

A Most Respected Educator - Mr. CHEONG WAI FUNG, MBE

Wong Sau Man (Year 1957-1958)

Since the inception of the school in 1954, Queen Elizabeth School (QES) has grown into one of the most prestigious in the region, with former students taking up important posts in all fields and areas that help Hong Kong to grow and prosper and progress well into the Twenty-First Century and all the years beyond.

The school's continuous remarkable success and progress owe much to the founding principal of the school, Mr. Cheong Wai Fung, who was unflinching in his efforts as a dedicator to education back in the 50s and 60s, when Hong Kong was still struggling with all sorts of social problems such as impoverishment.

Children born in Hong Kong were lucky if they could study in a government school where school fees were nominal or even free. I was one such pupil back in 1957 when I was a Lower Six pupil in Belilios Public School (BPS) where I enjoyed a free education because of my family condition. However, at the end of my Lower Six year at BPS, only 4 girls wanted to go on to Upper Six as most other girls were leaving to go on to nursing or secretarial schools. Hence, the 4 of us were told that we had to finish our matriculation in QES in Kowloon.

On the day I went for an interview at QES, I was filled with uncertainty and apprehension. Since I lived on Hong Kong side, I well knew that my father could not afford the extra student monthly tickets for the Star Ferry and Kowloon Bus on top of the fare for the HK bus. Anyway, I plucked up my teenage courage to go for the interview with the Principal, Mr. Cheong Wai Fung. My very first impression of Mr. Cheong was his dignified solemnity, which made me feel uneasy. I took a deep breath before I answered his questions on my intended Advanced Level choices etc. Then, he asked me to tell him about my problems if there were any. I told him very honestly about my family situation and the problems that confronted me. When I finished, he looked at me with a fatherly smile and told me not to worry, but just to accept the offer to finish Upper Six at QES.

When the term began that September, I was very happy to find that Mr. Cheong had helped solve all my problems, such as a free place, and, on top of it all, he had helped me get a student grant for Upper Six students. The grant helped me to solve the monthly transport issue and the cost of a simple lunch on school days.

Mr. Cheong was so kind and considerate that he told the four BPS girls to attend classes at QES in our BPS school uniform, instead of spending extra money on acquiring QES uniforms since these were to be worn for only one year in Upper Six at QES.

I really need to stress that Mr. Cheong, who really treated all the students with his loving heart, was a most wonderful and exceptional person and educationalist, as well as being the professional founding principal of QES. I feel so proud of being a QES student, even if it was only for one year. Furthermore, I feel grateful for getting to know Mr. Cheong who helped to give me the opportunity to successfully finish my Matriculation, a qualification for entry to university.

All in all, I want to extend my much belated gratitude to the most wonderful founding principal of QES, Mr. Cheong Wai Fung. My very best wishes to his children and their families too.