**From Aerosols to Friendship**

memories by

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***Keyword****: Prof. Dr. David Y.H. Pui*

In the beginning there was an aerosol. As a student of physics, I was looking for an interesting topic for my PhD thesis and talked in 1978 with several possible supervisors. One of them was professor Othmar Preining. He convinced me swiftly that what I really wanted was a PhD thesis related to the physics of aerosols with him as a supervisor. I agreed and he gave me some reading material: few papers and a blue book with the title: “Experimental studies of diffusion charging of aerosols”, a PhD thesis by David Y.H. Pui.

That was when all things started, although at that time I did not know that soon I would be meeting David; a friend for life, an excellent scientist and a wonderful companion in various extracurricular activities including the challenge of canoeing and camping in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of Minnesota.

In 1979 – a group of scientists from various institutions, particularly researchers from the University of Minnesota, arrived in Vienna for the Workshop on Ultrafine Aerosols (WUFA) conducted at the University of Vienna. In fantastic two weeks of laboratory experiments and discussions the aerosol electrical mobility classification was firmly established as one of most important methods for aerosol particles sizing and for particle measuring instruments’ calibration.

It was the occasion when for the first time David and I met in person. It was a busy and satisfactory period resulting in the following year in a first paper where David’s name and mine were on the same page. Here, I may postulate that David’s affinity to wine was likely initiated while he was in Vienna that year when after a long day in the laboratory we all found time to enjoy a glass of wine, maybe two.

In the summer of 1983 I arrived at the U of M as a postdoc invited by Dr. Liu to work in the Particle Technology Laboratory. Who was the first person giving me a hand? It was David Pui. It was him who welcomed me at the airport in Minneapolis asking at my arrival if I were interested to see some experiments. I was curious to visit the famous PTL. However, instead to the U of M David took me to an industrial scale coal gasification facility where he conducted some research at that time. It was a hard hat area, dusty and hot. A bit of a shock in the first moment – it was not the imagined and idealized outstanding PTL facility. However, there I met some fine people from David’s group and quickly learned various facets of particle technology because our next stop was finely the PTL. That first day with David is mirrored in some of our later papers from electrostatic removal of tar particles during coal gasification to high precision laser particle spectrometry. From the beginning David was a perfect guide and he made me feel at home all the years I spent at the U of M. We worked together and we had fun together with him and his wonderful family. It was a time where David and I became not only research collaborators but also friends for life. What makes me very happy is that our friendship continues in the next generation.

During the time at the University of Minnesota David taught me in practice what the famous Michael Faraday (1791-1867) once said: work, finish, publish.

Thank you, David. I am still trying and you continue to be my role model.