

OBITUARY**Professor Wilson H. Tang**

Written by Charles W. W. Ng

On Thursday, January 5, 2012, Professor Wilson H. Tang, aged 68, passed away peacefully in the company of his loving family in Chicago after a long and courageous battle with his illness. Born in Hong Kong, Professor Tang pursued further studies in the US after completing his high school education at La Salle College. He earned his Bachelors (1966) and Masters (1967) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and completed his Doctorate from Stanford University (1969), all in Civil Engineering. He taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for 27 years before joining the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology as Chair Professor and Head of the Department of Civil Engineering in 1996. Under his leadership, the department evolved into one of the best in Asia. He retired in 2009, but remained active in research, teaching and public service.



Professor Tang had an extremely distinguished academic career in which he made significant contributions in the areas of safety and reliability analysis in Civil Engineering. He was a world leader in promoting the use of reliability based methods for risk mitigation and design in various areas, geotechnical engineering in particular. His expertise covered application of probability methods to the wide area of civil infrastructure engineering/management. He had over 250 technical publications and his co-authored books (with A. H-S Ang) including "Probability Concepts in Engineering Planning & Design," recently revised, have been widely adopted by top universities worldwide. The books have also been translated into five languages. Professor Tang had led several major international boards and committees. He was a long-term member of ISSMGE and served as vice chair of TC32 Risk Assessment and Management between 1997 and 2001. More importantly, he encouraged his colleagues and students to join ISSMGE. His distinguished career is evident by the highest honors that he received worldwide including the State of the Art Award, Fellow and Distinguished Member from the American Society of Civil Engineers, the highly respected T.K. Hsieh award from the Institution of Civil Engineers in the UK, the US Offshore Energy Center's Hall of Fame and Guggenheim Fellow, and Fellow and Vice President of the Hong Kong Academy of Engineering Sciences.