

Letter from the Alumni Affairs Coordinator:

Richard Morris, former CUHK LAW teacher, inducted to The Law Society of Hong Kong Roll of Honour 2024

It is for me a rare, indeed unprecedented, privilege to pen as head of Alumni Affairs a piece of my own in our newsletter. Today I do so - not only in service of my faculty, but in service of a friend. I write now of Richard Morris, a former CUHK LAW teacher with whom many of you will be familiar. I write following the announcement that Richard was this month inducted to The Law Society of Hong Kong's 2024 Roll of Honour.

You can read *The Hong Kong Lawyer's* coverage of this at [https://www.hk-lawyer.org/sites/default/files/e-magazines/HONG-KONG-LAWYER-JOURNAL-\(DECEMBER-2024\)/](https://www.hk-lawyer.org/sites/default/files/e-magazines/HONG-KONG-LAWYER-JOURNAL-(DECEMBER-2024)/).

Many of you will remember Richard from his days at CUHK LAW. Former students and colleagues still benefit from the magnitude of his contribution to the Faculty from 2008, which he gave in spades for over a decade. He taught a panoply of subjects across all programmes. Students remember Richard as a keen and versatile teacher, who brought to the subjects he taught a level of practice experience that is to this day unrivalled. He was as an administrator fair and industrious to a fault. From 2009 he served as PCLL Director. After over a decade in that post he moved to head Alumni Affairs, the seat I, on his recommendation, now occupy.

But what you may not be so familiar with are Richard's decades of achievement and contribution that preceded his time at CUHK LAW. Perusing the piece on him in *The Hong Kong Lawyer*, I read things I knew. His early life and education in England and his beginning legal practice in Chichester. His coming out to Hong Kong in 1977, joining Deacons and becoming capital partner in 1985. And of course his eventual transition to academia in 2008. There were other things I did not know, for instance the true extent of his contribution not only to Hong Kong legal practice but the city's very constitutional present and future. Richard's work on the Committee on the Draft Basic Law speaks for itself. That work reverberates to this day through the black letter law and spirit of this foundational document that underpins our city's constitutional order.

And then there were other things I read in the article about which I did not know but, on reading, I chuckled and thought – that is so Richard. About his first boss, Christopher Doman, who told him “early on that litigators were the real lawyers.” (Trite but gospel truth. Sorry, non-litigators.) About the same boss who “tore to shreds [Richard's] early and horrible attempts at letter-writing and educated [him] in the art of a good letter, a very important skill for a solicitor.” (Decades later Richard would with equal zest studiously mock my writing, as I am sure he is doing now as he reads this piece.) His practice of “respect[ing] support staff: without them you cannot function.” (I witnessed this unfailing respect first-hand.) His observation that “Hong Kong is a very small town, and one small piece of deceit can destroy a reputation.” (Ignore this and it will be your own funeral, students of the law.)

Richard's induction to The Law Society of Hong Kong's Honour Roll is a tribute to all of his prodigious achievements, quiet wisdom and outstanding character. It is a great award for a great man, sure. But, to me, Richard is still the same poised humorous old-school Oxonian gentleman I met in 2008, and who I instantaneously thought looks more like Chief of MI6 than a CUHK schoolmaster. Sixteen years on, he is still the same friend I much enjoy seeing for a bite or coffee when he is not off busy seeing the world in content retirement with his wife, children and grandchildren. I reveal here a little secret. To this day, years after he left our halls, I still enjoy meeting him most when he visits campus, forever a faculty ally. For seeing my friend there always brings me back in time, to when his office was but a few doors from my own.

Congratulations, Richard.

Matt Cheung