

**Remarks by The Honorable Elaine L. Chao on behalf of  
Dr. James S. C. Chao & family  
Inauguration of the Ruth Mulan Chu Chao Center  
Harvard Business School  
Boston, MA 02163  
Monday, June 6, 2016**

President Faust, Dean Nohria, Governor Baker, Senator Warren, Senator Markey, members of the Harvard Corporation, and dear friends:

My father, Dr. James S. C. Chao, sisters May, Christine, Grace, and Angela, brothers-in-law, Jeff Hwang, Jos Shaver, Gordon Hartogensis, and Jim Breyer, and nieces and nephews Ben, Alexia, Tyler, Penelope, Miranda and Jessica-- and, my husband Leader Mitch McConnell and I-- want to thank you for joining us for the inauguration of the ***Ruth Mulan Chu Chao Center***.

We are so touched guests have come from all over the country and the world to join us, including my father's old classmates from Jiading, China, leaders of Shanghai Lixin University and schoolmates from his alma mater, Chiao Tung University.

Four years ago, Harvard announced the gift that made this Center a reality. In the school's initial discussions with my father, they explained there was a pressing need for a special place to anchor Harvard Business School's Executive Education Program in the expansion of this campus. We could not think of a better way to give back to the University that has educated so many members of our family. And we were excited to have the opportunity to help educate leaders who can make a difference in the world.

As you may know, my parents left China when they were very young, during a tumultuous time in Chinese history. The hardships they encountered instilled in them a life-long commitment to build bridges of understanding between people of different backgrounds and cultures. When they relocated again to start anew in America, a key element that helped them not only survive but thrive was their education. That's why they have devoted so much of their philanthropy to helping others access education.

And that's why the concept of a place of learning at Harvard for leaders from all over the world resonated with my father. It is his hope that the ***Ruth Mulan Chu Chao Center*** will be a place where emerging leaders from across the globe can mix with each other—as well as Harvard students, faculty, and administrators and visitors -- and be inspired by the life and spirit of an ordinary yet extraordinary woman, Ruth Mulan Chu Chao.

My mother came from a distinguished family in Anhui Province who believed in educating their daughters. She believed that men and women should be treated equally, and she and my father made sure her six daughters were equipped with the tools they needed to realize their dreams. My mother was the constant north star of our family, holding us together during years of separation from our father when he came to this country to build a better life for our family. And when we finally joined him in America, she was the strong foundation that gave us the confidence and courage to advance in this new country. With today's inauguration, there is finally a building on campus named after a woman and an Asian American. We hope her example of remaining steadfast in the face of adversity and turmoil will inspire others to never give up on their dreams.

It is fitting that Goody Clancy's design of this building honors the past while looking forward to the future, which is so emblematic of my parents' life journey. We thank the workers who toiled on this building through so many seasons and the Harvard team that worked on the programmatic needs of the community. We also want to thank the renowned portrait artist Chen Yanning for his gift of the portrait of my parents, Dr. James S. C. Chao and Ruth Mulan Chu Chao, which hangs in the reception area, depicting a loving couple hand in hand, facing life together.

It is my father's hope that when people enter the ***Ruth Mulan Chu Chao Center***, they will be imbued with Ruth Mulan Chu Chao's spirit of optimism, determination and her strong example ***of a life lived for others***. He is humbled and grateful to be able to help Harvard share that dream with the world. Thank you.

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