

Remembering Colin J. Wall

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I still remember the very first time I met Colin. It was during my CI Arb fellowship oral assessment in Hong Kong. Entering the room with an overwhelming presence, he asked the candidates several questions on costs in arbitration. While the questions themselves were tough and challenging, it was apparent through his encouraging tone and body language that Colin was keen to ensure that all of the candidates, who were non-native speakers of English, understood his questions.

The next time I met Colin was on a more relaxed occasion. Ms. Amarantha Yip, now the executive director of the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society, had organized a lunch at a Vietnamese restaurant in Causeway, Hong Kong, and we were introduced formally. We had a good chat together over some nice food. With the benefit of hindsight, the lunch might have been an "interview". Soon after, I had the opportunity to coach in his mediation courses and assist him in other mediation related projects. As a coach, I enjoyed the privilege of learning mediation from him as I always arrived to class a little earlier to listen to his sharing of real life mediation scenarios before coaching the small groups. He had an international vision and had always been able to see issues in a wider perspective.

As a quantity surveyor, he was the mediator of many construction disputes in Hong Kong. We all felt proud when Colin was elected as the President of the CI Arb after spending over 20 years in Hong Kong.

In addition to a good reputation as an arbitrator, Colin also held a position with the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre, chairing the Hong Kong Mediation Council.

When I wrote to him in June 2015, I learnt that he was very ill but he nevertheless took the time to write back. I will always remember the last line in his last email, on 10 June 2015, "I remain optimistic as a good mediator should!" That was his final sharing with me, which embodies the right attitude to life. I always reflect on this learned statement when encountering difficulties or am faced with an impasse.

Hong Kong is going to hold the ICC Mediation Competition in October 2018. We are indebted to the foundation laid by Colin for ICC and Hong Kong. For those taking part in the competition, a must-read would definitely be [the book on past competition problems: "International Commercial Mediation Competition"](#) edited by Colin and Mr. Greg Bond, who is a regular contributor to this blog.

Mr. Colin J. Wall was born on 3 July 1953 and passed away on 16 July 2015. He was described as "a pioneer in Hong Kong for his work in mediation" (Who'sWhoLegal 2011) and he will always be remembered by the mediation community in Hong Kong and internationally.