

Mr. Tong Tin-sun, B.A., LL.B., J.P.

Mr. Tong Tin-sun is a distinguished member of the legal profession, whose wise, quiet and conscientious counsel has been much in demand in his own profession and in the world of education. As a solicitor Mr. Tong is highly regarded and well respected in his practice as a general practitioner with a sound knowledge and substantial experience of various branches of the law and litigation. Apart from Hong Kong, he has also been admitted as a solicitor or attorney in the Supreme Courts of England, Victoria, Australia and Singapore.

Shortly after being admitted as a solicitor to the Supreme Court of Hong Kong in early 1961, Mr. Tong founded his own firm of solicitors, which is still going strong some six years after he retired from the partnership as the senior partner. One might have thought that, in those early years, he would need all his time and energy to develop his career and to nurture the firm which was an important part of that career. But it was not long before his fellow lawyers decided that his profession too required his counsel and advice and elected him to the Council of The Law Society of Hong Kong, which he served with distinction for more than 15 years -- two years as Vice-President and one year as President. In that latter office, he was co-host with the then Chairman of the Bar Association, Mr. Henry Litton, Q.C., now the Honourable Mr. Justice Litton, for the seventh Commonwealth Law Conference which took place for the first time in Hong Kong in 1983.

The quiet care, analytic deliberation and conscientiousness, with which he approached all issues, and the thoughtful judgements, which he was always able to offer, brought him appointments over the years to no fewer than seven Statutory Boards and Committees including the Advisory Committee on Legal Education.

In the early eighties, Mr. Tong was one of the External Examiners nominated by The Law Society of Hong Kong for the Postgraduate Certificate in Laws (P.C.L.L.) and was also an Honorary Lecturer in the Law Faculty of the University of Hong Kong. Earlier on, he served for some years on the Advisory Board of the then Lingnan Institute of Business Administration for the M.B.A. Programme when it was first set up in The Chinese University of Hong Kong. For more than twenty years he also served as Honorary Legal Advisor to Lingnan College as well as to the Lingnan Educational Organization, the Lingnan Middle School and the Lingnan Club.

For most busy lawyers who -- like Mr. Tong -- also take great pride and satisfaction in their family, these commitments to his profession would have been thought more than enough. But as a prize graduate in History and Political Science of Lingnan University in Canton, China, it went without saying that Mr. Tong, who had been Chairman of the Lingnan Club in 1964-65 and of the Lingnan University Alumni Association in 1965-66, would be one of the fourteen members, who comprised the first Board of Directors, when Lingnan College was incorporated as a post-secondary institution in 1967. From that year onwards he was a member of its Board of Directors and later its Board of Governors and Council until 1992, when he agreed to serve on the College's Board of Governors under the new Ordinance.

For the crucially formative years between 1983 and 1992 Mr. Tong served the College with great distinction as Chairman of its Board of Governors. In that role he inevitably became a crucial link between the College and the outside world. One of his major responsibilities was -- in conjunction with the College President -- to persuade Government, Legislators and others of the merits of Lingnan's case for being upgraded to degree conferring status and for being provided with the appropriate budget resources to take it through each stage of the transition process. People dealing with him did not have to be his friends to be impressed by the logic of his submissions and arguments and the careful way in which he listened and then responded to their views.

He had a genuine and sympathetic understanding of the world of learning, which enabled him to speak with conviction on the College's behalf. But, as his fellow members of the Board of Governors and the Council will remember, he also had the understanding of what was required of the College both internally and externally, so that our case for recognition could be put to the very best effect. Lingnan could not have found a better Chairman of its Board of Governors during those formative ten years of rapid growth and change.

Your Honour, I have much pleasure in presenting Mr. Tong Tin-sun, Bachelor of Arts and Laws, Justice of the Peace, Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Hong Kong and of the Supreme Courts of England, Victoria and Singapore for the award of a Doctorate of Laws *honoris causa*.