

Dr James Tak Wu *GBS, SBS, HonHD*

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION *honoris causa*

Citation

A native of Taishan, Guangdong, Dr James Tak Wu was born in the US and returned to his home country when he was a child. He studied at Lingnan Primary School in Hong Kong, Guangzhou Lingnan University Affiliated Secondary School and Lingnan University. Dedicated to furthering Lingnan's educational goals, Dr Wu served as Chairman of the Lingnan University Hong Kong Alumni Association, a member of the Lingnan University Council and a member of the Lingnan Education Organization. In 1987, Dr Wu submitted an application to the State Education Commission to reopen Guangzhou Lingnan University at its original location, so as to fulfil his wish of "reviving Lingnan education at Kangle Village". Lingnan (University) College was established in 1989, and Dr Wu became Chairman of the first Board of Trustees, leading the college on its path to become one of the top business schools in China.

Professionally, perhaps Dr Wu's most celebrated achievement is his founding of the renowned Maxim's food and beverage kingdom. In 1956, Dr Wu and his brother Mr S. T. Wu opened a French-styled Maxim's Restaurant in Central, which was the first step for Chinese businesses in Hong Kong to get a footing in Western catering. In 1970, Dr Wu won acclaim for providing Cantonese dishes and dim-sum for the Hong Kong Pavilion at the Osaka World Expo, laying the foundation for Maxim's to operate Chinese cuisine business in Hong Kong. With "Triple-Win" as his business mission, Dr Wu developed Maxim's into a top catering brand in Hong Kong. Today, Maxim's serves more than 540,000 people every day through more than 70 brands and over 590 shops.

In 1979, when China and the US reached an air transportation agreement, there was a need to provide catering services on direct flights from Beijing to San Francisco. China's Aviation Authority solicited Dr Wu's support through the Xinhua News Agency in Hong Kong. At that time, China did not have any experience in Sino-foreign joint ventures. Travelling back and forth between Hong Kong and the Mainland, Dr Wu set up Beijing Aviation Food Company Limited in partnership with the Beijing's Aviation Authority, the first Sino-foreign joint venture in China, receiving the first joint venture certificate, "Wai Zi Shen Zi [1980] No. 1", from the China Foreign Investment Regulatory Commission. Dr Wu introduced a production line operated by US-made machines, and the flight catering service was launched in May 1980 as scheduled. The successful experience he gained in Beijing was subsequently applied to other airports in China, including Shanghai, Dalian, Qingdao, Xiamen, Shenzhen, Haikou, Chengdu, Nanjing,

Ningbo and Lanzhou. This helped China's aviation industry progress along the path to modernisation.

For his remarkable achievements, Dr Wu was honoured as one of the "Top Ten Outstanding Contributors in China's 30 Years of Reform" by China Enterprise Reform and Development Institute in 2008. He was also awarded the Silver Bauhinia Star and the Gold Bauhinia Star by The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2001 and 2009 respectively, in recognition of his outstanding achievement in enhancing the catering and tourism industries in Hong Kong.

Over the years, Dr James Tak Wu has been committed to practising Lingnan's motto of "Education for Service". He has made voluntary contributions to our country, to Hong Kong and to Lingnan, and is a truly distinguished model for Lingnanians. Mr Chancellor, may I present Dr James Tak Wu to you for the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration *honoris causa*.

Written and delivered by Dr Lau Chi-pang