

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

MICHAEL CHUNG REFLECTS ON A CAREER IN GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES AND HIS PASSION FOR HELPING OTHERS ACHIEVE MEANINGFUL SUCCESS.

MICHAEL CHUNG ('01) has spent his career investing in markets. He says the investments that have mattered most have been those made in community and people. Now global cohead of equities at Millennium Management, a global, diversified alternative investment firm, he goes on to highlight the role others have played in his achievements.

It all began with a phone call at Northwestern. Chung was a second-year student when the landline phone in his room rang unexpectedly at 8 a.m. and his roommate urgently woke him to take the call. Little did he know that the call would connect him to a lifelong mentor and open the door to an internship at a global financial services firm and a career in an industry he loves.

Chung's path took him through Tokyo, Hong Kong, New York, and eventually London, where he helped to lead a trading unit of Deutsche Bank that later spun out to become a multistrategy hedge fund firm called Arrowgrass Capital Partners. Ultimately he relocated to New York City, where he lives today. In 2015, the same mentor who had given Chung a chance as an intern recruited him to his current role at Millennium Management.

"One of the best things that has come from Northwestern is the friendships and the community that's been born from it," Chung says.

GROUNDED IN INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING

The foundation of Chung's expertise was set when he was an industrial engineering major at Northwestern. Amid the problem sets, Professor William White was among the first to show him how academic theory connects with the real world of business.

"He had a special way of integrating real-world problems and opportunities with the classroom. It showed me how the lessons could be impactful and meaningful down the road. He made learning fun," Chung says, adding that industrial engineering, a major Chung describes as interdisciplinary and collaborative, is "about designing a process that maximizes potential outcomes as opposed to guaranteeing certainty to a specific outcome."

It's a lesson Chung applies to his daily work, where he helps to manage one of the largest equities businesses in the industry. "The thinking behind designing and optimizing complex systems that involve machines, data, and human and financial capital is very much applicable to designing and optimizing an investment and risk management process and platform," he says.

After years of professional experience in the financial services industry, Chung felt something was missing. "I realized life wasn't just about financial results, that I cared about the positive impact I can have on my people—my family, friends, colleagues, and the community around me," he says. "I found real purpose and joy in investing in others and witnessing lives and communities change before my eyes."

"I've been incredibly fortunate to have the people and opportunities Northwestern has brought into my life. Giving back and investing in others is one small way I can express that gratitude, and I hope others will find their own way to stay connected and join me in serving the community at Northwestern."

Today, Chung's ambition to give back drives him forward. He serves on the Leadership Council for Apex for Youth, an organization that supports Asian American youth from low-income backgrounds by offering them mentorship and access to critical resources. The organization honored Chung for his leadership, advocacy, and commitment at the 2026 Inspiration Awards Gala, where he was introduced by Olympic gold medalist Eileen Gu.

Chung has also found community by partnering with Michelin star chefs to create a restaurant group that currently owns and operates five restaurants in four states, with a couple more on the way. "It's been fun and meaningful to be able to support talent not just in the office, but also outside the office and be just a small part of a chef's dream come true," Chung says.

His passion for supporting creative talent has led him to endeavors beyond food service, including a business partnership with award-winning, multihyphenate artist Pharrell Williams.

BRINGING IT HOME TO NORTHWESTERN

Though it's been a long journey since college, Chung looks back on his time at Northwestern with deep gratitude. That gratitude has inspired him to give back, including through his service on the McCormick Advisory Council.

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For current students looking ahead to their own career paths, Chung says, "You won't always know where your career will take you, and that's okay. Stay curious, invest in the community around you, and be open to where your relationships and life's adventure may take you."

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