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Citation for  
SHIING-SHEN CHERN, D.Sc.

Dr. Shiing-shen Chern is one of the most outstanding mathematicians of the world today. His contribution to the study of mathematics is so significant that it bears his name: the famous "Chern's characteristic classes".

Professor Chern's academic background and experience are indeed most impressive. He began his academic pursuit by taking the degree of Bachelor of Science from Nankai University, Tientsin, China, in 1930, and subsequently earned the degree of Master of Science at Tsing Hua University, Peiping, four years later. He then continued graduate work in France and Germany, obtaining the degree of Doctor of Science at the University of Hamburg in 1936.

He returned to China to teach at the Southwest Associated University, where he was a professor of mathematics from 1937 to 1943. Then, he conducted further research in the U.S.A. as a member of the famous Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. In 1946, he was invited by the Academia Sinica in Nanking to assume the important post of acting director of its Institute of Mathematics. In 1949, Dr. Chern left for the U.S.A. to become a professor of mathematics at the University of Chicago, and since 1960 has been with the University of California, Berkeley.

Professor Chern has been elected to numerous distinguished professional and academic bodies, especially the Academia Sinica of China, the National Academy of Sciences of the U.S.A., the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Mathematical Society, of which he served as Vice-president from 1962 to 1964. He has also been connected, in various capacities, with prominent mathematical journals.

Once in an interview by a newspaper reporter, Dr. Chern was asked why he had studied mathematics. His answer was that "My Chinese and English were not good and I could not conduct experiments; therefore, I could only study mathematics." As a matter of fact, Dr. Chern's Chinese and English have been very good ever since his student days. As a fast writer, he used to help his classmates by writing compositions for them, although he complained that the ones he wrote for others sometimes earned higher marks than the ones written for himself.

For cultural and academic reasons, Dr. Chern has been very dear to The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is our External Examiner for mathematics and a member of the Advisory Board on Natural Sciences. The University owe him a great debt of gratitude for what he has contributed to improve its academic programme.

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As a recognition of his remarkable achievements in modern mathematics and valuable contribution to the work of our University, may I present to you, Mr. Chancellor, Shiing-shen Chern for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.