

**DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
*honoris causa***

Ms Katie SHU Sui-pui



Mr Chairman,

As a “late-comer” to higher education, Ms Katie Shu Sui-pui has proved with her success that minor obstacles like age should never hinder our pursuit of true passion.

When she was young, like many women of the time, Ms Shu devoted everything she had to taking care of her family. Although she did not have access to university education at the time, she kept a small flame alive in her heart, quietly waiting for her chance. It indeed came at the age of fifty. After both of her daughters had graduated from college, Ms Shu made the decision to finally challenge and empower herself by taking a degree programme. She understood that it would be an extremely challenging and tough path, given her time away from school, but she approached the challenge with her natural optimism, positive spirit and passion for learning.

The then Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK), now renamed Hong Kong Metropolitan University (HKMU), was a perfect fit for Ms Shu. OUHK was a pioneer of open and distance learning, with the mission “Education for All”. It provided quality and flexible higher education opportunities for adults like Ms Shu.

Ms Shu enrolled in a part-time programme at OUHK, and after six years of diligent work, in 2006, she received a Bachelor of Arts in Language and Translation. This initial achievement cemented her determination to go even further. Two years later, she enrolled in a mixed-mode programme in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University to equip herself with modern management capabilities. In 2011, Ms Shu, by far the oldest graduate in the School, obtained a Master’s in Hotel and Tourism Management. Those eight years of learning provided her with plenty of practical knowledge and happy memories, and fostered important messages that she is always eager to share: It is never too late to start something new. Do your best, and live life to the fullest. And you are braver, stronger and wiser than you think.

In addition to studying, in 1997, Ms Shu established her own company, Regal Fortune Limited, which specialized in property investment and management, covering residences, offices, retail shops and parking lots. Blessed with the talent to make informed choices in the ever-changing market, she also cultivated a corporate culture focusing on business ethics. Her emphasis on teamwork, respect, integrity and profit-sharing enabled her to assemble a strong and stable team, which in turn, helped her company sail through myriads of challenges in the past 25 years. Ms Shu has set a very good example for “Do good. Do well.” (創富創善) in her career.

Ms Shu has always been very grateful to OUHK for its support in turning her university dream into reality, and she wants to help others achieve the same. She shares the view of Nelson Mandela that “education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world”. Since 2005, she has generously supported many education-related initiatives in Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland. HKMU, the then OUHK, her alma mater, is among her major beneficiaries.

In 2008, Ms Shu donated HK\$1 million to support the OUHK Campus Phase II project. At the time, it was one of the largest donations received by the University from an alumna. In 2012, Ms Shu set up the “Katie Shu Sui Pui Charitable Trust” to pursue a number of very meaningful initiatives, which have had a far-reaching impact. In 2014, OUHK made her an Honorary Fellow to show its gratitude. In 2021, she donated HK\$20 million to HKMU to establish the “Katie Shu Sui Pui Endowment Fund” to ensure the sustainable development of various initiatives. With a strong passion for fuelling her alma mater’s development through donations, Ms Shu is an excellent role model for our graduates.

Ms Shu has not only offered financial support. She has also devoted her time and effort to identify needs, set objectives and oversee their implementation. It is particularly worth noting that Ms Shu is persevering in supporting “working fathers” with financial difficulties as well as fathers in prison. The “Bursary for Working Fathers”, set up in 2013, and “Hope for the Future Bursary”, set up in 2018, are perhaps the only bursaries targeting “fathers” in Hong Kong, if not in the world. Ms Shu recognises that “fathers” in Hong Kong are still the main source of strength in a family. She thus wants to empower the fathers by helping them complete their university education, which in turn, can inspire their children to work hard for a better future. Intergenerational poverty has been identified as an increasingly critical problem in Hong Kong, so the Government’s Commission on Poverty is highly focused on providing children from disadvantaged backgrounds with support. Ms Shu is more proactive on this subject as she seeks to tackle intergenerational poverty by empowering fathers with tertiary education.

As for the other current HKMU students, Ms Shu has financed three programmes. The initiative “We Can Fly” aims to nurture students’ capability in innovation and technology by sponsoring them to attend related international conferences and competitions. The “Residence Scholarship” provides rental subsidies for needy full-time Mainland undergraduate students, and the “Outstanding Student Leaders Award for Belt and Road / Greater Bay Area Enterprise / Academic / Culture Exploration Journey” aims to encourage students to explore Belt and Road countries and the Greater Bay Area through academic and cultural exchanges.

Being very positive and proactive, Ms Shu reminds the young generation to be hopeful of tomorrow. She is confident that Hong Kong will remain a very important international financial centre with a vibrant future, as it is an integral part of the world’s soon-to-be largest economy. She encourages the young to gear up with political sensitivity, an international outlook, a positive mindset and a serving heart to embrace the opportunities brought about by the development of the Greater Bay Area.

As HKMU gradually evolves from being primarily a distance-learning institution to a comprehensive university, it has started to offer research postgraduate programmes and engage in research activities in strategic niche areas. Ms Shu has contributed significantly to foster a robust research culture in the University and increase quality research output through three programmes set up by the Katie Shu Sui Pui Charitable Trust: the “Outstanding Research Publication Award”, the “Academic Publication Fellowship” and the “Research Training Fellowship”.

Apart from quality education provided by OUHK as well as the gender-equality and free-market mechanisms in Hong Kong, Ms Shu attributes her success to her two thoughtful and caring daughters, Mandy and Lily, who have stood by her and cheered her up at all times.

The University’s new motto is “Transcendence through Erudition and Renewal”. A proud alumna of HKMU, Ms Shu has truly demonstrated the spirit of this motto through her zealous pursuit of knowledge, her admirable career achievements, and her virtuous character.

Mr Chairman, in recognition of Ms Shu’s distinctive contribution to the sustainable development of our University, and her commitment to back up “working fathers” in pursuing a university education and to groom young talent for the future of Hong Kong, may I invite our President to present Ms Katie Shu Sui-pui for the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences, *honoris causa*.

Citation to be delivered by Dr Li Kam-cheong