ON THE SHOULDER OF GIANT LOOK FURTHER AND GO FARTHER

Distinguished Alumnus

DR NIM-KWAN CHEUNG

1969 BSc General (Physics and Mathematics) Graduate
1970 BSc Special (Physics) Graduate

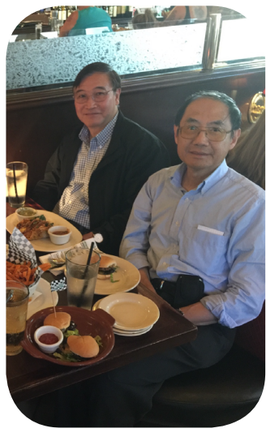
Major Achievements

- Member of Technical Staff, Bell Laboratories
- District and Division Manager, Bell Communications Research (Bellcore)
- Vice President, Telcordia Technologies
- Consulting Professor, Stanford University
- Chief Executive Officer, Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute (ASTRI)
- Council Member, Research Grants Council of Hong Kong
- Honorary Professor, Chinese University of Hong Kong

"Honesty, Ethics, Integrity and Professionalism"

"I attended HKU with a full scholarship, but being assigned to University Hall, which was over 5 kilometers from main campus, had restrained me from attending early morning classes, as the buses from Aberdeen were mostly full and thus barely stopped at U-Hall bus station. I had to skip classes quite often and rely on my classmates to show me what was being taught!

At HKU, I was inspired by so many warm and caring teachers with their fascinating stories of research adventures at overseas institutions. I was stimulated by my teaching assistant Yu Ming-lun who taught me experimental physics with his meticulously-kept lab note books. This led me to follow his footsteps to pursue graduate studies at California Institute of Technology (Caltech), where I received my PhD degree in 1976. My thesis project involved cooling an ensemble of Fe57 nuclei to 0.01 degree above absolute zero using a He3-He4 dilution refrigerator to study time-reversal-invariance properties of oriented nuclei.



At Caltech, I had the good fortune of attending classes taught by the legendary physicist and teacher Richard Feynman.

After graduation, I joined Bell Laboratories to work on fiber optics, a new field pioneered by Nobel Laureate Charles Kao in UK in the 1960's. At there I was engaged in the R&D of terrestrial and undersea communication systems using the new single-mode fiber optics technology. This was followed by a succession of management positions at Bellcore and Telcordia Technologies in New Jersey.

During my time at HKU, Professor Kao was teaching in United College of Chinese University at Bonham Road, not far from HKU's Northcote Science Building. I did not meet Professor Kao until late 1970's when he was executive scientist at ITT in Connecticut.

In 2006, I was elected President of IEEE Communications Society, a 45,000-member professional organization with 180 chapters globally. I was appointed Chair of the IEEE Fellow Committee in 2012-13 where I presided at the selection of new IEEE Fellows around the world.

In 2008, I became CEO of the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute (ASTRI), a 600-member research centre established by the Hong Kong Government. During my 6-year tenure at ASTRI, I recruited several hundred applied researchers worldwide to work in Hong Kong Science Park and increased ASTRI's number of patents from 11 to over 450, making it a major patent pool in Hong Kong.

Throughout my career, I never ceased to learn from technology giants who were trailblazers in their respective specialties. They were never afraid to challenge the status quo and then proceeded to start brand new and more exciting fields. Recognising what they did have a profound effect on the well-being of mankind, they had to abide by the highest standard of integrity, ethics and professional conduct."