

# MEMORIAL RESOLUTION KOSUKE ISHII

(1957-2009)

Kosuke (Kos) Ishii of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Stanford University passed away on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009 at age 51. He is survived by his wife, Naomi (MS 1987), of Los Altos, California, his sister Akemi Iida, and by his father, Tsuneharu, and mother Masue, all of whom reside in Japan. He will be deeply missed by his family, his current and former students, his colleagues at Stanford and in the broader professional community. He passed away as a result of complications following from a massive hemorrhage from blood vessels in his esophagus.

Kos Ishii was born in Tokyo. He spent his high school years in Sydney, Australia because his father, who was employed by Toshiba, was stationed there. He attended North Sydney Boys' High School, graduating as the top student in the school. He then attended Sophia University in Tokyo graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Engineering in 1980. His next stop was Stanford, where he received a Master of Science degree in 1982. Back in Japan, he earned the degree of Master of Engineering from Tokyo Institute of Technology. Kos then went to work for Toshiba himself, as controls and systems design engineer based in Tokyo. He was soon based in Australia again commissioning power station controls.

In 1985 he returned to Stanford to study for his doctorate with Professor Phil Barkan. He served as a teaching assistant for Professor Barkan's new Design for Manufacturability course sequence (now ME 317 A&B). He completed his PhD in 1987. Waldron first met him in 1986 when on sabbatical at Stanford from Ohio State University. At the time, he spoke English with a broad Australian accent, including some of the more colorful idioms. Waldron suggested that he apply for an academic position at Ohio State. He did so and received an offer, which he eventually accepted, joining the faculty in 1988.

Kos showed characteristic energy during his service at Ohio State both in generating a research program, and in formulating new courses. He was very popular as a classroom instructor. He earned an early promotion to associate professor with tenure. In 1993 Waldron became department chair at Ohio State. At about the same time, Professor Barkan's health began to deteriorate, and Stanford approached Kos about continuing Barkan's program. That was the beginning of an extended negotiation. He was well thought of at Ohio State and, in fact, was approved for a very early promotion to full professor. Nevertheless, he ultimately decided to return to Stanford, starting in 1995.

As a faculty member at Stanford Kos established the Manufacturing Modeling Laboratory and made the ME 317 Design for Manufacturability course sequence his own. He worked with a succession of PhD students, and with a variety of corporate sponsors to create a unique research program. The ME 317 course sequence actually served as a test bed for many of his student projects. Kos was promoted to the rank of professor in 2002. The success of ME 317 as an off-campus offering was recognized by the General Motors Outstanding Distance Learning Faculty Award in 1996 and 2008. He received the Japan Society of Mechanical Engineers Achievement Award in 2000. In 2006 he was appointed by the Office of the Prime Minister of Japan to be a member of the Science Council of Japan. He became a Fellow of

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ASME in 2007, and was awarded the ASME Spira Outstanding Design Educator Award in 2008.

Kos maintained a grueling travel schedule. The ME 317 courses are electronically delivered to remote company sites via the Stanford Center for Professional Development serving many more students off-campus than on. Kos typically visited the remote sites in Michigan and Mexico each quarter. He was co-teaching a new program at Keio University in Tokyo with Olivier de Weck from MIT, necessitating several trips to Japan each year. He returned from one of those trips only a few days before his collapse.

There has been a remarkable response to his passing from Kos' former students, and from people in the professional community throughout the world with whom he has interacted. This is very gratifying to his family, and to those of us who were his day-to-day colleagues. It is our challenge to perpetuate his contributions to our technical field, and to the world he traversed so energetically.

Committee:

Kenneth Waldron, (Chair)  
Mark R. Cutkosky  
Sheri D. Sheppard