

Mr Kwan Chi-sun

Mr Kwan Chi-sun is a native of Jiujiang in Guangdong Province. His father, Mr Kuan Ka-pak, founded the Kai Fung Banking House in Hong Kong together with his uncle in 1921, and the National Theatre in 1939, which became bedrocks of the Chinese film business after the war. Mr Kwan's contributions to Hong Kong film and popular culture were enormous. In addition to building cinemas, he also worked as distributor and producer.

From 1949 to 1952, Mr Kwan studied abroad at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and received his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering practice. Between 1953 and 1965, as executive director of Sun Shing Construction Company, Mr Kwan was the person behind the building of more than a few iconic landmarks, such as the Kam Wah Cinema in Yaumatei, the Olympia Cinema in North Point, and the Kam Kwok Building and National Building in Wanchai.

Apart from the cinema business, Mr Kwan has shown great foresight and acumen in cinematic production and distribution, effectively realising the vertical integration of film production, distribution and screening. From 1953 to 1967, he was a director of both the Tai Shing Film Company (formed in 1951) and the Chi-leun Film Company (formed in 1964); the former mainly produced Cantonese opera films, and the latter initiated the trend of youth musical films in the 1960s. Mr Kwan produced over 16 films, among which the most memorable are *Colourful Youth* (first released on 17 August 1966, directed by Chan Wan and starring Connie Chan and Josephine Siao) and *The Sweetest Moment* (first released on 26 April 1967, directed by Wong Yiu and starring Connie Chan and Lui Kei). Not only were these films immensely successful in terms of box office receipts, they also ignited the popularisation of youth musical films. In the aftermath of the shadows of the Korean War and the American-British embargo, Hong Kong was riding the tide of a rising economy in the 1960s, heading toward a modern, industrial and commercial society. Youth musical films provided entertainment and encouragement for factory workers as well as the general public. Mr Kwan's film productions have written a dazzling page in the history of Cantonese cinema.

Modest, gentle and compassionate by nature, Mr Kwan has always been a "Lingnanian" devoted to his alma mater and its cause of education since graduating from the Affiliated High School of Lingnan University in Guangzhou in 1949. He has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Lingnan Education Organization since 1994, and has helped with the preparation of Lingnan College's upgrading to university status. He was also a member of the Board of Governors of Lingnan College from 1995 to 1999, and a member of the Court of Lingnan University for the following 11 years. Apart from his solicitude for Lingnan, Mr Kwan is also concerned with primary education, for he believes education is the hope of our city and our nation. He was Supervisor of Lingnan University Alumni Association Primary School from 1995 to 2003, and has been a director of Lingnan University Hong Kong Alumni D S S Primary School from 2005 to this day. In addition, Mr Kwan was Supervisor of Kow Kong Commercial Association School from 1968 to 1969.

Other than education, Mr Kwan is known for actively participating in community and public affairs. He has been a director of Kow Kong Commercial Association since 1989. From 1993 to 1995, he was Chairman of Lingnan University Alumni Association, and has been a member of its Publishing Committee since 1989. He is also a director of Lingnan Club. Additionally, Mr Kwan was Chair of the 5th FINA Diving Grand Prix Organising Committee, and successfully hosted the event (the only international diving competition ever held in Hong Kong) on 3-6 June 1999. He was also Chairman of the Diving Committee of the Hong Kong Amateur Swimming Association from 1995 to 2001.

The films produced by Mr Kwan Chi-sun led to the popularity of youth musical films in the 1960s and turned a page in the history of Cantonese cinema. Mr Kwan has also made many important and significant contributions to Lingnan's endeavours in primary and university education. Mr Chairman, may I now present to you Mr Kwan Chi-sun for the conferment of an honorary fellowship.