FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK.....

Dear SCBA members:

Welcome to the October 2015 issue of the SCBA Newsletter. I take this opportunity to share with our members that we have received many very positive comments after the 2015 SCBA International Symposium in Taipei. I am thankful to everyone who contributed to this great success!

SCBA is growing continuously. I am very happy to report to our members that SCBA now has established a new Hematology Division under the outstanding leadership of Dr. Dong-Er Zhang and Dr. Paul Liu. This new division will promote 1) interactions among SCBA members in the hematology field, 2) advancement of hematology studies, and 3) awareness of scientific responsibilities and contributions. We are looking forward to having a very active and impactful Hematology Division of SCBA.

I am sure many of our members were as excited as I was when the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine winners were announced on October 5th. Ms. Youyou Tu was awarded with this top honor “for her discoveries concerning a novel therapy against Malaria.” (Nobelprize.org) The media described her as a “modest Chinese medical scientist, pharmaceutical chemist, pharmacist, and educator.” To me, she is also the “Aunt Tu”, who is a life-time old colleague of my parents, both physicians in the China Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine. This gave me the opportunity to know more about this highly dedicated female scientist. She devoted her life to using innovative scientific approaches to tackle the devastating health problem of malaria and her efforts, along with those of many other Chinese scientists, have saved millions and millions of lives! Many of us are inspired by her to envision that we Chinese bioscientists can truly make more important contributions to the scientific world and to benefit mankind.

Wish you all a wonderful golden fall season!

Respectfully yours,

Dihua Yu, M.D., Ph.D.
SCBA President (2014-2015)

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY

Dear Members of the SCBA,

As you are aware of, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of SCBA this year. Thanks to Dr. Tommy Yung-Chi Cheng, who tells us his story about the original ideas and discussions on the establishment of this very successful society. Dr. Cheng was the SCBA president in 1987. He is currently a Pharmacology professor at Yale University. At the 2015 biannual meeting of SCBA in Taipei, we were fortunate to have Dr. Susan B. Horwitz at Albert Einstein College of Medicine to present the Tsai-Fan Yu Legacy Lecture, which was chaired by Dr. Hua Yu at City of Hope Medical Center in Los Angeles. In this issue, Dr. Hua Yu and her cousin Dr. Zhigang Yu share with us more stories about career and life of the distinguished physician scientist Dr. Tsai-Fan Yu. If you have been associated with SCBA for one or two decades, I am sure you know Dr. Joseph Li, who was the executive director for the society for many years. This society is deeply saddened by Dr. Li’s untimely passing during a vacation in Canada.

Respectfully yours,
Dear Members of the SCBA,

For the months of July to September, we collected $5,705 membership fees and $150 advertisement fee. In addition, $6,000 was raised by the Neuroscience Division and these funds will be used solely to support the Division’s Chinese neuroscientists social at the 2015 Society for Neuroscience Conference. On the expense front, we distributed eight travel awards at $180 each to the 2015 SCBA Symposium travel grant awardees.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep condolences for the sudden loss of Dr. Joseph Li. He cared about the SCBA with passion and devotion; he will be missed.

Sincerely,

Hui Zheng, Ph.D
SCBA Treasurer (2014-2015)

MY MEMORY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCBA

By Yung-Chi Cheng

Time is flying fast. It was more than 30 years ago when this idea was discussed among Horrace Loh, C.C. Wang and I during several dinners and after a few drinks when I was a consultant for SYNGENE Pharmaceutical in San Francisco. We sent the letters out to those we knew and the first preparative meeting took place in St. Louis during a FASAB meeting. It was supported enthusiastically by all of the attendees. The name of the Society was born. It was officially established as Society of Chinese Bio Scientists in America (SCBA) 30 years ago with the joint efforts of many individuals. The principle is non-political. This can bring together all of Chinese Bio Scientists in spite of where they came from. The purposes are to serve as a platform to enhance the interaction of and to protect the rights through joined effort of Chinese Bio Scientist in America. Also, to facilitate the Bio Scientific development in Chinese predominant areas. I believe we have achieved both purposes through the years of effort by our members. Many of those new Bio-med scientific developments in both America and Chinese predominant areas will not be possible without our members or their joined effort. The Society is getting strong with a solid membership support, healthy financial situation and many scientific activities. It served its purpose and will continue to move forward with new leadership. I salute to those who made unselfish efforts to make the contribution.

CAREER AND LIFE OF DR. TSAI-FAN YU

By Hua Yu and Zhigang Yu

Dr. Tsai-Fan Yu was born in Shanghai, China in 1911. When she was thirteen, her mother died, causing her father to work three jobs to send her to school. As a sophomore at Gin Ling College, she was admitted into Peking Union Medical College (PUMC) with a full scholarship and received her MD with highest honors in 1939. In the same year, she became the Chief Resident of Internal Medicine at PUMC, an unprecedented feat for a female physician during that era.

In 1947, Dr. Yu came to the United States and taught at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons until joining the staff faculty at Mount Sinai Medical Center in 1957. In 1973, Yu became the first female to be appointed as a full professor at Mount Sinai Hospital. Dr. Yu retired with Professor Emeritus status in 1992 at the age of eighty-one.

Working with Dr. Alexander B. Gutman, Dr. Yu established a connection between elevated levels of uric acid and the pain in ankles and wrists experienced by gout patients. She and Dr. Gutman conducted seminal translational studies and identified probenecid, colchicine and allopurinol as effective treatment for gout, which, for the first time, turned gout into a treatable disease. These agents still remain in use as primary treatment of gout.

NOTES FROM THE TREASURER
Dr. Yu served on the National Institutes of Health Advisory Board on Metabolic Diseases and received funding from them for twenty-six years. During her career, she was awarded the Distinguished Career Achievement Award from Mount Sinai Medical Center and the Master Award from the American Association of Rheumatology. More than 220 of her articles were published during her distinguished career.

Dr. Yu blazed a trail for female translational medicine scientists half a century ago by becoming one of the very first researchers to determine the cause of gout disease at the molecular level. In addition to her research, as a clinician she followed over 4000 active gout patients, probably one of the largest gout-based practices that ever existed. She was so beloved by her patients that for years they held annual “Gout Club” meetings in her honor.

Dr. Tsai-Fan Yu died on March 2, 2007 at Mount Sinai Medical Center at the age of 95 due to respiratory complications after a stroke. Her legacy in discovering the cause of gout and making it a treatable disease lives on. To honor her contribution to human life, her biography was collected in the National Women’s History Museum of the United States, together with Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu, as the only two Asian scientists listed.

References:

1. Naishi Li, Medical Journal of Peking Union Medical College Hospital, 2011, Vol 2, No. 4, 404-406
7. Introduction to the Division of Rheumatology, Icahn School of Medicine, at Mount Sinai, http://icahn.mssm.edu/static_files/MSSM/Files/Departments/Medicine/Divisions/Rheumatology/Rheumatology.pdf
Figure 4: A Tribute to Dr. Tsai-Fan Yu from the Division of Rheumatology, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. The picture shows Drs. Tsai-Fan Yu and Alexander Gutman at the gout lab in Mount Sinai Medical Center.

Source: Introduction to the Division of Rheumatology, Icahn School of Medicine, at Mount Sinai, http://icahn.mssm.edu/static_files/MSSM/Files/Departments/Medicine/Divisions/Rheumatology/Rheumatology.pdf
THE PASSING OF JOE LI, THE LONG-TIME SCBA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with a heavy heart that we report to you the passing of Joseph K.-K. Li, our long-time Executive Director, on October 2, 2015 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada while on a cruise with his family. He was 75 years old. Joe Li, as we had known him, graduated from the elite Wah Yan College, a Roman Catholic secondary school in Hong Kong. He attended the University of Redlands in Southern California in the 60’s where he met his wife of 45 years, Livia, whom he married in 1970. Joe obtained his Ph.D. in Microbiology from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1974, and had been a long time faculty member at the Utah State University till his retirement in 2012, where he established himself as an expert in virology, especially on the bluetongue disease, caused by the infectious bluetongue virus affecting primarily domestic and wild ruminants. Joe is survived by his wife, Livia, two daughters, Karen, Brenda and two son-in-laws, and a granddaughter, Lauryn, and a grandson-to-be in November.

Joe Li retired as a Professor from the Department of Biology at Utah State University in 2012. At that time, he had a full calendar of adventures and tours with his family and friends, which included a cruise along East Coast of Canada. Many of us are saddened by the news of Joe’s sudden passing.

Joe Li had contributed significantly to the initial establishment and growth of SCBA, especially during 1990’s and 2000’s. He assisted the Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers in the administration and biennial symposium preparation and fund-raising efforts during that period. Since the COOs are changed every two years through elections, as the Executive Director, Joe kept them informed of the development and progress, and assisted the administrative chores of conducting business of the Society. To many of them, his assistance was lifesaver, as they are well-established and busy bioscientists among their respective fields. To the Society, his administrative skills insured an efficient operation of the daily business, and a smooth transition from one administration to the next. One could also recognize that Internet was not fully developed at that time, his role as the Executive Director fulfilled a critical mission of communication between the administration and the general membership. For example, he painstakingly edited, typeset, printed and sent the quarterly newsletter via US Postal Service to every member before 2009, when the newsletters were sent electronically via the Internet.

The Department of Biology at the Utah State University has established a scholarship in honor of Joe Li to support graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. The family has requested, in lieu of flowers or gifts, to send donations to the “Joseph K.-K. Li Scholarship Fund” through the Biology Department at Utah State University: http://www.biology.usu.edu/htm/giving/joseph-li-scholarship/


THE JOSEPH LI EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT AWARD

Joe Li had great passion in education, both at his own Department and throughout SCBA. In particular, he actively sought funding for the Society, particularly keen on providing travel fellowships to students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior investigators to attend the biennial SCBA international symposia, held at various locales around the globe. Recognizing his special contributions to education advancement, the SCBA Council has voted unanimously for the establishment of the “Joseph K.-K. Li Educational Advancement Award” to be presented biennially to qualified graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior scientists to travel and present at the biennial SCBA international symposia. The number of awards will be determined specifically by the current COOs and Council and will depend on available funds. Friends, colleagues and interested individuals are encouraged to contribute to the “Joseph K.-K. Li Educational Advancement Fund” at SCBA. Please send your tax-deductible contributions to SCBA Treasurer through the “donate” link button on the front page of SCBA website: http://www.scbasociety.org/, and specify the donation as for the “Joseph Li Travel Award”. The current Treasurer will issue a receipt to the donor for every donation. For record keeping, please also send a record of your donation via e-mail or postal mail to the Co-Executive Director, Chris Lau, with the address below:

Chris Lau, Ph.D.
Department of Medicine
VA Medical Center, 111C5
University of California, San Francisco
4150 Clement Street
San Francisco, CA 94121
E-mail: chris.lau@ucsf.edu

Alternatively, checks of donations can be sent to Chris Lau at the above address. Again, the current Treasurer will issue a receipt for such tax-deductible contribution.
REMEMBRANCE OF JOSEPH LI FROM SCBA

Since the initial news about Joe Li’s passing, many current COOs, Council members, and past President and friends have expressed sadness, loss, and suddenness of the event, and reflect their experience in working and interacting with Joe. The following paragraphs represent a few of comments expressed by some individuals. Everyone convenes his/her condolences to the Li family.

FROM DIHUA YU, PRESIDENT OF SCBA 2014-15

I was saddened to hear that Dr. Joseph Li, our SCBA founding Executive Director, passed away on October 2 2015 while vacationing on a cruise with his wife, Livia. Joe had worked tirelessly on all aspects of the SCBA daily operation for more than a decade and was a major driver of SCBA’s success. Many of us worked with Joe closely and enjoyed his sharing of wisdom and passion. He will be profoundly missed by us. As his close friend and colleague, I wish him a peaceful rest and extend my deepest condolence to his loving family.

In celebration of his wonderful life and contribution to SCBA, the SCBA council has decided to establish the Joseph K.K. Li Educational Advancement Award. The award will be used to support outstanding young scientists for attending SCBA annual symposiums. This award will signify the legacy of Dr. Joseph K.K. Li.

FROM SOPHIA AND MIN-JAR TSAI, SCBA COUNCIL

Sophia and I were saddened by the sudden pass of Joe. He is a friend and very respected SCBA colleague. He is instrumental in the success of SCBA in the early years when the society is struggling to be relevant. We and the SCBA will miss him.

FROM C. C. WANG, PAST SCBA PRESIDENT

I am stunned by the passing of Joseph Li. Joseph was one of the most devoted members of SCBA. He was the backbone of our Society and the bridge between a long line of SCBA Presidents over many years. Being the Executive Director of the Society, he participated in the fund raising, planning, organizing and execution of a series of successful SCBA Symposia. I remembered vividly the first symposium he organized together with Michael Lai in Singapore. It was a smashingly successful international gathering that made a significant impact not only on all the participants but also on the local Singaporean scientific community. Joseph loved SCBA with all his heart. He managed the financial aspect of the Society always with great care. He worked hard to ensure that the budget of each SCBA international symposium would end up in the black, and he was able to do so in most cases. We have to thank him for the solid financial foundation SCBA enjoys today. Joseph was an accomplished virologist and a kind person. He communicated well and was always helpful to others. We shall miss him, but he will always live in our hearts.

FROM MICHAEL LAI, PAST SCBA PRESIDENT

I am totally shocked and saddened by the unexpected news of the passing of our dear friend Joe Li. I do not know the circumstances of his passing, but the feeling of loss is all the same. Joe was one of the most dedicated and diligent volunteers of SCBA for many years. When I became the president of the organization, I appointed him to the post of Executive Director. He organized the Singapore Symposium in the early ’90s. Thereafter, he served under many other presidents. I cannot say enough on his dedication and responsibility. I will write a memorial article for the next issue of SCBA news. I propose that in the next SCBA symposium, we can arrange a workshop on virology and biotechnology in his memory and honor.

FROM MIEN-CHIE HUNG, PAST SCBA PRESIDENT

No word can express my sadness on Joe’s passing. When I was President of SCBA 2004-2005, his knowledge and experience in SCBA helped me enormously. He had been a major driver to keep SCBA a whole and growing. It is comforting to know that he was surrounded by loved ones when he went to heaven. He will be missed by us. Most of all, I miss him as a dear friend. Rest in peace Joe. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

FROM ING-KANG HO, PAST SCBA PRESIDENT

I concur. (of Michael Lai’s email)

Nobody had done more for the SCBA than Joe. I am so sad to hear the news.

FROM JEAN CHEN SHIH, PAST SCBA PRESIDENT

My heart sunk when I heard the sudden passing of our dear friend Joe. Joe had been so dedicated to SCBA for so many years. Many Presidents including me were totally dependent on his assistance on all matters. Joe was so organized and dedicated to SCBA. He was always willing to help. SCBA would not be as successful as today without him. I agree with Michael that SCBA should honor and recognize Joe.
May God comfort his family and give them peace at this difficulty time. Let us know if there is anything we can do.

FROM ROBERT YU, PAST SCBA PRESIDENT

With profound shock and sadness I heard the passing of Prof. Joe Li. I have known Joe as a friend and fellow scientist for well over 30 years. For many years, he served as the Executive Director of SCBA and helped establish it as a major scientific society for Chinese bioscientists. I had the fortune of working closely with him for the biennial meeting of SCBA in Taipei when I served as the President in 2004. He was a person of tremendous capabilities, resourcefulness and dedication. He had the foresight of involving other scientific communities for promoting the future of Chinese scholars and students. In particular, he invited representatives from Science, Nature, and other influential scientific media to attend our meetings. The Society remains to be a strong public forum for Chinese students and scholars to interact and network, which can be attributable to Joe’s dedication in promoting its cause. The passing of Joe is devastating news for his lovely family, friends and colleagues throughout the world. He will be sorely missed.

FROM YUNG-CHI (TOMMY) CHENG, PAST SCBA PRESIDENT

…. the sad news of Dr. Joseph Li, whom I have known for more than 30 years. My wife and I were shocked by his sudden passing. We met him when he was just finishing his post doctorate training at Duke and working at a biotech company. I helped him to land an academic research position in the pharmacology department at UNC Chapel Hill. It was at that time that we lunches at SCBA. He was very enthusiastic and supporting the initiative and very helpful on a volunteer basis. I could always count on him to help out if needed. At that time, Society didn’t have any resources to hire anybody. Everything was done on a volunteer basis. He subsequently was appointed to executive secretary of Society for many years. I have to say, without his effort, Society would not be as we are today. I will support any initiative, such as a dedication symposium in his memory, in our upcoming SCBA meeting that was suggested by many of you. If anything else needs to be done, please let me know.

FROM C. C. LIEW, PAST SCBA PRESIDENT

I am totally sadden! Please send my deepest condolence to his wife and his family members.

FROM YANG SHI, SCBA PRESIDENT-ELECT

I am terribly sorry and saddened to hear about Joe. My deepest condolence to the family.

FROM ROY WU, NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

I am saddened to hear the news of Joe's passing. Joe contributed greatly in holding SCBA together as an organization during a critical period of SCBA's lifespan. He was collegial and always helpful. Perhaps some sort of a travel fellowship to the SCBA biennial meeting can be named after him. He was always happy to promote careers of young researchers.

FROM CHRIS LAU, SCBA CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am totally shocked to hear the passing of my good friend, Joe Li. I spoke with some personal experience on his outstanding contributions to SCBA. As the Executive Director of SCBA from 1999 to 2010, he had single-handedly kept us abreast of events happening with the Society. He served and advised so many Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers, and Councilors, and the members at large through his dedicated and excellent services. I still remember the first time I met him. It was on the boat cruise during the Seventh SCBA International Symposium in Toronto in 1997. I noticed Joe and Kenneth Fong as a distinguished pair of pals during the cruise. They were sitting by the windows. I was wondering, who was that gentleman so buddy with the CEO of a big biotechnology company? I was thinking, he probably another rich CEO somewhere. When Ken introduced him to me, I came to realize that he was the “Joe Li” whom I heard about for sometime. He came across as an energetic person, full of energy. That was the impression I had, and it remained in my mind ever since. We had kept up with each and other since then, throughout different SCBA symposia, in Hong Kong in 1999, Beijing in 2004, San Francisco in 2006, and Taipei in 2009. This was the period when he put his footprints on the history of the Society, as its Executive Director. I still remember his fund raising efforts during the Beijing meeting, which greatly endowed the Society. He helped me, as the local co-chair, on running the logistics for the San Francisco meeting in 2006. He guided me through the various details for coordinating the events. He had such commanding knowledge of who's who in the Society and what needed to be done and when, for which I called him the “walking” Encyclopedia of SCBA. His guidance helped me tremendously in performing my duties as the Secretary during my term from 2008 to 2009. We certainly had a lot of fun in editing the quarterly SCBA newsletter, as Co-Editors. He helped me filling up the contents in the new SCBA website, some of which still remain. Again, his administrative and interpersonal relationship skills were shining in the
preparation for the Taipei meeting in 2009. I was totally amazed how he did his magic with the local sponsors, the Academia Sinica and the National Health Research Institutes. Without his contributions, the meeting would have been a lot more difficult to organize and implement.

As a professor, he was a role model for many young scientists. He cared about students, postdoctoral fellows and junior investigators. He always tirelessly sought money to provide them with travel awards to attend the SCBA symposia. Anyone who needed a support letter for a job or other matters, such as immigration reference could expect the devoted support from him. The poster sessions had been a key focus of his efforts on many of the SCBA symposia he participated in organizing, as he told me that the poster sessions represented outstanding opportunities for the students, postdoctoral fellows and junior investigators to interact with many established and elite Chinese bioscientists in their respective fields attending the symposia. This had been the outstanding character I remember about Joe Li, among many other excellent attributes.

Joe Li (center) with Gavin Newsom, the Mayor of San Francisco (left) and now the Lieutenant Governor of California, and Depei Liu, then President of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College, at the Reception of the 2006 SCBA International Symposium, San Francisco.

Since his retirement in 2012, we talked occasionally on the phone on various topics. I always promised him a bowl of wonton noodles, when he visited San Francisco, as a way to lure him to visit us. It took quite sometime for him and Levia to finally show up in San Francisco in January of this year. Y.W. Kan heard of his visit, and wanted to take them out for dinner instead. As usual, we had a wonderful time with Y.W., Mrs. Kan, Joe and Levia at the Crystal Jade restaurant at the Embarcadero by the San Francisco Bay. So, I still owe him a bowl of wonton noodles, of which I regrettably will not be able to fulfill. Joe was a friend I will sorely miss.

A recent photo with Joe Li (left), Y.W. Kan (center) and Chris Lau (right) while visiting San Francisco on January 15, 2015.

FROM KENNETH FONG, PAST SCBA PRESIDENT

Joe and I had crossed path three times. He and I spent our teenager years in Hong Kong, then UCLA and then Research Triangle Park, North Carolina and we never met until we finally joined SCBA in the early 1990's. We became close colleagues at SCBA with Joe as the Executive Director (ED) and treasurer and I was the President for the 2006-2007 term. We worked together on every issue and Joe was a great fan in getting as many graduate students and post docs to attend the biennial symposia. He always nudged me for more funding to the students. His long tenure as the treasurer and ED of SCBA (2000 to 2009) remained a much sought-after continuity of the Society when Presidents and staff came and retired. It is hard to imagine how the Society could sustain itself to become the established society as it is today without some of the enduring marks left behind by Joe. I miss Joe as a persistent champion of the noble causes of SCBA and a contemporary that we had shared many wonderful moments together. As the late Oliver Sacks said to his departed contemporaries, "I have been increasingly conscious for the last 10 years or so, of deaths among my contemporaries. My generation is on the way out, and each death I have felt as an abruption, a tearing away of part of myself - - - - - - - - - - for it is the fate -the genetic and neural fate- of every human being to be a unique individual, to find his own path, to live his own life, to die his own death."

This very much summed up my feeling of Joe, my SCBA mate and friend who has passed something truly enduring to the next generation.

For those who had interacted with Joe Li and would like to express his/her remembrance of him, please send the comments to the Editor, Gen-Sheng Feng (gfeng@ucsd.edu), and/or the Production Editor, Chris Lau (chris.lau@ucsf.edu), to be included in the next issue of the SCBA Newsletter.
POSITION SOUGHT

Highly talented and efficient administrator seeks additional training position as an administrative volunteer/projector coordinator to perform services for the administrative section and senior scientist in oversea educational institutions, and universities. The applicant is supported by a funded fellowship from the American Lingnan Foundation, for a period of six months with full insurance coverage. Interested department heads, university, research institutes and scientists, please send contact to Ms. Lucia Liu, Zhongshan School of Medicine, Sun Yat-sen University, via email: lxiaox33@mail.sysu.edu.cn
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