



郭清華女士
Ms. Annie Kwok

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盛事善事為社群 文化橋樑從心建

投身酒店業30多年的郭清華，不但是位籌備宴會和款客服務的專家，亦是各種大型活動、舉足輕重盛事的幕後功臣，曾參與締造了不少歷史時刻。她又把豐富的專業知識和經驗獻給社群，從盛事延伸至善事，義務協助社區籌劃高水準的慈善活動，不分主流或族裔社群。此外，又致力促進主流與華裔社區之間的聯繫，還熱衷於教導下一代，為「款待業」賦予新的意義。

郭清華把自己形容為一道橋。這是她看到自己一直在工作和社群中擔當的角色，她也不諱言這是一個獨特的角色；畢竟，像她一樣熱愛搞盛事，做善事，又具有此等專業知識和豐富經驗的人實在不多。更難得的是，她天生一股服務社群的熱心，絕不斤斤計較付出多少，也不需要表揚或回報。每當談到難忘的盛事，她總是說可以參與和處身其中，已是最大的滿足。

過去30多年，她曾任職香港和加拿大的高級酒店，也曾在大多倫多會展中心宴會部工作14年。在主流社會取得成就之餘，她又積極參與華人社區舉辦的活動，尤其是籌備慈善活動，務求把活動的質素提高，取得更美滿的成果。

另一方面，她又把中國傳統文化特色介紹給主流，例如1992年，在費爾蒙皇家約克酒店首次引入正宗中國菜，開多倫多高級酒店之先例，繼於1995年在大多倫多會展中心引進中菜，帶動一股新的跨文化飲宴潮流。

2007年退休後，她更進一步義務參與籌劃社區內的大小活動，例如作為港加商會創會以來的活躍會員，繼續推動港加活動，甚至跨越地域文化限制，足跡遍佈中、港、加，以致世界各地。

華麗上路 幾度轉身

郭清華談起她如何踏足酒店業，不禁從小時候的一段「美味」回憶開始。猶記她母親最愛吃香港半島酒店的Lopera 巧克力蛋糕；家境雖然並非富裕，爸爸也會不時帶一家去半島品嚐太太的心頭好。年紀小小的郭清華樂於置身五星級豪華酒店，卻沒有想過有一天竟會每天進出這酒店大堂，而且還在此走上她的「華麗人生路」。

也許是個性使然，郭清華高中畢業後毫不猶豫選上前赴夏威夷唸旅遊業管理，她自言從小佻皮又愛玩，性格外向好動，是一個天生的「搞事」能手，可幸她搞的都是服務大眾和客戶的事。

話說她選讀了旅遊業管理系，主修科目是酒店與餐飲行政管理，當中也涵蓋客戶服務、活動策劃和營銷等層面；未來要走的路，也就此一槌定音。

到大學三年級暑假，她寫了44封信申請暑期實習職位，最終取錄她的，竟是香港半島酒店集團，原來當時酒店公關部一位助理經理剛好短期離職，於是由她暫代。回想起上班頭幾天已碰著《鐵金剛007》電影攝製隊在酒店內取景，加上置身華麗高雅的工作場所，興奮之情至今仍然難以忘懷。

1974年畢業後，她正式受聘於半島酒店集團，滿懷希望回港步上青雲路。然而1975年，隨著家人移民加拿大，她亦移居溫哥華，重頭再找工作，樂觀的她，既相信只要有人到的地方便有酒店，也就是說，工作機會到處都有；何況，她也毫不介意擔當的是甚麼職位。經多番努力，她終於獲溫哥華希爾頓酒店聘用，其後又返港任職香港希爾頓酒店，晉升為宴會部經理。

1983年，郭清華再度走上移居之路，這回也是為了與家人

共同進退，當時丈夫因工作關係要移居至多倫多，她也作好準備迎接另一個新開始。可是那年剛遇上經濟衰退，她唯一能找到的工作是在希爾頓海港城堡酒店當電話接線生。然而，她絕不介懷「變相降職」，並且慶幸依然可以在酒店任職。終於守得雲開，不久以後重回宴會部任職。

1990年，她的事業更上層樓，轉往費爾蒙皇家約克酒店任職宴會部經理，成為這酒店1923年開業以來第一位擔當此職的女性和華裔。

1994年，她又被邀加盟大多倫多會展中心任職宴會部主管，並參與當時南翼的擴充計畫。

1996年，南翼開幕在即時，她患上了乳癌，要每週接受一次化療，她卻沒有因此而停步，只管全力以赴，最後勝過了病魔，也完成艱鉅的任務。

家國社區有情人

2007年是郭清華的退休年，然而她依然「以活動為生」，繼而從心出發，以豐富的經驗和專長回饋社會，此間，她亦對港、加、中國、及社區傾出關注之情，參與締造了好些歷史性盛事。

其中最難忘的，包括2015年協助香港貿易發展局籌劃了「邁向亞洲、首選香港」研討會；這是貿發局在加拿大舉行的有史以來最大型推廣活動，有千多位代表參加。其中高潮是香港特首梁振英到訪，與多倫多華人社區會面，以及與多倫多地區貿易局和港加商會舉行早餐會議。對她而言，別具意義的是，特首訪問多倫多的一天是 6 月 8 日，正好是她的64 歲生日。她笑說當日籌備了一次500人晚宴，感覺有如和500人一起慶祝生日。

她曾見證的歷史時刻，包括1994年國泰航空首度香港直航多倫多，為此舉行慶祝晚會、1997年香港回歸中國，她策劃在大多倫多會展中心衛星直播政權交接儀式。

此外，也難忘1997年國家主席江澤民首次訪問多倫多、2005及2010年國家主席胡錦濤到訪多倫多和渥太華，她先後代表多倫多會展中心協助加中貿易理事會籌備款待晚宴。

她特別回味與珍惜的，不光是歷史性盛事，也有一些溫馨和別具意義的社區活動，例如「香港聯校情人節晚會」，便是她從1984年起一直參與，並擔任籌委會成員。此外，又曾任聖保祿學校多倫多分會會長，她對中學母校特別有感情，因為她母親也同屬此校。

2007年，她開始擔任孟嘗會的董事，對該會一年一度舉行的重點籌款項目「孟嘗之夜」，亦早有參與，並於2011年擔任共同主席。

對於主流社區慈善活動，她同樣積極參與，例如多年來一直參與「大多市愛滋病社區」籌辦的慈善時裝表演，以及聖米高天主教長者組織的活動。於2007年，又參與策劃「金盤廚子大賽」，為2008年參加北京奧運會的加拿大選手籌款。

歷史時刻繼續創

要計算郭清華曾經成功籌劃的盛事，實在不甚可能，然而她相信分享自己的成功經驗是絕對可能和值得去做，因此她很著力將經驗與年青一輩分享，甚至認為自己職業生涯的一大「亮點」是造就和培育了不少有志晉身酒店業的年輕人。

多年來，在她任職的各間機構，她都會向多間提供款待業課程的專業學院和大專收取實習生，並且擔任他們的導師，在不同範疇以各種方式提供意見及指引。對她而言，看到他們成

長以至在業內取得成就，是無可比擬的「回報」。這些年來，受她所教的後輩遍佈世界各地的酒店，她也可說是桃李滿天下。事實上，就連她的兒子現時也是從事飲食業，她所樹立的榜樣不言而喻。

對於年輕後進，她有好些成功格言樂於分享，首先是要「事事關己，參與投身」，而且要與時並進。談到聘用職員，她說最重視的是態度；一個人待人接物是否真誠，客戶很容易感覺得到。此外，她又說懂得靈活變通是另一要素，尤其這行業，時刻要處理意想不到的突發事件或情況，必須隨機應變，作好後備方案，並且懂得建立和調動資源。

與她一席話，恍若走進了盛事的後台，看到舞台背後的真功夫。對於「寶刀未老」的她而言，歷史時刻自然要繼續締造，盛事仍要繼續上演。

展望來年2017，她表示正熱切期待香港回歸20週年，和加拿大150周年的慶祝活動，希望可以出一分力，創造歷史里程。



四歲大
At 4 years old



聖保祿天主教小學六年級
St. Paul's Primary Catholic
School - Grade 6



聖保祿學校畢業典禮 (1969)
St. Paul's Convent School-Speech Day
(1969)



兒子李康恩婚禮 (2008)
Son Gerald Li's Wedding (2008)



在費爾蒙皇家約克酒店歡度“四十大壽” (1991)
“Big 40” at the Fairmont Royal York (1991)

「金盤廚子大賽」
與賈斯汀·杜魯多
及施珍珍 (2009)
Gold Medal Plates,
at Banff with Justin
Trudeau, Dorothy Pang
(2009)



加中貿易理事會在廣
州 (2013)
Canada China Business
Council event at
Guangzhou (2013)



聯邦自由黨晚宴
(2000)
Confederation Dinner
(2000)



「邁向亞洲 首選香港」研討會, 香港特首梁振英到訪
(2015); 加中貿易理事會接待國家主席胡錦濤。
With Chief Executive the Hon. C. Y. Leung (2015); President
Hu Jintao, People's Republic of China



與成龍和丈夫李廣豪在
Skydome (2005)
With Jackie Chan and husband Peter
Li at the Skydome (2005)



與前紐約市長Rudolph Guiliani (2002)；與前美國總統Bill Clinton (2004)；
與前美國副總統伉儷 Al & Tipper Gore (2005)
An Evening with Rudolph Guiliani (2002), with Bill Clinton (2004),
with Al & Tipper Gore (2005)



港加商會2016新春晚宴與芮紹能、Glen
Dierker及歐陽健昌

Hong Kong Canada Business Association 2016
Chinese New Year Ball, with Andrew Yui, Glen
Dierker, Dennis Au Yeung



與劉兆和在孟嘗會15年義工服務獎 (2011)
Mon Sheong Foundation 15th Year Volunteer Award
with Garth Low (2011)



和孫兒李晞婷、李庭謙 (2016)

With grandchildren Paityn Grace, Harry (2016)



全家福 - 兒媳和孫兒 (2014)

Family all together (2014)

Ms. Annie Kwok

Annie Kwok, an expert in organizing large functions and galas, joined the hospitality industry over 30 years ago and was responsible for the planning and execution of many significant public events. Through her pivotal work behind the scenes, countless historic moments were made. She has shared her expertise and dedicated herself to the community, extending her work from corporate event planning to volunteering at charitable events for both mainstream and the ethnic community. In addition, Annie has been working hard to facilitate exchanges between Canadian and Chinese businesses, with government agencies and at the community level. She is passionate about sharing her experience with the younger generation, giving new meaning to the word "hospitality".

Annie describes herself as 'a cultural bridge', a unique role that she enjoys playing because she loves being involved with large events and being able to help out in the community; at the same time very few people have her level of knowledge and experience. Also rare is the fact that Annie is naturally enthusiastic about volunteering. She is not preoccupied with how much she gets paid; nor does she need recognition or reward from others. She says the fact that she is participating in a memorable event already gives her great satisfaction.

Over the past 30 years, she worked in luxury hotels in Hong Kong and Canada, and had also worked at the Metro Toronto Convention Center for 14 years. On top of her achievements in mainstream society, she is actively involved in Chinese community events. A founding member of Hong Kong Canada Business Association, she has helped organize many charitable events with a view to enhancing the quality of activities, and getting the best results.

In addition, she brought traditional Chinese culinary culture into mainstream. As an example, in 1992, she introduced authentic Chinese cuisine to the Fairmont Royal York, setting a precedent in top-ranked

hotels in Toronto; and in 1995 she also introduced the same to Metro Toronto Convention Center, leading a new wave of Asian fusion food in banquets.

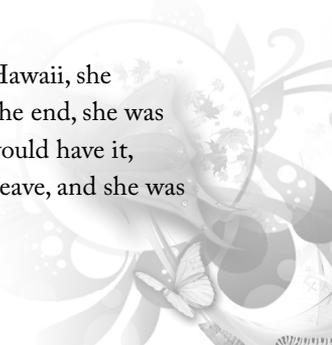
Even after retiring in 2007, Annie has continued to volunteer in planning for various large and small events within the community and across cultural boundaries, traveling throughout China, Hong Kong, and around the world for this work.

When Annie talks about how she happens to be involved in the hotel industry, she cannot help but reminisce about wonderful childhood memories of her mother's favorite L'opera chocolate cake at the Hong Kong Peninsula Hotel. Although her family was not wealthy, her father would occasionally take her mother to enjoy her favourite treat at the Peninsula. Little Annie was already exposed to the 5-star luxury hotel from a young age, but she never dreamed that one day she would be walking in and out of that hotel lobby every day, and that this would set her off to a "glamorous way of life."

Perhaps it is what her personality dictates, but without hesitation after graduating from St. Paul's Convent School, Annie departed for Hawaii to study Travel Industry Management at the University of Hawaii. Annie says growing up she was impish and playful, with a dynamic and outgoing personality. She is a natural "organizer", and fortunately her natural instincts have been put to good use in doing all the right things.

She majored in Travel Industry Management, specializing in Hotels and Restaurants, which also covered customer service, event planning and marketing. Her Business Administration degree was solid preparation for her career going forward.

In the summer of her junior year at the University of Hawaii, she wrote 44 letters to apply for a summer internship. In the end, she was accepted by the Peninsula Group of Hotels. As luck would have it, their public relations manager had to take short-term leave, and she was



hired to fill in temporarily. Annie recalled within the first days of work, she bumped into film crews shooting “Goldfinger” at the hotel. Her excitement of meeting “James Bond 007” on top of working in such gorgeous and elegant surroundings is still unforgettable to this day.

After graduating in 1974, Annie was formally hired by the Peninsula Group of Hotels and returned to Hong Kong full of hopes for a fulfilling career. However, in 1975, she decided to immigrate to Canada with her family. After landing in Vancouver, she was optimistic about finding a job soon, because she did not mind what kind of position she would get in a hotel. She also believed that where there were people, there would be hotels, and that job opportunities were everywhere. After repeated efforts, she was finally hired by Hotel Vancouver, which was run by Hilton. Subsequently Annie returned to Hong Kong and worked in Hong Kong Hilton, where she was promoted to banquet manager.

In 1983, Annie was on the move again with her family when her husband had to move to Toronto because of his work. She was ready for another new beginning, but it was just in the midst of an economic downturn, and the only job she could find was at the Harbour Castle Hilton as a switchboard operator. However, she did not mind the ‘demotion’. Annie was just glad that she could still work in a hotel. Soon enough, she was promoted to a position in the Catering & Conference Services Department.

In 1990, her career reached new heights. She switched to the Fairmont Royal York Hotel and worked there as Director of Catering, becoming the first woman and ethnic Chinese director there since the hotel opened in 1923. In 1994, she was invited to join the Metro Toronto Convention Center Catering Department, and was involved in the south wing expansion plan.

In 1996, Annie discovered that she had breast cancer, and had to undergo chemotherapy every two weeks. She did not stop her work but

instead went all out to complete the arduous task of preparing for the opening in 1997 and conquer her cancer at the same time.

2007 was Annie's year of retirement, but since then she has stayed active in the community. She shares her wealth of experience and expertise to contribute to the communities in Hong Kong, Canada, and China, participating and helping out in many historic events.

One of the most memorable events for Annie was assisting Hong Kong Trade Development Council to plan the "Think Asia – Think Hong Kong" Symposium. It was the largest promotional activity held by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council in Canada, with over a thousand attendees at the symposium. It culminated with a visit from Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun Ying to the Chinese community in Toronto, and a breakfast meeting with the Toronto Regional Board of Trade and Hong Kong Canada Business Association. For her, of special significance was the Chief Executive's visit to Toronto on June 8 coincided with her 64th birthday. She laughingly said she spent the day preparing the event for 500 people and it was as if they were all celebrating her birthday with her.

The historic moments that she had witnessed included the event to celebrate the inaugural direct flight on Cathay Pacific from Hong Kong to Toronto in 1994, and the luncheon event to celebrate the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, marked by a live broadcast via satellite of the Hong Kong reunification ceremony at the Metro Toronto Convention Center.

Also unforgettable to her are President Jiang Zemin's first visit to Toronto in 1997, and Chinese President Hu Jintao's visits to Toronto in 2005 and to Ottawa in 2010. On those occasions, she helped Canada China Business Council prepare for the evening gala events at the Metro Toronto Convention Center and at the Westin in Ottawa.

Aside from these historic events, Annie particularly cherished many

warm and meaningful community activities, such as the annual “Hong Kong Joint-Catholic School Valentine’s Ball”. She has been involved with this event since 1984, and serves as a member of the Organizing Committee.

Between 2007 and 2014, she served on the board of directors for Mon Sheong Foundation, focusing on fund-raising at the annual “Cathay Ball”, and co-chairing the gala in 2011. Since then, she has been a member of the Honorary Board of Governors for the foundation.

She has also been actively involved in mainstream charity events. For many years she was on the organizing committee for “Fashion Cares”, a signature fundraising event for the “AIDS Community of Greater Toronto”. A member of the “Golden Seniors” group at her church, the St. Michael’s Catholic Church, she organizes occasional lunch outings for the seniors. In 2007, she was on the Toronto Committee for the “Gold Medal Plates” culinary competition to raise funds for Canadian Olympic Foundation’s “Own the Podium” program.

It might not be possible to count the number of events Annie has successfully held, but she believes that it is possible and worth it to share her successful experiences. She is passionate about mentoring the younger generation, and feels that one bright light in her own career is the nurturing of the many young people who wish to enter the hospitality industry.

Over the years, in the various organizations that she worked, she would accept interns taking hospitality courses at a number of professional schools and colleges and serve as their mentors in different areas to provide advice and guidance. For her, the satisfaction of seeing them grow and achieve new heights in the industry is unparalleled by anything else. The young people that she taught are now working around the world. In fact, even her own son is engaged in the restaurant business, following the steps of his mother.

Annie has a motto to share with young people: ‘throw yourself into everything because everything is your concern’. Another motto is: ‘be relevant - change with the times’. She says the most important thing in hiring staff is their attitude. Customers can tell whether you are sincere. Flexibility and adaptability are also important elements, especially in the hospitality industry. There are always emergencies and unexpected situations, and one must be prepared to deal with them, have a backup plan and know how to build and mobilize resources.

Talking to Annie is like stepping backstage when a major production is going on, and seeing what really happens behind the scenes. Annie has a lot to offer still and she will continue to create those historic moments and make things happen.

Looking forward to the year 2017, when the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to China along with Canada’s 150th birthday will be celebrated, Annie hopes she will be able to contribute her efforts and be part of these historic milestones.

