

Obituary for Dr. Shih-Chi Liu

(Honorary Editor-in-Chief)

Our friend and colleague, Dr. Shih-Chi Liu, passed away on June 30, 2023. Born in China, Dr. Liu grew up in Taiwan and received his undergraduate degree from National Taiwan University before moving to the University of California, Berkeley to pursue his PhD degree under the supervision of Prof. Joseph Penzien. Upon graduation, Dr. Liu worked for eight fruitful years at Bell Laboratories focusing on the emerging area of probabilistic methods applied to seismic risk analysis. He joined the National Science Foundation as a Program Director in 1975, where he showed great foresight and superb intuition regarding the most important areas of study for earthquake engineering and disaster mitigation. He was an exceptional administrator who understood the intricacies of the research program that he directed. He had the unique skill of keeping up with his primary researchers and understanding what they were attempting to accomplish. Even more so, he was able to see beyond the immediate goals of their research and guide their work in fruitful directions. As a result, he was uniquely successful, not only in laying the groundwork and drawing the blueprint for large-scale research efforts, but also in seeing his visions come to fruition. Moreover, Dr. Liu was a true visionary in recognizing the synergy of multinational research cooperation and a pioneer in the planning, development, implementation, and support of such cooperative research programs, especially between the United States and countries in the Pacific Rim and Europe. Indeed, Dr. Liu was known as a charismatic and creative leader, leveraging multilateral collaborations to enhance the safety of our society and the reliability of civil infrastructure, and fostering understanding and goodwill among engineers and scientists throughout the world. For example, following the Tangshan Earthquake (1976), Dr. Liu catalyzed over 20 years of USA-China collaboration in earthquake engineering. Additionally, in the wake of the Northridge (1994) and Kobe (1995) earthquakes, Dr. Liu spearheaded efforts between the NSF/USA and Monbusho/Japan to initiate a major 5-year US-Japan cooperative research program on earthquake disaster mitigation research, through which performance-based seismic design and engineering methods and other related advanced technologies were brought into focus for the first time. He also led the way, through multidisciplinary team and center-based research, toward the development and utilization of smart structures technology, including structural control and health monitoring, to establish the knowledge and technological bases enabling smart buildings and other structures. The impact of his tireless efforts stands as lasting testimony to Dr. Liu's insight and wisdom. He is survived by his wife, Rae, two daughters, Libby and Debbie, and three grandchildren.

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