

MEMORANDUM TO iNEER COMMUNITY ON THE PASSING OF PROFESSOR CHANG-LIN TIEN

TO: iNEER Community

DATE: October 30, 2002

Dear Colleague,

It is with great sadness that we note the passing last night (October 29, 2002) of Professor Chang-Lin Tien, former chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley.

He was a strong supporter of international cooperation in engineering education and research. I fondly remember the many trips we took together, in days before he became chancellor, to many lands to promote international understanding and linkages.

Many of you may remember him for the memorable keynote speech that he delivered at ICEE-2000 in Taipei. It was three weeks after that event that he was diagnosed with brain tumor that led to a debilitating stroke from which he never recovered.

He was 67.

Robert M. Berdahl, Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, said today: "Chang-Lin Tien, who served Cal for 42 years as a professor of engineering and as Chancellor from 1990-97, was a remarkable man and an exemplary scholar. His boundless love of the University of California was matched only by his devotion to his family and a determination to always do what was right. His energy and optimism, his willingness to fight for the principles he cherished, and his loyalty and love for this campus made it a stronger and better place."

Professor Tien was born in Wuhan, China in 1935, and educated in Shanghai and Taiwan. With his family, he arrived in Taiwan in 1949. He completed his undergraduate education at National Taiwan University, and came to the United States in 1956 to study at the University of Louisville. He earned his master's degree there in 1957, and later a second master's degree and a PhD in mechanical engineering at Princeton University in 1959.

In 1959, he was appointed assistant professor of mechanical engineering at UC Berkeley. He became a full professor there in 1968, and later was chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering for seven years. During 1983-85, he was UC Berkeley's vice chancellor for research. In 1988, he was appointed executive vice chancellor at UC Irvine. In 1990, he became chancellor of UC Berkeley.

The following are excerpts from a UC Berkeley tribute:

“Tien was a naturalized U.S. citizen who said he was deeply grateful to be an American, but he also was proudly Chinese. When he became chancellor, he declined the suggestion from well-meaning supporters that he seek coaching to speak with less of an accent. On his office wall hung the Chinese character for crisis, but Tien explained how it actually represents two ideas – danger and opportunity. He said he preferred to see most crises as opportunities.”

“Tien personally recruited top young professors, dedicated himself to retaining prominent faculty members and presided over consecutive years of record private fund-raising, vowing that UC Berkeley would stay on top. ‘It’s not a matter of whether we can survive,’ he said in 1993, asking the public to help spare the campus’s dismantling by lobbying their legislators, ‘it’s a matter of being excellent or mediocre.’”

To read more about the life of this remarkable man, including how he successfully weathered a potentially devastating \$70M or 18% budget cut, click on:

<http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2002/10/tien.html>.

Sincerely,

Win Aung
iNEER/ICEE-ISC Secretariat