

A TEACHER OF HOLOGRAPHY

This summer approximately one hundred individuals will gather on the charming, wooded campus of Lake Forest College to learn holography. Two-thirds will be learning beginning techniques in two week-long workshops. The rest will hear experts discuss the latest in pulsed portraiture, the use of optical fibers and embossing techniques.

This summer's group is likely to include junior high school students, retired individuals, eager entrepreneurs and theoretical scientists. They will come from around the United States and beyond. Each of these students will be fortunate to be learning about holography from one of its masters: Dr. Tung Hon Jeong. "T.J." (he never encourages artificial distance by insisting on "Dr. Jeong") has been teaching groups like this at Lake Forest for seventeen years now. Indeed, Ms. Rosemary Jackson-Smith and Mr. Jody Burns, the two principal founders of the Museum of Holography, were students in his first class.

Jeong first became involved in holography through his interest in teaching. He joined the faculty of Lake Forest College in 1963, after completing his Ph.D. in nuclear physics at the University of Minnesota. Initially, he continued his work in high energy physics but felt frustrated by its relative inaccessibility. "You must always go to the 'atom smasher' in that field; that doesn't allow much opportunity for teaching undergraduates," he said. "So I began searching for something I could do in a small college." At about that time the laser was emerging and Jeong recognized it as a perfect research tool for his needs.

In 1965 he helped to organize a conference for school teachers to develop new experiments for students. He wrote to Dr. Emmett Leith asking for assistance. "Leith, without even knowing me, sent us one of his classic chess holograms and said 'Keep it,'" remembered Jeong. "Because of that, we got into holography."

And into it he got! In addition to

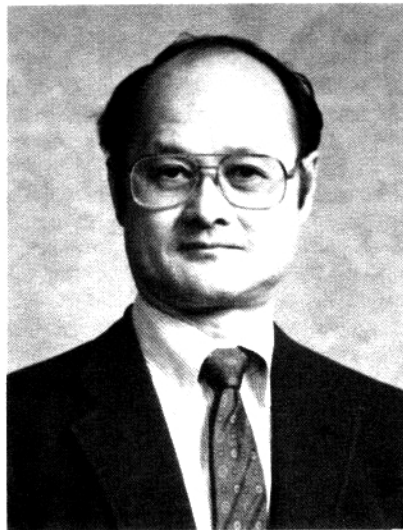


Photo: Courtesy of Dr. T.H. Jeong

teaching thousands about holography through summer workshops and lectures at more than 400 other universities, professional groups and corporations, T.J. recently completed *Laser Holography: Experiments You Can Do* (a thirty-four page book, aimed at junior high school and high school students, which will be distributed free to schools through the Thomas Edison Foundation). He has also invented a number of novel holographic techniques and has worked with scientists, artists and commercial enterprises alike, to expand the current range of holographic applications. He has consistently advocated the importance of both artists and scientists in the development of the field. Perhaps more than any other individual, he has promoted international exchange. Jeong persuaded Lake Forest College to host the First and Second International Symposia on Display Holography in the summers of 1983 and 1985. As many readers will attest, these symposia have been important in fostering communications and building a sense of unity among holographers around the world.

As impressive as these accomplishments are, they are made all the more so by the man himself. T.J. is a proper,

diminutive, energetic man with a quick almost impish glint in his eye. He is a man devoted to his family, his community and his music.

His neat appearance and modest manner do not suggest the difficult road he has traveled. T.J. was born in a rice paddy in China. During the famine of the 1930s his parents were executed for stealing food and he was sold for \$50 to a family without a male heir. In 1948 when the communists took over, his land-owning, adoptive family recognized the danger. They sent T.J., then age twelve, under an assumed name, to live with relatives in Amarillo, Texas. Not speaking English, he was at first mistakenly classified as a deaf and dumb child. Soon he was transferred to regular classes where he had to learn English while studying his regular subjects.

In time he began to excel. Jeong finished first in his high school class with a near straight "A" average despite the fact that he worked in his family's store every day after class. After graduation, he entered Yale University on a full scholarship. At Yale, T.J. studied physics. He also found time to compete as a gymnast and to become a member of the cheerleading squad.

Those who know him can see elements of that cheerleader's spirit and enthusiasm in his approach to holography. Talking about this summer, Jeong said, "For the first time we will have fiber optics and embossing techniques in the workshops. Nobody else has done this before! I feel that I am fulfilling my function as a communicator in being able to persuade others to begin teaching what is regarded as a guarded secret—to open up the field. Whatever is worth learning is worth teaching!"

The field owes a great deal to this man who has taught so many of us so much about holography. T.J.'s own words describe him well: "I'm in Lake Forest mainly for the teaching. I think that is my calling. If I am known as anything, I want to be known as a teacher—a teacher of holography."