

Distinguished Radiologist, Clinician and Visionary Leader:**Emeritus Professor Lenny Kheng Ann TAN (1942-2019), AOSR Past President 2004-2006***By Dr Evelyn Ho, AOSR Archives Chair, October 22, 2023.*

For a more in-depth write up about E/Prof Lenny Tan, Evelyn met up with radiologists Dr Lynette TEO and Associate Professor Swee Tian QUEK from the National University Hospital and the E/Prof Lenny Tan's son, Associate Professor Colin TAN in Singapore in September 2023.

**Extracurricular Positions**

The late Emeritus Professor Lenny Tan, an interventional radiologist, was an illustrious global figure in the field of radiology. He was president of the International Society of Radiology (ISR) from 1994-1998, way before he became the president of the AOSR (2004-2006). He was also founding president of the Asia Pacific Society of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology (APSCVIR) from 1990-1992. In 2016, he was the chair of the regional organizing committee for the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine. Photo on the left shows Lenny Tan wearing the AOSR President's Chain of Office.

International Recognition in Radiology

He received many honours in radiology - the ISR Antoine Bécélère Medal (2000), Gold Medals (APSCVIR 2010, Society of Interventional Radiology 2014, AOSR 2014) and was conferred honorary membership from many international/regional/national radiological societies. The photo on the right with Lenny Tan (far right) was taken at the Gold Medal Awards ceremony held in AOCR2014, Kobe.

**The Lenny Tan Modus Operandi**

Associate Professor Swee Tian Quek described E/Prof Lenny Tan as a distinguished clinician, a respected teacher and a visionary leader. He added, "E/Prof Tan pioneered interventional radiology and introduced computed tomography in Singapore. As an interventionist, he was highly regarded and would get referrals from other institutions including private clinicians and occasionally from overseas which was relatively uncommon for a radiologist. If he was on other clinical duties, mainly the CT station, he would come round several times a day to review the scans with the trainee. He was quick, sharp, clinically astute and decisive in his work and his reports were short and succinct."

"I used to wonder how he got his reports out so quickly after dictating them as he had to attend various meetings in between his clinical work. One day, I found the answer when I wandered into his office and found his trusted secretary of many years, Ms Koh Wai Leng, typing merrily away on pre-signed forms! He would sign a stack of blank radiology report forms (he called it signing blank cheques) and leave them for Wai Leng to type and send out

after he dictated them! He didn't need to check the typed reports again - it was a reflection of the great trust they had in each other's work!"

Swee Tian also recalled his first 'business' meeting with Lenny Tan - to apply for a training position in Radiology. "After making an appointment through Wai Leng, I finally got to meet the man. The discussion was short and sharp – I think he spent most of the time sizing me up and once he decided I was 'OK', the interview was over. It lasted less than 10 mins with no need for a CV! This trait I was to discover was typical of Lenny Tan – he was decisive and once he had made up his mind, he would move on without wasting time."

Dedicated Teacher/Educator

E/Prof Tan was a dedicated teacher/educator. Dr Lynette Teo, now a senior consultant in the Department of Diagnostic Imaging, NUH remembers E/Prof Tan with fondness as her interaction with him started when she was a radiology resident. She said, "He really was always around for us to consult and he really had time for us. He always reviewed every scan we reported on and was a regular face in the reporting room." She has never forgotten one of E/Prof Tan's pearls of wisdom, "Never lose your clinical skills because the administrative career is finite."

Lenny Tan walked his talk, as right till the end, he was still practising interventional radiology. He had held many administrative positions, amongst which were: senior consultant/head of the department of diagnostic radiology in Singapore General Hospital from 1984 till February 1990; professor of radiology/head, department of diagnostic radiology, National University of Singapore (NUS); chair of the Medical Board, National University Hospital from 1994-1997; clinical director of the National Healthcare Group Diagnostics from 2005-2015. From 2006, he was emeritus consultant at the Department of Diagnostic Imaging, NUH. He was also the first radiologist ever elected to serve as Dean of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine from 1994-1997.

Lenny Tan's Contributions to the AOSR

E/Prof Tan was responsible for the official registration of the AOSR with the Singapore Registrar of Societies on 28 September 2001. (Re: 2004 AOSR executive council meeting minutes held during the 10th AOCC). He also explored the possibility of a tax-exempt status for the AOSR. He was organizing chair of the 2001 and 2003 Asian Oceanian Congress of Radiology (9th and 10th AOCCs) both of which was held in Singapore at a time where the council put on 'trial', a fixed location for the AOCC, that would reap the benefits of a fixed AOCC location as well as a secretariat for the AOSR (similar to the RSNA or ESR annual meetings which are held in Chicago and Vienna respectively). Both the AOCCs under the skilled oversight of E/Prof Tan were very successful and made very significant income for the AOSR. That sum of monies has been dedicated to educational activities of the AOSR, and provided the seed money for the activities of the Asian Oceanian School of Radiology (AOSOR).

The AOSR has been privileged to have as one of its council members and subsequent president, E/Prof Tan. He also held positions of AOSR Secretary-Treasurer , President-elect

2002-2004, and Immediate Past President in the council. He subsequently served on the AOSOR Consultant Panel from 2012-2018.



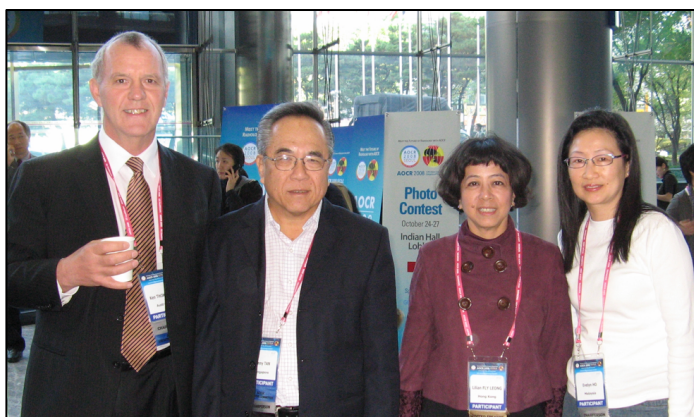
**3rd Asian Oceanian
Congress of Radiology
1979, Singapore.**

Front row, seated:
Far left -Lenny Tan

3rd from left -Federico
Principe, wearing the
AOSR President's Chain
of Office.

He put his heart and soul into the AOSR, the same way he also served in the ISR. His son, Associate Professor Colin Tan, an ophthalmologist in Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore remembers his dad's deep involvement in the ISR for many decades and was Congress President for the International Congress of Radiology (ICR) in Singapore in 1994, the second time, the ICR was held in Asia.

Since the ICR 1994 in Singapore, where E/Prof Tan became ISR President, the AOSR is a continent member of the ISR executive council, and the AOSR president attends the ISR business meetings, executive council meetings and the ISR general assembly. Several ISR-AOSR joint sessions were held: at the ICR2008 in Marrakesh, Morocco where E/Prof Tan was the moderator of the session; AOCR 2008 in Seoul, South Korea and ICR 2012 in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



**12th Asian Oceanian
Congress of Radiology
2008, Seoul**

Left to Right:
Kenneth Thomson,
Lenny Tan, Lilian Leong,
Evelyn Ho

**Lenny Tan - the Exemplary Father, the Wife Behind His Success**

Colin Tan (pictured on the left) reminisces, "I remember the hard work that my father put in to organize the various international congresses and conferences over the years, including the AOCR and the ICR. I was in a unique position to observe him in action both at official activities such as the meetings of the organizing committees and during the Congresses, as well as the work that he did tirelessly behind the scenes at home.

I was one of the few that had this privilege. A lot of hard work and planning went into organizing each of these meetings, something that few realized. The work started well before the actual congress, when the choice of the congress venue was being decided on. I remember that he went to Paris to represent Singapore to bid for the next ICR in 1989, with the actual meeting being held only in 1994. It was inspiring to see my father in action and I learned a lot from him over the years. He had a clear vision of what needed to be done, and would not let any challenges deter him. He was decisive and bold in his actions and he always based his decisions on principle and doing the right thing.

My father had many friends from all over the world whom he involved in these congresses. They would often eagerly ask him 'when is the next meeting?' That was one of the secrets of his success. He interacted with people so easily, regardless of where they came from and whether they were senior, experienced clinicians or junior staff. He was also kind to junior staff and put them at ease with his humor and his friendly demeanor.



2004:
Lenny with wife,
Agnes and son
Colin at Colin's
Master of
Medicine in
Ophthalmology
graduation
ceremony.

Equally important was the contribution of my mother – Agnes Tan – who many of the delegates and the spouses would remember as a constant presence at all of these meetings, supporting the various activities in order to make sure that it was the best possible. She wholeheartedly supported my father in his commitments, and never shied away from taking on whatever role she could to help him.

Despite his heavy responsibilities, I never felt neglected and my father was always there for me throughout the years. I remember the day that I was commissioned as an officer in the Army. Normally, a close family member would attend the ceremony and pin on the rank for the new officer. There was no doubt in my mind that I wanted my Dad to do this for me. On that day, my Dad had a meeting with a high-level delegation from Harvard University in the

US, which coincided with the time of the ceremony. When he found out, he delayed his meeting with the visitors so that he could come to my commissioning ceremony. Not only was he there to pin on my rank, but he stayed for the entire event. It was only when he was sure that the entire event was over that he then rushed off to meet the visitors.”

Epilogue

It is evident from the personal “testimonies” above that Emeritus Professor Lenny KA Tan was radiologist, clinician, administrator, visionary leader and educator, as well as a loving husband and the best father one could wish for. His connections and the various positions he held throughout his career ensured his valuable contributions to the AOSR was multifaceted. He truly embodied the essence of giving back to healthcare as a whole and specifically to the radiological community worldwide.