

The Governor General's Caring Canadian Award



Jun Kin Wong

Montréal, Quebec

Jun Kin Wong was born in Hoy Sun, China, and spent his childhood in Hong Kong, experiencing the hardships of war during the Japanese occupation. In search of a better life, Mr. Wong immigrated to Montréal at the age of 21. There, he started a new life, without any knowledge of either English or French, or any understanding of Canadian culture.



Undaunted by the challenges, Mr. Wong embraced the opportunities that Canada provided. He graduated with a degree from McGill University and started several businesses that specialized in trade between Canada and China. By promoting Canada abroad, he helped to break down barriers for Canadian businesses in China and vice versa, allowing for much greater commercial interchange.

Mr. Wong became an active member of Montréal's Chinatown community, organizing many activities, notably Montréal's International Dragon Boat Race Festival. But for many, his greatest achievement came in the form of the Montréal Chinese Community and Cultural Centre.

While other Canadian cities already had Chinese community centres, Montréal was without one for many years. This all changed in 2002, when Mr. Wong became president of the much-awaited institution. Drawing on his organizing skills and many contacts, he provided the leadership necessary for fundraising and construction, raising over \$8 million in funding from three levels of government. The centre opened to great success, lending itself to activities that benefitted the Chinese community, while at the same time putting Montréal on the Chinese cultural map.

Before the centre was built, Chinese performers and exhibitions rarely came to the city. Now, some 10 years later, Chinese performing arts troupes and government

officials visit Montréal on a regular basis, raising the city's profile in China as a place for both business and tourism. The centre has helped in countless tangible ways to bridge Canadian and Chinese cultures.

"It was largely through his leadership that the Chinese community finally came together in an exceptional demonstration of unity."

David Payne, friend

"Mr. Wong is an example to all young Canadians," says David Payne, who has known him for years. "It was largely through his leadership that the Chinese community finally came together in an exceptional demonstration of unity. The centre offers a broad gamut of activities to enrich the lives of the Chinese community through dancing, painting, calligraphy and language. It has quickly become a prominent landmark in Quebec, and a rallying point for visiting artists from the People's Republic of China."



The Caring Canadian Award was presented to Jun Kin Wong on April 17, 2012, at Rideau Hall. Sgt Ronald Duchesne 2012 © Rideau Hall