PREFACE

This special issue of JNCA is devoted to Professor Anthony (Tony) To-Ming Lau on the occasion of his retirement from the University of Alberta. It includes 13 research papers authored by 32 researchers, some of them are students, collaborators and friends of Tony.

Tony was born in Hong Kong. He left Hong Kong in 1961 for a bachelor degree at the University of California at Berkeley. He continued his PhD study in the University of British Columbia under the supervision of Ed Granirer. After his PhD (1969), Tony joined the University of Alberta at Edmonton as a postdoctoral fellow, then as a faculty member in 1970. He was the chairman of the math department (2001-2005) and the distinguished university professor of Alberta (since 2004).

Among several academic services, Tony served as the President of the Canadian Math Society for 2008–2010. He has also joined the editorial boards of 12 math journals, and supervised 31 PhD students. Among many awards and honors, he received the David Borwein Distinguished Career Award from the Canadian Math Society (2018). He also got the University Cup (2003) and the McCalla Professorship (1991–1992) from the University of Alberta, and the NSERC Discovery (previously NRC) Grant awards (since 1971).

Tony has a broad research interest, covering abstract harmonic analysis on groups and semigroups, fixed point theory, operator theory, hypergroups, topological groups and Lie groups. With his 179 published papers (with 2838 citations recorded in Mathscinet), Tony has made many significant contributions to these subjects. In particular, people call a *Lau algebra*, also known as an F-algebra, to refer to a Banach algebra $\mathcal{A}$ with a von Neumann algebra dual $\mathcal{A}^*$ such that the identity of $\mathcal{A}^*$ is a character of $\mathcal{A}$. This is a group-free generalization of the Fourier algebra $A(G)$ of a locally compact group G.

Tony continues his academic service, research, and teaching after his retirement. We are sure that Tony will make more contributions in the future. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to him.

Wataru Takahashi and Ngai-Ching Wong