

# HIDDEN FIGURES BEHIND THE MAN OF VALUE



The corridor echoed with sturdy footsteps in a steady pace. A man entered the room, wearing an energetic grey windowpane wool suit. Wrinkles of wisdom came in sight as his cheek raised with a warm smile. Mr Kai Man WONG greeted us in his tranquil voice, laughed humbly and said, 'It's great to be back!'

"One of the most valuable assets that you can gain in university is lifelong friendships."

As Mr Wong emphasised his gain, he was staring at his own reflection on a glass cup. Memory flashed in eyes, as if time rewound back into 1970s when he was still an undergraduate science student in Faculty of Science, The University of Hong Kong.

It was a post-war era, a time where university students were actively involved in political issues. At years where most students lacked a complement understanding about China, Mr Wong remembered how courageous President of HKUSU 1971 was, as he led a group of students to visit Beijing, and met Mr Zhou Enlai, first Premier of the People's Republic of China. "This period is regarded as 'Fury Years'," said Mr Wong, 'Back in those days, students were simple and true.'

Bachelor of Science (General) used to have 2 separate streams. Mr Wong chose to study Physics/Maths/Chemistry for 1<sup>st</sup> year and furthers on with Physics/Maths for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Mr Wong believed that Physics and Mathematics had helped him in many ways unseen. "In calculus, problems can

be separated into manageable size." And this technique was being applied into his financial works.

When asked about his unforgettable memories as an undergraduate student, Mr Wong turned his head towards me and said seriously, "There's no examination on my 2<sup>nd</sup> year." The room immediately burst into laughter as I sighed with envy.

"I had unlimited spare time to do anything as I wish, therefore, I participated in almost every orientation camp available during the long boring summer." There, Mr Wong met many friends in various



disciplines from other Faculties, but little did he know that those friendships brought by fate could last for more than 40 years and would affect each other in the future. In 2000s, a few friends of his from education,

engineering and social sciences sectors was setting up a primary school and a college sponsored by HKUGA Education Foundation. His friends approached Mr Wong for his profession as an auditor, and Mr Wong agreed to help without any hesitation.

"In recent years, we still contact each other." In Mr Wong's eyes, these friends are still his most valuable assets.

"People have been asking me why I am an accountant instead of a physicist. And I said it's just a coincidence that I entered the finance sector."

After graduated with a BSc(General) degree after 3 years, Mr Wong enrolled in the one year BSc(Special) in Physics course, planning to study further in the US. Rhododendron blossomed in middle Spring, a final call before the last examination at the end of 4<sup>th</sup> year. Near the completion of BSc(Special) study, an accountants firm came to the campus and interviewed graduates to-be. "I know exactly what I hate to do!" Mr Wong didn't want to be a teacher like other science graduates or a civil servant, but he was open to any opportunity. At times of graduation, a friend of his was studying accounting in another college and Mr Wong asked for information before attending

the interview with the accounting firm. He always had his curiosity burning, since secondary school. At that time, Mr Wong was obsessed with radio. He therefore tried to build his own radio receiver and sound amplifier at home, without any guidance. "I felt exactly the same when I first entered the finance sector," Mr Wong recalled, "I acquired new skills and knowledges every day at work."

It might be a coincidence for Mr Wong to enter the finance sector, but as he explained his personal motto, I realise it is never a coincidence for Mr Wong to be this successful. The motto was a quote from Albert Einstein, "Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value."

Mr Wong never considered himself as a successful man. He believed that 'success' was a self-centred feeling that had no benefits. In contrast, Mr Wong chose to be 'a man of value'. He believed that the 'true' value a man held was how much he or she could serve the society. Perhaps this was why Mr Wong had been involved in various civic duties, NGOs, statutory bodies and university councils, including the HKU council.

"As a leader today, it is important to clear the way for others to ride on their crests of success, rather having them to chase your footsteps." Mr Wong was thankful to his predecessors because they allowed him to trial and error, and he was now doing the same thing, giving chances and supports to his successors.

At the end of the interview, Mr Wong said to me, "Be a man of value."

Sure will.

## STUDENT REPORTER

"Mr Wong is a charmingly cheerful and easy-going person. I am very grateful to have such chance to meet with alumnus graduated from HKU years ago. The interview is a valuable moment when excellences and spirits of HKU are inherited from the past decades to the future."



Jimmy Mak, BSc Student  
(major in Biochemistry)

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