

Press Release
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25 June 2018

Legendary Hotelier Thanpuying Chanut Piyaoui Honoured with SHTM Lifetime Achievement Award

Thanpuying Chanut Piyaoui, Founder and Honorary Chairman of Dusit International, was bestowed the **SHTM Lifetime Achievement Award** this year. The award was presented to Thanpuying Chanut, now 97 years old, in Bangkok in February 2018. At a ceremony held in her honour at Hotel ICON on 22 June, Thanpuying Chanut was represented by her son Mr Chanin Donavanik, Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Executive Committee, Dusit International.

The **SHTM Lifetime Achievement Award** is established by the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) to honour outstanding personalities who have contributed substantially to the development of hospitality and tourism in Hong Kong, the region and around the world. In awarding the distinction, the School seeks to recognise true leaders who help define the global hospitality landscape and advance the industry as a whole. The inaugural award went to Mr Adrian Zecha, founder of Aman Resorts, in 2016. Last year, the award recipient was The Honourable Sir Michael Kadoorie.

At the award ceremony, Mr Chan Tze-ching, Chairman of the PolyU Council, said, “The theme for this year’s award is *Celebration of Women in Leadership*. Our awardee, Thanpuying Chanut, is a legend and pioneer in her industry. Her exemplary accomplishments have not only played an important role in raising the level of the regional and global hospitality business but also helped transform it through a distinctively Asian focus. Throughout the years, she has contributed generously to charitable causes and royal projects, in both personal and professional capacities. Thanpuying Chanut provides a truly inspirational role model, demonstrating to practitioners around the world what can be achieved with foresight, tenacity, and a giving heart, while being an especially significant figure to women in this region.”

“Throughout her life my mother has worked tirelessly, and unselfishly, to promote and develop Thailand’s tourism industry overall, and she is delighted and honoured to be recognised with this prestigious award,” said Mr Chanin Donavanik. “While Hong Kong is unfortunately a bit too far for her to travel these days, I am delighted I could be here today to pass on her thanks to Dean Kaye Chon and the SHTM team. Since opening her first hotel 70 years ago, my mother has always believed in Asia’s potential to become the epicenter of the tourism and travel industry, and she is delighted that, in the SHTM, we have a kindred spirit in Hong Kong which not only shares these sentiments, but whose dedication to developing young talent mirrors our own values and efforts in Southeast Asia.”

Thanpuying Chanut Piyaoui is the pioneering visionary who established Dusit International in 1948. Her life’s work began with the opening of Bangkok’s first modern hotel with a swimming pool, The Princess on New Road, in 1949, where she experimented with offering luxury hospitality with a distinctively Thai touch. After perfecting this formula, in 1970 she opened the five-star Dusit Thani Bangkok.

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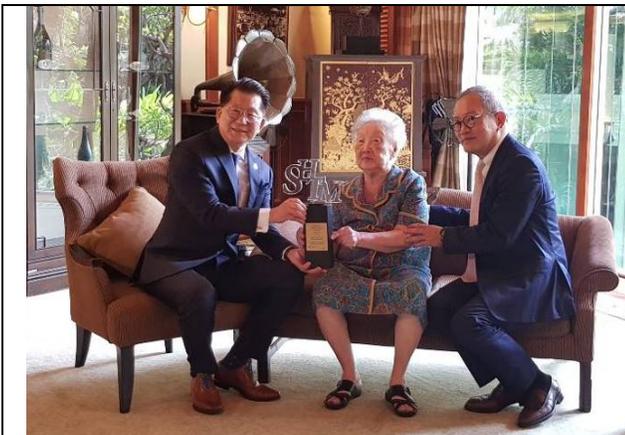
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Building on the success of this property, Thanpuying Chanut opened more five-star hotels in major tourism destinations in Thailand and overseas, and branched out into hotel and culinary education with the Dusit Thani College in 1993, and a joint venture with Le Cordon Bleu in 2005.

For her efforts in hospitality and education, on 5 May 2000, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand conferred upon Chanut the highest royal decoration for a civilian: Knight Grand Commander (Second Class, Higher Grade) of the Most Illustrious Order of Chula Chom Klao. And with this, the right to bear the title “Thanpuying,” the equivalent of the title “Dame.”

Today Dusit International is a leader in hotel management and education and comprises a unique international portfolio of distinctive hotels and resorts. Rooted in Thai culture and tradition, the company continues to deliver the brand promise Thanpuying Chanut established in 1948 – “Delivering an experience that enlivens the individual spirit, no matter the journey.”

“Our heartfelt congratulations to Thanpuying Chanut Piyaoui who is truly a deserving recipient of the award,” said Professor Kaye Chon, SHTM Dean, Chair Professor and Walter Kwok Foundation Professor in International Hospitality Management. “In many ways, the SHTM shares a similar vision and passion. We do not rest on our laurels but continue to scale new height, playing a pivotal role in nurturing talents for the advancement of the entire industry. With steadfast support from our industry partners, we are committed to nurturing all the bright minds who will become employees, entrepreneurs, and hopefully future leaders, in this very exciting global industry.”



Dean of SHTM Professor Kaye Chon (left) presented the SHTM Lifetime Achievement Award to Thanpuying Chanut Piyaoui (middle) in the presence of her son Mr Chanin Donovanik (right)



PolyU Council Chairman Mr Chan Tze-ching delivers welcome remarks at the gala event

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Mr Chanin Donavanik delivers speech



Mr and Mrs Donavanik (front row, middle), Mr Chan Tze-ching and Professor Kaye Chon (front row, 5th and 8th from right), with distinguished guests at the gala event



SHTM graduates involved in “Dialogue with Tomorrow’s Woman Leaders”



Dean of SHTM Professor Kaye Chon delivers the closing remarks

About PolyU’s School of Hotel and Tourism Management

For close to 40 years, PolyU’s School of Hotel and Tourism Management has refined a distinctive vision of hospitality and tourism education and become a world-leading hotel and tourism school. Rated No. 1 in the world in the “Hospitality and Tourism Management” category according to ShanghaiRanking’s Global Ranking of Academic Subjects 2017, placed No. 1 in the world in the “Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism” subject area by the CWUR Rankings by Subject 2017 and ranked among the top 3 “Hospitality and Leisure Management” institutions globally in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2017 and 2018, the SHTM is a symbol of excellence in the field, exemplifying its motto of *Leading Hospitality and Tourism*.

With 75 academic staff drawing from 22 countries and regions, the School offers programmes at levels ranging from undergraduate degrees to doctoral degrees. In 2012, the SHTM was bestowed

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the McCool Breakthrough Award by the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (I-CHRIE) recognising its breakthrough in the form of its teaching and research hotel – Hotel ICON – the heart of the School’s innovative approach to hospitality and tourism education. A member of the UNWTO Knowledge Network, the SHTM is also the editorial home of *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism* and *Journal of China Tourism Research*.

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