

Justin Brian Poy

It would be easy to believe that someone like Justin Poy, blessed with creative talents and arduous passion, with a family background as eminent as his, would naturally turn into a well-known philanthropist and one of the top talents in the field of creative media. But when one looks deeper into Justin's life, one discovers that, on the contrary, this success is not a matter of course. The creation of a legend in the making of a successful business together with a long history of community service is in reality the result of tremendous hard work and dedication.

In the eyes of many, Justin was born with a silver spoon in his mouth; his mother, an author and historian, was the first Canadian of Asian descent to be named to the Senate of Canada, and his father a plastic surgeon and avid photographer. Nurtured by loving parents, and no doubt having inherited their superior genes, Justin dreamed of becoming an artist when he was growing up. He started early, founding his own media design company with a niche marketing strategy soon after graduation. á

Since then, Justin has won many awards in the media industry, including the Canadian Youth Business Foundation's first ever Entrepreneurship Champion Award, Summit International Creative and Emerging Media Awards for innovation in the use of high tech media, and awards from the Chinese Canadian Advertising, Media and Marketing Association (CCAMMA). The holoAd marketing service that Justin launched in 2002 using three-dimensional holographic technology was a perfect example of art and commerce combined. With a sharp eye for business, he saw the opportunities brought on by the wave of Chinese immigrants in the 90Æs, and has been targeting multicultural and Asian markets, a niche market that he is quite successful in.

Justin's achievements in business are indeed remarkable, but his work extends also to the community. His many contributions have been well recognized - he was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002 and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012. Currently Justin serves on over 20 committees and four boards of directors. He also gets involved in the planning of several large charity events, including Asian Heritage Month and the Horizon Gala for Markham-Stouffville Hospital. In addition to contributing his expertise behind the scenes, Justin, a rather splendid singer, also performs au gratis at some of these fundraising events. Justin's external engagements outside his work life far exceed a regular nine-to-five job.

Justin says that in the past twenty years, he attends a board or committee meeting almost every evening. On occasions when he feels exhausted, he would contemplate reducing his involvement, but in the end he always concludes that business profits alone cannot give him the same satisfaction. Contributing to the community has now become an integrated part of his life, volunteering part of his blood. He also believes that achieving a balance between making a profit and doing public good would be just like a perfect marriage between art and commerce, and that has always been a goal for his media business.

Among all the non-profit work, Justin is most interested in medical related work, especially in kidney-related diseases and organ and tissue donation. Besides being a board director for the SickKids Foundation, he also actively promotes the Kidney Foundation of Canada's organ donation movement in the Chinese Canadian community. This enthusiasm originates from his personal experience as a patient. Justin

remembers much of his childhood being spent on hospital beds. He frequented hospitals for dialysis treatment for sixteen years, often spending more time with the equipment than going to school. Even when he did not feel well, he insisted on going to school. He treasured the time he spent in class, refusing to give a hint that he was sick in front of his classmates. Ten years ago when he had a bout of cancer he continued working as usual. Not wanting to talk about his illness, Justin would try to infuse positive energy to those around him.

Bad things will happen to us whether we like it or not. I want my solutions to problems to be my legacy, not the challenges themselves. This is his motto for life.

No matter what kind of misfortune befalls me, I will not let it define me. He believes that when facing illness, some of us will give up easily, and some of us will feel like the world owes us something. I am the opposite. I am quiet when I am sick, but when I get better, I want to do something about the needs of those who were in the same situation as me.

Some people think that things always go smoothly for me. That I can get anything I want, and my family background and connections get me special treatment. They don't know that in today's world, even if you get an introduction, no one will give you a second look if you are not capable on your own merits.

Your destiny is in your own hands. From when he was a child, Justin has always relied on his will power and hard work to make his own destiny. Behind all this, the most important person giving him guidance and advice is his mother, a woman of extraordinary poise and grace.

Five years ago I received a kidney transplant from my mother. She was already my mentor and my biggest supporter. This act of love only reinforced what she had already taught me about being a parent and a good human being.

A mother's love is the best kind of love. In Justin's eyes, his mother is also an inspiring role model for him. She has shown him the importance of striving for balance in all aspects of life. She taught me to get involved in community work, and how important our cultural heritage is, especially in Canada. She had been influenced by her own father, who spent his life giving to others. When I was just over twenty, I began volunteering at Mon Sheong, and later I was one of the founding committee members of the Cathay Ball to raise funds for their Foundation.

Among second generation Chinese Canadians growing up here, very few of them are like Justin, getting involved in the Chinese Canadian community from a young age. Even rarer are those who keep their passion after they grow up.

Many people think that the children of prominent people would naturally become influential themselves. In truth, most of their children are unknown to me and you. The many committees that I sit on, most of the members are over fifty years old, and I am often the youngest member.

It is a pity that young Chinese Canadian leaders are hard to find. Many young people do join youth groups, but quickly lose their connections with their community as soon as they graduate from high school or university. Yet as a leader, Justin is always focused on being a good role model, and provides the next

generation with support and encouragement. In 1999 he set up the Justin Poy Agency Award for the School of Radio and Television Arts (RTA) at Ryerson University, an annual award open to 3rd and 4th year students. This is awarded to a student who has produced a project that deals with overcoming life challenges. Aside from that, he was also the Chair of the Program Advisory Committee for the School of Radio and Televisions Arts, contributing not only his resources, but also his expertise.

His school days unforgettable to him, Justin is most proud of the Alumni of Distinction Award given to him in 2013 from the Toronto French School (TFS).

I was excited to get this award and it means a lot to me because among all the awardees I was the only person in creative arts. When I was at TFS, which was purely an academic school in the 1980Æs, I was always involved in drama or in an art exhibit after hours and on weekends. Fortunately my parents supported me in anything that made me happy. They wanted to see my brothers and I do something that we enjoy, and the area that I enjoyed as a child the most was art.

Justin has encouraging words for the younger generation, If you believe you can do it, then you can, but it doesn't fall on your lap. He lives his own words with passion. He continues to devote his time and energy to community affairs, especially those related to medical and healthcare issues. His wish is to do something, no matter how small, that will improve the lives of young patients. One such thought is to write a story book specifically for children who spend a lot of time in hospitals. As a young patient, Justin would draw cartoons to amuse his fellow hospital mates, bringing them a little bit of joy in their often very lengthy stays.

Justin also hopes that through his different roles in the community, he could promote the integration of Chinese Canadians in mainstream society, and raise the profile of Chinese Canadians in the community. On the other hand, as a Chinese born in Canada, he would also like to devote his energy to bridge the gap between the immigrants here and our three motherlands to improve collaboration and understanding all around. This is why whenever he joins a committee, he will always think about what angle he could target to benefit the Chinese Canadian community. As an example, as Chair of the Chinese Community Outreach Advisory Group for the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), he raised funds to have a private box in Theatre One named the Chinese Canadian Community Box.

This year, Justin is the producer and host of a program called 'Philanthropy Today' for Rogers TV York Region. There is a saying that it takes ten years to prepare for just one minute of a TV program. With so many passions, how does Justin find time?

Justin softens his voice when he talks about the family he loves. No matter how busy, he will always find time to spend with his family, his two daughters Daphne and April and his parents. His energy and his passion are fueled by the love for his family, and their love for him.