

CE expresses sorrow over passing of Sir David Akers-Jones

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (September 30) expressed deep sorrow over the passing of Sir David Akers-Jones.

"After coming to Hong Kong in the 1950s, Sir David had all along called Hong Kong his home. Before Hong Kong's return to the Motherland, he served in various posts in the Government, the highest-ranking of which was the Chief Secretary. After retirement, he took up work on local youth and charities in the Mainland. Committed to serving the community all his life with distinguished achievements, Sir David was held in high regard by people of various sectors. He was awarded the Grand Bauhinia Medal in 2002.

"Serving the Government for 30 years before Hong Kong's return to the Motherland, Sir David was the Chief Secretary from 1985 to 1987 and had been the acting Governor for a few months. He took charge of work in the New Territories in earlier years, during which he served as District Officer in a few districts there as well as the Secretary for the New Territories. Committed to advancing various developments to improve the lives of residents, he took up a vital role in the development of new towns in the New Territories. Meanwhile, he attached great importance to the provision of accommodation to members of the public and took an active role in implementing a wide range of housing policies across different positions. His remarkable leadership and dedication during his public service laid an important foundation for the long-term development of Hong Kong.

"Sir David continued to serve Hong Kong after he left the civil service in 1987. He was the first non-official Chairman of the Hong Kong Housing Authority, and a Hong Kong Affairs Adviser, contributing to the transition of Hong Kong. He established the Business and Professionals Federation of Hong Kong, a pioneering think tank, in 1990 and had offered valuable views for the Policy Address and on major social issues to the Government over the years. I often consulted him while I served in different posts. He was particularly concerned about young people. In addition to being a mentor to grassroots and university students, Sir David also founded the '10,000 Miles Friendship Trek' exchange programme, which has been held for 17 years to this year, to provide youth exchange opportunities in the Mainland, sparing no effort in nurturing the younger generations.

"Sir David's care for the community did not stop in Hong Kong. He was also committed to charitable activities in the Mainland. The project 'Wu Zhi Qiao' founded by him encourages university student volunteers from Hong Kong and the Mainland to design and build footbridges and village facilities in remote and poor villages in the Mainland in order to enhance the understanding of students to the Mainland and assist them in developing integrity and a commitment to society and life. As well, his Beam International Foundation has in the past 28 years been devoted to organising

medical volunteers from various places around the world to provide free surgeries for underprivileged children with cleft lips and cleft palates in the Mainland. Having had the privilege to take part in the charitable activities he organised on several occasions, I hold deep respect for his devotion and passion to improve the well-being of the people in the Mainland.

"Sir David had all along been a senior whom I respected very much. The great support and sincere views given to me during the visits I paid to him in the past few weeks moved me immensely. His spirit in serving the community and his contributions to the Hong Kong society will stay in our hearts forever. On behalf of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and in my personal capacity, I would like to extend my deepest condolences to his family.

"Sir David, you will be sorely missed, always," Mrs Lam said.