first as honorary treasurer and then as vice chairman of the Hong Kong Chinese

Orchestra at the crucial time of its transition to independence. He remains an honorary advisor, which makes it no surprise that a group of young musicians affiliated with the orchestra performed in the halls of HKEX for a recent anniversary celebration.

During his term at the SFC, he oversaw the launch of several major policy initiatives, including the introduction of the landmark "Mainland-Hong Kong Stock Connect" programme, allowing mainland investors to invest abroad, and for international funds to access China via the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and partner markets in the mainland. Today, southbound investment into Hong Kong accounts for up to 20 per cent of HKEX's daily turnover. He also tightened oversight of the market, exacting nearly HK\$4 billion in fines and compensation in several high-profile cases of wrongdoing, and taking steps to enforce rules requiring the person or company that committed misconduct to compensate investors who have suffered losses as a result.

All his services are important to this and Hong Kong's other universities. For without a sound and robust financial environment there would be fewer opportunities for our graduates, and less funding from the public

purse for our teaching and research. Yet Dr Tong has contributed even more directly, as the recent chairman of the UGC. During his tenure he secured from the government an injection of a massive HK\$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund to support Hong Kong's development as a pioneering technological hub. In addition, he oversaw steps to enhance governance and accountability of the sector, teaching quality and provision for students with special needs, as well as elite athletes. The latter included the launch of the UGC Student-Athlete Learning Support and Admission Scheme, with HK\$100 million in funding set aside for universities to provide flexible support to athletes, enabling them to compete at the highest levels internationally and find pathways for higher education and new careers after retiring from competition.

The steps he has taken to support the rise of elite sports in Hong Kong in fact began when he joined the board of the Hong Kong Sports Institute, and was later appointed chairman. In that period, he helped secure over HK\$100 million from the Hong Kong Jockey Club to build a multi-purpose sports complex for Paralympic athletes, and negotiated the first agreements with universities, including CUHK, to cater

for the needs of athletes, among other developments. These were visionary initiatives, with consequences.

Hong Kong SAR is a long-established powerhouse in the Paralympics, but not in the Summer Olympics, so there was an outpouring of joy and pride when athletes from Hong Kong won the first Olympic gold medal for Hong Kong in the delayed 2020 Tokyo Games, and the two silvers and three bronzes won alongside it demonstrated the broader strength of what had been achieved. That was no transient achievement, as 2024's four medals – two gold and two bronze – demonstrate. I'm particularly happy to note that one of those golds is the most recent addition to CUHK alumni's trove of medals: our congratulations not only to Vivian Kong, but also to the vision of a road to excellence that has surely lifted all our athletes.

Dr Tong had no idea what he wanted to do, let alone that he could contribute so much to his city, when in 1971 he left school – St Paul's Co-educational College – after Form Five, unable to secure one of the limited places for A-levels, the senior secondary school leaving qualification that Hong Kong then used for university admission. Instead,

he found audit work on the lowest rung of a local accountancy firm, earning just HK\$200 a month. However, his ambition was sparked by observing the role of a qualified accountant, and he decided to set out on the journey to become a chartered accountant. That meant leaving Hong Kong and completing a business diploma at a college in Wales, which allowed him to begin a five-year training contract open to non-graduates. He chose to do this with a small firm in Cardiff.

After slogging through the programme and qualifying in 1979 he moved to Peat Marwick Mitchell's Cardiff office, met his Welsh wife Gill, and expected to remain in Wales for the rest of his career. He did stay with the firm – which later merged to form KPMG, or Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler – for that duration, but not in Wales. In 1984 an assignment in London led to a chance meeting with a partner from Hong Kong, resulting in him being invited to return, as a senior audit manager. He would go on to become a partner himself in 1989, and rise much further, culminating in his appointment as chairman of KPMG China and Hong Kong in 2007, and as chairman of the Asia-Pacific Region and a member of KPMG's global board in 2009, while he and

Gill raised their three children in the city. He built up a particular expertise in merger and acquisition deals, and initial public offerings (IPOs) and in 1990 managed the first public listing on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange of a mainland company – Hai Hong Maritime Marine Paint, a subsidiary of China Merchants. He spent a year working to prepare the Shekou-based business, which was 200 times oversubscribed. This paved the way for Hong Kong's increasing role in connecting the mainland and its capital market, as well as his own journey towards leadership in asset management and its regulation.

Among his many other roles over the last two decades, he has also been an independent non-executive director of Standard Chartered PLC and the Hong Kong International Airport Authority, chairman of Aviation Security Company Limited, a member of the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, and chairman of the English Schools Foundation. All have benefited not merely from his acumen with numbers, but his strategic insight, diligence, open mindedness, and charismatic skill in building consensus.

His remarkable contributions to society and education are reflected in his many awards, among them the Gold Bauhinia Star by the Hong Kong SAR Government in 2019, preceded by a Silver Bauhinia Star in 2014. In 2019 he was selected as a Fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of Finance, and in 2022 became the first Hong Kong person to be presented with the 'Outstanding Achievement Award' by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. He is also an honorary fellow of the Hong Kong Securities and Investment Institute, among other honorary awards.

Mr Chairman, it is my great honour and my pleasure to present to you Dr Carlson Tong Ka-shing, who has contributed enormously to the integrity and competitiveness of Hong Kong, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Social Science, *honoris causa*.

Citation is presented by Professor Nick Rawlins, Pro-Vice-Chancellor / Vice-President (Student Experience) and Master of Morningside College
