

Thank You Address by Ms Shirley Loo, BBS, MH, JP, Honorary Fellow

Dear Council Chairman Professor Frederick Ma, President Professor Stephen Cheung, Council Members, fellow professors and students, guests of honour, ladies and gentlemen,

I am truly grateful to The Education University of Hong Kong for conferring Honorary Fellowships on Principal Ada Ho How-sim and myself. I am so privileged to speak here, expressing thankfulness for the University's warm hospitality, not only to us but also to our relatives, friends, colleagues and students on this joyful occasion.

I feel flattered by the invitation to give a thank-you address here, which I consider a great honour. Principal Ho is a veteran writer of children's literature and an educator, whom I very much respect. I was thrilled to learn that I was to be awarded the Honorary Fellowship together with Principal Ho, as both of us share a deep love in reading and writing. We also share a commitment to education, believing that good teacher student relationships have life-changing power.

I trust in education. Education is not only for passing on knowledge but also changing people's lives. My own experiences support this. When I was in secondary school, I had a deep passion for writing. Back then in Pui Ching Middle School, my Form One Chinese teacher Ms Law Hill-mui appreciated my efforts, to the extent that she spent time after class to review my work. At the end of the semester, she encouraged me to keep writing and said to me "you will be a writer one day". I have kept these words in my heart from then on, because nobody else before or after her has said the same thing to me. You can see how far-reaching an impact a great teacher can cast on his or her students.

I also trust in parental education. My mother was the first female stockbroker in the Hong Kong stock exchange. She was also highly self-disciplined and family-loving. She started cultivating in me a love for reading, early in my childhood. She almost always declined my requests for a new toy. However, whenever I told her I wanted to read, she would take me to the World Bookshop, where I was allowed to pick any books I liked. As a result, I have loved reading since I was a small girl and what followed was my deep interest in writing. My mother used to be a music teacher but had to give up this job that she loved so much because of a medical condition with her vocal cord. That's why she switched roles to become a stockbroker. She said to me: "You can give yourself a new start regardless of your age, provided you try hard." Thank you, mother. Although you were taken to Heaven 26 years ago, what you taught me never leaves my heart.

I also believe in the importance of reading, which I have diligently promoted among parents and their children in recent years. Reading helps train our logical thinking, expand our vision, raise self-esteem and brighten our lives. What matters most is an extraordinarily joyful experience. Indulged in the world of reading, one gets the sense of interacting with the author: an experience that is amazing beyond words. Of course, deep in my heart, I have a small wish. My hope is that there will be more people from our younger generation who want to make writing their aspired career. This has motivated me to teach writing classes to primary school students from the beginning and that has given me the greatest

joy, especially when my students say to me: “Ms Loo, I want to keep learning from you about how to write.”

Last but not least - actually, most important of all - I have a deep trust in God. I am thankful to Jesus Christ for all the guidance and changes in my life, and for me to see faith, hope and love: that God is faithful, tomorrow is hopeful and our world is filled with love. This is also the faith behind all my work in parental education and writing.

On behalf of Principal Ada Ho How-sim and myself, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to The Education University of Hong Kong. The field of education is not one that gives an easy harvest, particularly nowadays. Yet, as long as we work hard together and keep sowing and irrigating, we will definitely reap the rewards.

Thank you every one!