

Mrs Janice Choi

Honorary Fellow Citation

In *King Hui of Liang* by Mencius, there is a record of a dialogue between Mencius and King Xuan of Qi:

Mencius asked: "Which is more joyful: to enjoy music alone or to share it with others?"

King Xuan replied: "It's better to enjoy it with others."

Mencius pursued further: "Which is better: to share music with a few or to share it with more people?"

King Xuan then replied: "With more people. No doubt."

The message behind the above dialogue is clear. It is important to make more people happy. The Chinese character "lè" as a noun originally means musical instruments, and is in every respect connected to music. According to *Shuowen Jiezi* (a reference book compiled by Xu Shen during the Eastern Han Dynasty, which explains the shape, sound and meaning of Chinese characters), the word "lè" gives the aggregate description of the five Chinese pentatonic tones (gong, shāng, jué, zhǐ, yǔ) and eight types of natural musical materials (gold, stone, earth, leather, silk, wood, gourd, bamboo), each capable of producing its own

unique timbre. However, the word "lè" was later being extended to mean "happiness" or "joy", and it elucidates well the joy one could derive from music appreciation. It follows that "lè" could also be interpreted as the pinnacle of music. Mrs Janice Choi, our Honorary Fellowship recipient today, knows well what "joy" or "happiness" means to the community. A phenomenal community leader in Hong Kong, Mrs Choi has been practising what she believes, by sharing her joy and happiness with others through various public services.

Mrs Janice Choi graduated from The University of Hong Kong, where she obtained the Bachelor of Laws degree, following which the Postgraduate Certificate in Laws. She is qualified to practise in a number of legal jurisdictions, including Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Singapore, and Victoria, Australia. She is also a China-Appointed Attesting Officer. Currently, Mrs Choi is the Consultant and Legal Director of Sunwah Group, a consultant to a solicitor firm, and a Non-Executive Director of the Sunwah Kingsway Capital Holdings Limited.

Mrs Choi has been married to Sunwah Group

Chairman, Dr Choi Koon-shum Jonathan, for 36 years, and together they have raised a very happy family with five children. For many years, Mrs Choi has struck a well balance among family, work and voluntary services. A good example of which is when she was Vice-Chairwoman of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, she often brought along her children to concerts presented by the Orchestra, so as to expose them to the culture of music while at the same time fulfilling her voluntary service for the Orchestra. To Mrs Choi, nurturing the next generation is her greatest mission. Besides attending to her children, she particularly likes to get into contact with young people. When she finds at work any inadequacy of young associates, she will always provide earnest advice and encouragement for them, in the hope that they will overcome difficulties and carry on with their good work. Her kind and amiable personality has won her not only respect but also friendship from all those she meets. Mrs Choi has been a laudable role model for others to follow.

Ever since childhood, Mrs Choi has always been kind and courteous to people, and committed herself to serving the public. While in secondary school, she inherited, as a Girl Guide, the virtuous spirit of "One good deed a day". When in college, Mrs Choi joined student groups that focus on housing and poverty issues, and accompanied these groups to visit the underprivileged and people living in squatter areas. When she became a solicitor, her passion to serve people has not attenuated.

She joined the voluntary service of the Hong Kong Community Chest in the early stage of her career, and has been the Chairwoman of the Community Chest Flag Day campaigns for many years, scoring record-breaking fundraising results. Later, she concurrently became a director of the Community Chest and is currently Vice Patron and Consultant of its Flag Day Campaign. As of today, Mrs Choi has served the Community Chest for over 30 years. In addition, Mrs Choi was once the President of the Island Regional branch of the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association, a position that enables her to continue the virtuous spirit which took root in her secondary school days. For her dedicated service, Mrs Choi was later appointed Honorary Vice-President of the Association, following which she was invited to take up a more impactful role, the vice president position, at its headquarters. Mrs Choi's service at various portfolios in the Association for over two decades have generated wide and positive effects in society, all of which are worthy of recognition.

For her outstanding leadership both in her profession and community work, Mrs Choi has been appointed by the Hong Kong government to a number of positions in the public service arena, including that of non-official member of the Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee (and Convenor of the Working Group on Industrial, Commercial and Professional Sectors under the committee), and member of the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (and Convenor of the Working Group

under it). Besides, she cares about fostering women's advancement in society and, to that end, has been active in participating in women's social groups in Hong Kong. She has served as President of the Zonta Club of the New Territories, President of the Hong Kong Federation of Women Lawyers Limited, member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong (CGCC), and Chairman of the CCGC Ladies' Committee. In recognition of her numerous achievements and outstanding contributions to society, *Jessica* magazine honoured her with the "Most Successful Women Award" in 2015, a lucid reflection of her achievements and upright character. Two years later, she was appointed Justice of Peace by the Chief Executive and, in 2019, she was awarded the Bronze Bauhinia Star by the government, both in recognition of her outstanding contributions to Hong Kong. Mrs Choi's generous and meritorious services, and her compassionate character, are all commendable and gratefully acknowledged by those who have the fortune to cross her path.

Mrs Choi's love for music is well known and her unreserved passion in supporting musical endeavours is a story well told. At the tender age of six, she started practising piano, which was followed by vocal training. Despite their hectic daily schedules, the Choi couple often find time to enjoy music at home. Every now and then, Dr Choi will heartily sing, supported by Mrs Choi's piano accompaniment. A true

believer in sharing the joy of music with others, Mrs Choi spares no effort in promoting the development of music in Hong Kong. Since 2002, she was appointed Board member of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society Limited (HKPS) and her 20 plus years of service at HKPS has made her its longest serving Board member. In 2013, she was elected Vice-Chairwoman of HKPS. In addition, she has served as Chair of the HKPS Fundraising Committee for over a decade, thereby helping raise tens of millions of donations for the Orchestra. The funds enable the Orchestra to offer discounted or even free tickets for the underprivileged, the elderly and school children for admission to its performances. The money raised also allows HKPO to recruit internationally renowned conductors as Music Director so as to raise the professional standing of the Orchestra. This move has later resulted in the Orchestra winning a number of international awards. In 2003, she joined force with Mr Mok Wah-yeun Warren, a world famous tenor, to establish *Opera Hong Kong*, the mission of which is to promote opera music in schools and to popularise performing arts in Hong Kong. Always a true supporter of music, Mrs Choi also takes time out to help raise funds for *Opera Hong Kong* in order to nurture more talents in the field. In 2010, Mrs Choi joined force with Mr Trey Lee, a local superb cellist, to set up the Musicus Society. The aim of the Society is to promote cross-cultural collaboration regarding music projects between top local and overseas artists, and also through staging performances. Furthermore, the

Society aims at nurturing the next generation of talents in creative and performing arts, and has attempted to reach out to cultural institutions of the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area for more exchange and collaboration opportunities. For her significant contributions to arts and culture, the French government awarded Mrs Choi in 2018 the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Since the 1990s, Mrs Choi has built up a strong link with our University. The Choi couple have befriended Professor Yang Chen Ning for a long time and they often visited him while Professor Yang was resident on campus. Since 1991, Dr Jonathan Choi had served as a member of the Board of Trustees of United College. When he retired from the Board after 30 years' distinguished service, Mrs Choi followed his footsteps, and since 2021 has been holding the trustee position, extending the care and support of the Choi family to the College. Recently, the Choi family has donated HK\$50 million to support the construction of a new student hostel at United College, to the immense joy of both the faculty and students. To express deep gratitude to Dr Jonathan Choi and Mrs Janice Choi, United College named the new hostel the Choi Kai Yau Residence after Dr Choi's late father, and named the activity wing and the hall inside the hostel the "Jonathan K S Choi Cultural Centre" and "Janice W K Choi Concert Hall" respectively. With a seating capacity of 300, the future concert hall will become a rendezvous for both cultural

exchanges and performing arts events. The new student hostel will also become another vital venue for whole-person development – intellectually, spiritually, and ethically. Through the programmes and activities of the hostel, the College can further promote a framework that realises the College motto: "Ming De Xin Min" (literally to mean "Make one's virtues shine and renew the people"). Taking pride in this construction project, our students look forward to an enriched hostel life that injects rigor into both teaching and learning, raises the level of social concern, and strengthens moral inquiry.

Mr Chairman, Mrs Choi is an enthusiast in both music and arts. Her care and love for the Hong Kong community is whole-hearted and commendable. For her tireless efforts in serving society, and her generous devotion in the promotion of arts and culture in Hong Kong, she has won both praise and admiration from many sectors, and has deservedly earned her many honours and awards. All these years, she has put into practice well the exchanges between Mencius and King Xuan of Qi, that is, it is always better to share joy and happiness with more people. The University, and in particular United College, are forever grateful to the many benefactions from the Choi family at various stages of its development, which have unequivocally helped our efforts both in further advancement and new frontier exploration. Mr Chairman, it is my great pleasure to present to you Mrs Janice Choi for the Honorary Fellowship.