



Dr. P.K. Wong
1946-2013

**Founder and First President of
Singapore Catalysis Society**

by Dr. Ludger Paul Stubbs

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to PK Wong, the founder and first president of our society. PK passed away on 26th March after a 9 month battle with cancer. His untimely passing has left a deep void in our scientific community and our hearts. Many of us have known PK for years and miss him dearly.

PK was born in Tianjin, China, and grew up in Hong Kong. He then moved to the US where he majored in chemistry at Pasadena College, followed by a PhD with John Stille at the University of Iowa. After a postdoc with Michael Swartz, he joined Dow Chemicals for 5 years, and then worked 20 years for Shell. At Shell, PK was involved in catalyst development for the polyketone production, among many other assignments.

After his long professional career in industry, PK came to Singapore in November 2003 as the head of the Applied Catalysis Department at ICES. Joining ICES in its very early years, PK helped to turn the Applied Catalysis Department from a few scientists into a fully fledged research program that engages in a large portfolio of cutting edge projects in emerging technologies, many of them in collaboration with universities, other RIs and industry. Seeing the need for a stronger representation and organization of Singapore's scientists working in catalysis, PK founded the Singapore Catalysis Society in 2007 and became its first president. Since then, our society has brought together international experts with members from ASTAR, universities, polytechs and companies to foster Singapore as a world class innovation hub in catalysis.

After five fruitful years as program manager at ICES, PK was earmarked for higher duties and was appointed Scientific Director in 2008. In his role as Scientific Director, PK was overseeing ICES entire research efforts and helped to take ICES to the next level of excellence. From the beginning, PK spearheaded our initiatives in sustainable development, a topic that is of global emergence to address the problems of population growth and dwindling fossil resources.

In addition to his scientific and leadership merits, PK had an outstanding personality which was elemental in building a successful research program. His scientific and interpersonal skills not only endowed him with a deep technical knowledge and understanding of applied

research problems, but also made him a very efficient communicator between academia and industry, as well as between Asian and western culture.

I had the privilege to work with PK for more than eight years at ICES and within our society. Like many of my coworkers, I was always impressed by his profound knowledge and his bright mind, and charmed by his humour and his warm and humble personality. ICES and SCS have benefited enormously from his guidance and his wisdom. PK was a true gentleman and scholar, and will be remembered for his contributions to Singapore's scientific community. His legacy lives on, let us all put up an extra effort to make SCS a prosperous society in honor of PK.

by Prof. Richard Wong

I would like to pay my tribute to PK Wong's contributions to the establishment of Singapore Catalysis Society. PK has the vision of bringing the catalysis community together to promote the advancement of catalysis amongst academia and the chemical industry in Singapore. About seven years ago, he took the initiative to get together interested parties from NUS, NTU and ICES to discuss the possibility of forming a catalysis society. As a result of the meeting, a pro-term committee was formed in 11 May 2007. One year later, SCS was formally established and registered as a society in Singapore. PK was the Inaugural President of SCS. He served as President for four years and stepped down two years ago. He remained very active as an auditor of SCS and provided tremendous support to the executive committee. In particular, he played a critical role in helping SCS to become a member of the International Association of Catalysis Society, a vision that he shared since the establishment of the society. SCS owes PK a great deal for his dedicated service and skilful leadership. His selfless devotion will be remembered well by all of us. As mentioned by Lugder, the best way for us to honour PK is for us to put up a concerted effort to make SCS a prosperous and successful society.