

香港前高級公務員協會 有限公司

HONG KONG FORMER SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS ASSOCIATION LTD.

OBITUARY NOTICE

It is with great sadness that we learned of our Past President, **Mr James So Yiu-cho** (蘇耀祖), passing away on Friday, 31 January 2025.

Mr James So Yiu-cho was born in Hong Kong on 16 February 1940. He was educated in Hong Kong, first at Diocesan Boy's School (1950-1959) and then at the Hong Kong University (1959-1962), graduating with a BA (Hons) degree, majoring in History.

Upon graduation, Mr So joined the service of the Hong Kong Government first as an Assistant Education Officer, teaching English and History at Senior Forms in Queen's College. In August 1966, he became an Administrative Officer of the Hong Kong Government.

During his long career in the Hong Kong Government as an administrator, Mr So served in a wide variety of posts, gathering useful experience as he progressed and advanced. In the early days, he served as an Assistant Financial Officer in the Finance Branch of the Government Secretariat, when he was involved in budgetary and financial control. Later, he served as City District Commissioner, Kowloon, Assistant Director of the Urban Services Department and Principal Assistant Secretary in the Home Affairs Department and Branch, dealing with city administration and the promotion and development of recreation and cultural policy in Hong Kong. In these posts his responsibilities included the planning and development of major recreational and cultural projects such as the Coliseum in Hung Hom, the Space Museum, the Science Museum and the Cultural Centre and Arts Museum in Tsim Sha Tsui and including other duties such as the management of abattoirs, markets and public hygiene and cleansing.

In the late 1970s he was promoted to Deputy Secretary of the Government's Civil Service Branch, responsible for staff management and development, and staff relations. He was Chairman of the Administrative Officers recruitment board on two occasions.

The critical point of his career came when he was appointed Private Secretary to Governor MacLehose during the latter's final years as Governor of Hong Kong. Upon leaving Government House, Mr So first took up the difficult and challenging task of dealing with the Vietnamese refugee problem in Deputy Secretary for Security, Special Duties post. Later, he was promoted to Secretary for Administration and Information post, where one of his major tasks was to organise Hong Kong's participation in World Expo 1986 in Vancouver to promote Hong Kong's image overseas. Thereafter, he became Commissioner for Transport, managing and administering Hong Kong's complex transport network, including its highly successful public transport system.

In 1989, he took up the Director of Urban Services post, where he was responsible for administering Hong Kong's municipal services. It was during his time as Director, that the Hong Kong Science Museum and the Cultural Centre and Arts Museum in Tsim Sha Tsui were commissioned.

Finally, in 1991, he was promoted to the ministerial post of Secretary for Recreation and Culture where he was responsible for policies and development on Broadcasting, Culture and Recreation. In 1994, he

organised Hong Kong's biggest ever overseas promotion – the Hong Kong Festival in Canada. He retired from Government in September 1996.

Mr So was first made an Official Justice of the Peace in Hong Kong in 1978. He was honoured by the Queen for his contributions to the Hong Kong Administration in 1991 when he was awarded the OBE. He was further awarded the CBE in June 1996, a few months prior to his retirement.

Since his retirement, Mr So had set up the Hong Kong Experts Consultancy Co. Ltd. with a few retired colleagues. Mr So also served on the Board of the China Motor Bus Co. Ltd. and the International Bank of Asia Ltd. as an Independent Non-Executive Director from 1997 to 2003.

The Association has sent condolences to his family. James's death is a great loss indeed to his loved ones and friends. His colleagues as well as his friends and fellow members of the Association will remember his kindness and professionalism fondly. He will be much missed by us all.

Vigil service will start from 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm on Tuesday, 11 February 2025 and the Funeral service will start at 10:00 am on Wednesday, 12 February 2025 at the Hong Kong Funeral Home, North Point, Hong Kong (香港殯儀館).

The Association will send a wreath. Members who wish to pay their last respects to the late James So Yiu-cho, are welcome to attend the service.

Simon Chan Hung-lit
President
6 February 2025