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# People to Watch

From journalism to politics to business, the varied members of Vancouver's Asian community are making their presence known

By MARGARET FELDSTEIN

## Commentator

VANCOUVER'S BRASHEST ASIAN COMMENTATOR thrives on controversy. Gabriel Yiu's weekday AM-radio show and his column for the Chinese-language daily *Ming Pao* tackle such hot subjects as abortion and male dominance, and debate whether Chinese Canadians should vote for Chinese-Canadian politicians, a practice Yiu sees as "race discrimination." He believes the

heated discussions he provokes can promote a "greater understanding, leading to a long-term harmonious effect not just in our community but in our society."

The city of Vancouver agrees, and this year it awarded Yiu a Cultural Harmony Award, citing his "willingness to address sensitive issues in a way that stimulates the kind of community discussion necessary to build bridges." His means are unorthodox, a mix of satire and acid-tinged commentary not usually found in the Chinese media. "I dare to speak a lot of things

that people don't want to touch," Yiu says.

Yiu came to Canada from Hong Kong in 1991 and got into the commentary business while acting as host of an arts-and-culture radio show. It's not exactly lucrative work; he and wife Angela own and run a downtown flower shop. He has begun to contribute to the daily *Vancouver Sun*, and sits on the newspaper's community editorial board. Says *Sun* senior editor Patricia Graham: "He will challenge people in both the Asian and non-Asian communities to think in different ways." —Reported by Nadene Rehnby



### Raymond Chan Politician

CANADA'S SECRETARY OF STATE (ASIA-PACIFIC) Raymond Chan, 46, is the highest-ranked Asian-born politician in the Western world. Yet from his eminent perch, he still remembers the bus ride nearly 30 years ago, just a few weeks after he had arrived in his new homeland, during which a stranger asked him where he was from. Despite his embarrassment at speaking minimal English, he squeaked out a reply: "Hong Kong." The woman smiled a greeting, "Welcome to Canada, son." "At that moment," Chan recalls, "I knew I had found my country. I promised myself I would never let this lady down."

He didn't. Chan's parents fled China for the British colony in 1949. He made the move to Vancouver in 1969, sponsored by an older sister. For the next 28 years, he worked at the classic repertory of unskilled jobs—busboy, waiter, janitor, farmhand, encyclopedia salesman—as he put himself through the University of British Columbia. After working for UBC's physics-research center, he opened two Chinese restaurants but then was electrified by the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Chan founded a society in support of the democracy movement and helped escaping dissidents. Politics was the natural next step. "I came here for freedom, democracy," he says. "But what had I contributed? Most Chinese come out to vote, but that's just the surface of democracy. I felt ashamed."

Chan's first campaign for the House of Commons in 1993 was, in his words, "very grass roots and old-fashioned. I shook 30,000 hands." He won and was immediately named to Jean Chrétien's Cabinet. He keeps up a strong interest in human rights and, among other things, helped establish an institute to train judges in China. Chan won a tough re-election campaign last spring. As a role model for Asians, he says, "I let them understand they can have a say."

—Reported by Maggie Sieger

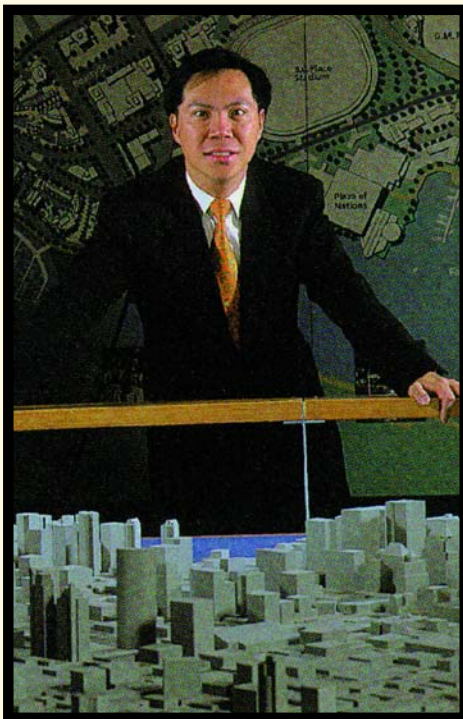
### Terry Hui Businessman

OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, TERRY HUI, 34, has literally been reshaping the face of Vancouver. As CEO of Concord Pacific Group, a development company backed by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing, Hui has been in charge of the \$3 billion office-and-residential complex on the north shore of False Creek, the largest single development of its kind in the city's history.

Hui, an engineer by training, moved to North America as a teenager and attended university in California before shifting to Vancouver in 1985. Three years later, he was developing local condominiums when the False Creek lands, the 85-hectare site of the 1986 World's Fair, were sold to Li Ka-shing, one of the world's wealthiest men. Hui had become close friends with Li's son Victor in California; Hui was tapped to become a director of the holding company, Concord Pacific, and his family—the elder Hui is Hong Kong tycoon K.M. Hui—was invited to take an equity stake in the huge property.

Hui's other love is new media. He is head of Multiactive Technologies Inc., a group of companies providing online content, and he has a majority stake in a cable company that will wire the Concord Pacific development. Now Hui is turning his sights to the rest of Canada. Last summer he became CEO of Burcon International Developments Ltd., a controlling shareholder of one of Canada's largest real estate and property-management firms, the Toronto-based Oxford Properties Group Inc.

—Reported by Doug Ward



### Thomas Fung Businessman

IN JUST FIVE YEARS, THOMAS FUNG, 46, HAS become one of Canada's media barons. The head of a \$190 million radio and real estate empire, he is the man behind Fairchild TV, the nation's only national Chinese-language network. As media magnates go, Fung is still just a fledgling. His broadcast holdings, which started with a radio station he bought in 1992, have expanded to include four more stations and a television network, as well as a local station broadcasting his multilingual programming, with a total value of \$9.8 million. The popular radio stations Fung owns air call-in shows and direct feeds from Hong Kong and Taiwan, with hosts in both Vancouver and Hong Kong. In Fung's view, they are a good start. They "prove that immigrants can be good consumers and that mainstream advertisers like to place their ads in Chinese media," he says proudly.

Fung came to Canada as a teenager in 1967. His father, who headed a Hong Kong banking empire, expected his two sons to enter the family business. Thomas had other plans, studying filmmaking at New York University on the side when he was sent to New York City to train at the Merrill Lynch brokerage firm. Then he went back to Hong Kong, staying 10 years and starting a film-production company, an advertising agency and a p.r. firm.

In 1984 he moved to Vancouver, setting up a photo studio. Five years later, he built the project for which he is best known, the \$15 million Aberdeen Center shopping mall. The original mall is now part of the three-block, \$110 million Asiatown, the largest indoor-shopping complex of its kind outside Asia. While he burnishes his media properties, Fung is planning a \$75 million Aberdeen expansion.

—Reported by Lawrence Kootnikoff