



# *In Memoriam*

**Dr Ching Yuen-kai, MBE**

*Dr Ching Yuen-kai, Principal of the Hong Kong Technical College (1969–1972) and first Deputy Director of the Hong Kong Polytechnic (1972–1986), passed away on 24 August 2007 at the age of 85.*

*Dr Ching was a key driving force behind our Institution's development from a predominantly technical college to the territory's first polytechnic in the 1970s.*

*The following is an obituary by Dr Dan Waters, a former senior staff member of the Technical College.*

At the end of World War II, young Ching Yuen-kai attended the prestigious Imperial College, which forms part of London University. After obtaining his doctorate in electrical engineering, he returned to Hong Kong.

As a government Assistant Education Officer, he spent two years teaching mathematics at King's College. But with his qualifications it seemed natural that he should be transferred to the government Technical College (TC), the forerunner of PolyU. At the time, in 1956, we were ensconced in the pre-World War II red-brick building in Wood Road, Wan Chai, long since replaced by the Vocational Training Council tower.

We in the Technical College moved to our new Hung Hom campus in November 1957, and YK Ching became Head of the Mathematics and Science Department. Later still, he transferred to become Head of the Electrical Engineering Department.

For want of an educationalist with a technical education background in the Education Department Headquarters, the post of Senior Education Officer (Technical) was created in 1967, which was first filled by Dr Ching. After Mr Sung Sing-zak, Principal of the TC, took up a position with the World Bank in 1970, YK Ching moved back to Hung Hom to become Principal of the Technical College.

In 1972 the Hong Kong Polytechnic came into being. With natural progression Y K Ching became the Deputy Director. The pace of development on the Hung Hom campus that took place in the 1970s has been rivalled by few, if any, educational institutions in the world.

Much of the credit for this must go to the late Dr Keith Legg, Director of the Hong Kong Polytechnic. But Dr Legg was always ready to acknowledge how much he depended on YK Ching, especially for detailed knowledge of the local scene.

Dr Ching was one of the most meticulous persons I have ever had the pleasure of working with, taking infinitive care in everything, including every decision he made. All his students and all of us colleagues valued highly his opinions and judgment. He was exemplary regarding fairness, principles and moral standards.

Ching Yuen-kai was himself largely a product of the Western education system but he could be fiercely proud of being ethnic Chinese. I remember him telling me in some detail how, when one of his sons was about to start primary school, at home the family performed a special initiation ceremony and his son was given a "brush name" and climbed the symbolic ladder of promotion.

He was also a gourmet with a special taste for Chinese food, especially Shanghai hairy crabs, which he relished, every bit of it, and amazingly "re-assembling" the remains of the crab on his plate, more or less in its original form.

YK, you lived a fulfilling life, and you did a great deal for the local community. We will miss you.



# *In Memoriam*

---

**Ir Prof. Leung Tin-pui**, BBS, JP

*The following is an obituary by Mr Victor Lo, PolyU Council Chairman,  
and Prof. Poon Chung-kwong, PolyU President*

Prof. T.P. Leung, Professor Emeritus and former Vice President of the University (fondly known to his friends and colleagues as T.P.), passed away on 6 September 2007.

T.P., one of the longest-serving colleagues of this Institution, will be remembered not only as a pioneer in PolyU's engineering education, but also for his significant contributions to the development of learning and teaching, quality assurance, student development as well as the promotion of culture for the University.

T.P. joined the Hong Kong Technical College (PolyU's predecessor) in 1972 and subsequently became Head and Chair Professor of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Dean of Faculty of Engineering, and Vice President before his retirement in 2006. During his tenure as Vice President (Student Development), he played a leading role in PolyU's learning and teaching development. His broad academic interests and versatility were well reflected in his concurrent appointments as Dean of Faculty of Communication and founding chairman of the Culture Promotion Committee. He was also the Honorary Director of the Confucius Institute of Hong Kong established at PolyU. Under his leadership, the first PolyU Arts Festival was launched to enrich the campus life of both staff and students.

T.P. actively participated in various professional bodies over the years and had served as President of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, President of the Hong Kong Association for the Advancement of Science and Technology and Chairman of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (Hong Kong Branch). Among his tireless services to the academic community, he had been a member of the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation and the Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants Committee.

In recognition of his enduring contributions to the engineering profession and the University as a whole, he was conferred the distinguished titles of University Fellow and Professor Emeritus by the University upon his retirement.

But his achievements were not confined to the academic and professional circles. T.P. was awarded the Bronze Bauhinia Star by the HKSAR Government in 2003. He was also a Justice of the Peace and a veteran member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

T.P. is no longer with us, but his friendship, community spirit and accomplishments will always be fondly cherished by his friends and colleagues in the University.