



The Eulogy

William F. Lee

On behalf of the entire Lee family, I'd like to thank you for being here today.

Thank you from his wife, Kin Ping.

Thank you from his three sons --- Tom, Rich and me --- and daughters in law --- Leslie, Susan and Soheyla.

And --- he would tell you --- thanks particularly from his eight grandchildren --- Christopher, Catie, Maggie, Jessica, Cathy, Simi, Sabrina and Ariana.

Thank you for joining us in a celebration of an extraordinary life of an even more extraordinary person.

Those of you who knew my father well would know that he would be very appreciative that you were here.

And he will be eternally grateful that you took the time to remember him.

But he would not want you to be here to mourn him or miss him.

For those of you who truly knew him know that he would want us all to pause in celebration --- a meaningful celebratory pause --- and then move on to the important task of living life.

For that is what he did and would do.

In fact, his family knows that he has moved on to the important task of tackling strategic planning and total quality management in heaven.

Of course, before he does, we all know that he will pause before he passes St. Peter, move slightly to the side, take his glasses off and check out the menu in the very best restaurant in heaven.

If he does not find the right restaurant and menu, he won't go in.

Perhaps there is no greater manifestation of Thomas Henry or Tien Ho Lee than those gathered in this room.

Today we have the MIT community

The GE community

The Center for Quality Management community

The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis from Vienna

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Chiao Tung University

The National Academy of Sciences

The Chinese government

Partner's HealthCare

The Brigham and Women's Hospital

The Massachusetts General Hospital

The Harvard Medical School

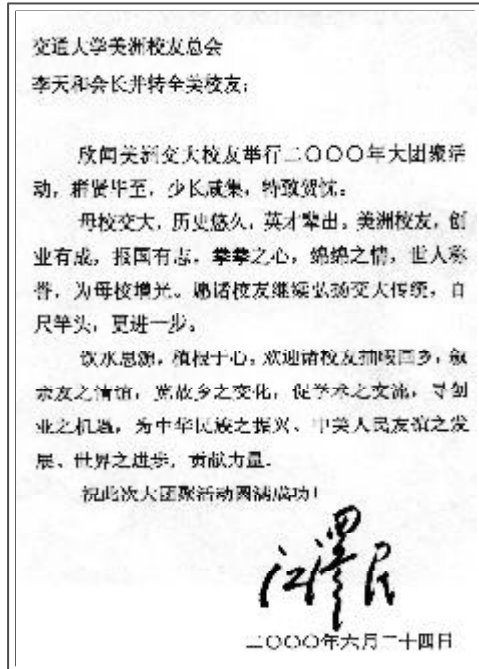
And, of course, my partners and colleagues at Hale and Dorr and the Boston legal community.

There are people from three continents and a dozen countries here today.

Indeed, you might say Dad has succeeded in doing what ten United States Presidents failed to do --- bring China and the United States together, even for a moment.



What kind of man brings so many different communities and so many different people together?



What kind of man has touched so many lives?

What kind of man has left a legacy that bridges so many of us?

On the back of your programs is a letter we received from Jiang Zamin, the President of the People's Republic of China.

Our father did more than live the American dream; he was the embodiment of the American dream.

From the most humble beginnings in Shanghai

Powered by a dominating intellect

A relentless work ethic

And the highest sense of integrity

He literally and figuratively drove himself to the top in everything he did --- and carried us along with him.

Some people have suggested that his sons work hard.

Believe it was nothing compared to him.

Even in retirement, he thought more, wrote more, read more and worked harder than any of his sons.

When Dad arrived here in 1948, life for a Chinese American was

not what it is today.

Biases and prejudices that are no longer acceptable were standard fare of the day.

It was not enough for Dad to be almost as good or just as good.

He knew he had to be better, and better he was.

From the time he talked himself into Union College to obtain his Master's degree he was off and running.

Many of you know the incredible highlights of what followed.

The still unmatched academic record at RPI where he obtained his Ph.D.

The invention of the vacuum circuit breaker and the thirty patents that followed.

The rise through General Electric from scientist to manager to executive to the company's senior scientist.

The move to here -- MIT -- where he began by teaching electrical engineering to sophomores as the Phillip Sporn Professor of Electrical Engineering.

His time in Vienna as the Director of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, founded by McGeorge Bundy as the real precursor to post Cold War cooperation in the progress of science.

His election and devotion to the National Academy of Sciences.

The founding of the Center for Quality of Management with Ray Stata, his friend, colleague and business soul mate.

And now -- never one to know what the word "retired" means -- his devotion to the place where he started, to China, and, in particular, Chiao Tung University in Shanghai, China.

But the measure of my father was not in his scientific accomplishments and achievements.

The true measure -- in our view -- is the family of which he was the patriarch.

A family founded upon the same values of hard work, integrity and fairness that were the foundation of his life.



He taught us:

to think

to innovate

to create

to persevere

to stick together

and to always remember that nothing -- absolutely nothing -- counts more than family.

What we saw that the rest of the world never saw was

The father who came home early from work to teach us anything we wanted -- as long as it was a science or math.

The father who took the impossible calculus problem to -- the problem that our college professor could not solve -- and who would do it in his head.

The father who would drive two hours to find just the right Chinese restaurant.

The father who was always there with just the right advice, even if we did not want to hear it.

The father who was proudest of not his accomplishments, not of the accomplishments of even his children, but the father whose greatest pride was that his children were good people of strong character.

We saw

The grandfather who decided he had made many mistakes as a father and was committed to not repeating them with his grandchildren.

The grandfather who found the time and energy to take his grandchildren to China, England, France, New Zealand, Australia and Spain.

The grandfather who almost lost our two daughters at Euro Disney.

The grandfather who climbed the Great Wall of China with every single grandchild.

The grandfather who had time to read to his grandchildren, see their school plays, and attend horse shows, music recitals, field hockey games, swim meets, soccer games and lacrosse games.

The grandfather who gave every grandchild a Chinese name.

The grandfather whose greatest pleasure was to have everyone together -- at the right Chinese restaurant.

But most of all there was the husband of 52 and one half years.

My mother's best friend.

Her lifelong companion.

The only love of her life.

One half of the most unusual and extraordinary couple there will ever be.

I want to pause here because we have a message for his grandchildren, a message with two parts.

First, you eight must always remember that he believed and continues to believe in you.

It is not a belief that you will be or need to make much money or become rich and famous.

He believes that each of you will be a good person of strong character who will make life better for those who you are with or whose lives you touch -- just like he did.

And, second, he wants you to stick together.

Many of the people here have asked us how we will get through this difficult time.



We will get through the same way our family always has.
We will gather together, be stronger together and move forward together.
Grandma and Grandpa took us through many successes and many disappointments.
They took us through an American community that wondered what Chinese people were doing here.
They did it by getting us to stick together.
Remember, Grandma and Grandpa always told us that one chop stick can be easily broken.
But three together named Tom, Rich and Bill could not.
Well, now there are eight of you.
Eight cannot be broken if you join together.
Join together even closer than if you were all brothers and sisters.
Carry each other through successes but more importantly disappointments.
That is what he wants you to do.
My Dad and I had a routine at Martha's Vineyard.
I'd get up and run early in the morning.
No -- part of the routine was not him running with me.
But after the run, Dad and I and our dog Tilly would get in the car and go to the Black Dog to get coffee and papers -- and usually an apple turnover for the love of his life.
We talked about everything with me always asking -- most recently for advice on how to be manager or at least try to be one.
Most recently, we actually talked about dying.
We agreed that, on the positive side, dying would be very much like sleeping and we all know how much he liked that.
But more importantly, he felt satisfied and comfortable with where his family was.
With what it stood for.
With where it was.
And where it was going.
And, he said he thought he could die with a smile on his face.
I tried hard to find the right thought to end this on.
I even consulted my erudite partner Jeff Rudman who always has the right quote or quip.
But I could find nothing better than something my son's kindergarten teacher said when she knew she was dying of cancer.
Something that so clearly applied to Dad.
She said (quoting someone else) "When I was born, I cried and the world smiled.
Now I die and the world cries but I smile."
Dad, we know you are smiling.

William F. Lee at MIT on February 17, 2001

