

Southern California's Chinese American Woman Warrior

Feelie Lee, Ph.D.

When I first met Lucie Cheng in 1974, she was the founding Director of the AASC and I was a newly-minted Assistant Dean of Students. She struck me then as an earnest, no nonsense person with a penetrating curiosity and directness...more Mainland than Asian American but a woman full of restless energy. Over the many years we became campus friends. My admiration for Lucie grew as I observed her work ethic, her pursuit of meaningful research projects, and her ability to go beyond the academic boundaries.

When the Asian Pacific Women's Network – the largest network in the US at that time - nominated her in 1984 to receive the Woman Warrior Award in Education, it was an easy choice for us. I interviewed her for the Warrior presentation that would take place before 600 guests in Los Angeles at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on 22 Feb 1985. I discovered, to my delight, how she was truly the daughter of her father, Cheng She-Wo, a legendary publisher in China, who was so respected that both Chou En-lai and Chang Kai-Shek asked him to join their respective governments in 1949. He turned both down and started his own press in Taiwan. Lucie described working her way through college in Hawaii, which included stints as a waitress on roller skates while taking customers' order while also pursuing unconventional research projects (Chinese prostitutes in 19th Century America).

From the time I first met her she moved seamlessly from Mao-like pant suits to silk dresses and high heels when the occasion called. Sometimes we would talk privately about personal issues, especially since my graduate studies were in psychoanalysis and social psychology. We laughed a lot then. We collaborated on a book for the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California that dealt with immigrant Chinese women in Southern California in the early part of the century. When she retired from UCLA to return to Taiwan, she became even busier, taking on her father's mantle by becoming the publisher of the *Lipao* newspaper and helping to found a school of journalism. Not just a workaholic, Lucie also relished the arts, playing the piano with great skill, frequenting concerts and traveling extensively. Restless, creative, and energetic to the end, Lucie will remain an inspiration to a generation of inquiring women ...and men. She will be sorely missed but never forgotten.

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