

Eulogy – Mr Poon Chia Wee (1949 – 2021)

15 Sep 2021



IN LOVING MEMORY

LATE MR POON CHIA WEE

DEPARTED PEACEFULLY ON

10 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT THE AGE OF 72 YEARS OLD

Wake location/ 丧府

Block 221 Bedok Central, Singapore 460221

Starts From/ 停丧第一天

11 September 2021, 7.00pm

(Saturday)

09月11日, 晚上 7点正

(星期六)

Cortège Leaving/ 出殡礼拜

15 September 2021, 12.40pm

(Wednesday)

09月15日, 下午 12点40分

(星期三)

Cremation Location & Time/ 火化场与时间

Mandai Crematorium Hall 3, 1.40pm

万礼火化场 3号厅, 下午 1点40分

Due to the Covid Regulations, there can only be up to 30 pax at any one time at the wake.

因冠状病毒疫情 根据卫生部条例, 停丧处最多允许 30人在场

A bus will be provided to transport family, relatives & friends to the crematorium.

家属, 亲戚与朋友可乘坐提供的巴士来回丧府与火化场

SERENITY
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Mr Poon was the founder of ASLAE (later SIAE) who fought for recognition of LAE's contribution to Aviation Safety. He has devoted much of his life to improving training and education for aerospace engineers and technicians.

Eulogy – Poon Chia Wee (1949 – 2021)

By Lim Yeow Khee, President, SIAE (15 Sep 2021)

When I told Katrine that I will write a eulogy for her dad, I thought it was going to be an easy task. Just summarise the over 60 condolence messages from friends and colleagues. I did, but it was not easy. I had to pause every few lines as I reflected on similar experience, I shared with Chia Wee, occasionally with tears welling in my eyes.

Chia Wee has passed on and we will miss his unique personality of tenacity and humour, convoluted in a manner that we do not remember when he was exuberant or sad. He was not a conformist to social norms, but we will remember him as a person with high principle, helpful and a good heart.

Key words that cropped up often in the messages include pioneering spirit, dedication, integrity, professionalism and tenacity in work and play. As a person honesty, generosity and selflessness stood out. He is also known for his “refreshingly candid perspectives and direct approach on matters”.

Many of his staff and younger colleagues remembered him as their respected senior, mentor and advisor. One staff wrote, “we remember, and treasure the person behind a name, the kindness of a smile, the strength of a presence and life of a mentor, colleague and friend”. His wry humour and candid comments, although at times bordered on offensive to some, became iconic to Poon, as he is commonly known.

Poon is a visionary leader with a tenacity to push on his beliefs, taking on tough challenges which he knew will benefit the community. One message put this succinctly, “while most of us spent more time crafting our careers, I think Mr Poon spent more time on the careers of others in aerospace”.

53 years ago I met Poon, a hardworking and disciplined staff, always focused on the work at hand. Be it working on the aircraft, doing admin work, attending classes or preparing for exams, his attention to duty was the same. Intense and candid at the same time. We soon became close friends sharing hobbies and interests in aircraft and electronics. It was a time of uncertainty in the industry. MSA was about to be split and trainees (myself) and newly graduated trainees (Poon) were not certain of future employment. Things turned out better than expected and SIA grew rapidly. Poon saw the need to enhance the status and instil professionalism in the LAEs to ensure sustainable growth of the aviation industry in Singapore.

On 15 May 1975, he registered ASLAE and became its first President for the next 20 years. Two years later, I was elected to the ExCo and worked with Poon for the next 18 years. During those 20 years, Singapore’s aviation went through several transformations resulting in having the best airline and the best airport in the world.

Poon's pioneering spirit was evident from the very start. With little resources at hand, he launched the Aircraft Engineer, which provided valuable technical information to the engineers and technicians working in the fledging aerospace industry. By 1980, Poon was deep into the new hobby of Home Computers. He set up the first Bulletin Board System (BBS) in Singapore.

In 1982 when SIA wanted to encourage computer literacy among the staff, ASLAE was the obvious choice. We set up SIA Computer Club to conduct computer programming classes and worked closely with the newly formed IT Department, building a strong friendship between Engineering and MSD. This proved to be very valuable when SIA moved into SAMEIS and later SAP.

In Feb 1983, we received a phone call from Hong Kong asking us if we could host the IFA Conference which was scheduled to be held in Bahrain in October that year. There was a war between Iraq and Iran and they thought it was not safe to go to Bahrain. Poon discussed with me for a couple of hours and decided to take on the challenge. It turned out well and that laid the foundation for SIAE to host regular conferences during the biennial Airshow event in Singapore till today.

In 1986 when SIA wanted to restore an Airspeed Consul for its 40th Anniversary celebration, the following year, Poon again took on the challenge after a short consultation with the ExCo. It was one of the most challenging endeavours which received international acclaims.

With the strong foundation laid by Poon's conviction on high standards of professionalism among aerospace workers, ASLAE was recognised as an important player in the future development of aviation in Singapore. We changed our name to SIAE in 1993 to represent the wider aerospace workforce in the flourishing aerospace industry in Singapore.

SIAE went on to establish ATTC and AAIS and took on the challenge to formulate and validate over 70 Aero WSQ modules.

Poon's vision and tenacity to push for high standards of training aerospace engineers and technicians has contributed much to the growth of Singapore's aerospace industry. His deep knowledge of IT has helped many, young and old, across several generations. His willingness to share his knowledge and always ready to help people in every way will be remembered.

Christine, Katrine, Terrance & Family. Chia Wee has done so much for us. I know he loves his family very much. We all shared the loss of a man who is respected by friends and colleagues for his selfless commitment to improve our society.

Poon, you have done much for all of us in this world. You will be missed by many, but in our minds, you will always be there. May you rest in Peace.