

A Conversation with Our Inspiring Olympic Swimmers

Three months after the Rio Olympics, the Editorial Subcommittee was very fortunate to have the opportunity to meet up with our DGS alumnae Olympics swimmers – Rebecca Sze (2004, 2012, 2016 – Butterfly, Freestyle), Claudia Lau (2016 – Backstroke) and Yvette Kong (2016 – Breaststroke). They shared in the following interview their days at DGS; as well as their challenges on the road to the Olympics, and gave valuable advice for our younger sisters who will enter the field of sports.



From left: Yvette Kong, Rebecca Sze and Claudia Lau

R: Rebecca Sze (Class of 2006) C: Claudia Lau (Class of 2009) Y: Yvette Kong (Class of 2010)

When did you first start training and how did you balance between school work and swimming training when you were in DGS?

- R: I started when I was ten and at the time I was training five days a week. The best thing about DGS is that it has always been supportive of girls with different talents. Students are given opportunities to develop their strengths outside of the classroom. Studies are always important but the School does not only focus on academic results.
- Y: I remember when I had to miss lessons due to swimming training. I was grateful to my friends who were always willing to share their notes with me.
- C: The teachers were very supportive and when I missed a whole week of class, some of them would give me extra lessons during lunch time to go through the material with me.

How about the teachers? Do you remember any particular one of them?

- Y: One of my most memorable teachers was Ms. B. Liu who was my class teacher and English Literature teacher. She really cared about my personal growth.
- C: I have fond memories of Ms. Ma (later Mrs. D. Lam). She taught me Geography and was very encouraging. It is great to be able to build up a relationship with a teacher and be able to keep in touch; to have someone support you at different stages of your life.
- R: Mr. Jack Ng, my computer teacher, who was also my class teacher for two years. He was caring and would constantly ask me about my training. I was just going through my computer notes the other day and I tagged him on Facebook, and he instantly approached me and asked if there was anything he could help. I also go back to see Mrs. Stella Lau these days. She has been very supportive throughout my swimming career at DGS.

Any fond memories of DGS?

- C: My most memorable event is definitely the Secondary Interschool Swimming Competition. I still remember the fervent, fiery cheering from everyone on the stand - the swimmers, the spectators and all the supporters. Even today, I still keep the notes of encouragement written by the swimming captains and passed to members of the swimming team. Old girls and ex-swimmers also attend the event and cheer for the School too. I can really feel the DGS spirit.
- R: I like the morning assembly – the old assembly hall with the large, round lights hanging from the ceiling. It felt wonderful when the school gathered together, especially in the school hall during the winter months - the feeling of the whole school gathering together was so warm and cozy. I also miss the tuck shop where we ordered our sandwiches in the morning.
- Y: My memories of DGS have always been the old campus. It was where we grew up back in the old school days.



What were some of the most important things you learned at DGS?

- C: Definitely perseverance. I learned not to give up against challenges. I saw perseverance in students generation after generation. My peers definitely influenced me and pushed me.
- R: For me it was being involved in teams and clubs – a part of our School tradition. Participation in school teams gave us the opportunity to learn about leadership. Being in charge of a stall at the mini bazaar also provided us with the experience of dealing with suppliers and business people in the real world. These are invaluable skills.
- Y: Involvement with extra-curricular activities taught us how to interact with peers and with people younger than us.

What were some of the challenges being a full-time athlete? And the path to the Olympics?

- R: I started being a full-time athlete after I completed Form 7. Although I now train thirty hours a week, I have more time to rest in between trainings and I can become more focused. I have represented Hong Kong since I was 12, and was 16 years old when I had my first Olympics in 2004 at Athens. I then made a second try at the 2008 Olympics, but unfortunately did not make it. My momentum started to drop when I realised other swimmers could be overtaking me. My coach at the time supported me by giving me a very clear goal to focus on – the 2009 East Asian Games. I continued working towards that goal and eventually won the first gold medal for Hong Kong. With constant training and determination, I was able to reach a breakthrough with my timing and qualify for the 2012 and 2016 Olympics. I am happy to say that I am a veteran on the Hong Kong Swimming Team now, being the oldest!
- C: After graduation from DGS, my swimming training continued at the University of Michigan where I also trained for the Olympics. I have now decided to come back to Hong Kong to become a full-time athlete, and this is a conscious decision I made after finishing Business School. I was at a cross-road after college graduation, struggling between whether I should go into the business world or continue with swimming and aim for the Olympics, a goal that I aspire to. After much deliberation, I made my choice and I knew this was a decision that I would look back on years later with no regret. Once I have decided, I was 100% committed going forward.
- Y: I was a scholarship athlete at University of Berkeley when I hit a low period of self-doubt about my future in swimming because my results were not going anywhere. I could not find any good reasons to continue swimming. In the end, I retired, but only for three months; and with much guidance and encouragement from my coach, I came to realise I still had the passion for the sport. I was only trying to hide from it as a form of escapism. I realised that it went from hurting to swim to hurting not to swim, and I was really not solving any problems by quitting. In 2013, I chose to go back to swimming and started to aim for the Olympics. It was more important to have tried my best in the pursuit of my goal. I realised that success for me is not measured by results, but rather by efforts. When the focus is on efforts, I can channel positive energy into controllable factors which is a much better way of living. I get to enjoy the process more with growth, friendship and memories.



What did you have to give up and was it worth it?

- C: When I was studying at Michigan, my friends would go skiing in the winter and I had always wanted to try. However skiing was considered as a high-risk sport and I decided to refrain from it. Although I had to give up a lot of time for swimming, it was worth it in the end because not everyone has a chance to become a full-time athlete.
- Y: I have definitely gained more from swimming compared with what I had to give up. I was able to develop personal growth, expand my horizons and become a stronger person with persistence. I also learned to become more independent.
- R: I don't see swimming as a choice which made me give up other things in life. I choose to take this path and therefore do not look at other paths or options as things given up. Swimming gave me much more in return than what has been missed out in daily life. Only sports can provide you with these invaluable experiences that can carry through for the rest of your life.

What is your advice to our young athletes?

- C: I think this generation of athletes are very lucky. I see transportation being arranged for students going to Sports Institute for training after school and it shows how supportive the School is. Keep persisting even if there are other things to deal with and work hard towards your goal. If you are considering sports as a full-time career, be true to yourself and ask yourself what are the reasons that drive you to pursue this goal. Once you have made up your mind, you need to commit 100% and not look back.
- R: The important thing is to enjoy the process. Do not take things for granted and always learn to cherish what you have. Family support is also very important if you are to pursue sports as a career.
- Y: In any profession or field, there will be many mundane tasks to do. You have to know how to find pleasure in these mundane moments. The important thing is to have fun and enjoy it – and remember to have passion, positive living and perseverance.

Activities

Class of 1957 60th Anniversary Reunion

This year marks the 60th anniversary reunion for the Class of 1957. 15 old girls from Australia, Canada, UK and the US joined 17 of their Hong Kong classmates in celebration. As some alumnae were accompanied by their spouses and siblings, over 40 participants kicked off the reunion with a welcome dinner at Hong Kong Club on 31st October 2016. The next three days were jam packed with activities including an overnight stay at Beas River Country Club, mahjong games, cycling, swimming, outings to Stanley market, Tse Shan Monastery and Chi Lin Nunnery.

The highlight of the reunion was on 4th November. The class commemorated 60 years of friendship by donating two benches to the School, one to DGS and one to DGJS. The benches are to remind young girls to be aware of others' feelings, to show empathy, to give a helping hand, to lend an ear for their classmates and most importantly, to make long lasting friendships which they will treasure for life. All 32 alumnae were present at the ceremony on campus to witness five representatives handing over the gifts to Mrs. Stella Lau, Mrs. Emily Dai and Mrs. Annie Lee. A farewell dinner that night at the Kowloon Cricket Club drew an end to the reunion celebration.

As time passes, many of their classmates are not as physically fit as they used to be. Nonetheless, the class spirit remains high. They look forward to many more reunions ahead to reminisce about their good old school days and have a good laugh!



50th Reunion of the Class of 1966

In celebration of their 50th reunion, the Class of 1966 alumnae in Hong Kong organised a series of events for their overseas classmates. The first round kicked off with a school campus tour, lunch at Eaton Hotel, and the evening highlight of the DOGA Annual Dinner on 28th October 2016.

For those overseas girls who missed the first round of fun, a campus tour, lunch and another reunion dinner at the Chariot Club were held on 4th November. A guided tour to Chi Lin Monastery and Nan Lin Garden followed on 5th November. The final event was on 6th November. The day began with a guided tour to two famous spots of The Chinese University of Hong Kong –the Promenade, and One with Nature at New Asia College. A sumptuous meal at the Staff Lounge at Lee Woo Sing College concluded the morning. The reunion celebration came to a delightful end after a post lunch guided tour to Tze Shan Monastery. With friendship so much rekindled, talks for another reunion overseas next year are already in progress.



40th Reunion of the Class of 1976

The Class of 1976 kicked off their 40th reunion on 28th October 2016 with Morning Assembly followed by a visit to the Tsz Shan Monastery. The highlight was a walk around the magnificent 76m tall Guanying. The day ended with DOGA Annual Dinner and a school visit was organised for the next morning. Celebration continued on 31st October. 16 classmates went on a 2-day excursion to Lantau Island. They strolled around Tai O fishing village, shopped for local products, and had drinks at the Heritage Hotel before going to the Auberge Discovery Bay Hotel. On the second day, some of them hiked up to the Trappist Monastery. That evening a class reunion dinner was held at the United Services Recreation Club where 40 classmates and two teachers, Mrs A Yau and Ms T Kan, attended. Friendships were renewed and there was great camaraderie.

A big thank you to their class representative, Lily Wong, and reunion working group (Anna Wong, Karin Hoo, Linda Fung, Sharon Cheng, Susanna Luk and Winnie Kwok) for doing an amazing job planning and organising this reunion.



Italian Cooking Workshop

Social Sub-Committee

"Cooking is fun!" and as participants at the Italian cooking class "Buon Appetito!" held on 25th June 2016, we certainly couldn't agree with it more! We had an overwhelming response with the class already full well before the deadline. With the coaching and demonstration of master chef Maggio, members learnt many useful cooking tips. The preparation of the 4-course lunch started literally from scratch - with members making their own pasta using flour, water and eggs. To make this delectable lunch, only the freshest seasonal ingredients were used. Participants enjoyed working in the clean and well-equipped kitchen, which was easily transformed into a fine dining room afterwards complete with crisp tablecloth and nice tableware. We cheered "Buon Appetito!" as we raised our glasses of wine to celebrate this wonderful culinary experience.



DOGA Orchestra

The DOGA orchestra made its debut performance at the DGS Summer concert on 9th July 2016. The orchestra comprises 29 alumnae members: 19 strings, 6 woodwinds, and 4 brass players. With the help of a few additional players in the various sections from the DGS Symphony Orchestra, we performed with much success Mozart's *Overture to The Abduction from the Seraglio*, under the baton of Mr. Leung Kin Fung. Some members of the DOGA Orchestra also played Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances* with the DGS Symphony Orchestra as a finale to the evening. The evening also included as one of the highlights, Rachmaninoff's *Variations on a theme by Paganini*, featuring our alumna pianist Nicolette Wong. After this debut, the DOGA Orchestra hopes to hold at least one concert a year and welcome any interested alumnae to audition to join.



Membership Sub-Committee Events

On 13th August 2016, the Membership Sub-committee held a University Gathering at DGS. Close to 50 DOGA members attended and amongst them were current students and staff of HKU, CUHK and HKUST. HKU University Group met at St. John's College on 29th September where 30 DOGA members met with 38 HKU students facilitated by HKU alumni and staff. On 17th October, DGS alumnae at HKUST gathered during the mid-term break.

A "Finance Interest Group" has been formed to support our alumnae who are eager to enter into this popular industry. An "Introduction to Finance" workshop was held on 7th September where DGS alumnae currently working for top finance firms presented to 23 DOGA members. It was an invaluable networking and learning opportunity.

7th November marked the first Interview Workshop to provide essential skills and advice in connection with job search and interviews for 15 DOGA members. Ms Maisie Lam (class of 1970), previously Director and Country Human Resources Officer at Citigroup, was invited to lead the workshop.



HKU University Group



Finance Interest Group

15th Anniversary Concert of the Diocesan Graduate Singers

Choir Sub-Committee

The Diocesan Graduate Singers took the stage at the DGS Auditorium on 19th November. With the theme of "Music Will Lead Us", this year's annual concert marked the 15th anniversary of our growing choir. The repertoire of songs performed reflected various aspects of our singing journey while glorifying the greatness of God. The highlight of the evening was a series of colorfully choreographed musical excerpts from *Phantom of the Opera*, *Mama Mia* and *My Fair Lady*. The Diocesan School Old Boys' Association Choir was the guest choir of the evening who collaborated with us on several mixed-voice pieces. It was a very successful event well attended by over 700 guests in the audience.





Lucky draw 1st prize winner

DOGA Annual Dinner

Social Sub-Committee

Our DOGA Annual Dinner has no doubt become an important annual event that brings us together for a great celebration of our school and its traditions. On 28th October 2016 550 old girls from the Class of 1957 to the Class of 2012 attended the gala dinner themed "Dazzling Glam Slam". Ten classes came together to celebrate their respective milestone years and the Class of 1991 won the Best Turnout Class, with 48 girls attending. With sparkling wine in hand, old girls went around the foyer looking for friends to greet, souvenirs to buy and fancy hats to wear for a memorable photo. In the Best Dressed Competition, a total of 15 gifts were given to the 5 houses, with 3 Glam winners from each house. There were 3,000 lucky draw prizes, table prizes and individual gifts – the most we've had in prizes ever! Everyone brought home a bag of goodies, and most importantly, some very fond memories of this reunion night!



Annual Dinner Organising Committee



Best Turnout Class – Class of 1991

Autumn Clay Craft Workshop

Art Club

The Art Club held three very popular clay craft workshops on 5th November 2016 from 10am to 5pm where over 50 alumnae and their families participated. We started with the morning clay doll workshop where our members had a great time using their creativity in making different outfits and hairstyles to personalise their dolls. In the afternoon, we had two workshops which proved to be more popular with young children as we made everyone's favourite food - cupcakes, doughnuts and macaroons!



Congratulations



Dr. CJ Symons Scholarship 2016 winner Laurice Wong Lok Sze

DOGA is happy to announce that Wong Lok Sze, Laurice has been awarded the Dr. CJ Symons Scholarship for 2016. The scholarship, which amounts to HKD \$160,000 will go towards her study at Columbia University. Congratulations to Laurice and all the best to her studies!

We would also like to congratulate Karen Mok (also known as Karen Morris, Class of 1987) for receiving the "Cultural Ambassador" award from the Bergamo Government, Italy, in May 2016. It is the first time that such an award was conferred upon an Asian global artist by the Bergamo Government, whilst previous awardees listed are such as Luciano Pavarotti and Elton John.



Karen Morris (Class of 1987)

Upcoming Events

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| January | Inter-house Basketball Competition (Jan 8) |
| February | Inter-house Netball Competition; UST University Group Gathering; Inter-School Alumnae Badminton Competition; HK Adventure Corps Flag Day (Feb 4); Art Club Valentine's Workshop (Feb 11) |
| March | Introduction of DOGA to S6; Art Club Spring Event; Beach Netball Competition |
| April | Class Rep & New Members Tea Gathering; DGS Career Fair; Easter Project with DGS Citizen Club |
| May | Art Club Mother's Day Workshop (May 6); DOGA Netball Team in Festival of Sports; Community Chest Dumplings Making Workshop |
| June | DOGA AGM; Dr Symons Scholarship Interview; DOGA Netball Team in Mixed League; Support of S5 Job Shadowing Programme |
| July | Art Club Summer Workshop |

Details of the events will be updated periodically. Please visit www.doga.org.hk to obtain the latest information.

DOGA Office: 1 Jordan Road. Tel: 2771 5881, Email: doga.info@gmail.com

Joining DOGA:

Any old girl of DGS or DGJS (whether resident or abroad) who has completed at least one academic year at DGS or DGJS is eligible to apply for membership of DOGA Ltd. Details of the application can be found at www.doga.org.hk.

Class Reunion Gathering:

Alumnae who are interested in organising their class reunion gathering at the School, please contact DOGA office for further information.