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Bio & Policy Statement from A Nominee for President Board of Governors 2018-2019

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Dear Fellow Correspondent members,

I have had the privilege to be a Correspondent Governor of the FCC for the last five years and was elected President by the Board last November. Having long argued in favour of a higher degree of continuity on the board, I thought I should stand again.

I am well aware of the challenges that the FCC is facing. The most obvious one will be the selection of a new General Manager, to take over the operations of the Club when Mr Cheng leaves this summer after an exemplary and life-long commitment to the FCC.

As a President, I feel responsible to follow this key mission through, until a new GM is in place. I am especially grateful to the Treasurer and 2nd V-P Doug Wong who spearheaded this effort and co-led the Search Committee with First V-P Victor Mallet.

Before this ballot closes we'll also have lost our dear executive chef, Chef George. And there are other key management positions that have been empty for a long time. All this creates a slightly unstable situation that requires dedicated attention from the board in general and the President in particular.

We are also facing some financial challenges that we partly addressed by introducing a "minimum spend". The Finance Committee looked closely at our cost structure and considered how to improve our revenues. Several initiatives have already been taken, but we still can do better: less paper, less plastic, less air-conditioning.

The Master Plan that you have been consulted about and that is being monitored by the House Committee should help the Club identify new solutions to address its functional and financial challenges. It should also help us consolidate and reaffirm our identity as a unique club, whose fame goes well beyond boasting Asia's cheapest G&T in Hong Kong's best-looking heritage bar.

The FCC is unique for the conversations it hosts, literally and figuratively.

If you vote for me I will promote, protect and encourage these “conversations”. On that note, I am thrilled to see new members willing to join the board and enrich the Club with their dynamic input.

The FCC is and must remain a journalists’ club and to that end, we should continue to attract more journalists and correspondents. But just as we have currently in place a successful promotion scheme for Correspondents and Journalists (that could be expanded), I have proposed a promotion scheme aimed at making the FCC more accessible to some Associate members.

The club plays a critical role in upholding the freedom of expression and freedom of thought that are essential to the freedom of the press and that is under growing threat. More than ever, it is essential that the FCC keeps a close watch on these issues.

Finally I would like to underline my commitment and attachment to the two most significant press-related events in the Club’s calendar: the Journalism Conference Day (3rd year) and the Human Rights Press Awards (22nd year). It is hard to fathom the amazing amount of benevolent work that these initiatives require, in particular from the board members who also contribute a great deal to their respective committees. It is a real privilege to work with such dedicated professionals to uphold the name and reputation of the club.

Having worked as a Foreign Correspondent since 1991 (in Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Taiwan and in Hong Kong since 2008), mainly for Le Monde (Paris published daily newspaper), RFI and Radio France (French National Radio), the FCC carries a special resonance to me.

I am confident that we have all the assets we need, through our membership, our staff, our board members and our amazing "home", to successfully address the challenging and exciting issues highlighted above, with vision and ambition for the Club.

I shall do my best to serve the FCC as your President for another year, if you wish me to do so.

Thank you for your vote of support and see you around the Club!

Florence de Changy