

SPIRIT OF THE MEMORIAL ORCHESTRA AWARD

I have been waiting for several years to present this award. I created it several years ago to recognize students who show character, behavior and attitude that is more than good – it is exemplary.

The award is not given out every year – but the thing that makes this year's award special is that the person who is receiving this award tonight is the very person who inspired the award several years ago.

Let's go backward in time to two years ago. In 2004 – at this very banquet – we recognized Jimmy Chang – a young man whose hard work led him to great successes in various businesses – but even more – led him to great generosity. Jimmy was blessed beyond the ordinary – and he LOVED to share what he had.

The year before that – I recognized Yeong Lim – the older brother of Peace and Jieun. Yeong faced great challenges in moving to America and adjusting to life in high school. But as the years went by – I marveled at the maturity that Yeong adopted. By the time he was a Senior – he was entrusted with the care of a young student who was going to be away from his parents for the first time and was going to need some special care. During the orchestra trip to Corpus Christi that year – Yeong acted as a father would – devoting absolute attention to his charge.

But then again – this young student – the one who needed some special care – is such a loving person that I think that anyone could have done the same thing. I don't think that there is anyone in this room that has not been affected by Kevin Lee. His cheerful greetings, his authentic smile, his joy for life is inspirational as it is infectious. One cannot conduct a class without Kevin saying something that lights up your life. One cannot be in a class with Kevin without him lightening your load. And everyone should be so blessed.

If you think of your absolute best day – the one that you remember as your happiest – I think that you will experience to some degree – what it's like to walk in Kevin's shoes. This award is evolving to represent many things – responsibility, maturity, generosity – and now the authentic uncontainable joy of life – and there is no one that represents that more than Kevin Lee.

Ladies and gentlemen – Kevin has demonstrated over and over to you what unconditional love, acceptance and joy looks like. And now – it's our turn to share some of that with him. The 2006 Spirit of the Memorial Orchestra Award goes to Kevin Lee.

- Bingiee Shiu