

Memorial Article for Wong Hin-Shing ('61) on the First Anniversary of His Passing

Fong-Ying Yu ('61), February 7, revised on 10, 2025

Dear Hin-Shing,

I thought it best to do this memorial article in the form of an email addressed directly to you.

This is the most common form of communication between us. I am not a good telephone chatter, and dreaded your question, "Do you remember...", for often I did not. We did use the land line not infrequently when there was something suddenly newsworthy or to exchange moans and groans about health conditions.

What is there to say to you now? Well, unbeknown to you, Lunar New Year Day of the Year of the Dragon arrived on February 10, 2024. A reunion in Hong Kong with visitors Peter Poon and wife took place on February 25. A grand daughter was born to me on February 16, and a fourth grandchild, a boy, came to my family on July 8. The New Year Day and my grand daughter's birthday will inevitably be always tinged with mixed feelings, for you were cremated on March 1 and buried on March 7, 2024 in your parents' graveyard, witnessed by three classmates and two friends.

It is now one whole year since you were gone. I missed you whenever anything pertaining to WYK came up. 2024 marked WYK's centenary year of course. Nearly 2000 people attended the celebratory gala dinner at the Convention Centre on Dec 20. Andrew Tseung flew back from NZ for the occasion; unfortunately, Molly was unwell the days before and without her Andrew could not go by himself. What a turn of events! Above all, what Wah Yan spirit! Hei Kaw was there of course as a past teacher and honoured guest, together with his two brothers (Photo 1). He told me that Albert Lam and Richard Li were present. As the lights in the Centre were rather dim, he was not sure if there were other '61 grads there or not.



Photo 1 - Chiu Hei Kaw & his two brothers, Left Lai Wing Leung

One of your biggest contributions to us was your compilation of past reunion photos, done as early as 2018 and updated in Oct 2023, our last collaboration. Since you cared so much about reunions, I would count some others that took place during the past year, the ones I knew about. Peter Poon Hon Wai and his wife met with Hei Kaw, Homun, Mrs Lee Wen Ho (簡佩芬) as well as Wen Ho's son and his wife, and grandchild, in YMCA restaurant. What a reunion that was! It would surely warm your heart since you initiated Lee's In Memoriam file and got me to assist. (For photo, please see Wong Hin Shing's Memorial File on WYKAAO.) Connected with Andrew Tseung's HK visit, there was one among Andrew Tseung, Molly, Andrew Cheung, Grace, Hei Kaw, me and May, at a restaurant at Tseung's temporary residence on Dec 2. (Photo 2) Then on December 4, Freddy Fong threw a party to celebrate his 80th birthday, at the Deep Water Bay Golf Club. The guests that turned up were Gilbert Chinn, Andrew Cheung, Albert Lam, Wu Homun, Ng Sheung Yee, Ho Ping Kwong, Kung Yam Sing and me. Some could not make it for various reasons, among them Hei Kaw, Kenneth Loo, Andrew Tseung, Andrew Man. It was a lavish western banquet that lasted from seven to ten. (Photo 3). After that, the three couples of Freddy, Gilbert and Andrew Cheung met up again. (Photo 4)



Photo 2 - Andrew Tseung, left, visiting



Photo 3 - Reunion Dec 4m 2924 Freddy's birthday party



Photo 4 - Dec 2024, 3 Couples - Freddy, Gilbert, Andrew

You will appreciate that Hei Kaw is the hub of many connections. May and I were in HK in December 2024, hoping to get him to form a buffet group at YMCA. But Mrs Chiu was indisposed and Hei Kaw attended to her with great care, in addition to teaching Chinese painting. So I just met with him when he was less busy. He was kind enough to rework two old paintings and gifted them to me. I myself picked up some sort of flu in Hong Kong in the second half of my stay and curtailed severely the meeting relatives and friends.

The flu I contracted continued for two more weeks after our return to Vancouver on Dec 23. After that, May had severe muscle cramps around the shoulders and neck. You would be in a position to advise her based on your excruciating experiences. We missed you then for May liked to talk over the phone with you, often for more than half an hour. Now after physio-massage sessions, she felt better.

How are the '61 Grads faring as a group? The answer can only be a personal one. There must have been some group meetings and plenty of messages over social media that I am ignorant of, But the Vancouver group has not met for a long time. I have not heard much from the Toronto group either. No news about Bernard or Martin whom you were so concerned about. A recent open letter, an appeal for memories of old WYK days, by Patrick Tai sparked a dozen or so responses from the usual suspects, including Tse Tak Fu and Stephen Lam. The discussion is ongoing as I write. I have just sent Bobby Chen The Shield 1965-2002 CD which you obtained from Mr Ho and which Bobby asked for. Seasonal greetings are also ongoing, as well as Bobby's annual newsletter. Considering that the '61 Grads group was formed in 1965, its continuance to today could be seen as the manifestation of the Wah Yan spirit and to a large extent the result of your strenuous efforts.

As an irrefutable testimony to the effectiveness of your work, Harry Aitken wrote to us on Feb 8, 2025,

“On the occasion of Wong Hin Shing’s Anniversary yesterday, I attended Holy Mass at the Westminster Cathedral in London, and on behalf of the ‘61 Grads, I lit a candle and prayed for the repose of Hin Shing’s soul. May he rest in eternal peace. I attach photographs of the Cathedral.” (Photos 5 and 6) What is so amazing about the email is that Harry and Hin Shing had not met since graduation! Yet Harry was more often than not the first to respond to Hin Shing's general broadcast about 61 grads affairs, which HS appreciated a great deal. I had the privilege of seeing both friends separately and I can tell everyone that the mutual respect between them was and is genuine and lasting.



Photo 5 - A light for HS

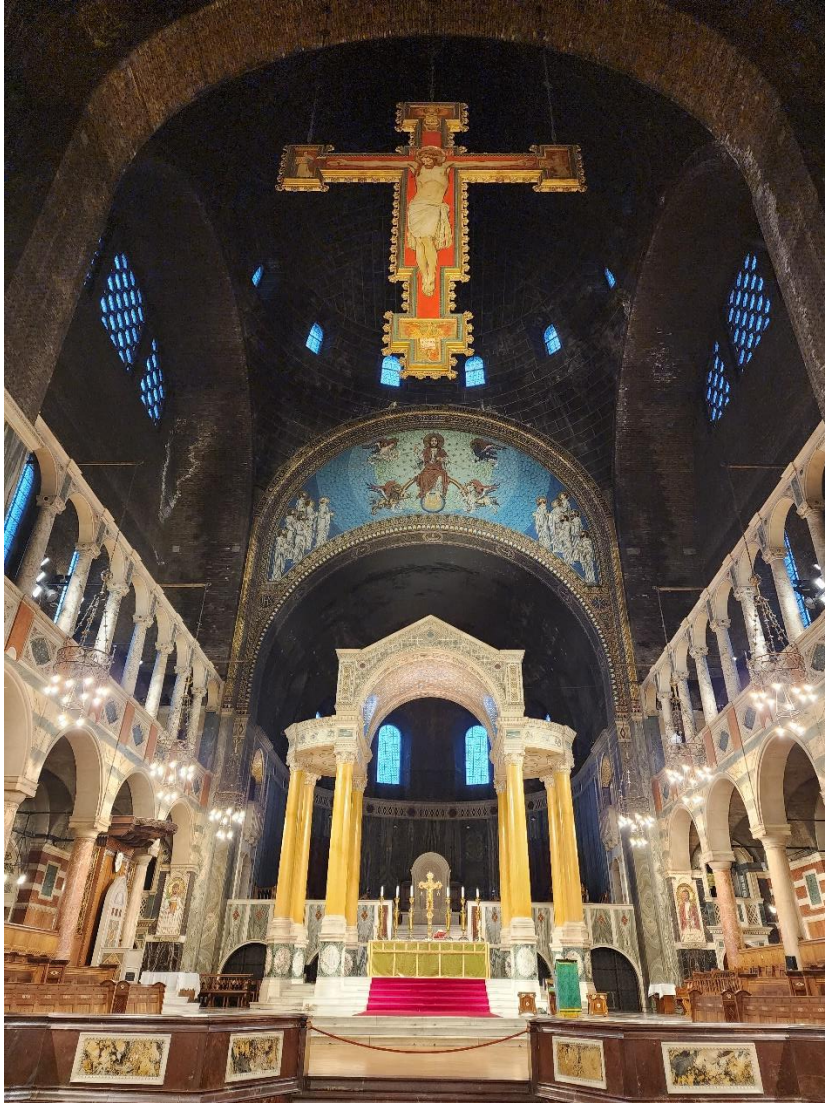


Photo 6 - Inside Westminster Cathedral

I missed you too when I watch YouTube and the videos of the 16 CD's you sent me for entertainment and information. The Golden Oldies contain many songs like April Love, An Affair to Remember {sung by Deborah Kerr}, As Time Goes By, Hight Noon, My Way etc. which we both love.

Finally, I want to thank you, Hin Shing, for bequeathing to me three good friends of yours whom I did not know before: Ivo Zivkov who was with you in your very last few days and helped with so much in everything, Godfrey Chan, a DBS boy who took care of you after your coronary surgery, and Jolie Ng, one of your favourite colleagues at BHJS, who wrote a very perceptive essay about you quoted in the Memorial File.

Rest in Peace my dear friend, and using Cassius' words to Brutus, "If we do meet again, why, we shall smile; if not, why then, this parting (on October 2, 2023) was well made."
(Photo 7)



Photo 7 - Oct. 2, 2023 in Toronto with Jacob

Fong ying