

# 10 foreigners who helped transform China

Ten people, among them Singapore's founding prime minister Lee Kuan Yew, were honoured by China yesterday as it marked 40 years of reforms.



The China Reform Friendship Medal

**ALAIN MERIEUX**



**"Pioneer in development of China's healthcare sector and its external collaborations"**

Mr Alain Merieux, 80, chairs Institut Merieux, a French medicine and public health conglomerate which has worked with China to fight cancer, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases since the early days of the reform era. He also helped build China's first top-level safety biological lab in the central city of Wuhan, one of about 20 in the world.

**WERNER GERICH**



**"First foreign factory manager of China's reform era"**

Mr Werner Gerich was already retired when he was dispatched to oversee a diesel engine plant in Wuhan in 1984, becoming the first foreigner to run a state-owned enterprise in the reform era. He was lauded for introducing to China modern tenets of industrial management based on discipline, quality control and market demands.

**KLAUS SCHWAB**



**"International activist who promoted China's external economic exchanges and cooperation"**

A German engineer and economist, Mr Klaus Schwab founded the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 1971 and launched annual meetings in the Swiss town of Davos to brainstorm solutions for challenges the world faces. He was an early supporter of China's reforms and involved China in the WEF's annual meetings soon after his first visit to the country in 1979.

**KONOSUKE MATSUSHITA**



**"Trailblazer of renowned international companies' participation in China's reforms"**

Mr Konosuke Matsushita founded Japanese consumer electronics giant Panasonic in 1918. Mr Deng Xiaoping, China's paramount leader and architect of its reforms, went out of his way to call on Mr Matsushita during his visit to Japan in 1978 and invite the latter to take part in China's modernisation. Mr Matsushita reciprocated by building a television component factory in Beijing. Panasonic thus became the first Japanese corporation to invest in China.

**MASAYOSHI OHIRA**



**"Statesman who pushed for normalisation of Sino-Japanese ties and supported China's reforms"**

Japan's Prime Minister from 1978 to 1980, Mr Masayoshi Ohira played a pivotal role in normalising relations between China and Japan despite coming under pressure from conservative Japanese factions. Mr Deng Xiaoping would later say that it was a conversation with Mr Ohira in 1979 that inspired him to coin the goal of building a "xiaokang (moderately prosperous) society" for China.

**LEE KUAN YEW**



**"Statesman who drove Singapore's deep participation in China's reforms"**

Chinese leaders have long regarded Mr Lee Kuan Yew as the principal architect of Sino-Singapore relations. He was also one of a handful of world leaders who met all five of China's top leaders – from the late chairman Mao Zedong to President Xi Jinping. A keen China watcher, Mr Lee visited China 33 times over 37 years. He was also the main force behind Suzhou Industrial Park, the first government-to-government project between Singapore and China that started in 1994.

**JUAN ANTONIO SAMARANCH**



**"Champion of China's emergence in the Olympics"**

A long-time president of the International Olympic Committee, the late Mr Juan Antonio Samaranch helped engineer China's return to the Olympics in 1979 after a two-decade absence. He also encouraged China to bid to host the Games, culminating in the successful Beijing Olympics in 2008 – a feat which burnished China's credentials as a global power.

**STEPHEN PERRY**



**"Promoter of Sino-British friendship, economic and cultural exchanges"**

British businessman Stephen Perry, 70, is chairman of the 48 Group Club, a British business association committed to promoting China-Britain trade. He helped seal the first trade deal between the United States and China in the 1970s. He is described by state broadcaster China Global Television Network as one of a select group of people who played a significant role in breaking the ice in China-Britain trade relations, and in bridging ties between China and the West.

**MAURICE GREENBERG**



**"Entrepreneur who advocates and promotes China's external economic and trade cooperation as well as Sino-US friendship"**

The retired chairman and chief executive of American International Group (AIG), the world's largest insurance and financial services company, Mr Maurice Greenberg, now 93, was a trailblazer of his industry when he visited China in 1975, years before China launched its economic reforms. In 1992, AIG became the first foreign company to receive a wholly owned life insurance licence in China, helping to open up the country's financial services industry to the United States.

**ROBERT KUHN**



**"International friend who strives to tell the world the story of contemporary China"**

A long-time adviser to Chinese leaders, investment banker and corporate strategist Robert Kuhn is well known among the Chinese for his frequent commentaries on China's political and economic developments. The 74-year-old even has his own weekly show on state broadcaster China Global Television Network, about current affairs in China.

## TRANSFORMATION OF CHINA OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS

Main indicators since the economic reforms launched under Deng Xiaoping in December 1978

