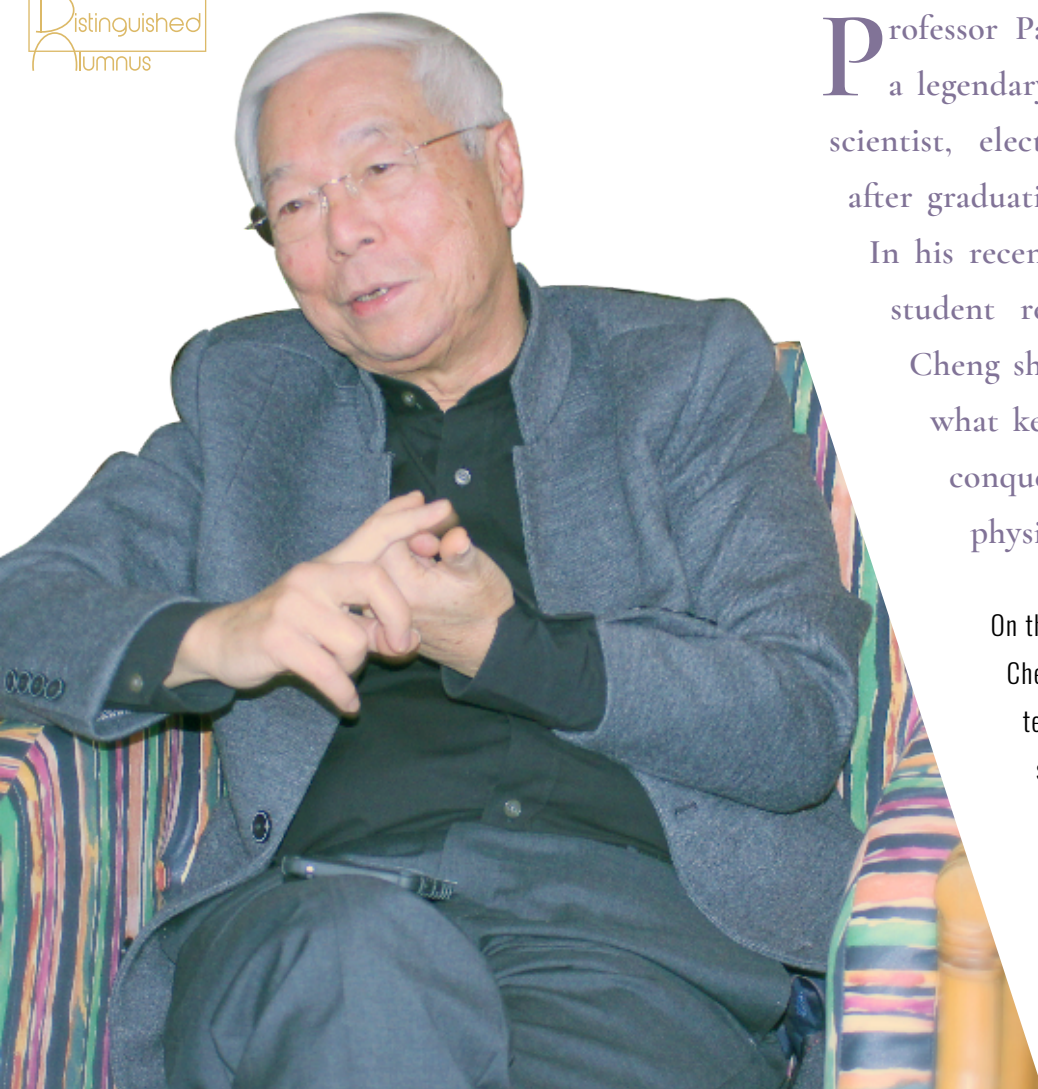


LIFE-LONG LEARNING JOURNEY OF A BOLD LEADER

Distinguished
Alumnus



PROF. PATRICK YIU CHUNG CHENG
1963 BSc Graduate

Professor Patrick Yiu Chung CHENG led a legendary career as a physicist, material scientist, electronic engineer and educator after graduation from HKU Science in 1963. In his recent interview with HKU Science student reporter Jackie Tsoi, Professor Cheng shared about his fun school days, what kept him in the lab, and how he conquered and continued to conquer physical demands of various sports.

On the green couch deemed too small, Professor Cheng sat comfortably with a cup of hot lemon tea in his hand. Dressed in a grey suit, he spoke about his past as a distant story, yet through the spark in his eyes I saw it happen in the present.

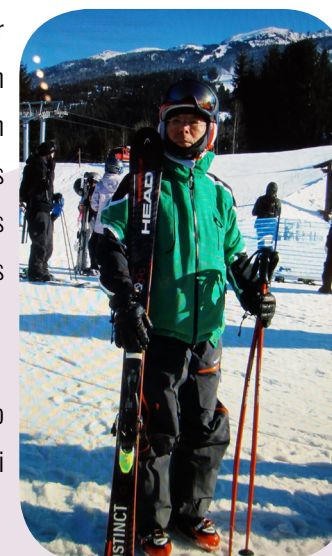
"We don't do research because it is useful, but because we are curious."

As Professor Cheng talked proudly about his past achievements, he mentioned that it was curiosity that had led him to the pursuit in physics and electronic engineering research starting from his undergraduate years at HKU. Amazed by how his professor always walked

away from class at Loke Yew Hall just to think about a math problem, Professor Cheng bared passion in mind, which later led to his impactful improvement of the Metal Oxide Semiconductors technology by testing out an unconventional way of experimental setup. He paused after an insightful description of his success in research, picked up the hot lemon tea with firmness, and leaned back relaxed while slowly sipping the cup. "Don't have a fixed mindset," he said in a passionate tone, "I did years of physics and never thought I would end up in electronic engineering." It was the skills that he learned at HKU that helped him recognise the limitless possibilities science brought and later applied aspects of physics and engineering in areas including biology and medicine. "One should learn from different perspectives of life. Never get stuck in conventions and always learn."

Another determinant of his success, as Professor Cheng mentioned several times, is the will to excel. He was never hesitant to participate in a range of new experiences, some of which include being an active member of the swimming team for Morrison Hall at HKU. "You can always turn bad things into something positive... You must be a driving force for yourself." Never failing to smile, he quoted the saying by Mencius, the Chinese philosopher: "If I reflect on myself and find myself to be right, then even if it be an army of one hundred thousand, I will go forward (自反而縮，雖千萬人吾往矣)." Such mindset was proven powerful by the milestones he achieved as the Vice Chancellor of HKU despite many opposite voices. Always carrying the mind to serve, Professor Cheng was adventurous in education reform at HKU, in which many of his policies remained as key to HKU's achievements in various areas such as research.

Professor Cheng was proud to share that he learned to ski



and received his scuba diving license at 61, as well as always followed a rigorous fitness routine. It was not difficult to see that the man, despite his astonishing life achievements and challenges of the physical body, never stopped learning. He was also involved in various charity activities including funding education for children living in rural China.



Living by the principles of "curiosity, drive, passion, and the mind to serve", Professor Cheng established an adventurous lifestyle and awaited new challenges in the future. As he stood up, I was reminded of a man who exhibited great power in the mind. "You only live once. Try your best to serve others and leave some footprints," he said to us.

Footsteps are heard.

STUDENT REPORTER

"It was an absolute honor for me to have sat down with Professor Cheng and discussed many aspects of learning and life experiences. It was an extremely inspiring experience as Professor Cheng shared many opinions on ways the young generation may be able to contribute to society, and that for us students it is crucial to learn with a growth mindset."



Jackie Tsoi, BSc Student
(major in Statistics)

"Once you put your mind to something, just trust yourself, be brave, be adventurous, and do your best."