

1st International Vice President

Dr. W. K. TAM



Pragmatic and always, always active, Tam has a strong capacity for getting things done, as demonstrated throughout his 27 years of Lions service. From his teenage years onward, Tam shouldered numerous responsibilities in the support of his family. Rather than cutting his school life short, he simply made room to live five lives instead of one.

In a typical day, Tam would work as a restaurant waiter in the morning, attend school in the afternoon, coach the school's basketball team during breaks, take on extracurricular tuition in the evening and give juniors private lessons to earn extra cash before going to bed. No fuss was made. Tam, barely 15 and blessed with an innate, boundless reserve of energy, simply volunteered to do what came naturally to him.

Work hard, and anything is possible!

This natural work rigor and anything-is-possible ethic would carry Tam through a multitude of life's challenges, from his first working day lifting and moving 200 boxes of cargo as a part time freight sales agent, and having the idea to make sales calls to a few small companies in Palo Alto, to his steady rise from a sole business proprietor to a multi-national veteran adviser in the aviation, tourism, and transport industries, through to his lifelong devotion to service for a better world as a fully-committed Lion.

"You must do better!"

Tam's father, a successful trader in China, had always wanted him to go far. "Explore the world! I have traveled two thirds of China, you must do better!" The loving son didn't let his old man down. At twenty, Tam took on his boss' offer to train in the U.S.A. With his typical larger-than-life, can-do spirit, the self-confessed workhorse galloped through his newly adopted home studying and working three jobs on the go. He won contracts, made money, earned respect, but none compared in value to the friendships he gained. b>"America taught me the value of friendship. We may be from different parts of the world; if we are friends, nothing can stop what we can change or make happen."

Friendship and love

Friendships brought Tam to the Lions Clubs in 1981. That same year he married his beloved wife, Irene. It was a life-changing year, not only because he was invited to join the Lions, but because through the Club he found life's new purpose. On one occasion, he accompanied a 93 year-old Lion to donate gifts to the elderly. "What we gave away, a few grains of rice here, a trinket or two there, meant so much to them," recalls Tam. "I discovered that even as I give, I receive so much more back. This truth was no longer just a cliché, it was utterly powerful."

Since joining the Lions Club of Mount Cameron in 1981, Tam has held every post and served every committee from the Club level to the District level. He served on the international board for an unprecedented 9 years, including 2 years as International Director and held the position of Presidential Board Appointee under 7 past International Presidents.

Wherever he travels in the world, from Asia, Africa to America, through his devotion and commitment to deliver, Tam builds friendship, trust and respect. This in turn enables him to realize large-scale, complex projects, such as SightFirst China Action, the joint Chinese Central government-Lions Clubs initiative, which has restored sight to over 5.2 million people across China. As China moves from a recipient of charity to being a donor of international aid, Tam's leadership role becomes even more invaluable.

Some of the accolades bestowed upon Tam in recognition of his achievements:

- Bronze Bauhinia Star by the Hong Kong SAR Government (BBS), 2003
- Non-official Justice of the Peace, 1994
- Ten Outstanding Young Persons Award, Hong Kong, 1988
- Honorary Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE), 1997
- Her Majesty The Queen's Badge of Honor, 1992
- Honorary Citizen of the State of Georgia, U.S.A., 1999
- Honorary Citizen of the City of New Britain, Connecticut, U.S.A., 1993
- Honorary Consul of the Republic of Kenya in Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR, 2003
- Commissioner for the Kenya Tourist Board - Far East Regional Office, 2004
- The First Annual Model of Overseas Young Entrepreneur Award, 1992
- Outstanding Service in Prevention of Blindness Award by Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology, 2008