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In Memoriam: Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee—A Long Memory, An Enduring Legacy

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In Memoriam: Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee—a long memory, an enduring legacy

Few people pass through our lives, like a comet, a blazing beacon brightening the heavenly sky, visible around the planet, touching lives and illuminating destinies. Dr. Lee, January 25, 1931—December 17, 2023, in his passing lives on through enduring memories shared by an expansive range of colleagues and friends, family and relatives, and professional and personal acquaintances alike. Although I was only a brief acquaintance, Dr. Lee’s warmth and generous demeanor captivated my memory of him and imbedded a recollection of wisdom, humanity, and benevolence known more deeply by his closest colleagues. It is a rare quality in a human being to give and be given recognition in the same instance of exchange. Dr. Lee crossed all barriers of time and space and continues to cross the invisible barrier of that which is left behind, a legacy, which that which is sustained, a sphere of influence.

The structure of Dr. Lee’s remembrance, built upon his global career in academia and librarianship, may be identified as the founder of International Librarianship. Dr. Lee’s personal and professional life brought him from China, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, and across the United States, touching the lives of officers, librarians, farmers, students, and royalty, as a great scholar, administrator, professor, mentor, and friend. His contribution to international librarianship is immortalized in architecture named for his legacy and in the memory of those embraced by the warmth of his generous nature.

For references to his life, books, and memoirs, please see the links to the ALA Memorial Resolution Honoring Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee, his brief biography in the International Journal of Librarianship, and his obituary at Dignity Memorial.

Submitted by Ann Roddy