Mr. John Woo, a globally renowned film director is an outstanding alumnus of Concordia Lutheran School. This June, he took a trip to different cities around the world to promote his new film "Windtalkers," and Hong Kong was one of his destinations. His schedule was tight as he had stayed in Hong Kong for only three days, yet he showed his affection and support for his Alma Mater through his visit in the morning of June 25. Teachers, students and alumni of Concordia held a grand reception to welcome him.

"Alumnus Woo has become a world-class film director and his achievements have brought him accolades from all parts of the globe. The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts conferred the title of Honorary Fellow upon him in recognition of his contributions to the film industry. He was chosen as one of the 50 most powerful figures in Hollywood by "Premiere", the authoritative US movie magazine. He is also the first Chinese director to earn special honor of the famous Hollywood Boulevard handprint and footprint ceremony. Concordia is proud of having such a distinguished alumnus. On behalf of all the teachers, students and alumni, I would like to express our sincere congratulations upon Alumnus Woo’s achievements," said Principal David Wong in his opening speech.

"Alumnus Woo’s talents and his passion for drama could be seen as early as he studied at Concordia. At school or church, he participated enthusiastically in drama activities. He would save up for making experimental movies with 8 and 16mm film and invited us to be his audience. It was his unyielding devotion to film-making, strong will and industrious spirit that brought him his accomplishments today," Principal Wong added.

Alumnus Woo was invited to make a speech at the reception to encourage his younger schoolfellows. He first pointed out that school and church were the places to cultivate his interest in drama and lead him to becoming a Christian. They are great blessings in his life for which he is sincerely grateful. Christianity not only gives him support and strength in adversities, but also influences his films and philosophy. Alumnus Woo recalled that life was harsh when he was young and the resettlement estate he lived in was an awful environment. As a result, he spent most of his time at school and church that he received attention, warmth, assistance and peace. After he had become a film director, there was a time when his movies performed badly at the box-office. His bosses decided not to hire him and his friends either alienated or abandoned him. Although he was dejected, his faith supported him and kept him from giving up. He realized his value from God, not man. It was this realization that gave him courage and confidence to face difficulties and challenges. Despite the fact that most of Alumnus Woo’s works are action films that emphasize visual stimulations to the audience, there are also depictions of human elements, such as love for family and friends, forgiveness, acceptance and repentance. These elements come from the Bible and are the essence of Christian ethics.

Alumnus Woo’s speech was followed by a Q&A session, a floral tribute, a photo session, a signing session, and finally a tour of the campus that he had missed for many years. He then had to leave, despite his unwillingness, because he had another appointment. Concordia was where he spent his childhood. The visit certainly brought him back a lot of fond memories.

After giving his speech, John Woo took a photo with Concordians.