



CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE A HONG KONG ET MACAO

Dear Prof. Nancy Ip,
Dear President of HKUST, Prof. Chan
Dear members of the council and members of the court of HKUST
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you, your family - Mr Chu and Cathryn - and your dear friends here at the French Residence. The number of your friends here shows your great popularity. This popularity reflects your outstanding achievements in research, teaching and management. But, maybe more importantly, it shows you are a close and dear friend to all of them.

Since the beginning of your career, you decided to make a job out of your passion, which always requires great courage. Everyone here agrees that you have succeeded!

You spent the early part of your scientific career in the USA. You are a Harvard graduate, PhD in Pharmacology and a postdoctoral fellow. You assumed also, for many years, high responsibilities in a US Biotechnology Company. It proves that you are a woman of science and knowledge, but also that you have a great sense of innovation and entrepreneurship.

You joined Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) just few years after its birth in 1991. The ambitious project of a newly created university perfectly matched your own ambition to promote science and technology in HK. It was the perfect environment to conduct far reaching research activities... in a wonderful natural setting!

Starting as Lecturer in the Department of Biology in 1993, you became successfully Chair Professor in 2005 and were appointed Dean of Science last year. Such a success, in less than fifteen years, is an outstanding performance! It is obviously the result of your dedication and of your talent.

Former Director of the "Biotechnology Research Institute", Founding Director of the "Molecular Neuroscience Center" (MNC) and Director of the "State Key Laboratory" of Molecular Neuroscience, you are internationally recognized for your discoveries in neurotrophic factors as potential agents in the treatment of neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

But these achievements would not by themselves explain why we are here tonight. We are here also because of the essential role you played in bringing France, Hong Kong and mainland China closer together in the field of science. You used your many qualities and talents to build bridges between France and Hong Kong.

Friendship between France and Hong Kong is indeed not only a matter of business. It's also a long and fruitful partnership in research and higher education.

Let me give you just few figures! France is the 1st destination in continental Europe for the students of Hong Kong. In 2010, more than 400 Hong Kong students came to study in France, 10% more than the previous year. On the other hand, and maybe surprisingly for some of you, France is ranked 1st in Europe for sending students to Hong Kong.

As a good friend of France, you were in Paris last month to attend a meeting of the 2012 "For women in Science" jury. This prestigious prize was launched more than 10 years ago by the

Prof. Ip, Doyen de la Faculté de Science, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Chevalier dans l'Ordre National du Mérite – 20 octobre 2011



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“L’OREAL Corporate Foundation” in association with UNESCO. You are very familiar with this prize, since you were awarded it in 2004 and since you were already a member of the jury in 2007 and 2009.

You have many colleagues in French institutions, such as Christine Petit from “Institut Pasteur”, Jean Mafoulier from “Ecole Normale Supérieure” and Claire Legay from “Université Paris Diderot”. You are very active in building cooperation to enhance student exchange or research activities. Your department hosts also the international associate laboratory “ROCADE”, a collaborative project between the French “National Centre for Scientific Research” (CNRS), University Paul Sabatier in Toulouse and HKUST.

You were a precursor in building bridges between France and Hong Kong research institutions. But as the French Consul General, I am particularly thankful to you since you seem to have created a trend. France has indeed many friends in HKUST. More than fifteen agreements are already in place between HKUST and French institutions. In 10 years, 120 professors of HKUST applied to the France Hong Kong joint research scheme. But we have to continue! With the support of my team, a delegation of HKUST led by President Tony Chan will also visit Paris at the end of the month to meet some famous French institutions.

France is famous in Hong Kong for luxury products and wine but I think it has a lot to bring to Hong Kong in other fields, like science and technology and that a greater cooperation in that regard can help meet the wish of the HK authorities to diversify the economy.

Naomi Oreskes, a famous American science historian once said: “The question is not why there haven't been more women in science; the question is rather why we have not heard more about them”. Dear Nancy, this evening, I am happy that we are here to show our collective appreciation of your great accomplishments.

Prof. Nancy Ip, in recognition of your outstanding contribution to the community and your constant support to establishing cooperation between France, Hong Kong and mainland China in the field of science and higher education, I am proud to bestow upon you this decoration, as a sign of appreciation for the great work of a friend of France.

Prof. Nancy IP, au nom du Président de la République, et en vertu des pouvoirs qui me sont conférés, je vous fais Chevalier dans l'ordre national du mérite.