

# Honorary Fellow A Citation

## Mr Kenneth Benjamin LI, BA

*The Book of Changes (Zhouyi, Kungua, Wenyan)* says, 'The family that accumulates goodness is sure to have superabundant happiness.' Renowned philanthropist and entrepreneur Dr Li Dak Sum has made numerous significant donations to mainland China and Hong Kong's higher education institutes, spreading his good deeds and blessings far and wide. Dr Li's third-generation successor, Mr Kenneth Benjamin Li, has carried forward this splendid legacy, bringing an illustrious, innovative new chapter to his family business. Truly, the Li family gives testimony to the wisdom of *The Book of Changes*, having enjoyed wealth and happiness by accumulating goodness.

Mr Li's ancestral home is Ningbo, Zhejiang Province. His grandfather, Dr Li Dak Sum, is an entrepreneur who started from scratch in the electrical appliances trade and made a business breakthrough by introducing Sharp, the world-famous electrical appliances brand, to Hong Kong. His honest and prudent approach to operations enabled his business to grow steadily. After founding Sharp-Roxy (Hong Kong) Limited in 1987, Dr Li gradually established Sharp as a leading brand in the Hong Kong, Macau and South China market. Mr Kenneth Benjamin Li was smart and industrious as a child, and received an excellent family education. He furthered his studies abroad in the United States of America, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Asian Studies from Colgate University. Upon graduation, he worked at an investment bank in Silicon Valley, where he gained valuable knowledge and experience in finance and business administration. When he returned to Hong Kong, Mr Li joined Sharp-Roxy (Hong Kong). Ever insightful and forward-looking, he adhered to his grandfather's teachings: 'To guide an enterprise to success, the decision-maker must be able to take control of its overall operations, and work towards the goal one step at a time.' In view of this, he eschewed a managerial post when he began,

instead accepting junior posts to learn the ropes in various departments, from administration to business development, and product marketing to customer sales. While gathering work experience, he also learnt to be more broad-minded. He accumulated a deep understanding of how the company functioned, shared the ups and downs with his staff and experienced what it was like to work there at multiple levels.

In 2009, Mr Li succeeded his grandfather as Chairman of Sharp-Roxy (Hong Kong) Limited and proved capable in the role. In addition to maintaining the company's good practices in treating customers with honesty and sincerity, he also introduced a series of modern business administration approaches and innovative marketing techniques. However, the electrical appliances industry was experiencing a slowdown, as the global economy had been hit hard by the 2008 financial crisis, aggravated by the 2011 earthquake in Japan and a hike in the Japanese currency. Bearing in mind his grandfather's teaching to 'always be best-prepared and brace for the worst', Mr Li navigated the challenges with exceptional finesse, defining three development strategies for the company: developing corporate clients, fortifying its retail market presence, and expanding component sales. He led the company to tap the large-format commercial display market while focusing on sales of colour multifunction printers (MFPs), and launching a series of versatile products to meet clients' business needs. Under Mr Li's leadership, Sharp-Roxy (Hong Kong) not only withstood the global economic fluctuations, but also gained a foothold in different new markets, accomplishing remarkable results through business diversification. While he has certainly been successful in running the business for his family, Mr Li chose not to focus solely on electrical appliances. He demonstrated an additional brilliant talent for hotel management by serving as Managing Director of Carlton City Hotel Singapore and as a Board Member of the Singapore Hotel Association.

Mr Li understands that employees are a company's most valuable assets. Over the years, he has been adamant that Sharp-Roxy (Hong Kong) provides its staff at every level with an ideal working environment, continuing education and training courses. The company has also taken up corporate social responsibilities by encouraging employees to volunteer for charitable organisations, and by supporting home appliance donation and recycling programmes, earning respect within the industry. From 2008, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service awarded Sharp-Roxy (Hong Kong) the Caring Company logo for seven consecutive years, in recognition of the company's care for its community. In 2014, Mr Li received 'The Excellence in Achievement of World Chinese Youth Entrepreneurs' award from the World Federation of Chinese Entrepreneurs Organization, in recognition of his contributions in enterprise management and social services. Since 2016, Mr Li has been a board member of St. Joseph's Institution International School in Singapore.

Since the 1950s, many residents of Ningbo have come to Hong Kong to earn a living. Dr Li has made numerous donations towards erecting institutes for education in Zhejiang Province and Ningbo. To connect former Ningbo residents in Hong Kong, he also founded the Ning Po Residents Association, serving as its Founding Chairman. Mr Li has also made significant contributions to his homeland, as his grandfather did. He is currently a Member of the Zhejiang Province Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a Board Member of Ningbo University, and Chairman of the Ning Po Residents Association. In 2016, he was elected an Honorary Citizen of Ningbo City and a Model Compatriot of Zhejiang Province. He has also received the Zhejiang Province Philanthropy Award.

Both Dr Li Dak Sum and Mr Kenneth Benjamin Li have extended staunch support to CUHK through

generous donations. In 2015, a donation of 300 million Hong Kong Dollars was made to set up the 'Li Dak Sum Yip Yio Chin Kenneth Li Scholarship'. This scholarship was established to provide financial assistance to outstanding academic graduates of Ning Po College and Ning Po No. 2 College attending CUHK or two other local universities, so that distracting concerns are minimised and they can concentrate on their studies.

As we bask in the pleasant summertime of May, it is impossible not to imagine the picturesque scenery of the Zhe River running through Ningbo, with green willows and red peach blossoms dotting the shores. An outstanding place is matched by outstanding people, and Ningbo has fostered a host of distinguished persons who are keen on serving the public and contributing to society. Mr Li is a young entrepreneur with Ningbo roots who has made remarkable accomplishments in business administration. His tremendous love and passion for his country, and his efforts in promoting education in Hong Kong have benefitted our teachers and students enormously. Mr Chairman, it is my great pleasure to present to you Mr Kenneth Benjamin Li for the award of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.