

Professor Philip St. John Smart (1961-2008)
Harold Hsiao-Wo Lee Professor in Corporate Law
Faculty of Law, The University of Hong Kong

Philip graduated with first class honours from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 1982, followed by an LLM in 1983. He was a Harwicke Scholar at Lincoln's Inn and was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 1984. Following his call, he served as a researcher at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law and lectured at SOAS until moving to Hong Kong.

Philip joined the University of Hong Kong in September 1985 and was admitted to the Hong Kong Bar in September 1986. He was then in his early 20s and from day one he seemed mature beyond his years. His advice and ability to solve problems, however complex, was unerringly good. Philip rapidly established himself as one of the world's leading authorities on cross-border insolvency. His book *Cross-Border Insolvency* was ground breaking, cited in the highest courts of the common law world. At the time of his death, he was working on its third edition. His research, published in the leading commonwealth journals was erudite, always on point, provocative and interesting. His first article, published in the *Law Quarterly Review* in 1983, addressed conflict of laws – a theme to which, in addition to company law and insolvency, he remained dedicated throughout his career. Philip was offered substantive terms in 1987. In 1989, Philip nearly left HKU for the Bar in London, but decided at the last minute to remain and in 1990 he was promoted to Senior Lecturer. In January 2006, he was promoted to Professor and soon after was named the inaugural Harold Hsiao-Wo Lee Professor in Corporate Law.

Few of his colleagues would know that Philip was a passionate supporter of the Arsenal Football Club, a low single figure golfer in his youth, a cat lover, a bon vivant who preferred Burgundy and an eclectic reader of biographies, history, science fiction and whatever else took his fancy. Yet his professional love was that of law.

He was honest both personally and intellectually. He spoke and wrote without fear or favour. He was a loyal friend and colleague who would not hesitate to give of himself if needed. In every facet of academic life – down to administration of which he was undoubtedly not fond – he had huge ability, was loved by students, and admired and respected by colleagues. As a lawyer, he had that rare ability to be all of: one who could distil principles from the most complex problems, handle them with great technical expertise, and come up with practical (and often straightforward) solutions (which only appeared so after he had pointed them out). And Philip was legitimately funny, not raucously so, but in a quiet understated manner.

We will miss him hugely.

Professor Andrew J. Halkyard
Professor Charles D. Booth