

**Eulogy at the Wake Service for Professor Lim Chee Seng
on Wednesday, February 9, 2011**

“Death where is thy sting?”

In responding to this heroic question from 1 Corinthians, Maya Angelou says, “It is here in my heart and mind and memories.”

I wish I had the eloquence of Chee Seng to capture this sting, this sadness that is in our hearts.

Good evening everyone. I am Carol Leon from the English Department of the University of Malaya. Professor Lim Chee Seng was my teacher, colleague and a dear friend.

Chee Seng was an integral part of the Department of English and a highly-regarded academic not only in Malaysia but internationally as well. He served in the Department for 32 years, from 1977 till 2009. As can be attested to by the sheer number of people who have turned up to pay their respects, many former colleagues and past students, it is evident that Chee Seng touched many in his care and concern and in his pursuit of academic excellence.

I had the singular privilege of being his first postgraduate student. Though renowned as a scholar in Shakesperian studies, Chee Seng had no problems supervising my Master’s thesis on Samuel Johnson, a famed 18th century English writer and thinker. Johnson was another author whom Chee Seng admired greatly. Chee Seng had a wonderful memory and was able to quote with ease from Shakespeare and Johnson.

As students, we were impressed with his knowledge but even more so by his generosity towards us mere students.

Yesterday I received many calls from people asking if it was true – did Professor Lim really pass away? One student told me, “Dr Carol, the best thing about Professor Lim was that he was always encouraging. He made us feel we could achieve our dreams.”

I am pursuing my own academic career and I shall never forget Chee Seng’s encouragement and guidance. He certainly planted in his students a respect and love for literature.

As a colleague, Chee Seng was committed, enthusiastic and had high ideals and aspirations for the development of the English Department. He has contributed much to the Department’s character and growth and his passing really marks an end of an era for the Department.

Chee Seng was also actively involved with ACLALS (the Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies) and was President of the Malaysian chapter for many years. Let me read you an excerpt from an email sent out yesterday by the Chair of ACLALS to the regional chairs across the world: “We received the sad news of Professor Lim Chee Seng’s passing from our friends at MACLALS. I remember Professor Lim’s warmth, goodwill and courtesy in his approach to the management of ACLALS affairs and his sage contributions to our deliberations.”

We shall miss Chee Seng very, very much.

Let me end with this quote from Plutarch: “Not by lamentations and mournful chants ought we to celebrate the funeral of a good man but by hymns, for in ceasing to be numbered with mortals he enters upon the heritage of a diviner life.”

Rest in peace Chee Seng.