

Distinguished Alumni

Distinguished Alumnus Award - 2004

Sir John Bond '60

A UK native, you attended Cate on a one-year scholarship from the English-Speaking Union, where you are now a Governor. You describe your time at Cate as the most formative experience of your life, beginning your love affair with America. In particular you applaud the American "can do" attitude, which may explain your eldest daughter's recent ascent of Everest as part of her desire to climb the seven summits. You have remained close to your friends from Cate through the years and loyal to the School. Under your leadership, HSBC (formerly The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) where you are chairman, sponsored a UK student to study at Cate this year.

After graduating from Cate in 1960, you went to Asia by taking a job as a deck hand on a ship crossing the Pacific. This opportunity allowed you to get a sense of life "below decks" in exchange for free passage. Through this experience and others, you gained a significant awareness of those less fortunate than you. Today, you note that while capitalism has succeeded as the dominant economic structure globally, it must benefit the wider public for it to continue to proliferate.

Having reached Hong Kong, you continued to work on ships, serving as a disc-jockey. After traveling through Asia in 1960, you aspired to work for The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and, in 1961; you were accepted and joined a two-year training program before going to Asia for 25 years. Throughout your tenure over the past forty years, you proved your value by excelling at the highest level. In 1971 you studied independently for the International Banking Exam and received the second highest score in the world. The bank took notice and placed you in your first prominent position. In the years following, you served as a "firefighter" for the bank and became known for your ability to emerge successfully from adversity and failure.

In 1988, you were appointed one of the youngest members of the board of HSBC as executive director. From 1991 to 1993, you were president and CEO of Marine Midland Bank Inc, now known as HSBC USA, Inc, during which time you turned around the loss-making bank. Your success led you to be appointed as group chief executive of HSBC from 1993 to 1998 and group chairman in 1998. During your tenure on the board, HSBC has grown to a market value of \$180 billion, the second largest bank in the world and tenth largest company in the world. In 1999, you were knighted by Queen Elizabeth for your services to the banking industry and, in 2003, received the Foreign Policy Association Medal in New York, and the Magnolia Gold Award from the Shanghai Municipal People's Government. You sit on the board of Ford Motor Company, which brings you to America.

Throughout your tenure at HSBC, you and your wife of 36 years, Elizabeth, two daughters and a son have moved homes 19 times. While in Indonesia, you developed an appetite to address issues of poverty. In the years since, you have instituted programs that improve primary and secondary education for underprivileged children around the world, as you believe that K-12 education is the key for bringing third world countries out of poverty.

Throughout your career, you have been motivated by a fear of failure, not monetary gain. When asked what qualities you believe create great leaders, you state humility, a desire to listen to others, emotional intelligence, an ability to communicate, and a huge amount of tenacity. You offer Cate students advice to find a quality company to work for or start their own business. They should "have fun" and move on until they find a place that fits.

In recognition of your devotion to Cate, your professional accomplishments, and personal example to others, the Cate School Alumni Association is proud to honor you, Sir John Bond '60, with the Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2004.