

The Women in the Hall of Fame

Celebrating a Growing Sorority of Female Scientists

科研女將享譽國際

Women in science occupy a special place in the halls of honour. With this year's Wilson and Amelia Wong Professorship in Plant Biotechnology, Chye Mee-Len, Professor at the School of Biological Sciences, becomes the third female scientist to receive the coveted Endowed Professorship in the science arena. Half of the Endowed Professorships in the Faculty of Science are held by women.

The other two women are Vivian W W Yam, a Professor at the Department of Chemistry, named the Philip Wong Wilson Wong Professor in Chemistry and Energy in 2010, and Dan Yang, a Professor of Chemistry who was awarded the Morningside Professor in Chemical Biology in 2007.

The three scientists are trailblazers in their field. Chye is noted for her research in agricultural biotechnology and, in particular, for starting the HKU research programme on Arabidopsis acyl-CoA-binding proteins. In January 2011 Yang became the first female scientist in Hong Kong and Macau to be awarded the Chinese Young Women in Science Fellowship.

Yam is on the forefront of research in synthetic molecules, creating molecules that emit light and could serve as a cost-efficient alternative source of light. In March she was presented one of the 2011 L'Oréal-UNESCO Women in Science Awards, which are presented to five top female scientists, one from each continent. Yam says that the funding has allowed her to support research staff, run her lab and hold workshops.

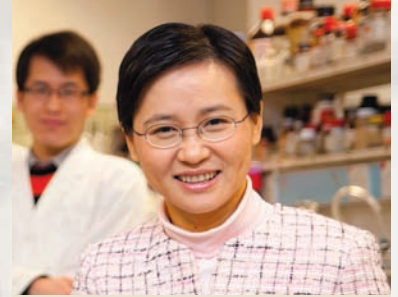
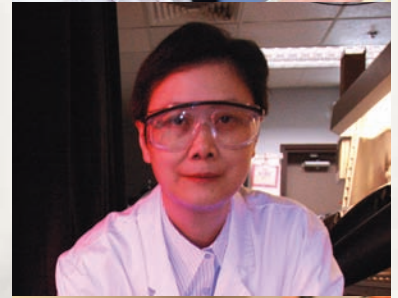
Their achievements are even more remarkable considering that science is well known for its gender gap.

"Women in science have come a long way, and now it's just taken for granted. In science in North America this is a non-issue, but in Japan, Korea, and China and in this region there is still a huge distinction between men and women, but I think we are moving in the right direction," said Sun Kwok, Dean of Science.

科學發展一日千里，早已打破了性別的鴻溝，明德教授席中，理學院內獲委任的學者，佔半數為女性。今年獲黃乾利辛禧基金教授席(植物生物技術學)的蔡美蓮，同時也是第三位獲明德教授席的女科學家，其餘兩位分別為去年獲黃乾亨黃乾利基金教授席(化學與能源)的任詠華，和2007年獲晨興基金教授席(化學生物學)的楊丹。

任詠華教授是無機化學、有機金屬化學及光化學方面的國際知名科學家，令香港在這領域的研究一直處於世界領導地位。她憑其發光材料及OLED(有機發光二極管)的研究，贏得有「女性諾貝爾獎」之稱的「L'ORÉAL - 聯合國教科文組織婦女與科學獎」，並膺該獎2011年度亞太區得主，是全球5名得獎者之一。

楊丹教授於今年一月獲頒「第七屆中國青年女科學家獎」，也是港澳區首位女科學家獲此殊榮。楊丹教授在有機化學研究方面的貢獻，包括：開創「有機催化反應」藥物設計先河；從中藥藥物設計中啟發的「抗癌思路」，及有助發現「囊腫性纖維化」、腦癲症等遺傳病治療方法的「人造離子通道」研究。



(from top)
Professor Chye Mee-Len,
Professor Vivian W W Yam,
Professor Dan Yang
(上至下) 蔡美蓮教授、任詠華教授、
楊丹教授