



黄永忠
Andrew Wong

黃永忠獻身消防生涯

如果一個人的一生最精華的歲月有60年的話，除掉幼年成長和受教育的日子，能夠把長達42年的時間忠誠奉獻給單一職業的人，真是如鳳毛麟角，尤其對一位後半生連根拔起的移民而言，更不容易，但是黃永忠(Andrew W. Wong)就是「一步一腳印」這麼走過來的楷模。

未滿19歲即加入香港消防處

1950年黃永忠出生於香港，家裡有7個兄弟姐妹，父親曾任小學校長，母親是位家庭主婦。他的個性從小就外向，對於童軍、水上救生、消防等紀律性的活動就很有興趣，而且經常參與，他在學校時曾擔任過糾察隊長、拯溺隊長。中六那一年，他以嘗試的心態報名香港消防處的招聘考試，當時有700人報名，錄取20人，沒想到筆試和體能測試都順利通過，當時他還在「崇德天主教英文書院」讀書，未滿19歲的法定年齡，但是招聘單位在進行面試時，發現黃永忠非常適合消防隊的工作，主考官考慮到他的優秀條件，而且再經過幾個月訓練期他就「足齡」了，於是決定錄取他，開始了他一生的消防生涯。

考取消防處後，他被送往八鄉消防學校受訓，畢業後成為三級消防官，同時受到中大畢業在酒店任經理的兄長鼓勵，他開始報讀中大和港大的校外管理課程，並加入英國消防工程师學會，提高自己的專業水平，終於考獲英國消防工程师(Member of Institution of Fire Engineer)的資格。黃永忠入行的最初9年一直在前線擔任領導救火的工作，與同僚出生入死，留下難數的英勇的救人事蹟。由於工作表現優異，他本人又不斷在專業知識的領域裡進修，獲得上級的賞識，將他調往消防總部擔任參事官，參與

管理和策劃工作。此期間，黃永忠兩度獲得港府保送到英國消防學院深造，榮獲優秀文憑，結訓返港後不久，晉升為香港國際機場救難主管。

上級賞識 快速晉升

黃永忠表示，他本來有機會再去英國牛津大學受訓，日後調離消防處，擔任政務官走上仕途的，但這與他當初的志向不合，而且消防處也極力挽回他，不想流失這位精英，他最終決定堅守崗位。在擔任機場救難主管期間，港府再保送他進入中大研讀管理課程，1982年，他取得研究院D.M.S (Diploma in Management Studies)的文憑，隨著資歷和學歷的長進，黃永忠再晉升為香港消防處高級參事官，負責消防處7,000多名員工的培訓事宜，他所制定的「長官級管理課程」和「隊目級指揮課程」，香港消防處仍繼續沿用迄今，他被同僚尊為香港消防管理學的「開山師祖」，也是當時香港消防界晉升速度最快的年輕領導層。

對黃永忠而言，1990年是個人生事業的轉折點，一方面他在香港消防處的職位已晉升至高級消防區長，當時他的年齡還不到40歲，是消防處最年輕的高級消防指揮官，大有再晉升至消防處長的機會，前程看好，而且消防處不同其他政府部門，只要做好救火和防火的工作，不必經常擔心捲入任何政爭和口水戰；但是另一方面，他亦受到當時已移民加拿大親友的影響，同時考慮到三個年幼女兒上學的問題，難以立刻作出選擇，於是決定拿三個月有薪的假期，來多倫多實地觀察一下。抵埗後，他一方面安頓家人，同時亦打聽多倫多和鄰近城市消防單位的聘雇情形，本行沒找到，卻在安省懲教處找到一份懲教官的職務，雖然與消防完全不同，但以一位新移民來說，這麼快找到一份政府工，亦聊以告慰。三個月的假期很快就過去，那邊廂，他在香港消防處的上

司催促他盡快回港，有機會更上一層樓，獲晉升為香港區消防副總長；這邊廂，他又捨不得與家人團聚的日子，懲教處的工作待遇亦不錯，也有考試晉升的機會，幾經掙扎考慮，他還是選擇留在加拿大。回港辦理辭職手續，賣掉在沙田購置，預備回流的單位，全心全力做個新移民，一切從頭來過。

移民加拿大 重新做起

黃永忠強調，他選擇移民與當時的政治氛圍無關，與同僚相處亦無任何問題，完全是為了家人團聚。他在安省懲教處做了四個月，終於在1990年8月有機會申請進入安省旺市(City of Vaughan)消防局，當時他以在香港有21年消防工作的經驗，進入旺市消防局擔任防火督察(Inspector)，不論薪金和位階都不及香港，10年後才升任防火組主管(Fire Prevention Captain)，三年前一個「偶然的機遇」，他被提升為旺市消防局的行政官(Executive Officer)。談到這「偶然的機遇」，黃永忠迄今難以釋懷。他說，加拿大雖然將「多元文化」寫入國家的政策，也一再重申不得種族歧視，但是還是會碰到所謂的「見不到的歧視」(Invisible racial discrimination)。他指出，2007年旺市消防局要提升一名首席防火官(Chief Fire Prevention Officer)，他申請這項職位，以他數十年的防火工作經驗，按說理應是由他得到這份工，但最後上面錄用了從另一個不同部門的申請者，黃永忠認為有失公平，遂向消防工會提出投訴，交由仲裁員主持公義，最後仲裁員雖然認為他有充分資格得到這份工，但同時判決他的上司有權選擇自認為最合適的人，不過，仲裁員同時裁定要旺市消防局特別增設一個行政官(Executive Officer)的職位給黃永忠，無疑是承認他也有充分的資格擔任首席防火官之職。可笑的是，這個「行政官」的職位將隨著他明年二月初的退休而取消。

對於這件事，黃永忠解釋說，升職和加薪並不是最重要的，重要的是上級對他工作表現的認同，他奉勸華人如果碰到類似的問題時，一定要據理力爭，不要啞忍。

鼓勵華人投身消防

華人移民或土生華人加入消防局任職的甚少，申請加入警隊的卻很多，他覺得可能是華人覺得消防工作危險性高，而且不夠威的緣故。其實警隊和消防隊的待遇是非常接近的，但是申請加入消防隊的條件可能比警隊更高，例如加入消防隊者除了要有豐富的消防知識以外，必須通過懼高症、懼黑症的反測試，以及通過視力（不得有近視、色盲）、上臂力、250磅拖力、拉力方面的合格測試，體能測試合格後有六個的有效期，逾期還得重新再接受測試。

黃永忠表示，許多消防隊員最初入職時的體能狀態甚佳，但經過若干年後因缺乏鍛練，多數呈現臃腫肥胖，而目前按照工會的規定，入職後的消防人員無需再接受體能測試，等於保障了這些人一輩子的工作。他指出，消防人員工會還有一種現象，就是許多消防人員爭著想做工會的領導人，因為管理層怕事，升遷的機會多半落到工會領導人的身上。

黃同時指出，有些人為了裝修廚房，但又不想自己花錢，竟然故意煮東西不留心，製造火災，然後向保險公司索賠，這種情形相當普遍，但像他這類有經驗的消防人員，在現場調查時，很容易找到破綻。他奉勸華人千萬別學這種手法，一旦被揭發是要坐牢的。

明年初退休仍將致力推廣家居安全

2003年，黃永忠獲安省消防界最高代表聯名推薦，在全世

界12,000名會員中，第一位榮獲騎士級的消防工程师師(Companion Fellow, Institution of Fire Engineers)。這是業界最高的殊榮，更是認同在消防界長期和優良的貢獻。黃亦是首位消防界人士把英國工程師學會成功地引進美洲大陸，帶領美國和加拿大消防工程領域邁進了一大步。黃永忠是消防工程师師學會的創會主席，從1990年至1996年，他一直担任加拿大分會會長，2010年，在同袍推舉下重任會長。2010年3月，黃更晉身為消防工程师師學會亞太區分會創會主席之一。該亞太區分會的理念是要幫助亞太區發展中國家將消防安全做得更好。

轉眼間黃永忠移民加拿大已20個寒暑，過去18年，公餘一直在辛尼加社區學院(Seneca College)教授消防證書課程，前幾年還首創全球唯一的學院及在線(on-line)的認可消防專家課程，和教授美國辛辛那提大學(University of Cincinnati)消防科學學位課程。他每次返香港度假，都不忘與過去消防處同僚相聚，交流心得，分享經驗，及到各學院及大學消防研討會演講。如今孩子都已長大獨立，他決定2011年初退休，與妻子黃寶聯(Rebecca)一起着手編寫有關家居安全和消防計劃書，希望鋪上電腦網絡，讓更多市民了解這方面的常識，他亦打算義務開班授課，講述有關消防常識，提高市民防火和救火的警覺。

明年是他從事消防生涯42年，這是他一生的志業，一生的選擇。他衷心感謝妻子的支持和鼓勵。



黃永忠(前排中)年幼時與父母兄妹合影。

Young Andrew (centre) with parents, brother and sister.



1969年，黃永忠(圓圈內)畢業於香港消防訓練學校時，接受檢閱。

Passing-out Parade (Graduation) at the Hong Kong Fire Services Training School 1969



1987年，黃永忠擔任香港消防處高級區長時，接受消防處處長頒贈勳章表揚。

Andrew received Colonel Fire Brigade Long Service Medal from Director of Fire Service Mr. Robert Holmes, 1987.



1991年，黃永忠移民加拿大，初加入旺市消防局擔任督察。

Andrew, 1991, as a Fire Prevention Inspector, the first one appointed also as a Building Inspector at the City of Vaughan.



1982年，黃永忠擔任香港國際機場消防局救傷隊主管時，與同僚合影。

Andrew, Rescue Leader at the Hong Kong International Airport Fire Station with fellow firefighters, 1982



2007年，擔任行政官的黃永忠在旺市消防局與同僚合影。

Andrew with the fire crew at one of the new fire stations in the City of Vaughan



黃永忠與從事IT工作的長女Bella(右)及擔任護士的次女Belinda合影。

Andrew with his daughter Bella (IT Project Manager) and Belinda (Registered Nurse)



2010年8月底，友好們歡慶黃永忠六十大壽，黃扮演貓王唱歌。

The lighter side of Andrew -- an Elvis Presley impersonator and entertainer during his 60th birthday party in September 2010.



黃永忠與妻子Rebecca喜愛旅遊，圖為2008年夫妻在歐洲乘郵輪時合影。

Andrew and his wife Rebecca in the cruise in Europe.



黃永忠於1990年創立安省消防工程師學會，2010年再次被推舉為全加消防工程師學會會長。

Andrew as Founding President and Current National President of the Institution of Fire Engineers Canada Branch, pictured with all Council Members during the 2010 ANNUAL General Meeting.

Mr. Andrew Wong

It is rare to find someone who has devoted 42 years of his life to one career, especially among immigrants transplanted in a new land. Andrew Wong is one of those rare individuals who stay in their career path even as they move halfway across the world.

Andrew was born in Hong Kong in 1950 to a family with seven siblings. His father was a primary school principal while his mother stayed at home to take care of her family. Andrew was outgoing from when he was young, getting involved in activities such as scouting, life saving and firefighting. In school he was Captain of Head Prefects and head of the school life-saving team. During Grade 12, Andrew thought he would try to apply for a position with the Hong Kong Fire Department. There were 700 applicants for 20 positions, and to his surprise, he was able to pass both the written and the physical tests with flying colours. At that time he was still attending the Shung Tak Catholic English College, and had not quite reached the legal age of 19. During the oral interview, the examiner found that Andrew was ideally suited to a job with the Fire Department, and considering his excellent qualifications, decided that he should be accepted despite being underage at the time of examination. He figured by the time training was completed, Andrew would turn 19 and then be officially employable. Thus began Andrew's lengthy career in firefighting.

After graduating from his training, Andrew became a Probationary Station Officer. Encouraged by his brother, he took management courses from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and The University of Hong Kong to upgrade himself. He also joined the Institution of Fire Engineers to improve his professional qualifications.

His hard work culminated in him being elected as a Member of the Institution of Fire Engineers. In the first nine years of his career, Andrew was working on the frontlines of fire fighting, and shared many heroic tales of rescue with his colleagues. His outstanding work performance as well as his hard work in continuously improving himself professionally gained recognition from his superiors. Andrew was promoted to be Staff Officer at the Fire Services Headquarters, taking on planning and management duties. During this time, he was dispatched twice for more advanced training in England. After getting distinguished diplomas in England, Andrew was promoted to be Rescue Leader at the Hong Kong International Airport.

Andrew says that he had an opportunity to be educated at Oxford University, and with Oxford training under his belt, many administrative positions could open up for him down the road. But this would represent a departure from what he wanted to do when he first started. At the same time, the Hong Kong Fire department also tried very hard to retain Andrew as he was well regarded. In the end Andrew decided to stay with the Hong Kong Fire Department. As Rescue Leader at the Hong Kong International Airport, he was selected to attend the Graduate School of Chinese University of Hong Kong for more management training. In 1982, he obtained a Post-Graduate Diploma in Management Studies. With increasing experience and academic background, Andrew was promoted again to Senior Staff Officer level, responsible for the training of 7000 staff. The course curriculums he designed for supervisory and management training and team leadership are still being used by the Hong Kong Fire Department today. He was regarded as the pioneer for the Hong Kong Fire Department management training program, and a fast rising star among management ranks.

To Andrew, 1990 was a turning point in his career and his life. On one hand he had already achieved the level of Senior Divisional

Commander with a handsome income while still under 40 years old. As the youngest senior officer, he had the most opportunity for future promotions to become the Director of Fire Services. Within the Fire Department, unlike other Hong Kong Government divisions, as long as you do a good job in fire prevention and fire fighting, you don't have to worry too much about politics. On the other hand, Andrew was also influenced by the wave of immigration to Canada among his friends and relatives. He also had to consider the education of his three young daughters. It was a difficult choice. Andrew finally decided to take a three-month vacation to come to Toronto to see for himself what it was like here. After settling down his family in Toronto, Andrew investigated job prospects with the local fire departments around Toronto and the neighbouring cities. While he did not get a job in his line of work, he was soon hired as a correctional officer with the Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services. While it was quite different from a fire service job, he was consoled by the fact that as a new immigrant, he was able to land a job very quickly. His vacation soon over, Andrew faced more difficult choices. The Hong Kong Fire Department now offered him an opportunity to become Deputy Fire Chief. For that he would have to return to Hong Kong and give up his family life here. The job as a correctional officer paid well and there were also opportunities for advancement. After a long struggle, Andrew decided to stay in Canada. He returned to Hong Kong to hand in his resignation, and sold the house he bought in Shatin. He would devote his entire attention to starting afresh as an immigrant in Canada.

Andrew stresses that his choice had nothing to do with the political atmosphere at that time; nor did he have any problems getting along with his colleagues. It was entirely due to his wish to stay together with his family. After being a correctional officer for four months, in August 1990, Andrew was hired as a Fire Inspector by the

Fire Department at the City of Vaughan. At that time, he already had 21 years of fire service experience. It was not a match, in salary or rank, to what he had achieved in Hong Kong. It would take another ten years before Andrew was promoted to the rank of Fire Prevention Captain. Three years ago, through an 'unforeseen opportunity', he was promoted to be Executive Officer. To this day Andrew felt uneasy over how this opportunity came about. In his view, although Canada practises multiculturalism and racial discrimination is illegal by law, there is still racial discrimination, albeit invisible to most eyes, in our society. He explained that in 2007, he applied for the position of 'Chief Fire Prevention Officer', and with his decades of experience, he felt that he was qualified to get this position. In the end his superiors decided to offer the position to another applicant from a different department. Andrew felt that the process was not fair, and he filed a complaint with his labour union. While the arbitrator determined that Andrew had sufficient qualifications and experience for the job, they also said that his superiors had the right to choose whoever they felt was the most suitable candidate. In the end, the arbitrator decided that the Vaughn Fire Department should create a new position called Executive Officer for Andrew. Andrew felt vindicated by this 'recognition' for his ability to do the job of the Chief Fire Prevention officer. The interesting point is, with Andrew's planned retirement in February 2011, this Executive Officer position will be eliminated.

Andrew explains that promotions and salary increases are not critical, but the most important thing is that his superiors recognize his work ability. He advises all Chinese Canadians to fight for their rights and not back down in silence when they face something similar.

There are very few Chinese Canadian immigrants or even native born Chinese Canadians in fire fighting. Comparatively speaking, there are many more Chinese Canadians in the police force. He feels that there could be a perception that the risk of firefighting is high while the

prestige of the job is lower. In fact, firefighters and the police force have similar pay scales, but the qualification requirements might be more stringent for fire fighting. Not only does one need a large knowledge base of fire fighting and rescue skills, one also has to pass multiple tests for fear of heights, fear of darkness and vision (cannot be myopic or colour blind). Physically they have to be strong, demonstrating upper arm strength in pushing and pulling up to 250 lbs. If one passes the gruelling physical test, one has six months to apply for a position, and when the six months expire, one has to take the physical examination again.

Andrew says that many firefighters are in good physical condition when they first get the job, but after a few years on the job, they become overweight. According to union rules, any firefighter who has been hired does not have to take a physical test again, so this allows them to keep their job for life. Another phenomenon is that many firefighters compete to become union leaders, who often get promoted by management in order to avoid labour relations problems.

Andrew points out that some people intentionally set fire to their kitchen through careless cooking, making insurance claims afterwards as a way to renovate their kitchen without having to pay a penny. As this is quite common, experienced fire investigators like him can discover these scams easily. He warns Chinese Canadians not to be involved in these insurance scams, or risk going to jail.

In 2003, Andrew was honoured to be the first person among 12,000 world-wide members to be recognized as a Companion Fellow at the Institution of Fire Engineers, the highest grade that can be achieved, as recognition for having rendered long and outstanding service to the Institution and the profession of fire engineering. Andrew was instrumental in successfully bringing the Institution of Fire Engineers to North America, which results in tremendous

advances in the fire engineering arena in both Canada and United States. Andrew was Founding President of the Institution of Fire Engineers Canada Branch from 1990 to 1996 and also current president from 2010. In March 2010, Andrew became a Founding Member of the Asia Pacific Region Forum of the Institution of Fire Engineers. One of its missions is to assist developing Asia Pacific Rim countries to improve their knowledge and practices in fire safety and fire engineering.

This year Andrew would have spent twenty years in Canada. In the past eighteen years, Andrew has been teaching fire safety certificate programs at Seneca College. A few years ago, Andrew spearheaded the only on-campus and on-line training for the US-based Certified Fire Protection Specialist examination. Andrew also taught part of a fire science degree curriculum for the University of Cincinnati in Canada. Every time when he returns to Hong Kong, he would meet with his colleagues, exchange ideas on fire prevention and fire fighting, and give seminars at colleges and universities.

Now that Andrew's children are all independent, he has decided that he will retire in February 2011, and will work with his wife Rebecca to write a book on fire safety management for publication on the internet. In addition, he also plans to volunteer teaching home fire and life safety classes to seniors. His goal is to improve everyone's knowledge and raise our awareness in this area.

2011 marks the 42nd year of Andrew's career in fire protection. Fire safety is in his blood and it is his life choice.