

Bio & Policy Statement
Correspondent Member Governor
Board of Governors 2014-2015



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Affiliation: Freelance

Press Freedom : Really, what more is there to say?

Our Club has again taken a strong and principled stand by marching on two recent occasions alongside local and overseas journalists who are increasingly concerned about the pressure – and outright attacks – on freedom of the press and the freedom of expression in Hong Kong. Have no doubt: These attacks, irrespective of whatever obscure motive lay behind them, have a chilling effect.

I am proud to have joined with members and staff in marching in protest against the brutal stabbing of Kevin Lau, the former chief editor of the *Ming Pao* newspaper. I am also the founding chairman and, until recently, co-convenor of the Press Freedom Committee – which I am proud to say has been more active than ever on press-related issues. I strongly favor the Club taking firm positions and issuing public statements in support of both our professional interests and the people’s constitutional right under the Basic Law to impart and to receive information.

In addition, I am a founding co-organizer of the Human Rights Press Awards, a flagship event for the FCC. The Awards – the most prestigious journalism honors in Asia -- are co-organized by the Hong Kong Journalists Association and Amnesty International Hong Kong. This year we’re holding our 18th Awards ceremony. The list of winners is long and impressive, and we are deeply grateful to the Board and members for the increasing support.

Soon, Hong Kong has to grasp some thorny issues: It must have a freedom of information act, one that offers real statutory access, not the ring-fencing of information in the guise of access. It needs an archive law that carefully describes what information must be preserved, and what can be dumped without doing harm to the preservation of material important to Hong Kong’s history and identity, and to holding officials accountable. It’s crucial to the operation of government at all levels that public bodies hold meetings that are open to the public and the press, and that they keep records that are open and accessible. We are still threatened by possible laws on stalking, as well as by legislation on parody and satire, just to cite a few examples.

Since I was first elected to the Board, I have served as a Journalist Governor and then as 2nd Vice-President, a position elected from among all three categories of club membership. I was also serving as Club Secretary until my recent change in membership category -- from Journalist to Correspondent – a shift that necessitated my stepping down from the Board.

Until very recently, I was the Senior Political Reporter at Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK). Over the years, I may have ruined the breakfasts of a few listeners, and if you are one, I apologize for any inconvenience. From here on I shall be earning my keep as a freelance journalist, mainly for overseas outlets. And I’ll join the ever-lengthening list of those trying to make money, somehow, off the Internet.

I figure the food, drink, friendships, networking and the best staff of any club in Hong Kong pretty much speak for themselves. We do need to keep riding herd on costs while keeping prices down (so please think carefully when voting for candidates who might make a good Treasurer).

My phone number is 9180-0734. My email is moriarty.francis@gmail.com - feedback and fair comment are welcome.