In Memory of Pat McDonald

R. I. P Patrick McDonald
23rd January 1945 to 16th January 2015.

Patrick McDonald joined Chemical Engineering Department of HKUST on the 1st August 1994 as one of the first few start up technical staff of the department. He retired on the 30th June 2010 after 16 years of service with the department, now named Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Department.

Pat McDonald came to the department with a background rich with hands on experience in building and setting up equipment. Pat assisted the equipment supplier to build the department’s first pilot-scale batch distillation column that spans one and a half story high and took six months to complete. The equipment which can be manually or computer controlled is used for undergraduate teaching and is the showpiece for visitors and HKUST Open Day. The “Distillation Column” as it was always refer, was the pride of Pat McDonald and he would introduce the equipment with great showmanship to students and visitors and generates lot of laughter and breaks the ice of the audience.

Pat’s hands on skills were greatly appreciated as he built a number of undergraduate experimental rigs, like the multi rig pump, the frictionless loss rig and water circulation rig. He was also involved in building setups that were designed for “Industrial Training” in HKIE accreditation scheme, and was on site on Stone Cutter Island to do pilot scale set ups for waste water treatment.

The first thing that people will remember about Pat is his cheerfulness and amiable personality. This personality trait works to the department’s advantage when he needs to get work done by University Workshop like lab service, mechanical work shop or the Glassblowing unit.

As shared by Prof. GH Chen, our current Department Head, “He made a significant contribution to the department when we built it from scratch, especially the laboratories. He was also a responsible technician that helped students a lot for their laboratory work. He has a pleasant personality that colleagues enjoyed his companion.”

Also as shared by Prof. Yue, Founding Department Head, “He will be remembered for the good work done for the Department in its founding days and missed for the Irish humor and roaring laughter.”