

■ SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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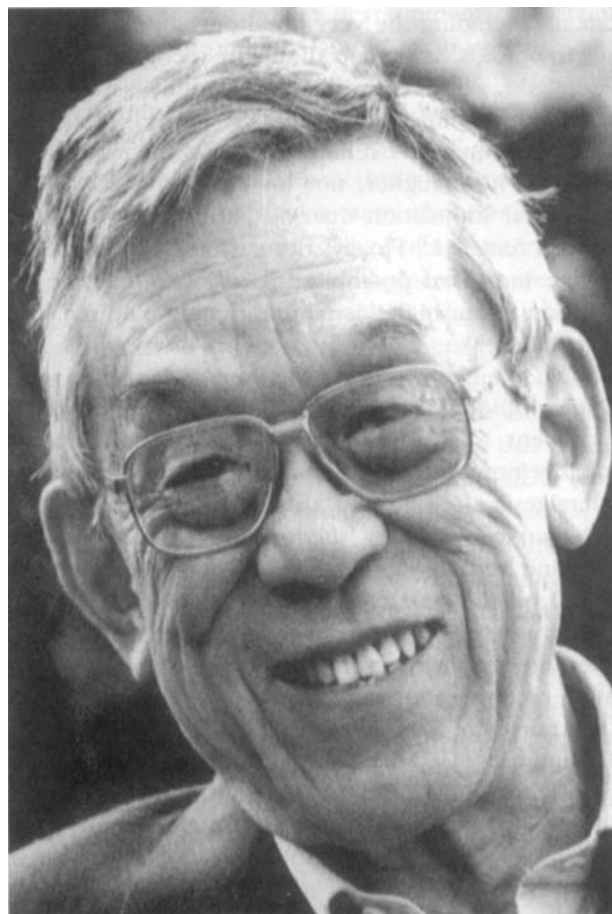
In Memory of Shih-hsun Ngai, M.D. (1920–1999)

SHIH-HSUN Ngai, a distinguished anesthesiologist and pharmacologist and former Editor of *ANESTHESIOLOGY*, died of lung cancer on July 8, 1999, shortly before his 79th birthday. He was born in Wuchang, China, on September 15, 1920, the youngest and eighth child of a high school teacher. A graduate of China's Central University Medical School, he spent almost his entire professional career at Columbia University's Department of Anesthesiology after winning a competitive government fellowship to study anesthesiology abroad. At Columbia, he rose to be Professor of Anesthesiology in 1965 and of Pharmacology in 1974. He spent 2 yr in the US Army (1955–1957) and chaired the Department of Anesthesiology from 1969–1973. He was a distinguished clinician, scientist, teacher, and mentor.

As a clinician, Dr. Ngai was knowledgeable, compassionate, and highly skilled. He was greatly regarded as a preceptor to residents because, while teaching them to provide anesthesia, he also made them think about their every action.

Dr. Ngai began his research even as a resident, doing pioneering studies on central nervous system control of respiration with Dr. S. C. Wang, the renowned physiologist, that are classics. Later, at Columbia and with collaborators elsewhere, he studied the interactions of biogenic amines with general anesthetics. He also studied narcotics, narcotic antagonists, and the participation of opioid receptors in anesthetic-induced analgesia. His work always seemed a step ahead of his time. An article in *Science* in 1976 about the analgesic effect of nitrous oxide stimulated controversy, which persists to now. Seven of his nine research fellows remain in the academic practice of anesthesiology, a remarkable record. Upon his retirement in 1988 the Shih-hsun Ngai Research Fellowship was established to honor his accomplishments.

For many years, Dr. Ngai was affiliated with the biomedical and anesthesiology communities of Taiwan. He was Visiting Professor at National Taiwan University in 1990, the Tri-service Hospital in 1992, and the Veteran's General Hospital in 1994. During these visits, he upgraded the practice, teaching, and research of anesthesiology in Taiwan. He also was a founding member of the



National Health Research Institute, which is similar to the National Institutes of Health in the United States.

Perhaps only his closest associates knew that he had an uncanny mastery of scientific writing and English. He helped many at Columbia University and in Taiwan with grant applications and manuscripts, and edited all accepted papers for the Chinese anesthesiology journal *Acta Anaesthesiologica Sinica*. Dr. Ngai was a man with great integrity in both his personal and professional lives. He had a passionate curiosity informed by keen observation. His high standards, unwavering sense of fairness, and commitment to do the right thing, along with a quiet humor, touched everyone around him. Prestigious honors included the Commonwealth Fellowship (1964).

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

election to the Academia Sinica (Taiwan, 1972), the National Research Council Anesthesia Committee (1961-1970), and several National Institutes of Health Study Sections (1962-1982). Elected to the editorial board of *ANESTHESIOLOGY*, he served for 10 years (1967-1977), having been asked to continue beyond the normal term because of his special contributions.

Dr. Ngai is survived by his wife, Dr. Hsueh Hwa Wang, Professor Emeritus of Pharmacology of Columbia University; two daughters, Mae, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Chicago; Janet, a physical therapist in

Massies Mill, Virginia; a son, John, Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Head of the Neurobiology Graduate Program at the University of California at Berkeley; five grandchildren; and memories of a joyous 50th wedding anniversary family reunion on Christmas, 1998.

He is profoundly missed, but his memory lives in the hearts of his friends.

Robert M. Epstein, M.D., with Members of the Ngai Family