Makoto Igarashi

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Makoto Igarashi, a distinguished physician, scholar and relentless Otologic investigator, was born on March 5, 1928, in Tokyo, Japan. He received his premedical education and his MD degree from Keio University, graduating in 1952. Thereafter, he completed residency training in Otolaryngology at the Keio University Hospital in Tokyo. In 1959, he earned the DMSc degree from

Keio University Hospital, and, shortly thereafter, in the same year, he came to the United States as a research fellow in Otolaryngology at the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. This was followed by two years of research fellowship in Otology at the Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary of Harvard Medical School. In 1963, he was appointed Head of the Otopathology Section of the US Naval Aerospace Medical Institute in Pensacola, Fla. In 1966, he relinquished this post to join the Faculty of Baylor College of Medicine, Houston as an Assistant Professor. In 1968, he was promoted to Associate Professor and Director of Research. In 1973, he became a full Professor in the Department of Otorhinolaryngology and Communicative Sciences at Baylor. From 1973 until his retirement in 1990, Igar (as he was known to his friends) was not only a preeminent scientist but a patient, devoted and dedicated teacher and beloved colleague to all.

In 1986, Prof. Igarashi became the part-time Director of the Division of Space Biomedicine of the Universities Space Research Association (USRA) of Houston, while retaining his other academic and research duties at Baylor. For over

15 years, he was instrumental in the conduct of research on vestibular function in an integral partnership with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). He was also instrumental in developing joint vestibular function in space studies between the United States and Japan.

In 1990, Igar retired from the faculty of Baylor College of Medicine, and moved to Japan, where he accepted an appointment as Professor at the University Research Center of Nihon University in Tokyo. He continues to this day, however, to maintain his ties at Baylor and NASA.

Much can be said of Igar's scientific work and accomplishments, but there is another side of his life, into which he brought the same zeal and devotion as in his professional work, that of being a loving husband and father. Igar and his wife, Emiko, are a great team. They have one offspring, a beautiful daughter, Yumiko, who is married and lives in Tokyo now as well. Emiko is a talented ito-mari artist and gracious hostess. Yumiko is a brilliant woman, talented pianist and linguist.

A tireless investigator, Prof. Igarashi is the author of over two-hundred and forty publications.

The subject

of these articles reflects his 31 years of passionate research on the auditory and vestibular systems. Dr. Igarashi provided research training to scores of physicians, now scattered throughout the world, among them six professors in universities.

As Director of the Division of Space Biomedicine of USRA, he served a vital role in the study of the phenomena of space flight adaptation. A popular lecturer, Igar has received numerous, world-wide invitations to address meetings, conduct symposia and to serve as chairman for many of these events. He has been elected to membership in all of the renowned senior societies pertinent to his career interests and has received innumerable awards for his work. His honors are many as well. He served as President of the VII International Symposium: Vestibular and Visual Control on Posture and

Locomotor Equilibrium in 1983. He was President of the International Society for Postural and Gait Research from 1983 to 1986. He has been elected to membership in the Collegium Oto-Rhino-Laryngologi-cum, the Bárány Society, the American Otological Society, the American Neurotology Society, the Japan Society for Equilibrium Research, the Japan Society for Aerospace and Environmental Medicine, the Japan Society for Basic Otology, the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, and the International Academy of Astronautics.

Throughout his career, Igar has always reflected a kind of self-giving, serenity, modesty, inner confidence and dignity seldom found in others. He has been a true friend and colleague. Rarely in one's life is there the very special privilege of knowing and working with so outstanding a person. For that, I am indeed grateful and feel very blessed to have been able to bask in the reflection of his achievements and greatness.

On the occasion of Igar's retirement, I asked him what he would like as recognition or tribute for his many years of outstanding service to the Department and to the Medical School. I offered virtually every sort of celebration one might imagine. True to his style and his being, he said that an issue of ORL in which several of his friends and colleagues would contribute articles looking into the future of science and the auditory and vestibular systems was what he would most like to see. Igar, here it is, written as an expression of the love and respect everyone has for you and what you have contributed to all of us and to science.