

Catherine Joyce Symons

The First Woman Appointed to Executive Council (1976)



Dr. Symons was born in Shanghai and came to Hong Kong with her family at an early age. She entered the Diocesan Girls' School in 1926. Upon graduation, she enrolled at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Hong Kong. After graduating from the university, she returned to her alma mater as a teacher. After World War II, she enrolled at the Institute of Education of the University of London to receive training in education and graduated in 1947. Dr. Symons was appointed the Headmistress of the Diocesan Girls' School in 1953.

Dr. Symons had served on several Government committees, including the Education Board, the Transport Advisory Committee and the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee (now the University Grants Committee). She was appointed to serve on the Urban Council in 1969. Three years later she was further appointed to the Legislative Council, becoming the second female Legislative Councillor in Hong Kong. Dr. Symons embraced a unique vista of various controversial issues, particularly on three social aspects namely education, social welfare and anti-bribery. In 1976, Dr. Symons was the first woman to be appointed to Executive Council in Hong Kong.

Dr. Symons was appointed to be a Justice of the Peace in 1965. In 1971, she was awarded the Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE), and in 1978, she was awarded the Commander of the Most Excellent Order of British Empire (CBE) and was conferred an Honorary degree in Law by the University of Hong Kong.

Fung Yuet-wah, Mui Yim-ling, Wong Ying, Cho Ping and Wong Yuk-mei

The First Five Hong Kong Women Disabled Athletes Winning Paralympic Games Gold Medals (1984)



Miss MUI Yim-ling
Source: Miss MUI Yim-ling

Ms. Fung Yuet-wah suffered from polio and had difficulty in walking since her childhood. She had a keen interest in sports, especially in playing badminton in her secondary school days. Ms. Fung joined the Hong Kong Sports Association for the Physically Disabled in 1982 and received training in fencing and table tennis. Much attributed to the guidance of her coach and her effort, she won a gold medal in individual foil of fencing in the 1984 Paralympic Games.

Ms. Mui Yim-ling suffered from polio and had difficulty in walking since she was two. The incident however had not crushed her will. With the support of her parents and siblings, she lived her life with faith. In 1982, she joined the Sports Federation and took part in the "wheeling" training at the Jubilee Sports Centre in Shatin. After two years' training, Ms. Mui achieved a roaring success in the 1984 Paralympic Games and won a gold medal in the 1,500m race. She came third in the Standard Chartered 42km Marathon in 1985 and won a silver medal in a semi-marathon in Japan in the following year. In recent years, Ms. Mui has shown a strong zest in tennis and regularly takes part in competitions outside Hong Kong.

In the 1984 Paralympic Games, other than Ms. Fung Yuet-wah and Ms. Mui Yim-ling who had won gold medals in individual events, Ms. Wong Ying, Ms. Cho Ping, Ms. Wong Yuk-mei and Ms. Mui Yim-ling together also won gold medals in the Women's 4x400m Relay.

Ms. Wong Ying suffered from polio and had difficulty in walking since her childhood. When she was receiving treatment in the hospital, Ms. Wong joined the activities of the Hong Kong Sports Association for the Physically Disabled. As a juvenile she came into contact with athletics and displayed a strong interest in the sport thereafter. After years of tough training, she together with her team members won in the Women's 4x400m Relay in the 1984 Paralympic Games. She switches to fencing afterwards and won a silver medal in the 1988 Paralympic Games.

Ms. Cho Ping received treatment at the physiotherapy department of the Kowloon Hospital because of her disability in walking. Owing to her passion for sports and her readiness to accept challenges, she soon represented the Kowloon Hospital to take part in its annual athletic

meeting with excellent results. She started to receive athletic training at the Hong Kong Sports Institute in 1982. In 1984, she took part in 4x400m Relay in the Paralympic Games and won a gold medal. Today, Ms. Cho still has a deep affection for sports and is actively undergoing training as a rower to prepare for the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games.

Ms. Wong Yuk-mei had difficulty in walking after her illness during childhood. She came to know the Hong Kong Sports Association for the Physically Disabled in 1979 and became interested in wheelchair basketball. As both wheelchair basketball and athletic events demanded a master of speed, Ms. Wong also received athletic training and set her goal towards the 1984 Paralympic Games. Never wavered from her goal, she outperformed the other candidates in Hong Kong's preliminary match. Elected to the team of 4x400m Relay, she together with her teammates held championship in the finals.



The Gold Medalists of 4x400m Relay in the 1984 Paralympic Games:
Miss WONG Ying, Ms. CHO Ping,
Miss MUI Yim-ling and Miss WONG Yuk-mei
Source: Ms. CHO Ping



Ms. FUNG Yuet-wah
Source: Ms. FUNG Yuet-wah

Lydia Selina Dunn

The First Female Senior Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council and the Executive Council in Hong Kong (1985 and 1988)



Ms. Lydia Dunn originated from Panyu, Guangdong Province and was born in 1940 in Hong Kong. She joined the Swire Group (Hong Kong) after graduation from the university. She was a director of the company from 1978 to 2003. She has also been a director of the Swire Pacific Limited since 1981. Between 1981 and 1996, she served as a director of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, the first female appointed to this post.

Apart from developing her career in the commercial sector, Ms. Dunn had also been active in the political arena in Hong Kong. In 1976, she was appointed an Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council by Governor Murray MacLehose. In 1985, Ms. Dunn was appointed the Senior Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council, first female being appointed as such. In 1988, she was appointed the Senior Unofficial Member of the Executive Council, again the first female in that position.

In 1989, she was vested as a Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (DBE), and in 1990 was made Baroness, the first Chinese to be made a life peer. In 1995, Ms. Dunn retired from the post of Senior Unofficial Member of the Executive Council and emigrated to England.

Catherine Che Kuk-hung

The First Hong Kong Athlete Winning a Gold Medal in the Asian Games (1986)



In the 1978 Asian Games held in Bangkok, the Hong Kong Bowling Team won a copper medal in Women Trios Tenpin Bowling event. Ms. Che was a member of the Team. She also won a copper medal in the Women Singles Tenpin Bowling event. In the 1986 Asian Games held in Seoul, Ms. Che won the first Asian Games Gold Medal in Women Singles Tenpin Bowling event in Hong Kong history, as well as a silver medal in the Women Masters event.

Ms. Che retired from the Hong Kong Bowling Team in 1997. But she continues to promote the development of tenpin bowling activities and coach junior athletes on a voluntary basis, reflecting her zeal for tenpin bowling.

Rosa Chak

The First Chinese Female Civil Airliner Pilot in Hong Kong (1989)



Ms. Rosa Chak graduated from the Maryknoll Father's School. She then joined the Civil Aviation Department for a six-year aviation training and a one-year job contract afterwards. She also obtained a private pilot license during this training period. In 1998, Ms. Chak joined the Dragonair as a cadet pilot. Upon completion of a one-year commercial aviation training in Scotland and having obtained a license in the field, she was promoted to second co-pilot, becoming the first Chinese female civil airliner pilot. In the same year, she was further promoted to be a co-pilot. Ms. Chak was promoted to be a captain in 1998, the first Chinese female captain in Hong Kong.

Picture Source: Sing Tao News Corporation Limited