Lance C.C. Fung: Technical Program Integrity Committee Chair

*I*EEE Systems, Man, and Cybernetics (SMC) Magazine introduces Lance C.C. Fung, a member of the IEEE SMC Society (SMCS). Fung is professor emeritus at Murdoch University, Perth, Australia.

SMC Magazine: Lance, I heard you have retired, and you are so young!

Fung: Officially, there is no retirement age for faculty members in Australia, but I opted for voluntary retirement from Murdoch University in October 2015. I was granted an emeritus professorship, so life hasn't changed much, as I still have my office, maintenance fund, students under my supervision, and most of all, free parking! The key advantage is pursing what I want to do without completing teaching and management worksheets. As far as my age goes, I will have my IEEE Life Membership in six years; you can decide whether I am too young then.

SMC Magazine: What made you take the voluntary retirement option?

Fung: There were a few triggers. Many of my friends retired earlier. Some are older, and some are not. With a sense of regret, they all told me the same thing: "Lance, I should have done this earlier." Second, my services and commitments to the IEEE and other volunteer organizations have grown, and I choose to do what I believe is most rewarding.

SMC Magazine: Is retirement boring with nothing to do?

Fung: I can confirm what others have said, and that I am much busier than before! Most of my friends exercise and play sports, take hobby classes, cook, and travel places that they have always wanted to visit. I

have made myself more available for IEEE services, and the opportunities are many! I have no time to even say the word *boring*!

SMC Magazine: Tell us something about your education and career.

Fung: I was trained as a marine radio and electronic officer in Hong Kong during the early 1970s after graduating from high school. The course started with 24 attendees in the first year, and just 50% got through to the second year. At the end of the program, only four graduated. The day I received my certificate, I had two contracts offered to me, and I began working the very next day. My duties and responsibilities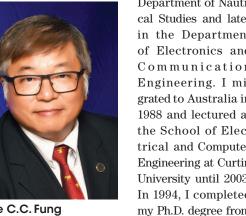 were to operate ship-to-shore communication, maintain shipboard communication/electronic equipment, and ensure the safety of life at sea.

I furthered my education with an advanced marine electronics diploma from the University of Bristol, United Kingdom; a B.Sc. degree in maritime technology; and a master of engineering degree in systems test technology, both from the University of Wales, United Kingdom. During the course, I was introduced to computer technology, including mainframes with de-

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vices that used paper tapes, punched cards, magnetic tapes, and line printers. My M.Eng. degree project was the development of an automatic tester based on a Motorola 6800 central processing unit developed on an HP 64000 system, and the codes were written entirely in assembly language.

Upon graduating in 1982, I took a teaching position at Singapore Polytechnic in the Department of Nautical Studies and later in the Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering. I migrated to Australia in 1988 and lectured at the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Curtin University until 2003. In 1994, I completed my Ph.D. degree from the University of Western Australia with a dissertation in the use of rule-based systems and simulated annealing for optimization of electrical power systems.

From 2003 until my retirement, I worked in the School of Engineering and Information Technology at Murdoch University, lecturing mainly in computer technology and artificial intelligence. My research interests have always been in applications of intelligent systems and techniques to solve practical problems.

SMC Magazine: Looking back, what are the highlights of your career?

Fung: In my many years of academic work, apart from my publications and projects, the highlight has always been the graduation of my postgraduate students. I am privileged to have supervised students from many countries, including Bhutan, Bahrain, China, Malaysia, India, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Singapore, Vietnam, and Thailand. Many have returned home and taken significant positions and responsibilities in their respective organizations. It brings me great joy when I receive updates through e-mail or Facebook, knowing they have contributed to the community and put their knowledge to good use.

> I intend to put succession plans in place by inviting appropriate and capable Members to the committee.

SMC Magazine: How about your journey with the IEEE?

Fung: I have been an IEEE Member for 26 years and an IEEE volunteer and with SMCS for more than 20 years. I was first invited to join the Neural Networks Special Interest Group, and then I subsequently began serving in the Western Australia Section as student counselor, industrial liaison, secretary, treasurer, vice chair, and chair. I have held similar positions in Western Australia Chapters for the IEEE Communication Society, the IEEE Computer Society, and the IEEE Power & Energy Society, and I initiated the IEEE SMC Chapter and SMC Student Chapter.

I was a member of the IEEE Asia Pacific Region (R10) Executive Committee for a special project in 2007 and 2008 and the chair of the Australian Council from 2013 to 2014. I also served in other IEEE committees or ad-hoc committees, including member benefits and portfolio, signature program evaluation, global strategy, conference quality, conference policies, conference branding, new initiatives, and technical program integrity. I am proud to have served as a member-at-large on the IEEE SMC Society Board of Governors for two terms from 2010 to 2015. I also served as chair of the SMCS Chapter Coordinator Committee and as advisor on the SMCS Conference Committee. The journey has enriched my experience with exposure to different IEEE communities, and I have gained an in-depth understanding of the challenges and issues faced by the IEEE and its Members.

SMC Magazine: With respect to your current IEEE appointments, what is their significance?

Fung: My 2018 appointments are mainly in two areas: conference quality and new initiatives. Conferences are essential to fulfill the mission of IEEE, which is to advance technology for humanity. They provide the platform for knowledge exchange and dissemination, whereas IEEE *Xplore* serves as the repository of papers from conference proceedings. It is important to ensure the papers included in IEEE *Xplore* meet expected standards with respect to quality and scope. This is the main role of the Technical Program Integrity Committee of which I am honored to chair.

I have also been appointed as Region 10 coordinator for the Conference Quality and Management Committee, with a focus on conference activities in the Region. In addition, I am chair-elect of the New Initiatives Committee (NIC). NIC considers proposals for new initiatives and seed grants, reviews continuing initiatives, and manages the IEEE new initiatives process. New initiatives are defined as "potential new programs, products, or services that will provide significant benefit to IEEE Members, the public, the technical community, and customers, or which could have lasting impact on IEEE or its business processes. Initiatives must also be of strategic importance to IEEE." It has been a great opportunity and experience serving on the NIC with leaders and IEEE presidents through the years.

SMC Magazine: Finally, what are your plans in the coming years?

Fung: First and foremost, my plan is to do my best in my current roles. While serving as chair, I intend to put succession plans in place by inviting appropriate and capable members to join the committee. It is essential to further the objectives of the committees to ensure continuity in the years to come. Between my commitments, I enjoy traveling, and cruising is my preferred holiday. Being a sea dog, my sea legs have never left me, and it is amazing to witness the change of seaboard technology through the years. Looking ahead, I plan to organize local IEEE gray power and retirees to continue their service to the community by putting their many years of experience to use. Six years after that, I will start the local Life Member Special Interest Group!

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