

In Memory of Prof. Hyung-Woo Kwak



It is with immense sadness that we announce the passing of Professor Hyung Woo Kwak, MD, PhD, President-Elect of the Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO) and Vice-President of the Asia-Pacific Vitreo-retina Society (APVRS), on January 1, 2016. In his battle against liver cancer, Prof. Kwak had never stopped for a moment leading the advancement of ophthalmology in Korea, the Asia-Pacific region, and well beyond.

Prof. Kwak received his early training in retina at the Seoul National University, and completed his research fellowship at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in Boston in the 1990's. He joined the Department of Ophthalmology of Kyung Hee University School of Medicine in 1986, and was a Professor of Ophthalmology for over 30 years and served as Chairman from 1997 – 2003. During his tenure, he trained innumerable ophthalmology fellows who now serve as Professors in various university hospitals nationwide. Prof. Kwak was also a prolific researcher with over 160 peer-reviewed journal articles. With his pioneering work in retinal research, Prof. Kwak was one of the key leaders in the development of the retina subspecialty in Korea, firmly placing Korea on the map of international ophthalmology with worldwide recognition. Prof. Kwak was Past President of many important professional societies in Korea, including the Korean Retinal Society (2006-2008), the Korean Ophthalmological Society (KOS) (2010-2012), and the Korea Uveitis Society (2013-2015).

Prof. Kwak was an active player in the international ophthalmic community. Prof. Kwak hosted the 27th APAO Congress 2012 in Busan, South Korea, as Congress President, bringing together over 4,000 delegates from all over the world. He was elected a Vice-President of APAO in 2012 – 2014, and then elected the President-Elect of APAO in 2015. He had also served as a Vice-President of APVRS since 2013.

Prof. Kwak was instrumental in the success of the 3rd APVRS Congress in Busan, and the successful bidding of the 12th APVRS Congress in Seoul in 2018. Prof. Kwak participated actively in many international professional organizations, including the American Association of Ophthalmology (AAO), the American Society of Retina Specialists (ASRS), the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), and the EURETINA, as an international member. Prof. Kwak had also been a member of the Macular Society since 2012.

Prof. Kwak received the Arthur Lim Award from APAO in 2013, in recognition of his exemplary leadership in the field of ophthalmology. With his dedication, Prof. Kwak made substantial improvements in ophthalmic teaching and training in Korea and beyond.

Prof. Kwak is survived by his wife Eun-Sook Youm and his children Jae-Young and Dong-Hoon.