

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

Professor George WOO



Mr Pro-Chancellor,

Helping people see; curing invisible wounds. Dubbed the “father” of optometry in Hong Kong, Professor George Woo is an eminent figure in the field of eye health and vision science, both locally and globally.

Professor Woo received a Doctor of Optometry (OD) degree from the University of Waterloo, Canada. After graduating and completing the licensing requirements for practice in 1964, he became an optometrist with the Canadian Red Cross Society, driving and providing eye care in its mobile eye clinic to people living in remote parts of northern Ontario. This experience of providing eye care to a population in need has inspired him and strengthened his commitment to primary eye care ever since.

After working with the Canadian Red Cross, Professor Woo moved on to Indiana University in the U.S. for graduate studies, where he obtained an MSc and PhD in Physiological Optics. He then held various teaching and research posts at Indiana University before becoming a faculty member at his alma mater in Waterloo in 1970. He rose through the ranks to become a full Professor in 1980. In 1975, he became the first Canadian to be awarded Diplomate status in low vision by the American Academy of Optometry, which recognizes “academic and practical achievement in the assessment and management of the rehabilitation needs of persons with impaired vision”. The Academy also bestowed on Professor Woo its prestigious William Feinbloom Award in 2006, which recognizes “distinguished and significant contribution to clinical excellence”.

During his 26 years at the University of Waterloo from 1970 until his retirement as a Professor Emeritus in 1996, he also took up many visiting and consulting appointments around the world, including the University of Melbourne, in Australia, the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, in

the U.S., and the University of Cambridge, in the U.K. He is currently an Adjunct Professor in the School of Optometry and Vision Science at the University of Waterloo.

In 1987, Professor Woo took a two-year leave of absence from the University of Waterloo to tackle a new challenge in Hong Kong, his hometown as a youth. In his new capacity as the founding Head of the then Department of Diagnostic Sciences at the then Hong Kong Polytechnic, Professor Woo helped develop the city's first-ever accredited undergraduate programme in optometry. After achieving this goal, Professor Woo returned to the University of Waterloo in 1990.

A Shanghai native, Professor Woo is also devoted to improving eye health and vision in the Chinese mainland. In 1995, he taught as a Visiting Professor of Ophthalmology at the Sun Yat-sen University of Medical Sciences in Guangzhou. In the following year, he took on the role of Director of the China Ophthalmic Education Program for CIBA Vision Atlanta and the CIBA Geigy Foundation, in Basel, Switzerland. He also served as an Honorary Consultant for the China Disabled Persons' Federation. Since the late 1990s, Professor Woo has been an Honorary Professor at Sun Yat-sen University, Tianjin Medical University, and Wenzhou Medical University in China. After his retirement from the University of Waterloo, Professor Woo returned to Hong Kong in 1997 to become a Chair Professor of Optometry and the Dean of the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. After eight years as Dean, Professor Woo stepped down, but was invited to stay on as Associate Dean. He resumed the deanship in 2008 until his retirement from the university in 2011. He is now an Emeritus Professor and the Senior Advisor in the university's School of Optometry.

In addition to his contribution to vision science as a scholar and researcher, Professor Woo has devoted a great deal of effort to bettering the eye health and visual welfare of ordinary people clinically. Since being a driver and optometrist of a mobile eye clinic in remote northern Ontario, Canada, Professor Woo has promoted better eye health for people living in less affluent provinces and regions of China, such as Gansu, Shanxi and Xinjiang. To make eye care more affordable and accessible to people living in developing countries, he and his research team invented the portable Instant Vision Assessment Device for measuring refractive errors, which can be used by health workers after only two days of training.

Professor Woo is a diligent and visionary optometrist with outstanding achievements in his profession. He advocates recognition of optometrists as primary care practitioners, who serve as the first point of contact in the community for the general public for examining their

eyes, and diagnosing and solving eye and vision problems within the optometrists' scope of practice. He strongly believes that this appropriate deployment of optometrists for primary care would help shorten the years-long waiting times for the general public for consultations with ophthalmologists and other specialists in the public sector to prevent delayed treatments. To this end, he also co-founded PolyVision, a chain of primary eye care centres in Hong Kong.

Having been raised in a family involved in the optical industry, Professor Woo, together with his brother, Dr Victor Woo Chi-pang, who is an ophthalmologist, set up the K.B. Woo Fund in memory of their father, Mr Keing-bai Woo, a pioneer in Hong Kong's optical industry, who had advocated the formalization of optical training to improve eye care. Over the years, Professor Woo and Dr Woo have made donations from the fund or personally in support of eye health-related education and other initiatives in Hong Kong, the Chinese mainland and overseas.

Professor Woo has earned a tremendous amount of respect from his peers in his profession, academia and healthcare. He has served on numerous local and international optometric, health and research committees and associations. Over the years, he has been elected as the President of the World Council of Optometry, President of the Asia Pacific Council of Optometry, and President of the Hong Kong Society of Professional Optometrists. He was also the Chief Administration Officer of the Asia Pacific Council of Optometry, President of the Hong Kong Contact Lens Research Association, a member of the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong from 2000 to 2006, and a Board Member of Hong Kong's Hospital Authority from 2008 to 2011.

Apart from his dedication to improving people's physical health, Professor Woo "wishes to cure wounds invisible to the eyes", to quote from a description of him by the Hong Kong Red Cross and Radio Television Hong Kong. Many years ago, an anaesthesiologist, who was a low-vision patient of Professor Woo after having lost much of his eyesight due to diabetes, had suicidal thoughts. Professor Woo decided to spend time listening to, and spending time with, the patient, and eventually the patient gave up the idea of suicide. That reinforced Professor Woo's belief in the importance of treating all patients with compassion and understanding, and made him realize how critical it was to provide timely support to those who were struggling with their emotions. In 2002, Professor Woo underwent training and started serving as a hotline volunteer for The Samaritans. Every month since then, often on an overnight shift or more, he has listened to callers in need with empathy and patience, knowing that it could make a real and meaningful difference to their lives.

In 2015, Professor Woo became the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of The Samaritans, where he took his passion for caring to another level. He supported various developments of the organization, including the establishment of services for the elderly and young people. In 2020, Professor Woo's impressive decades-long devotion to helping people in emotional distress was recognized by his being honoured as an awardee of the Hong Kong Humanity Award 2020, which was jointly organized by the Hong Kong Red Cross and Radio Television Hong Kong.

Professor Woo is a superb role model for all of us. He demonstrates how to exemplify the true spirit of humanity by putting it into practice and action not only throughout his professional life, but also as a caring citizen.

Mr Pro-Chancellor, in recognition of Professor Woo's impactful contribution to elevating the development of optometry in Hong Kong and his continuous dedication to helping people in need with empathy, may I invite our President to present Professor George Woo for the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences, *honoris causa*.

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*Citation written and to be delivered by Professor Joanne Chung Wai-yee*

## 榮譽社會科學博士學位

### 胡志城教授

副校監先生：

胡志城教授是眼睛健康和視覺科學領域的翹楚，除了幫助人們看得見，也治療看不見的創傷，素有香港眼科視光學之「父」的美譽，而且享譽國際。

胡教授於 1964 年在加拿大滑鐵盧大學畢業，取得眼科視光學博士學位和完成執業註冊要求後，加入了加拿大紅十字會任職眼科視光師。在任期間駕駛流動眼科診所前往北安大略的偏遠地區，為當地有需要居民提供眼睛護理服務。胡教授深受這項服務體驗啟發，對基層眼睛護理更充滿熱忱。

胡志城教授離開加拿大紅十字會後負笈美國，在印第安納大學先後取得生理光學理學碩士學位與哲學博士學位，畢業後留在原校擔任教學和研究職位，至 1970 年獲母校滑鐵盧大學延聘為教學人員，其後逐步晉升，至 1980 年成為正教授。1975 年，胡教授成為歷來首位加拿大人，獲美國眼科視光學院頒發低視能護理專科文憑資格，表揚他在評估與管理視障人士復康需要方面的學術與實踐取得傑出成就。該學院又於 2006 年向胡教授頒發享有盛名的「威廉·傅安布魯獎」，表彰他卓越非凡的臨床工作貢獻。

胡教授從 1970 年起在滑鐵盧大學工作，直到 1996 年退休，並獲頒榮休教授名銜。在這 26 年終身教職期間，他同時在世界各地擔任訪問學者和顧問，其中包括澳洲墨爾本大學、美國賓夕法尼亞州眼科視光學院，以及英國劍橋大學。胡教授現時擔任滑鐵盧大學眼科視光學與視覺科學院客座教授。

1987 年，胡志城教授從滑鐵盧大學休假兩年，回到他少年時期生活的香港接受新挑戰，以當時香港理工學院診斷科學系創系系主任的身份，協助開辦全港首個經評審的眼科視光學學士學位課程。胡教授成功實現此目標後，於 1990 年返回滑鐵盧大學。

生於上海的胡教授對推動中國內地的眼睛健康和視覺科學發展同樣不遺餘力。1995年，他在廣州中山醫科大學擔任眼科訪問教授；翌年出任「亞特蘭大視康」和瑞士巴塞爾「斯巴嘉基金會」的中國眼科教育計劃總監。他也擔任中國殘疾人聯合會名譽顧問。自1990年代末以來，胡教授便為中山大學、天津醫科大學以及溫州醫科大學擔任榮譽教授。他在滑鐵盧大學退休後，於1997年回港出任現今香港理工大學眼科視光學講座教授，並為醫療及社會科學院院長。胡教授任職院長八年後卸任，其後獲邀留任副院長。他於2008年再度出任院長，至2011年從香港理工大學退休，現時是香港理工大學眼科視光學院榮休教授及高級顧問。

胡志城教授身兼學者和研究人員，不但對視覺科學建樹良多，而且竭盡心力，透過臨床工作促進普羅大眾的眼睛健康和視覺福祉。胡教授不僅在偏遠的北安大略擔當流動眼科診所司機兼眼科視光師，還為甘肅、山西、新疆等不大富裕的中國省份和地區居民積極發展眼睛保健。為了讓發展中國家民眾更能負擔及更容易獲得眼睛護理服務，胡教授和他的研究團隊發明了手提式快速驗光儀，用來量度屈光不正度數。保健人員只需接受兩天訓練就能夠使用該裝置。

胡教授是一位努力不懈、高瞻遠矚的眼科視光師，在其專業領域內成就超群。他極力爭取眼科視光師獲承認為基層醫療專業人員，走到社區接觸大眾，以專業為人們檢查眼睛，診斷和解決眼睛與視力問題。他深信適當調派眼科視光師服務基層醫療系統，有助縮短市民輪候長達數年的時間，從而及早獲得公營醫療系統內眼科醫生和其他專家診治，避免延誤治療。為此，他也參與創辦香港的連鎖基層眼睛護理中心「理大護眼」。

胡志城教授成長於眼鏡業世家，與其弟胡志鵬眼科醫生一同成立了「胡賡佩眼科發展基金」紀念先父。胡賡佩先生是香港眼鏡業先驅，生前積極提倡眼科視光訓練專業化，藉此提升眼睛護理服務水平。胡教授和胡醫生多年來透過基金或以個人名義慷慨捐助香港、中國內地和海外的眼睛健康教育和其他倡議項目。

胡教授在其專業、學術界和健康護理等領域內均深得同儕敬重，曾服務過無數本港與國際的眼科視光、健康和研究委員會及協會，歷任世界眼科視光學會主席、亞太眼科視光學會主席和香港眼科視光師學會主席，也曾擔任亞太眼科視光學會首席行政官、香港隱形眼鏡學會主席、香港研究資助局成員（2000至2006年），以及香港醫院管理局成員（2008至2011年）。

胡志城教授除了致力改善民眾身體健康，也一如香港紅十字會和香港電台報導般「治癒肉眼看不見的傷口」。多年前，胡教授遇上一位低視能病人。這位病人本身是麻醉科醫生，因糖尿病而幾乎視力盡失，曾有輕生之念。胡教授決定花時間開解陪伴，最後解開了病人的心結。經此事後，胡教授更堅信需以同情通達待人，也領悟到及時支援情緒受困人士的重要。2002年，胡教授接受撒瑪利亞會義工培訓，其後每個月都在通宵或長時間輪值，以同理心和耐心聆聽求助者心聲。胡教授明白這樣服務能為求助者帶來饒富意義的真正改變。

2015年，胡教授出任撒瑪利亞會董事會主席，把關懷他人的熱忱提升至更高層次。他積極推動該機構發展，包括設立支援長者和青少年的服務。胡教授幫助有情緒困擾人士達接近20年，熱誠投入令人欽佩。2020年，香港紅十字會及香港電台向胡教授頒發「香港人道年獎2020」，表彰他無私奉獻的精神。

胡志城教授是身體力行的典範，他把信念付諸實踐、化為行動，體現真正的人道精神。無論是在自身專業還是關懷公益工作，胡教授都充分彰顯了人道精神。

副校監先生，為了表揚胡志城教授在促進香港眼科視光學發展作出了重大深遠的貢獻，為讚譽他秉持同理心、持之以恆地幫助有需要人士，本人恭請校長引介胡志城教授接受本大學榮譽社會科學博士學位。

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英文贊辭由鍾慧儀教授撰寫及宣讀