

香港的近律師行170年发展历程

今年，是的近律師行（「的近」）成立 170 周年。作為香港歷史最悠久的律師事務所，的近可以稱為香港最古老的商業存在之一。170 年來，的近始終與香港一起經歷滄海桑田，見證了香港發展的繁榮和低谷，經歷了瘟疫、戰爭以及商業的興盛與蕭條。隨著歷史的不斷變遷，的近這所香港本土獨立律師行逐步發展成為以華人律師為主要中堅力量的律師行。雖然目前並未在除中國內地以外其他國家和地區設立分支機構或進行聯營，的近仍憑藉專業的法律服務以及高水平的律師團隊在全球範圍內廣受認可，長期佔據行業領先地位。

除香港總部外，的近在中國內地也有著深厚的歷史積澱，的近於 1994 年起便在北京、上海及廣州陸續分別設立代表處。此外，的近還與許多世界領先的律師事務所建立了長期的合作關係。過去 20 餘年，的近的發展更加強勁，目前擁有 52 位合夥人及 200 多位律師，員工總數約 700 人。

自朝陽破曉至華燈初上，從過往到未來，的近始終踐行專業與法治精神，堅持以審慎、專業而致志的方式協助客戶，並致力於與香港共成長，與香港法律行業共發展。

創業垂統

時間回到 19 世紀下半葉，開埠初期的香港尚屬籍籍無名之地。港口外的社區一派田園風光，九龍半島仍然是一片農村地帶，各類基礎設施乏善可陳。在這樣的背景下，大律師必列者士（William Bridges，香港島上環的「必列者士街」就是以其命名）先生應港督私人秘書的邀請，於 1851 年前來香港執業。而必列者士先生在 1851 年創立的律師行，便是香港迄今歷史最悠久的，現如今廣為人知的「的近律師行」的前身。

作為當時香港首位和唯一的大律師（現稱「訴訟律師」），必列者士先生憑這個身份確立了『律師（現稱「事務律師」）不可擔任法院代表律師，唯有大律師的出庭發言權不受限制』的規定。因其出色表現，必列者士先生曾被任命為香港政府署理律政司及署理輔政使司（對應今日政務司司長），期間他也曾短暫回國，獲頒榮譽民法博士學位。

必列者士先生來港的十年時間裏，香港的法治體系逐漸形成，各類貿易蒸蒸日上，社會生活步入正軌。當必列者士先生離開這片土地時，香港的商業潛力已經是無容置疑，一個強健和充滿活力的律師行業已經誕生並持續發展，必列者士先生所一手創立的律師行也已初具規模。

筮路藍縷

必列者士先生離開後，負責其律師行業務的同事們決定暫緩訴訟業務，專心發展為以商事業務為核心的事務律師事務所。如今聞名業界的「的近律師行」，當時就在皇后大道一側的寫字樓辦公，通過專業的法律服務逐漸打響了名聲。

雖然香港的一切已逐步脫離開埠初期時的艱辛，可 19 世紀的香港生活仍然不易。夏天的戶外潮濕悶熱，令人窒息。缺乏照明的街道上經常發生打劫，管理鬆散的香港還處於動蕩不安之中。

的近漫長發展歷史中的另一位重要人物，Victor Deacon（“Deacon”）先生於 1880 年來到了香港，加入由必列者士先生成立的律師行，擔負起了的近發展與傳承的重任。Deacon 先生生於 1847 年，來自英格蘭德文郡的一個名為 Ottery St Mary 的小鎮。Deacon 先生對那處寧靜小鎮始終保有思念，為作以紀念，的近將律師行的電報地址定為“Ottery”。對於不熟悉背後故事的人們而言，這個名字也同樣令人陶醉。百年



DEACONS
 的近律師行

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大律師William Bridge先生創立了的近律師行的前身，其曾被任命為香港政府署理律政司及署理輔政使司。

1851



的近遷入香港當時最華麗、最現代化的寫字樓太子大廈。

1904

的近律師行慶祝成立100周年。

1951



的近在中國內地開設第一家辦事處，成為進軍內地的首批香港律師行之一。的近主要為內地客戶的跨國業務需要提供法律服務。

1986

如今，的近在多個業務領域都具有卓越業績。扎根香港並始終與其共同成長，一起創造繁榮。

2021

1880

Victor Deacon 先生獲得香港律師資格以及入港准許，加入Brereton與Wotton合夥組辦的律師行。

1941

當時最後一位留守的的近的職員洪渭劉仍英勇堅守維持本律師行的運作，使的近的檔案、文件和書籍保存。

1960

的近律師行把握時代的機遇，拓展信託、物業轉讓及服務業務，滿足香港不斷增加的法律服務需求。

1997

隨著香港回歸，的近為越來越多的中資企業提供法律服務。

來，雖然電報已經逐漸被現代通訊技術所淘汰，這個電報地址仍保持不變。此外，的近還將公司遊艇定名為“Ottery”號，作為對的近百年基業開拓者 Deacon 先生的紀念。

欣欣向榮

香港在遠東經濟走強的背景下，發展日益蓬勃。強勁的經濟需求更令香港成長為薈萃東西所長的交易中心，牽動諸多人士前來尋找機遇。隨著不斷的建設與發展，畢打街樹立了鐘塔，大會堂前面建造了噴水池，西環興建了水手館，煤氣街燈更在街頭巷尾推展開來。蘇伊士運河啟用後，歐洲與香港之間的航程大大縮短。銀行業也在香港發展興旺，帶動這片土地的迅速發展。

雖然必列者士先生離開不過 19 年，但由其創立的律師行在當時的掌舵者 Brereton 先生與 Wotton 先生的帶領下，已經成為當時香港四間業務蒸蒸日上的律師行之一。隨著業務的拓展，的近將辦公地點轉至太古大廈（即現在的遮打道 11 號）。雖然時間已將中環的面貌改變，的近律師行從未離開這片核心地帶。

Deacon 先生於 1882 年成為合夥人後，他的名字便成為的近律師行名稱的一部分。短短的兩年內，Deacon 先生已成為香港房地產轉讓領域的頂尖律師並參與了全港矚目的轉讓業務。Deacon 先生居住在中環亞畢諾道北面的一座雙層洋房，並以和藹可親、熱情好客的個性見稱。他喜愛品嘗美酒，並會於周末定期在家中舉行撲克派對，派對通常持續至凌晨，彼時港督威廉·羅便臣爵士則是派對的常客。

當時的香港正處於一個長達 30 年成長黃金期。直

至 Deacon 先生於 1906 年離開香港，20 多年來，他為律師行的法律服務的發展貢獻諸多，也將被歷史銘記。

休戚與共

緊靠著維多利亞港的香港中央商業區逐漸發展為一個舒適便利的地方，各類建築物鱗次櫛比。的近的辦公地點始終圍繞著這片香港多年以來最核心的地帶。

的近當年所在的寫字樓 距當時的高等法院僅有數步之遙。當時的高等法院大樓於 1843 年興建，座落於現在的皇后大道附近，是一座古希臘風格的宏偉建築，設計的初衷是建設一座交易所以促進商貿溝通。當大樓竣工後，香港的對外貿易開始滑落，交易所的必要性有所降低，當時香港政府只花了港幣三萬元便將它買下，改造為本地高等法院。

雖然這座建築外觀宏偉，但實際使用的體驗並非十分舒適。1870 年“*The Daily Press*”以一種頗具英式幽默的方式對其進行了報道「明顯地…在一些真誠、好刨根問底的人眼中…高等法院法庭的設計師對大自然有十分深入的研究，其深入的程度，是在幾乎任何天氣下，你都可以在法院內享受到仿如置身室外的感覺。」

附近設施的不完善也曾給的近律師行帶來了一些困擾。1894 年由於鼠患，寫字樓被迫暫時空置。而後，的近於 1901 年搬遷至雪廠街附近的新寫字樓，該辦公地點與孖士打律師行僅有一巷之隔。據說，當時律師們只需要從一扇窗向另一扇窗大聲喊叫，便可以互相溝通。

的近位於雪廠街的寫字樓只使用了幾年便再次搬遷。1904 年，的近遷入剛剛落成的太子大廈。太子大廈是位於新遮打填海區德輔道一號的四層高豪華建築物，當時被譽為香港最華麗及最現代化的大廈。



相片來源:的近律師行李淑玲女士

發生不可逆轉的變化。對的近而言，這也意味著新的社會秩序，的近的業務也需被賦予新的意義。

在二次世界大戰日軍佔領期間忠心耿耿捨命守護律師行，維持律師行運作的洪渭釗先生被擢升為合夥人，成為本律師行歷史上第二位華人合夥人。不久，黃維弼先生加入的近成為律師行的首位華人見習律師。黃先生於1959年成為的近合夥人，並於1974年成為的近首位華人高級合夥人。2003年，

在同一時期，高等法院的環境也有所改善。1912年，高等法院遷入現時為終審法院的大樓內。這些基礎設施投資為未來的國際化都市的建設奠定了良好基礎。

戰亂時期

戰爭與衝突是20世紀上半葉不可忽視的歷史。20世紀初，的近像香港一樣穩步成長。在第一次世界大戰期間，除了由於男子需要參軍以致於律師一度出現短缺外，戰爭對香港的影響微乎其微。不過，隨著40年代開始，新的危機讓香港的天空烏雲密布，這對的近也是一場空前的挑戰。

正當歐洲各國戰亂不止、四分五裂之際，亞洲也迅速陷入戰亂中。1941年，香港被迫向日軍投降，外來律師成為戰俘。的近當時的運作一度受到重大影響。當時，的近的一位職員洪渭釗（Willie）先生作為最後一位留守人員，英勇堅守崗位以維持律師行的運作。雖然的近的辦公地點被迫被日軍徵用，但的近的許多檔案、文件和書籍卻得以妥善保存。這些業務核心文件成為日後的近迅速復興的基礎，也成為如今香港法治發展史中的獨特又寶貴的檔案。

戰爭於1945年結束，的近許多僱員重返舊地時見到的是一片混亂的局面。但他們沒有時間來回顧往事長籲短嘆，的近的業務亟待重新建立。如同經歷了戰火的香港一樣，困難終不能將其擊倒。

本土化蛻變

儘管戰亂的日子已成過去，但戰爭所帶來的後遺症卻是深遠的。亞洲以至全球的社會及政治面貌已經

黃先生獲香港律師會列入榮譽律師名冊，亦是香港執業年期最長的律師之一。

隨著香港逐漸成為一個成功的貿易基地及港口，的近也享受到了發展的紅利。彼時，的近律師行以信託、物業轉讓及船舶業務見稱，借助香港的迅速發展，的近的業務也不斷延伸，越發完善與全面，從而能夠滿足香港當時不斷擴大及增加的法律服務需求。

經過長期艱苦的奮鬥，香港在過去的一百年由一個初創的社會發展為具有極大潛力的大城市。的近也在不斷地奮進中，持續吸納本地華人律師並始終保有香港法律行業的領先地位。

香港新貌

香港有無數潛力等待挖掘。在大量擁有知識和經驗的新移民湧入之下，香港在國際貿易中的地位愈發舉足輕重。可隨著時代的變遷，社會的進步與發展難免將過往的痕跡淡化。在滄海桑田的變化中，的近律師行選擇不斷提升自身實力，與時俱進。

1962年，舊太子大廈拆遷，的近由此遷出，又搬回了最初的於人行（現太古大廈），開啟了又一段持續發展的歷程。

隨著香港新商業動力的推動，地價及商業需求持續上升，昔日富有殖民地色彩的低層建築物再無立足之處。的近專長的地產交易在這種環境下愈發的勢頭蓬勃，並開始為數量激增的金融及公司業務提供大量服務。

香港法律行業也隨著香港經濟一同蓬勃發展。到70年代中期，的近已經成長為一間提供全面商業法



相片來源: 的近律師行蕭鳳起女士

律服務的律師行。的近在業界商譽極佳，業務繁忙，成長為商界中一家受到高度推崇的律師事務所。

扎根香港，背靠祖國，面向世界

的近自設立以來的 170 年間，見證了不少客戶的成功和興盛，陪伴了許多客戶一同成長。除了業務範圍全面、法律專業深厚、服務質量出眾外，的近還重視對於年輕法律專業人士的培養。許多現任的律師行合夥人、公司總法律顧問或是政府機構官員均有過在的近接受專業訓練以及任職的經歷。從這一點而言，的近可以說是香港法律業的「黃埔軍校」。

此外，的近為香港法律行業的歷史積澱與文化傳承做出了大量的貢獻。2014 年，經過與香港律師會和客戶的細緻協商，的近決定將部分歷史檔案永久存放於香港大學圖書館。這批歷史檔案共有 65 個種類，160 箱資料，足以放滿長 35 米的書架，其中包括由 1846 年至 2007 年間的商務合同、證書、法律文件、契約、遺囑及相片等，能夠讓學者及歷史學家更了解香港經濟發展及對香港有重要影響的人物。

香港作為粵港澳大灣區的核心城市之一，對帶動區域經濟發展富有重要責任。作為一間起源於香港的律師行以及當下香港法律行業領頭者，的近也始終肩負並踐行著為粵港澳大灣區發展貢獻力量的使命。借助在中國內地的深厚服務網絡，近年來，的近為大量中資企業「走出去」提供了全面的法律服務，並協助“外資企業”合法合規的在內地或香港開展業務，助力經濟發展。

的近相信，雖然曾經面對各種挑戰，但當展望未來時，積極與樂觀仍是近的主旋律。的近會緊密跟

隨國家發展的規劃，努力發揮「香港法律行業領先律師行」的作用，為更多企業提供契合業務實際需要的法律服務。

扎根現在，展望將來

一間充滿活力的律師行，誕生於一個動感之都並扎根於一個偉大的國度——的近對這往來間的歷史充滿自豪。

早在 1851 年，誰能想到香港會成為全球頂尖的金融中心之一呢？這是一段不平凡的旅程，對香港和的近而言都是如此。

的近的業務「隨著香港的發展而發展」。隨著客戶的需求變得越來越多樣化，的近始終在不斷適應與調整，同時注意保持一種遵守傳統價值觀的強大文化。

展望未來，的近可以充滿自信的說，的近律師行就是優質服務及不變承諾的代名詞。忠誠與勤勉的工作態度是長達一個半世紀以來的近的制勝秘訣，而這些特質仍然是的近如今引以為豪的長青密碼。

的近的辦公地點自 1985 年起已遷至中環遮打道 18 號的歷山大廈，並且仍在逐步擴展以容納人數不斷增加的律師隊伍。如今，的近能夠一站式的提供 18 個主要領域的專業法律服務，包括銀行與融資、資本市場、中國貿易及投資、競爭法、建造、企業與併購、公司服務、僱傭與退休金、家事法、破產與重組、保險、知識產權、投資基金、訴訟與爭議解決、私人客戶、房地產、監管以及稅務。客戶涵蓋建築與基礎設施、消費品與零售、金融機構、基金與投資管理、酒店與休閒、生命科學與醫療保健、私人財富、房地產以及科技、媒體和電信（TMT）等幾乎全部行業。

的近始終是各大法律業刊物及評選機構的榜上常客，的近已連續三年蟬聯《亞洲法律雜誌（Asian Legal Business）》香港本土最大律師行，多個業務領域連續多年在《錢伯斯亞太法律指南（Chambers Asia-Pacific）》及《亞太法律 500 強（The Legal 500 - Asia Pacific）》中名列前茅。

隨著的近的繼續發展，我們能夠相信，的近仍將繼續往開來，培育一批又一批的法律精英，為更多的客戶提供專業的法律服務，為法律行業的發展貢獻力量，促進中國內地、香港乃至全世界的繁榮。

（的近律師行供稿）

Enterprises “Going Global” (July 2011, Shenzhen, China)

The 2nd Session: Doing Business in China: Risk Prevention and Dispute Resolution (January 2013, Hong Kong, China)

The 3rd Session: Equity Investment and Corporate Governance in China (December 2013, Shenzhen, China)

The 4th Session: Legal Issues of Capital Market and Financial Innovation in China (December 2014, Shenzhen, China)

The 5th Session: The Development and Legal Issues of Asset Management Business for Chinese Financial Institutions (September 2015, Shenzhen, China)


The 6th Session: Legal Innovation in China’s Internet Era (September 2016, Shenzhen, China)

The 7th Session: The “Belt and Road Initiative”: Chinese Enterprises and Investment Arbitration (June 2017, Shenzhen, China)

The 8th Session: The 60th Anniversary of the New York Convention and the “Belt and Road Initiative” (May 2018, Shenzhen, China; June 2018, New York, United States of America)

The 9th Session: Chinese Enterprises and International Commercial Dispute Resolutions (November 2019, Shenzhen, China)

The 10th Session: Dispute Resolution for Chinese Enterprises: New Realities, New Issues and New Solutions (September 2020, Shenzhen, China)

The 11th Session: Cross-Border Disputes of Chinese Enterprises and International Arbitration in GBA (December 2021, Hong Kong and Shenzhen, China) 

*Doctor of Law, Director (President) of South China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (SCIA)

The Past and Future of Deacons: a History of Resilience and Growth

This year marks the 170th anniversary of the establishment of Deacons which is Hong Kong’s longest established legal practice and one of the oldest businesses in it. Over the past 17 decades, Deacons has experienced vicissitudes as Hong Kong underwent highs and lows, including plagues, wars, prosperity and depression.

In addition to the Hong Kong headquarters, Deacons has built profound ties with Chinese mainland. Since 1994 the firm has established representative offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Although the firm does not have any offices or affiliates outside of China, it enjoys a renowned position and is recognized worldwide for its professional service and high quality of legal work.

Deacons has established long-term cooperative relationships with many leading law firms. In the past two decades, its growth has been particularly strong. At present, the firm has 52 Partners, over 200 lawyers, and a total workforce of approximately 700 employees.

Throughout its history, Deacons has upheld the spirit of professionalism and rule of law, assisting its clients in a prudent and efficient manner. The firm is committed to its

business in Hong Kong and has rooted deeply in the local legal industry.

Early days

At the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, Hong Kong was unknown to many. The community near the port lived in idyllic scenery but with little infrastructure. The Kowloon Peninsula was still undeveloped and largely agricultural.

Barrister William Bridges came to Hong Kong to practice at the invitation of the Governor’s Personal Secretary in 1851 (“ridges Street” in Sheung Wan, Hong Kong Island, is named after him). He established a legal practice in the same year, which was the predecessor of today’s Deacons.

Because of his outstanding performance, Bridges was appointed as the Secretary of Justice and Colonial Secretary (“Chief Secretary” in today’s context) of the Hong Kong Government. During this period, he also briefly returned to Britain and was awarded an honorary doctorate in civil law. Bridges established the rule that only barristers, and not solicitors, could speak in court.





Deacons' predecessor was established by barrister William Bridges, the later Secretary of Justice and Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong.

1851



Deacons moved into Prince's Building, the most magnificent and modern office building in Hong Kong at that time.

1904



Deacons today has made outstanding performance in many business sectors. We root in Hong Kong and may thrive together with Hong Kong.

2021

1880
Victor Deacon was admitted to practice in Hong Kong and entered into the firm under Brereton and Wotton.

1941
The last guarding officer Wai-Chiu Hung (Willie) heroically protected the documents, notes and books in Deacons.

1960
Deacons seized the opportunities of the times and expanded trust, property transfer and shipping businesses to meet the growing demand of local legal service.

1997
With the handover of Hong Kong, Deacons has provided legal services to more and more mainland enterprises.

In the ten years of Bridges' service to Hong Kong, the rule of law developed and local commerce flourished. By the time Bridges left, Hong Kong's commercial potential was clear to all. With the help of Bridges, a strong and dynamic legal industry was growing with his own practice in the forefront.

Building successful growth

Those responsible for Bridges' practice after his departure elected to continue the practice as solicitors rather than barristers, with a focus on business operations. The firm operated from offices near the Supreme Court on Queen's Road. The foundations of Deacons as a business law firm were developed.

Life in Hong Kong through much of the 19th century was not easy. The damp and heat of summer were almost unbearable. Robbery was common on Hong Kong's ill-lit streets. There was sporadic social and political unease.

It was to this environment that Victor Deacon arrived in Hong Kong in 1880. Born in 1847, Victor Deacon hailed from a small village called Ottery St Mary in Devonshire, England. Memories of that peaceful, rural place would later lead the firm to select the firm's telegraph address as "Ottery", a somewhat beguiling name for those who do not know the story behind it. For many years, however, the address remained unchanged. While communication methods have now changed, the firm to this day operates a pleasure junk called "Ottery". It is a gentle reminder of the man who helped shape Deacons into the leading firm it is today.

Increasing prosperity

Hong Kong developed at a fast pace as a trading centre, marrying the strengths of the East and West and motivating people to look for opportunities in the city. The physical infrastructure developed, with many landmarks being built. A clock tower was erected on Pedder Street, a fountain in

front of City Hall, and a sailor's home at West Point. Gas streetlamps had become a long-established utility. The Suez Canal was now operative, cutting the journey time between Hong Kong and Europe. Banks, too, began to flourish, further feeding the mercantile spirit of this pioneer town.

19 years after Bridges' left, the practice he established was known by the names of its then partners, Brereton and Wotton. The operation of the law firm was transferred to Swire House (No. 11 Chater Road today) due to the expansion of business. The firm has been headquartered in Hong Kong's Central district ever since.

In 1882, Victor Deacon was admitted as a partner, thus adding his own name to the firm. In just two years, he had quickly become respected as one of Hong Kong's leading conveyancers. Residing in a two-storey house on the north side of Arbuthnot Road, Central, he was known for his good-natured and convivial manner. A lover of fine wines, his home became the venue for regular Saturday-night poker parties, which generally lasted into the small hours of the morning and at which Governor Sir William Robinson was a frequent guest.

Hong Kong was entering a golden period of growth. For more than 20 years, until his departure from Hong Kong in 1906, Victor Deacon brought great contributions to the legal practice, which would establish his place in history.

Moving with the times

Hong Kong's Central District, which is close to Victoria Harbour, gradually developed into a comfortable and convenient place and has always been the major business and financial hub of the city.

Only a few steps away from Deacons' office on Queen's Road Central stood Hong Kong's original Supreme Court. Built in 1843, it was designed as a mercantile exchange, a proud testament to international trade. It was a grandiose structure with an imposing columned facade. Following its



Photo credit: Linda Lee, Deacons

completion, however, a depression in foreign trade rendered the building somewhat redundant and the Government was able to acquire it for just HK\$30,000.

Unfortunately, the court's interior had little in common with its exterior. The Daily Press of 1870 reported, "It is quite evident... to any candid enquiring mind that the designer of the... Supreme Court room has studied nature very successfully – so much so, in fact, that you may enjoy the privileges of the open air inside the court in almost any kind of weather."

Bad infrastructure also brought some problems to Deacons. In 1894, its office had to be temporarily vacated due to an invasion of rats. A later change of location in 1901 seemed to work well for the firm. In new offices closer to Ice House Street, the firm found itself separated by just a narrow alley from the law firm of Messrs Johnson Stokes and Master. According to reports from the time, "communication in case of need was frequently obtained by vociferous shouting from one window to another."

Yet that arrangement, too, was to last only a few years. In 1904, the firm took residence in Prince's Building, a luxury four-storey edifice at 1 Des Voeux Road on the new Chater reclamation. Regarded as the most magnificent and modern building in Hong Kong at the time, Prince's Building was a prestigious address. Times were improving, too, for the Supreme Court. In 1912, it entered its new premises on the eastern side of Statue Square.

A time of war

War and conflicts were a dominant theme of the first half of the 20th century. Much like Hong Kong, Deacons grew steadily throughout the early 20th century. The First World War made little impact on the territory, other than a temporary shortage of solicitors as men signed up for the war effort. Yet, in the early 1940s, new troubles were stirring, on a far larger scale than the world had previously known.

As Europe disintegrated into bloodshed and conflict,

around the world.

Post war development

Although the war ended in 1945, its consequences would be far-reaching. The social and political landscape, in Asia and around the world, had changed forever. It was a time of movement and re-focus, of new values in an altered society. For Deacons, too, that meant a new social order.

Willie, who had fought so loyally to keep the office running after all other members of the firm had fled or been imprisoned, was made partner, only the second Chinese partner in the firm's history at the time. Soon after, Wong Wai Pat became the firm's first Chinese articled clerk, later becoming partner in 1959 and the firm's first Chinese senior partner in 1974. He was admitted to the Hong Kong Law Society's Roll of Honour in 2003 and was known to be one of the longest practising solicitors in Hong Kong.

Deacons continued to benefit from the development of Hong Kong as a successful trading post and port. Having long been known for its work in trusts, conveyancing and shipping, Deacons continued to expand to serve Hong Kong's increasing legal needs.

It had been a long, hard struggle, but 100 years had seen Hong Kong grow from simple roots into a dynamic territory of enormous potential. Deacons forged ahead, continuously cultivating talent and keeping its leading position in the local legal market.

The changing face of Hong Kong

In 1962, Deacons moved from the historic Prince's Building, which by that time had been zoned for demolition. It was the beginning of another cycle of growth. The firm's new offices in Union Building (later Swire House and today the location of 11 Chater Road) were indicative of the firm's stature.

Central was becoming a place of concrete canyons, the colonial low-rise buildings of yesteryear giving way to



Photo credit: Eliza Siew, Deacons

soaring land prices and the commercial demands of Hong Kong's new business dynamic. For Deacons, property transactions became just one aspect of a thriving practice, which had also begun to serve the territory's surging finance and corporate deals.

Hong Kong had matured rapidly and, with it, the legal community had developed too. By the mid-1970s, Deacons was a busy full-service business law firm and a highly-respected name in commercial circles.

An internationally recognized Hong Kong firm with strong Chinese roots

In the past 170 years, Deacons has witnessed and accompanied the success of many clients. In addition to a comprehensive business scope, wide legal expertise and outstanding quality of service, Deacons also attaches great importance to the training of young legal professionals. Many current law firm partners, company general counsels and government agency officials received professional training, or worked here. From this point of view, Deacons could be called the "West Point Academy" of Hong Kong's legal industry.

In addition, Deacons has made many contributions to the history and cultural heritage of Hong Kong's legal industry. In 2014, after careful consultation with The Law Society of Hong Kong and with the descendants of clients, Deacons decided to store part of its historical archives in the library of the University of Hong Kong. This batch of historical archives has been classified into 65 categories and packed in 160 boxes, enough to fit a 35-meter-long bookshelf, including business contracts, certificates, legal documents, deeds, wills and photos from 1846 to 2007, which can be used by scholars and historians for a better understanding of Hong Kong's economic development and people who have contributed greatly to it.

As a core engine in the Greater Bay Area, Hong Kong plays an important role to drive regional economic development. As a leading law firm that originated in Hong Kong, Deacons has always been committed to the

development of the Greater Bay Area. With the help of a wide service network in Chinese mainland, Deacons has provided comprehensive legal services for a large number of Chinese-funded enterprises to "go global" in recent years. The firm has also assisted the compliance of "foreign-funded enterprises" in the mainland, for the benefit of the overall economy.

Deacons believes that, though there are always many challenges, positivity and optimism are still the main themes in the future. Deacons will follow the national development plan closely and play the part of a leading law firm in the legal industry in Hong Kong to provide legal services to more

companies and to meet the needs of their business.

Today and tomorrow

As a dynamic firm with deep roots in a vibrant region of a great nation, Deacons is proud of its history.

In 1851 no one could foresee Hong Kong as a top international financial centre. The business of Deacons has grown alongside the development of Hong Kong. As the needs of clients become more and more diversified, the firm is constantly adapting and adjusting while maintaining a profound culture that abides by traditional values.

As the firm looks to the future, its name has become synonymous with quality and commitment. The integrity and professionalism which have kept Deacons at the forefront of legal practice for more than one and a half centuries remain an integral aspect of the firm's culture today.

Since 1985, the main office of the firm has been in Alexandra House, progressively taking more floor space to accommodate its expanding team of lawyers. Deacons now offers 18 legal services including banking and finance, capital markets, China trade & investment, corporate and M&A, corporate services, employment and pensions, family law, insolvency and restructuring, insurance, intellectual property, investment funds, litigation and dispute resolution, private clients, real estate, and regulatory and tax. Its clients come from many sectors including construction and infrastructure, consumer goods and retail, financial institutions, funds and investment management, hospitality and leisure, life sciences and healthcare, private wealth, real estate and technology, media, telecommunications (TMT) and other industries.

Deacons is the largest local law firm in Hong Kong and is highly ranked by major legal publications including Chambers Asia-Pacific and The Legal 500-Asia Pacific.

The firm continues to cultivate talent for the benefit of the legal industry. It is proud to serve more and more clients. It looks forward to continuing to contribute to the growth of the community as well as the prosperity of Hong Kong SAR, Chinese mainland and the world. 🇭🇰

(Contributed by Deacons)