



## IN MEMORIAM

# In memoriam Prof. Hisamichi Aizawa, 1950–2011

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**H**isamichi Aizawa died suddenly on February 11, 2011, leaving behind his wife Toshiko and two beloved daughters, Kumiko Noda, who recently married, and Yumiko. He was Professor of Medicine and Chairman of the Division of Respiratory, Neurology and Rheumatology at the Dept of Medicine of Kurume University (Fukuoka, Japan). Hisamichi Aizawa trained at Kyushu University, obtaining his PhD in 1976 and MD in 1977. He then trained internationally as a post-doctoral fellow, working with mentor Jay A. Nadel at the Cardiovascular Research Institute (CVRI) of the University of California (San Francisco, CA, USA) from 1981 to 1984.

We met Hisamichi Aizawa in San Francisco, where we immediately renamed him "Sam". He was and remained Sam for all of us, a group of young international respiratory fellows who trained at the CVRI, and continued to work in respiratory research and/or medicine, remaining colleagues and friends throughout our lives (fig. 1).

Sam provided important insights on the mechanisms of airway and lung inflammation in models of ozone- or allergen-induced hyperresponsiveness in dogs, in the studies carried out in San Francisco. He also continued to conduct research and provide important contributions in different fields of respiratory pathophysiology and medicine: airway smooth muscle and airway epithelium pathophysiology; neurogenic

inflammation of the airways; asthma; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and emphysema; and more recently, lung cancer, pulmonary infections and interstitial lung diseases. He reported the results of his studies in more than 200 scientific papers published in the most important international respiratory journals, becoming an internationally recognised scientist and professional. He also served as a member of the Editorial Boards of the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* and *Pulmonary Pharmacology and Therapeutics*. In addition to his very successful academic and scientific career, he served several national societies: he was recently nominated President of the Japanese Respiratory Society (JRS) and was due to chair the Annual Meeting of the JRS in April 2011.

Sam was a wonderful man, a great academic, and a terrific mentor. He championed both national and international training, and transmitted his enthusiasm for research to his colleagues and fellows, developing a new generation of Japanese scientists and professionals. Every time we met, after discussing science and fellows, we were showing each other photographs of our families like old friends. His hospitality in Japan was memorable: great science, great art and literature, great Japanese cuisine, great post-dinner karaoke. We will miss you Sam, a lot. We extend our deepest condolences to his wife Toshiko and his daughters, as well as to his colleagues, friends and the Japanese respiratory community.



**FIGURE 1.** Group dinner of Jay A. Nadel's past fellows from the Cardiovascular Research Institute (University of California, San Francisco, CA, USA), at the American Thoracic Society Congress in San Francisco, in 1993. From left to right: Allan Becker (Canada), Kian Fan Chung (UK), Leonardo Fabbri (Italy), Hisamichi Aizawa (Japan), Haydn Walters (Tasmania), Kumiko Aizawa (Sam's daughter, taken when she was 14 yrs old), Paul O'Byrne (Canada), Cristina Mapp (Italy), Steve Alpert (USA), David MacKay (UK) and Hans Hahn (Germany). Missing from the photo are Peter Barnes (UK), fellow at the same time, and of course Jay A. Nadel, the mentor to all of us!

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