

Dr. Sheng Yen Lee (1924-2005)

By Tzy C. Peng

Dr. Sheng Yen Lee (right), the Founder of the Chinese American Forum (CAF) Quarterly since 1984, has passed away on 20 July 2005 at his retirement residence in Silver Spring, MD. Although Dr Lee was a chemist, he was mostly remembered by his friends as an humanitarian dedicated to promote mutual understanding between the Chinese Americans and the American society at large.

He understood that a genuine friendly relationship between the U.S. and China is essential to the lasting world peace, and this genuine U.S.- China relation can only be built based on a deep-rooted cultural understanding between these two countries. This was the primary motivation Dr. Lee had when he started the CAF, a non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian cultural magazine designed primarily to introduce the Chinese culture based on a rational Confucianism to the American public.

Under Dr. Lee's leadership, CAF is written in English to facilitate the easy reading and understanding. CAF has members and subscribers including individuals and university and public libraries across the U.S. Since 1998, CAF has been distributing free copies to members of the U.S. Congress of both the Senate and House as well as high officials of all 50 states of the U.S.

Dr. Lee insisted that CAF be a non-commercial magazine and contains articles contributed by Chinese and non-Chinese Americans. Those articles are mostly educational in dealing with philosophy, history, culture, religion, personal accomplishments and current issues. For 20 years, CAF maintains its independence by not seeking dominantly large

donations from individuals or special interest groups, by relying only on volunteers for management and editorial staff, and

especially by not having any government funding in and out of the U.S.

Dr Lee is no longer with us, but his inspirations for CAF shall live on for now and ever. We, the followers of Dr. Lee, shall continue to publish CAF, continue to promote mutual understanding among the Chinese Americans and the American society, and continue to strive for the world peace in Dr. Lee's spirit for real understanding between different cultures.

Dr. Sheng Yen Lee, born in Xinyang, Henan, China on December 28, 1924, came to the U.S. in 1959 and received his Ph. D. (1964) in organic chemistry from the University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. He and his late wife, Winnie Cho, and their daughter lived in the Greater Washington, D.C. area for 22 years. After Mrs. Lee's passing in 1997, Dr. Lee remained in the D.C. area. He was 80 years old when he died. He is survived by his daughter, Yin May Lee Tate (born in 1957) and his son in law, Franklin G. Tate of Davidsonville, MD. He has a 11 years old grandson, Nicholas L. Tate, and a 10-year-old granddaughter, Cyrena A. Tate.

For a detailed biography of Dr. Lee, please read the article, Dr. Sheng Yen Lee, in Chinese American Forum, vol. 12, no. 3, Winter (January) 1997, pp. 3-4.

