

'Patient surgeon' fondly remembered



Dr. Conrad R. Lam
'He was our
original music man'

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Dr. Conrad R. Lam, recognized internationally for his contributions to cardiac surgery, died of cancer Monday. The Farmington Hills resident was 84.

A trumpet player, he helped finance his college education and medical school tuition by organizing and selling instruments to five boys' bands in Texas.

He was the director of the Franklin Village Band for more than 25 years. The band played throughout the Detroit area, including the Detroit Thanksgiving Day Parade, Nardin Park United Methodist Church, Heritage Park and area nursing homes.

"He was our original music man," said Lorie Carswell, church secretary at the Franklin Community

Church, where the 30-member band practiced every Monday. "Music was his first love."

Lam achieved several "firsts" in both his personal and professional life.

THE FIRST child in a family of 10 children, Lam was born Aug. 19, 1905, in the rural Texas town of Osgelby. He graduated valedictorian from Tuboka High School and went on to graduate with high honors from Simmons College (now Hardin-Simmons University) in Abilene, Texas.

In 1932, after completing his studies at Yale University Medical School, Lam received a highly prized internship — studying under Dr. Roy D. McClure, Henry Ford Hospital surgeon-in-chief. Lam became chief resident and youngest member on staff at the hospital in 1938.

One year later, Lam was assigned responsibility for thoracic (chest) surgery. His work was limited to that specialty after 1946.

During his 51 years at the hospital, he performed Michigan's first open-heart operation using total heart-lung bypass in 1958.

A founding member of the Central Surgical Association, Lam was the first American physician to use purified Heparin, an anti-blood clotting agent. He pioneered work in cardiopulmonary arrest and heart graft heart valves. He also developed surgical techniques and instruments still used today to correct congenital and acquired heart disease.

IN 1980, Lam was recognized by Shiley Laboratories as one of the "Ten Pioneers of Cardiac Surgery."

"The patients were always of the utmost importance to Dr. Lam," said Dr. Fred Whitehouse, division head of Endocrinology/Metabolism at Henry Ford Hospital.

"I first met him at a conference on diseases of the chest in 1949. I was an intern at the time and I remember thinking how active Dr. Lam was. In the conference, he always wanted to remind the internist that the surgeon had something to offer in the post-operative care of the patient."

HIS WIFE, Marlan, said Lam started the archives at the hospital and the Henry Ford Archives Fund. "He collected every piece of information about the hospital," she said. "People were always sending him articles. It was a slow process to go

through them all, but he seemed to enjoy it."

Marlan also said Lam treasured his barbed wire collection.

Lam continued working in the research laboratory until his semi-retirement in 1970. He served as a consultant emeritus at Henry Ford Hospital until 1983, when he retired.

"He had tremendous amount of energy for everything that he did," said Dr. Roger Smith, chairman of the Department of Surgery at Henry Ford Hospital. "His contribution to the medical world and Henry Ford Hospital always will be remembered. He was one of the outstanding people that helped make Henry Ford Hospital known nationally and internationally."

LAM AND his wife were Farmington Hills residents for 35 years. He is also survived by his children: Marjorie Leon, of Rockville, Md.; Janet Gessert of Decatur, Ga.; Richard of Grinnell, Calif.; and Dr. Douglas of Southern Pines, N. C.; and nine grandchildren.

Funeral services are planned for Friday at Franklin Community Church, arranged by McCabe Funeral Home in Farmington Hills. Burial will be in Franklin Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Cowboy Band Foundation at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, or to the Franklin Community Church, 32473 Normandy, Franklin, MI 48025.

Board candidates debate issues

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ANOTHER QUESTION asked candidates if they would favor spending more money on basic education if it meant eliminating some extracurricular activities and frills.

"I'm in favor of spending more money on curriculum and expanded curriculum that will better prepare our students for the competitive job market," Rands said.

"We need to take look at what is happening in the labor market. Employers are looking for certain skills."

Ranney said that if it came absolutely to a choice between the two, he would choose basic education.

"There's no substitute for first-rate skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and in the world we're in right now; languages."

He does not consider vocational education, arts and literature as frills.

"Frits to some people are basics to others," Warner said. "To some students, basic education is music, fine arts and even athletics."

The issue is how do you best spend dollars in a changing world, especially in areas like computer literacy, he said.

The 11,000-student school district is doing an excellent job, Webb said. "I don't see us as having frills. Technology demands high standards."

DeVries has first-hand knowledge of "no-frills" because he attended a two-room elementary school, he said. This district spends \$8,600 per pupil, he said.

"Forty-five percent of our budget goes for instruction and 55 percent for overhead and support. Before we cut out frills, maybe we ought to cut a little fat out of the budget."

The question is not either-or but both-and, Inch said.

"I have trouble accepting that staff is heavy."

It is important for students to have marketable skills and high behavioral standards, Myers said.

"Employers want to hire people who work as a team and are good at problem-solving."

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Vandals hit new house

Continued from Page 1

Basilleco is pursuing charges but said he would consider dropping them if full restitution was made.

"We received information from an anonymous caller that provided us with the names and addresses of three juveniles seen in and around the area at the time breaking glass was heard at 5:15 p.m. Sunday," Fox said.

"It seems like whoever did it had a field day."

Fox is continuing to investigate. No arrests have been made. Prosecution would be through the Oakland County Probate Court Juvenile Division.

Fox said he found at least six rocks of various sizes inside the house, which is ready to be drywalled and insulated.

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