

30/10/2006

## HKUST Mourns the Passing of Mr Henry Fok

HKUST is deeply saddened by the news of Mr Henry Fok's passing after a long illness. Our President, Prof Chu, has written to the Fok family to express his deepest condolences on behalf of the University. He also praises the late Mr Fok's enormous contributions to Hong Kong and the nation.

Prof Chu points out that Mr Fok has witnessed the resurgence and renaissance of the nation during his lifetime, having played an active role in the economic reform of the mainland. In response to the resolutions passed at the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh National Congress in 1978 on its open-door reform policies, Mr Fok threw his support behind this major national undertaking by being the first to invest in the tourism industry. In doing so, he adopted the three principles of "self-reliance" in the development of the Zhongshan Hotsprings Resort and the White Swan hotel in Guangzhou: the design, construction and management of these tourist establishments were wholly and exclusively handled by Chinese professionals. His early success in these efforts paved the way for further investments on the mainland by foreign investors who were emboldened by the results. It was a shot in the arms for China's open-door policy.

In preparation for Hong Kong's return to the motherland, Mr Fok threw himself into serving the Hong Kong SAR Basic Law Drafting Committee as a member. He was subsequently appointed to the first batch of Hong Kong Affairs Advisors by the Central Government. In 1993, he was elected to the post of Vice Chairman of the National Political Consultative Conference. In this capacity, he was able to give robust expression to his patriotic sentiments in the interest of the nation and of Hong Kong.

Mr Fok has cast a long shadow on the sports enterprise in the nation and Hong Kong. He has spared no effort and expense in fighting for the Chinese nation's return to the world sports arena. He firmly believed that sport energizes a nation and revitalizes its spirit and resurgence. His legendary vision and energy continue to be universally praised.

Never one to forget his roots, Mr Fok has been good to his native Punyu. For more than a decade, he has poured his energies and resources into developing Nansha into an economic powerhouse and a hi-tech locomotive - a sleek seaport on China's southern shores.

Prof Chu further extols Mr Fok's enormous contributions to the field of education. His unprecedented philanthropic generosity to HKUST has enabled the University to establish the Nansha Graduate School, turning Nansha into an important future base for scientific research, technological innovation and the incubation of talent for China. His groundbreaking benefaction to the University has made it possible for us to help realize his dream of taking part in national construction and the nurturing of fine Chinese talents. We owe him a huge debt of gratitude. We shall never forget.

In the words of Prof Chu, China has lost a leader, Hong Kong a pillar of strength and HKUST a friend and loyal supporter in the passing of Mr Fok. But what he has done for humanity, for the nation, for us all, lives on, here in Hong Kong and across the mainland.

