The award presentation for the “Outstanding PolyU Alumni Award” was successfully held at Hotel Inter-Continental Hong Kong in late March, drawing over 500 guests and PolyU members to share the joy of the awardees. This year, five distinguished alumni were chosen for this coveted award, which was presented by the Guest of Honour Dr Henry Tang Ying-yen, Hong Kong’s Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology.

Forty-five years since his graduation from the Hong Kong Technical College, it is the latest honour for being an outstanding PolyU alumnus that has brought the return of Prof. John Lee.

Currently a Professor at the Department of Mechanical Engineering at McGill University and an internationally renowned scholar in the areas of detonation and explosion, nuclear engineering and environmental sciences, he is also Honorary Professor of the Institute of Mechanics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

A literature lover in his teens, Prof. Lee said he was advised by his family to study something practical which led to his involvement in mechanical engineering. The three-year practical and hands-on training in the Technical College sowed seeds in the young mind of Prof. Lee who learnt to see things from a practical and sensible perspective.

Showing his care for people, environment and advancement of the society, Prof. Lee has taught and served as consultant on the Chinese mainland, Canada, Japan, Norway and the US for a wide range of industry and government agencies. His voluminous research achievements and contributions to the society have won him accolades including the Numa Manson Gold Medal presented by the Institute for the Dynamics of Explosions and Reactive Systems in 1991 and the Dinoizy Smolenski Medal of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Despite his talents in both research and teaching, Prof. Lee said teaching was his favourite job. “Doing research is more an individual thing while teaching allows me to pose an influence on others. For me, seeing my students making achievements in their careers brings me the highest satisfaction,” said Prof. Lee.

Prof. John Lee, 1957 graduate of Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, Hong Kong Technical College:

“My first technical education at the Hong Kong Technical College has given me practical training which has helped me understand and communicate with different kinds of people. This is crucial to the subsequent development of my career.”
Devoting more than half of her lifetime to photography, design, writing and filming, art appears to be in the blood of Dr Rebecca Lee Lok-sze.

An early graduate in Commercial Design in 1964, Dr Lee said she turned to commercial design in order to make a living. Having founded her own design company at a time when Hong Kong was rich in commercial opportunity, Dr Lee displayed her talent for working creatively on magazine and public relations projects with major clients such as the Hong Kong Jockey Club and Cathay Pacific Airways.

Her turn of life only came when she set foot on the Antarctica as a member of the Chinese research team’s news group in 1985 which confirmed her in her new found vocation. She then decided to devote her life to furthering research into the extreme worlds at the poles and on Mount Everest. She reached the North Pole in 1986 and in 1992 she accompanied a Chinese scientific expedition to Mount Everest.

A thinker as well as an intrepid explorer, Dr Lee has propounded original and poetic theories about human responsibility for the welfare of a planet threatened by global warming. Dr Lee has published numerous books and articles on her expeditions as well as photographic essays and television documentaries to preach her beliefs to the public as well as the youngsters.

Being an Adviser (Science) for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department of the HKSAR Government, Dr Lee also serves as an Adviser for the Polar Research Committee of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Vice President of the Hong Kong Association for the Advancement of Science and Technology. In 2000, she was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humanities honoris causa by Lingnan University.

Most recently, Dr Lee has devoted the bulk of her time to actively campaigning for the China Polar Museum Foundation, which she herself established. The Foundation’s museum in Dalian is scheduled to open in 2004.

“To live is to learn. Only through continuous research and learning can we advance further and strive for a better world,” Dr Lee remarked.
Despite his graduation from the Hong Kong Polytechnic for more than 20 years, Mr Humphrey Leung Kwong-wai said he has never left his alma mater.

“I am always in touch with my teachers at school, mentors of my career and now proposers for the Outstanding PolyU Alumni Award,” said Mr Leung.

A well-known figure in the electronics industry, Mr Leung devoted himself to the task of transferring knowledge in the field of semiconductor integrated circuit (IC) from teachers at school, mentors of my career and now proposers for the Outstanding PolyU Alumni Award,” said Mr Leung.

Mr Liu Sing-cheong, graduate of Higher Diploma in Surveying (General Practice) in 1977 and Advanced Higher Diploma in General Practice Surveying in 1979, Hong Kong Polytechnic:

“Compared to the other two universities, the Polytechnic was not a preferred institution during my days. We were seen as the underdogs. It was this underdog feeling that has taught me how to fight against the odds and led me to the achievements that I have made today.”

It is the courage of being different that has brought Mr Liu Sing-cheong to the Hong Kong Polytechnic. “After graduation from the secondary school, everyone scrambled for seats in the two universities. I asked why I had to be like others and I decided to apply for the Polytechnic.”

From a novice in surveying to a leader in the real estate industry, Mr Liu thanked his alma mater for the professional training that he had received in the Department of Building and Real Estate. Since graduation, Mr Liu has been serving in the property industry for nearly three decades. Mr Liu was also the first batch of young surveyors to be involved in the property development in the Pearl River Delta.

Having worked for such prominent players as Swire Properties Ltd, Hong Kong Bank, Hsin Chong Holdings Ltd and Knight, Frank, Kan & Baillieu, Mr Liu is now Managing Director and Chairman of Guangzhou Pearl-River Hang Cheong (PRHC) Real Estate Consultants and Chairman of Guangzhou Top Home Technology Co. Ltd.

PRHC has distinguished itself as the only company outside the Chinese mainland to have been accorded the prestigious status of “Class A” property consultancy/agency in each of the years since such classification began in 1996.

Mr Liu has also been extremely enthusiastic in supporting educational activities on the Chinese mainland and PolyU’s Department of Building and Real Estate, giving generously of his time as an active and stimulating co-investigator in several research projects.

“From an underdog to a fully-fledged university, I am proud to see what PolyU has achieved today and I am most proud to be one of its graduates,” said Mr Liu.
Tracing the successful story of Mr Samuel Wong King-on, one has to start from his training in the then Hong Kong Polytechnic some 20 years ago.

Mr Wong said the demanding accounting programme offered by the then Hong Kong Polytechnic was one of bests in Hong Kong. “At that time, I knew nothing about accounting,” said Mr Wong from his reminiscences. “It was the training in the Polytechnic that has given me such a solid foundation.”

After his studies at the Polytechnic, Mr Wong received his MBA from the University of Bradford, where he was also awarded the Binder Hamlyn prize for the best student in financial management in 1978.

The greater part of his experience has been with Ernst & Young Certified Public Accountants, where he is currently Partner — Assurance and Advisory Business Services. His involvement with the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA) began in 1993. In 2001, Mr Wong was elected Vice-president of ACCA Worldwide — the first Chinese person ever elected as an officer of this international body since its establishment in 1904. In 2002, he was elected deputy president, a role which will lead in 2003 to his assuming the presidency of this worldwide professional body with its nearly 300,000 members and students in 160 countries.

“Apart from work, I always feel that it is my obligation to pay back what I have gained to my alma mater and the industry,” said Mr Wong. This explains why he is so enthusiastic and supportive toward PolyU. Currently, Mr Wong is an Adjunct Professor and an honorary mentor for students of the Department of Accountancy. The Department has named him an Outstanding Accountancy Alumni in recognition of his tremendous contributions to the University.