



FRIENDSHIP and Dr. CC Hsiao

This is the splendid calligraphy of my **friend**, Dr. CC Hsiao. This beautiful, artistic, genuinely Chinese cultural design will be a small part of his legacy to Minnesotans.

I was privileged 13 years ago to have joined the ranks of **friends** who knew CC through his **friendship** organizations in Minnesota and China. We met first at a Board of Directors meeting of USCPFPA-Minnesota. He could very well have been the one who nominated me to the Board at that first meeting – if not he, then Joyce. It was CC and Joyce and other fine people of the Board of Directors that charmed me into commitments far beyond my expectations. Wally coached me before leaving for that first meeting. Practice saying NO. But what chance did I have against the **friendly** and persuasive Hsaios and Hsiao and Liu and Wang and the Wong-Graff consortium. They never missed a chance to involve a good prospect in their shared mission by extending their personal **friendship** from the very first moment. After becoming President, CC and I collaborated on a regular basis - with me driving to their Arden Hills home to consider an issue in the warmth of their living room-with-a-lake-view or to jump into the driver's seat of his minivan and chauffeur CC and Joyce to meeting places too tangled for them to drive comfortably. I can attest that it was easy to maneuver and park with the plastic fruit positioned in the windows to assist with vehicle placement.

It seems that aging suited CC. I remember pulling up in the drive one early spring day expecting CC to be ready to turn over the keys and head off to a garden meeting - only to find him yanking huge water-soaked carpets around in the garage. I asked him what he thought he was doing at his age messing with this heavy stuff. His comment was that the garage floor leaked from melting snow on the car and the room below the garage would get wet. He was going to remedy the situation in the immediate future and this was the first part of the plan. So, I added my muscle to his (like what was I doing at my age and in my dress clothes messing with this heavy stuff?) and we dragged the rugs out for drying. He said very matter-of-factly that after all, it would not be right for him to die and have the house sold to people who did not know of this plight. Almost as if the next family in his house was already his **friends**. When the job was finished, the garage door clambered down to display the wonderful characters he had painted. I hope the next residents appreciate the concern for the leak and marvel at the message. I do.

By his respectful, mild manner, he brought so many of us together to celebrate our unique and varied cultures. Even in his diminutive stature of later years, yes he was a "**friendly** giant" who calmly brought people, organizations, educators and government administrators together to move forward the cause of harmony in our global world. Every activity I shared with CC and Joyce (excuse me for including Joyce but

after their many years together they are almost one – even if she is the spritely 60 year old at their combined 170th birthday celebration) every activity - enhanced my life.

Enough of our personal **friendship**. Let's go on to what he masterminded on a global basis. In his younger years at the U of MN, he saw the potential for an educational relationship between Jiatong University in Xian with the U of MN and then went far beyond that to a state/province relationship. In 1979 along with 11 other professors, CC approached the school and the Ministry of Education to consider the request for a working relationship. The Minister of Education was not entirely enlightened as to the benefits of collaboration and refused the request. CC arranged a private meeting and the enlightenment took place. ARRANGED A MEETING – wait a minute – in 1979 connecting with people in China was not soooo easy. There was no inexpensive way to phone or email – much less text message – but he got the job done. On an historic day in October 1982 Governor Al Quie and Shaanxi Governor Yu Ming Tao signed a **friendship** agreement in the presence of many of the members of USCPFA-Minnesota – some of the witnesses are here today. That relationship is 27 years old and counting. Thanks, CC for doing your part.

CC was wise far sooner than most of us in his instinctual knowledge that **friendship** and shared respect should precede commitment whether it is in business or education or any other endeavor. When **friendship** drives the relationship everything enters into an elevated status with trust, confidence, kindness, and caring for the people involved. **Friendship** is not the big and showy things – it is all the millions of little things that all make a difference. Throughout the course of CC's academic tenure, he lectured often and was even given an Honorary Professorship in Jiatong Da. He and Joyce hosted uncountable and uncounted meals for visiting scholars and students - helping to make connections between people and programs. When I bluntly asked Joyce why they did all this, she said "to make life interesting" and then she gave the little chuckle we all know so well. Truly they shared an interesting life.

I have often been involved in hosting visiting delegations. The Hsiao's were always present. They buddied right up to the lead delegate and shyly said "Hello and welcome". I am not bilingual. How do I know this? I know because of their **friendly** demeanor, gentle ways, gentility that is clearly visible to those who observe. We consistently are told by visiting delegations we host that: YES, they have traveled other cities, but have never felt as welcome and cared for as they have in Minnesota. A big part of that ambience is due to the Hsiao's. We in USCPFA - Minnesota strongly encourage Joyce to continue to share her talents to meet and greet and work for **friendship** as she has done in an exemplary way in her first 60 years.

After his involvement in sistering Minnesota and Shaanxi, CC moved forward to another dream project – the **Friendship** University. I was a committee member and watched as he made the contacts in China, traveled to see campuses and consider candidates to approach and sought funding. Unfortunately, the stars were not in alignment for this project to succeed, but it was not because CC was complacent or lacking connections.

His last ambitious project as described by Chair Person Linda Mealey-Lohmann was to spark a fantastic project. One night while leaving a USCPFA-MN Board Meeting he turned to Linda and said, "Did you know there are five Japanese gardens and not one public Chinese garden here?" Linda replied, "Maybe we should build one." And so the project was birthed as a USCPFA - Minnesota Committee and later as a legal non-profit organization named Minnesota China **Friendship** Garden.

As we can all attest, CC put in many hours on this project, generated many ideas for the China garden concept, and created beautiful calligraphy for our logo and letterhead. Linda sends the message that she knows it was a project near and dear to his heart His spirit remains with the project and motivates us all to make a Minnesota China garden a reality. Involved partners in this project from Minnesota and China vary from architects, to landscape architects, to city planners to government officials to sister city and state representatives and even to Beijing Youxie. The character logo for the MC **Friendship** Garden Society was lovingly scribed by CC.

And so I close saying that our **friend**, Dr. CC Hsiao is gone from us know. We miss him already. He will never be forgotten. His cause of **friendship** between the people of his beloved Minnesota and Motherland China will continue to thrive.

Every time we write the USCPFA-Minnesota name we will be furthering his lifelong cause.

By USCPFA-MN President Mary Warpeha

Presented at the Campus Club at the Memorial Service for CC Hsiao, October 2009.