

## 2017 OCA-WHV Dynamic Achiever Award Recipient

Dr. James Si-Cheng Chao (趙錫成)  
Founder and Chairman, Foremost Group



Born in Shanghai, Dr. James S. C. Chao has dedicated his life to the maritime industry and philanthropic activities to help others. He is the founder and chairman of Foremost Group, a highly respected international shipping and finance company known for its integrity, reliability and service. He grew up in an educated family in a small farming village. Early in his career, he advanced quickly through the ranks to become one of the youngest ocean-going sea captains at the age of 29. Later, he took the national Master Mariner Examination and achieved the highest score ever recorded and was thus honored as the first “Zhuang Yuan Chuan Zhang” (狀元船長), namely “Number One Captain”. This honor provided him an opportunity to pursue further studies in the United States.

After earning his MBA in Management in 1964, Dr. Chao founded Foremost Maritime Corporation, which was later renamed Foremost Group. As an early adopter of green technology to reduce carbon footprint, Foremost Group has incorporated fuel-efficient design and technology in its fleet of ships, which are ranked among the world’s most eco-friendly bulk carriers. In 2004, Dr. Chao was inducted into the International Maritime Hall of Fame for his outstanding contribution to the maritime industry.

Dr. Chao and his wife, the late Mrs. Ruth Mulan Chu Chao, have dedicated their lives to promoting the values of education and philanthropy. More than 5,000 students have been awarded scholarships by the Shanghai Mulan Education Foundation. To commemorate his beloved wife’s legacy of faith, family, and altruism, generous gifts have been made toward the construction of *Mulan Marine Simulation Memorial Center* at Shanghai Maritime University; the *Ruth Mulan Chu Chao Building* at Shanghai Jiao Tong University; and the *Ruth Mulan Chu Chao Center* at Harvard University, the first building named after an Asian American in Harvard’s history and the first building named after a woman in Harvard’s history.

The recipient of innumerable honors and awards, Dr. Chao and his daughter, then Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao, received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2005, the first time a father and daughter received the award simultaneously. Dr. Chao was awarded the Horatio Alger Award of Distinguished Americans at the United States Supreme Court in 2009. The Museum of Chinese in America honored Dr. Chao and his family with its inaugural Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award. He was also presented the Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award by the Chinese American Academic and Professional Society in 2011. In 2017, in recognition of his outstanding leadership in the maritime community, the Seamen’s Church Institute, conferred upon Dr. Chao its highest honor, the Silver Bell Award. Massachusetts Maritime College awarded Dr. Chao with its inaugural Admiral’s Distinguished Service Award for inspiring leadership and contributions to society in September. Most recently, the Chinese Institute of Engineers, USA presented its Centennial Medal to Dr. Chao for his leadership in adopting energy-efficient and eco-friendly ship design and technology.