Halfway around the world, men and women with degrees from Roosevelt are helping shape China’s future.

These financiers, civil servants, entrepreneurs, developers, publishers, university officials – the list of their professional occupations goes on and on – live all across the world’s most populous nation.

In the tradition of Roosevelt University, they are socially conscious leaders, using their education to problem solve and innovate, transforming their society and homeland for the better. Stories of what some of these alumni have done with their Roosevelt education and lives in China are told on the following pages.

“They are remarkable individuals and worth knowing, as Roosevelt has transformed their lives and their world view,” said Roosevelt University President Chuck Middleton, who has visited alumni in China many times.

“Given Chicago’s growing presence as an international city and China’s emergence as the 21st Century’s newest economic superpower, it makes sense for the University to be connected with these alumni and with China,” he said.

Since 1999, the University has hosted groups of mid-career Chinese leaders, educating them in the classroom and giving them field experiences and internships for the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) or Executive Master of Public Administration (EMPA) degree. There are about 500 EMBA and EMPA graduates in China today. Most of them received their EMBA and were sponsored by governments and organizations in China’s northern Liaoning Province, Beijing, Shenzhen, Shenyang and Tianjin. In addition, hundreds of alumni who went to Roosevelt as international students live in China today.

Pledging to stay in touch, the University’s Office of Institutional Advancement has organized alumni chapters in Beijing, Shenyang, Shenzhen and Tianjin. Currently, there are nearly 100 Chinese students at Roosevelt, including a group of mid-career Beijing Statistical Bureau managers pursuing the EMPA degree.

“We are reaching out to our alumni, friends and many contacts in China,” said Patrick Woods, vice president for institutional advancement at Roosevelt. “We want them to know our door is always open and we want them to tell others in China about the Roosevelt experience and how it changes lives.”
Rising to the Top

SHENZHEN, CHINA Hengdi Li • Xiaochun “Jason” Liu • Songming Xu

Roosevelt business professor Lee Ahsmann visited China shortly before his death in 2007, where he met with former EMBA students.

“I never saw Lee as energetic and involved as when he was with the Chinese students,” said management professor Tom Head, who also taught them. “He spoke of it as the high point of his life, and when he came back from China, I remember him telling me, ‘We did it right! We really did it right!’”

For amazing success stories of alumni in China one can look to the city of Shenzhen, which sent the University 21 mid-career leaders whom Ahsmann and Head taught in 2001-02.

At the time, Hengdi Li was general manager of a 180-person Shenzhen shipping company. He mastered English that year and easily advanced in his career upon returning home.

Today, he manages the Shanghai plant of a Norwegian company that makes environment-friendly auto-emission-control devices. “This business is not just about making money,” said Li, who grew up in south China’s countryside, the son of farmers and the first of seven children to get a master’s degree. “It’s about environmental protection and contributing to society and I am doing something that is in the spirit of Roosevelt.”

Xiaochun “Jason” Liu had been general manager of the legal department of Shenzhen Investment Company in Hong Kong. After receiving his EMBA, he became deputy general director of Shenzhen’s World Trade Organization Affairs Center and founding chair of Shenzhen Society for WTO Studios. Today, he is deputy general secretary of the South China Commission of the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC), one of the largest arbitration institutions in the world.

“While at Roosevelt, I had an internship with the Chicago International Dispute Resolution Association that taught me a lot about international arbitration and helped me in my career,” he said.

Songming Xu had been Shenzhen’s director of real estate and housing and chief editor of a real estate magazine. Now, he is one of the city’s highest ranking officials. “I received a lot of professional training regarding leadership,” said Xu.

As vice chair of Shenzhen, a city of 14 million, Xu handles all urban planning and development and manages a team of 200. He has introduced a plan for Shenzhen to be a low-carbon eco city, which is now a national model for China. He envisions a day when electric cars and buses will be the norm.

“We need to slow down a little in terms of economic growth and combine our efforts in planning for our economy, society and the environment,” he said.

Learning to Say ‘I Love You’

SHENYANG, CHINA

Yan “Angel” Wang

Before attending Roosevelt in 2002-03, Yan “Angel” Wang was reserved and strict. She didn’t have a car. She didn’t express feelings much. She believed rigorous discipline was necessary for her six-year old to do well in school.

Now a veteran English professor and foreign languages department director at Shenyang University, the Roosevelt alumna is a changed woman. Not only does she better understand English and American culture, she also enjoys her life, family and future.

“If I found that in relationships, the American people love each other. They show their feelings,” she said.

Back home, she made a habit of telling her husband, parents and son that she loved them. She bought a car, a house and new clothes. She began spending leisure time with her family.

“My husband and son have told me: ‘You have changed quite a bit.’ They have said: ‘It’s quite nice the way you’ve changed.’” Wang is looking forward to the day her son, now 15, will study in the United States and gain his own experiences.
Bridging Cultural Differences

BEIJING, CHINA  Guoxin "Charles" Tan • Wenchang "Kevin" Zhu

Top: A group of Roosevelt alumni from Beijing. Above: Wenchang "Kevin" Zhu (left) receives an award from Carrier for his team’s winning sales.

Roosevelt alumni Guoxin "Charles" Tan and Wenchang "Kevin" Zhu transformed their lives and careers after receiving EMBAs from Roosevelt University.

They were in the first group of 46 EMBA students from Beijing municipal government. Both have gone on to build careers in China as liaisons between foreigners who want to do business in Beijing and the contacts they will need to get things done.

"These are gracious men who understand that progress is made by taking time to make connections," said Judy Frey, who guest-lectured at Roosevelt on Asian/American cultural differences for their incoming class in 1999-2000.

At the time, Tan, a Beijing Municipal Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Commission official, asked Frey to help Zhu, the deputy director of Beijing Chamber of Commerce, meet Chicago business leaders.

Frey introduced the men to a university leader heading up a high-tech incubator program involving Chicago entrepreneurs, as well as to members of the Chicagoland and Illinois chambers of commerce. For their graduation, she also gave them a framed, autographed photo of then-Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, a memento they still treasure today.

After returning home, both men joined foreign companies investing in China and the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"Roosevelt provided me with a tremendous opportunity," said Tan. "I learned how to strategize, develop business relationships and communicate. It is an experience that changed my life."
A Place in their Hearts

BEIJING, CHINA  Bo Wang • Yuzhe "Cindy" Ding

Roosevelt University is a special place for Bo Wang and Yuzhe "Cindy" Ding.

The Chinese natives met in 2007 as international students in Roosevelt’s English Language Program. Today, they live and work in Beijing, and are married. "Roosevelt University and Chicago will always hold special memories," said Wang.

Courtship began when Ding, an undergraduate business management major from Suzhou, China, saw Wang, an integrated marketing communications major from Beijing, in a classroom and asked in English if she could sit next to him. Agreeing to this, Wang addressed Ding in Chinese, saying: "Why don’t you speak Chinese to me?"

Dinners in Chinatown, shopping at malls and travels to Miami, Washington, D.C., Las Vegas, Niagara Falls and Florida’s Disney World followed.

Graduating in 2009, Wang returned to Beijing and got a job doing marketing for a Chinese company equivalent to Netflix. A year later, Ding graduated and moved to Beijing, taking a human resources job at CCTV News.

In 2010, Wang asked Ding to attend a conference trip that would include Chicago. "I brought her to the lakeside near Roosevelt and the museums, and I asked her to marry me," he recalled.

"Roosevelt University and Chicago will always hold special memories."

– BO WANG

"I thought there would be a romantic dinner with violins, so I was a little disappointed," said Ding. She did agree to marry him and had dinner with Wang in John Hancock Center’s Signature Room.

The two were married before 250 guests in Beijing in December.

Opening World Financial Markets

SHANGHAI, CHINA
Kaiyuan "Kathy" Xu

At a time when China’s nascent financial industry is aggressively going global, Kaiyuan “Kathy” Xu leads a sales team courting foreign investors for a major securities firm in Shanghai.

Part of the 12-member Chinese Youth Federation sponsored by China’s federal government at Roosevelt during 2001-02, the EMBA graduate now talks regularly with potential clients from institutions all over the world.

Xu, formerly with the Shanghai Grain Exchange, remembers eye-opening field trips to the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, the Chicago Board of Trade and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange while she was at Roosevelt. She also credits a business course, Strategic Management, for giving her skills she uses daily to research and analyze companies.

"There are many opportunities now in China’s financial industry and in our global markets," she said. "Roosevelt helped prepare me.”
ALUMNI ACROSS CHINA

Numbering in excess of 500 and hailing from more than 60 cities across China, Roosevelt’s Chinese alumni are making an impact in their communities, on local businesses and with civic organizations.

“GIVEN CHICAGO’S GROWING PRESENCE AS AN INTERNATIONAL CITY AND CHINA’S EMERGENCE AS THE 21ST CENTURY’S NEWEST ECONOMIC SUPER-POWER, IT MAKES SENSE FOR THE UNIVERSITY TO BE CONNECTED WITH THESE ALUMNI.”

PRESIDENT
CHUCK MIDDLETON
Building strong relations

Roosevelt University and its alumni in China are maintaining strong ties, thanks in part to a series of October 2011 alumni events in China where alumni chapters in Beijing, Shenyang, Shenzhen and Tianjin have been chartered.

Pictured from upper left and clockwise: President Chuck Middleton and a delegation of Roosevelt trustees and University leaders celebrate the start of a new chapter with alumni in Tianjin; a view of the Great Wall of China; President Middleton meets an alum at a chapter gathering in Shenyang, China; alumni from Liaoning Province in the north of China re-connect at a Shenyang alumni chapter event; a view of the Olympic stadium in Beijing; Chicago College of Performing Arts Dean Henry Fogel (fourth from right) meets with officials of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Immediately to Fogel’s right is professor Wang Cizhao, the conservatory’s president. Roosevelt University Board of Trustees Chairman James Mitchell and his wife, Linda, don festive Chinese garb in Shenyang; Shanghai was one of the stops for a meet-and-greet with alumni that the Roosevelt delegation made during a goodwill trip on behalf of new alumni chapters in China.
Government Training, American Style

BEIJING, CHINA
Daidong “Willis” Wu

At a time when the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics is building a new data system, Daidong “Willis” Wu understands the need to be trained in new technologies and the best public-administration practices.

“We need to know new information and technology,” said Wu, who was promoted to deputy director of the bureau’s consultancy center after getting his EMPA from Roosevelt in 2008. “We must apply what we learn to our new metropolitan system,” which uses geographic information system technology for the first time, he said.

Forty-three bureau managers studied at Roosevelt in 2007-08 and 2009-10 and 18 others are now at the University working on the EMPA. Their program is the same as for U.S. students, learning about public administration, management, quantitative and research methods, leadership, policy, budgeting, strategic planning, economics and human resources. Government and non-profit internships are provided.

“It has been difficult. Before we started the program we knew little about the history of public administration management in America,” said Hui An, who took part in Beijing’s 2010 census and is currently studying for the EMPA. “Language is a problem but we are getting better.”

Anna Marie Schuh, associate professor and coordinator of the EMPA program, gives the Chinese opportunities in class to work with all of her public-administration students. In addition, the students spent Thanksgiving at Schuh’s home and attended a TV party viewing GOP presidential primary results with political science professor Paul Green.

Giving Back to Roosevelt

BEIJING, CHINA
Wang Li

After Wang Li got his EMBA at Roosevelt in 2000, he was promoted by the Beijing Tourism Group. Over the years, his responsibilities have included being in charge of training for the group’s 40,000 employees, managing five-star hotels, and marketing hotels worldwide. He joined elong.com in 2007 and is now dean of Beijing Hospitality Institute (BHI), a new hotel management training school.

Now Li is giving back to his alma mater in a partnership that will bring BHI students to Roosevelt’s Manfred Steinfeld School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

“My dream is for my students to be the best hotel managers in the world,” said Li. “They need to know how to communicate with people of different cultures and backgrounds. I know Roosevelt has talented teachers with real-world experience.”

Plans are currently being made to bring BHI students to campus.

“We are looking forward to this relationship with the Beijing Hospitality Institute,” said Gerald Bober, director of Roosevelt’s hospitality program. “We have several talented Chinese hospitality students in our program, and we are planning to utilize them to mentor undergraduates from BHI.”

“Roosevelt gave me the opportunity to see what happens in the real world. I am glad to do something for the University as an alum.”

– WANG LI

Watch Chinese students discuss their experiences at Roosevelt University: www.roosevelt.edu/InternationalStudents

“Roosevelt gave me the opportunity to see what happens in the real world. I am glad to do something for the University as an alum.”

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