

## Honorary Fellow A Citation

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### Mr Chan Chee-hoi, Warren, LLB, PCLL, QC, SC

Mr Warren Chan is well known within the legal profession as a highly respected senior counsel. The challenges he faced in achieving that success, his rise from an impoverished childhood in public housing to a career as a barrister and home on the Peak, are an inspiration to all. His is an iconic Hong Kong success story of education, perseverance, and a fighting spirit that defied all obstacles.

As the old saying goes, "A man is not born to greatness, but he achieves so through self-improvement!" This quote, often cited by Mr Chan to encourage young people to work harder, reflects his own life experiences. Born into a poor family and raised in Sham Shui Po, Mr Chan had to work part-time to support himself when he was a student. These poor living conditions limited his study time, making academic achievement a struggle.

Upon graduating from secondary school, Mr Chan was awarded the opportunity to study history at the Chung Chi College at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He acquired a newfound joy for learning, a thirst for books and knowledge, and a desire to succeed in life as he delved into the ancient and modern history and culture of China and other nations. He gained new insights and explored new ways of thinking about the world around him.

Mr Chan has often said that the year he spent at Chung Chi College was the happiest and most fruitful of his academic life. This was the school that turned him from a scholar into an intellectual, and it was during this period that he began to envision a new plan for his future. Due to his outstanding marks, after a year of studying history at the Chinese University, Mr Chan was admitted to the Faculty of Law at the University of Hong Kong as an independent student.

At the University of Hong Kong, Mr Chan worried that he was not as proficient in English as his classmates, many of whom came from famous English schools. Nevertheless his results were among the best in his year, a testament to his dedication to his studies and his determination to improve himself. He read extensively and poured himself into his legal case studies with tremendous drive and commitment. When he completed the law programme at the university, Mr Chan was ranked top in the class, and was as well the only graduate to obtain a first class honours degree.

Upon recalling the hardships of those years, Mr Chan warns against giving up. "Don't complain or ask others to shoulder the burden for you. Learning to adapt and overcome hardships makes us stronger in the end, and is the path to true success in life. Too fortunate a start in life gives you no motivation to excel, which is the worst thing for a young person. Poverty in one's youth is priceless!" Mr Chan believes, based on his own experience, that "hardship in early life is priceless", as it's an excellent motivator for success.

After graduating, Mr Chan was called to the Hong Kong Bar, and in 1983 to the Bar in England. In 1994, he was appointed Queen's Counsel (now known as Senior Counsel).

Mr Chan is not merely a representative of the law, but of the people. His concern for the underprivileged has earned him widespread respect in the community, although as a modest man, he prefers to keep a low profile. When not at work or giving voice to social issues, he is often found reading and enjoying the company of his family.

The changing economic and social landscape has led Mr Chan to focus on the protection of rule of law and legal education in Hong Kong and the mainland, where he believes there will be greater need for high quality lawyers. He believes that promoting rule of law and legal education remains the major challenge for the modernization of China. To this end he supports the Law School of Tsinghua University, and has greatly assisted the Chinese University in establishing the School of Law in 2004. In addition to his financial support, Mr Chan has also lent his expertise in such ways as arranging the donation of books by C Y Kwan & Co and solicitor Mr K K Chu, which have become an important collection within the University's Law Library.

Mr Chan also gave his support to the Faculty of Law of the University, and to the development of programmes in the Department of History and Department of Philosophy in 2007. This generosity of character and spirit, along with his determination to set students on a path to success, have earned Mr Chan the appreciation and admiration of many.

Since its establishment, the Faculty of Law of the University has developed rapidly and demonstrated impressive results. In 2010, the law students won the first place for their written arguments and awarded the Hardy C Dillard Award for Best Memorials at the Philip C Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition held in Washington, D C. It is one of the world's most prestigious moots, featuring more than 580 teams from 86 countries worldwide. In 2012, another team of law students won the championship and the LAWASIA Trophy for Best Memorial at the 7th LAWASIA International Moot Competition. At every step, Mr Chan has provided support and encouragement, from establishing the Warren Chan Moot Court in the Graduate Law Centre in Central for students to practice, to establishing an advocacy fund.

In addition to developing promising legal talents, Mr Chan is also a keen promoter of sustainable personal growth, and the cultivation of social responsibility among the Chinese University students. In 2012, his donation to the Chinese University's I · CARE Programme encouraged students to join a variety of social and civic activities that served the community.

Mr Chairman, I have the great honour of presenting to you Mr Chan Chee-hoi Warren, esteemed barrister and model for the legal profession in Hong Kong, who has devoted himself tirelessly to the development of legal education in China and Hong Kong, for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.