

Hong Kong Island West Rotary Club

Some Remarkable Stories

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The Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island West (香港西區扶輪社) used to be one of the prominent clubs in Hong Kong since its inception in 1954. Here are some of the remarkable stories that may gain your round of applause ...

(1) Home for Typhoon Wanda Disaster Victims in 1962

In late 1962, the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island West built a Rotary Village that provided homes for typhoon-stricken families. Covering what was formerly a barren hillside on Mount Davis (摩星嶺), the Village (*see photo*) provided permanent housing for 64 families, a total of 337 persons, all were victims of the 1962 Typhoon Wanda.



Typhoon Wanda was the most intense tropical cyclone on record in Hong Kong. It was the 59th disturbance in the record-breaking 1962 Pacific typhoon season, forming in August from east of The Philippines. Typhoon Wanda reached peak winds of 175 km/h (110 mph) in the South China Sea, and it made landfall on Hong Kong on September 1, producing gusts of 261 km/h (161 mph) which, in combination with a high storm surge, damaged thousands of huts and left 72,000 people homeless. Wanda left a total of 434 deaths, and it is estimated that an identical typhoon striking today would cause HK\$2.6 billion (US\$335 million) in losses.



Rotary International President Nitish C. Laharry (*Calcutta, India*) (*first left in photo*) inspected the Village during his presidential visit to Hong Kong in spring 1963. President Laharry said that the Village typified Rotary at its best and urged the Club to follow up its US\$50,000 project with personal service to the homeless. This Rotary Village Project was written in the 1962-1963 Annual Report by George R. Means, General Secretary of Rotary International. The Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island West was awarded “Project of the Year” during the District 345 Conference held in Taipei.

[\(2\) The First Club in 1975 with 100% Paul Harris Fellows](#)

Forty-seven years after receiving its first donation (US\$26.50 from the Rotary Club of Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A.), The Rotary Foundation has marked two significant milestones in 1975 on its path of working for international understanding.

One of them was by the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island West (District 345) which has become the first Rotary Club where every single member was a Paul Harris Fellow. At the same time that Wilfred Wong became the 68th member of his Club to be designated a Paul Harris Fellow who made the

Club 100%, the entire Club received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Foundation's trustees. Both presentations were made by Rotary International Past President "Bill" William E. Walk Jr., 1974-1975 Chairman of The Rotary Foundation Trustees, who was in Asia to represent the Rotary International President at several conferences.

Moreover, in the Year 1977-1978, the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island West held the highest record in District 345 of having 88 Paul Harris Fellows with a membership of 68. The District 345 was composed with 83 clubs – 69 in Taiwan, 13 in Hong Kong and 1 in Macao.



Past Rotary International President Bill Walk presents a special Certificate of Appreciation to the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island West. Receiving the citation are (from left) Past Club presidents C. M. Wong, Herman Chan, and at right, Past District 345 Governor Hari Harilela.

(3) Rotary Scholar of 1977 bestowed Dame of British Empire in 1997



A Hong Kong native young woman Rosanna Wong (王葛鳴) sponsored in 1977 by the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island West a Rotary Foundation Scholarship to advance her post-graduate study of social work at the Toronto University in Canada, was invested in 1997 by Queen Elizabeth II of United Kingdom a Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (D.B.E.). Rosanna

was honored for her strong record of public and community services. She was the second Chinese woman conferred such title. At age 44, she was one of the youngest individuals to be so recognized. Previously, Rosanna has been decorated 2 times by the Queen: Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) in 1990, and a higher Order of Commander (C.B.E.) in 1994.

Dr. The Honourable Dame Rosanna Wong (王菊鳴博士), DBE, *HonDSocSc (HKIEd)*, *HonDSocSc (HKU)*, *HonDSocSc (HkPolyU)*, *HonLLD (Toronto)*, *HonLLD (CUHK)*, PhD (*UCDavis*), MA (*UCDavis*), MSc (*London*), MSW (*Toronto*), BSocSc (*HKU*), JP, born in 1952, was educated at St. Stephen's Girls College (聖士提反女子中學). As a student and a Christian, she did voluntary work for the underprivileged, and her active involvement in this work testified to an early call to the vocation of social service. Right from the start, Rosanna was sure of her calling, and her subsequent educational training, and professional and political achievements all bear witness to a life that has been lived in fulfilment of her vocation and in justification of her faith.

Rosanna entered the University of Hong Kong (香港大學) in 1972 to read for a degree in Social Science. Upon graduation in 1975, she applied for a job at the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (香港青年協會) – her only job application – and after further training at the University of Toronto where she obtained a Master in Social Work in 1979, she became, at the young age of 28, Executive Director of the Federation.

In the early years when she was Executive Director, she had to negotiate with government agencies who dealt with youth problems as a law and order issue. The Federation's remedial work for young criminals provided a much-needed human dimension to the official approach. At the same time, she planned and established new programs that were preventative and developmental. These included counselling services for young people at risk, a hotline service for problem youth, social skills training, moral and civil education in schools, and leadership development.

The Federation offered Rosanna a place and an opportunity to serve the community, and especially, its young, and in turn, her organizational skills and ability to inspire and motivate enabled the Federation to expand progressively under her leadership. Today, the Federation is the biggest and most comprehensive provider of youth services in Hong Kong. In over thirty years of service, Rosanna did not waver in her belief that it is in the nurture of its young that a society affirms its commitment to a better future.

To better co-ordinate the human and other resources she deployed so that those under her care could be best served, Rosanna sought to improve her own managerial skills through further study. In 1983, she obtained a Master of Science degree from the London School of Economics, followed by a Diploma in Executive Management from the Chinese University of Hong Kong (香港中文大學) in 1985, and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from the University of California in Davis, U.S.A., in 1997. During this period, rigorous formal training went hand in hand with increasing participation in public affairs and political life in Hong Kong. Her achievements both within the academy and in the public sphere demonstrate a capacity for hard work and a single-minded devotion to duty, qualities that ensured her recognition by all with whom she came into contact.

A Paul Harris Fellow recommended by Herbert K. Lau and named by Tolo Harbour Rotary Club (吐露港扶輪社), Rosanna is an Unofficial Justice of the Peace for Hong Kong (香港非官守太平紳士) since 1989. From 1985 to 1991, Rosanna Wong was an Unofficial Member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council (香港立法局非官守議員). For part of these six years, she was also an Unofficial Member of the Hong Kong Executive Council (香港行政局非官守議員) in 1988-1991, and her appointment to the Hong Kong SAR Executive Council (香港特別行政區行政會議成員) continued until 2002. She also chaired the Hong Kong Housing Authority from 1993 to 2000, and was also Chairperson of the Education Commission. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, in the face of much wariness, doubt and hesitation,

Rosanna fought hard for the establishment of a Youth Commission, and for the lowering of the voting age to eighteen. In these hard-won successes, she fully demonstrated her confidence in the ability of the young people of Hong Kong to shoulder responsibility, and the need to open up channels for their social and political participation, and for inclusiveness in government planning of youth policies.

Her contribution to the community has reached out from youth services to other sectors, and in the performance of duty, she shows a fundamental respect for the people she serves, whatever their class or status. As she says in an article, “In any social service policy, the most important issue is that it must protect and respect individual dignity... In Hong Kong, we have to be careful in ensuring that whatever system we adopt will not injure individual self-esteem, and will not bring social discord. As long as the citizens understand clearly that their enjoyment of appropriate social service is a right, and that the government is caring and recognizes the provision of such service is a responsibility, then problems can be resolved.” Rosanna understands that sometimes citizens need to be reminded of their rights and governments need to be reminded of their responsibilities.

The trials and tribulations of public life take their toll on even the most able. In moments of adversity when even her best efforts seem to be of no avail, Rosanna would turn temporarily away from active life to contemplation and self-reflection. She finds help and succour from her religious faith. It is in her faith that Rosanna finds constant inspiration and constant renewal. Rosanna has devoted her energies to the welfare and well-being of the people of Hong Kong, and in her, Hong Kong has also nurtured a strong leader who is loyal, open and humane.

Since 2003, Rosanna has also served as a Member of National Committee, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), People’s Republic of China (中國人民政治協商會議全國委員會委員).

Rosanna has been conferred doctorates by these universities:

- (1) Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*), The Chinese University of Hong Kong (1996)
- (2) Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*), University of Toronto, Canada (1999)
- (3) Doctor of Social Science (*honoris causa*), Hong Kong Polytechnic University (2002)
- (4) Doctor of Social Science (*honoris causa*), University of Hong Kong (2003)
- (5) Doctor of Social Science (*honoris causa*), Hong Kong Institute of Education (2004)

