



HEALTH SYSTEM
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



M
University of Michigan
Department of Radiology
Kyung Cho, M.D.

The Kyung J. Cho
COLLEGIATE PROFESSORSHIP IN RADIOLOGY

Dr. Cho:

A Leader in Interventional Radiology

After graduating from Seoul's Catholic University Medical School in 1966, Dr. Kyung J. Cho, the William Martel Collegiate Professor of Radiology, had "textbook" knowledge, but little clinical experience. In Korea, he says, "There were always written examinations, so if I could memorize the entire book, I got 100 percent."

He immediately entered the Republic of Korea Air Force where he served at a base off the coast of North Korea. As a medical officer, Dr. Cho's education got him through a dangerous case of placenta accreta (retained placenta) following a complicated breech delivery, but the experience left him certain that his schooling had been incomplete. As soon as he finished his three years of service, his drive to continue to learn and practice brought him to the United States.

"Everybody at that time wanted to come to the U.S. to learn advanced medicine," Dr. Cho explains. "I came not speaking any English. I had to learn once I came here." By 1969 he was an intern at Detroit Memorial Hospital. A three-year residency in radiology at Wayne State University's Detroit General Hospital followed.

In 1974 Dr. Cho got a call from Dr. Stewart Reuter, a renowned angiographer teaching the growing specialty at Wayne County General Hospital, which in the 1970s was affiliated with U-M. "He called me one day and said, 'I would like you to come out and work with me at the U-M.' I had never met him, but I knew who he was ... such a famous guy," Dr. Cho remembers. "My instant response to him was — I'm not that diplomatic at that time — 'How come you're offering me a position and you haven't seen me?' [Dr. Reuter] said, 'Don't worry about it, come out.' I was so excited to work with him."

As an angiography fellow, Dr. Cho's incredible work ethic and perfectionism impressed Dr. Reuter. When Dr. Reuter left for California, he recommended Dr. Cho as section head. "[It was] a full professorship position, and I was just finishing my fellowship ... I looked like a medical student, and I was treated as such. ... But I worked hard, focused on what I was doing," Dr. Cho says. The clinicians quickly came to respect him. Within a year, he was director of interventional radiology (imaging-guided surgical procedures) at University of Michigan Hospital and Health System.

Interventional radiology was experiencing tremendous growth in the '70s and '80s. Dr. Joseph Bookstein and Dr. Reuter introduced embolization at U-M, a procedure that controlled bleeding in the GI tract and kidneys. Dr. Cho observed

them and, through laboratory practice, perfected the technique. He also used the laboratory to perfect other techniques such as sclerotherapy, and placement of vena caval filters, among others. Dr. Cho now uses this method to teach such procedures: His students watch his technique, practice repeatedly in the lab, and only when secure there, treat patients while he observes.

Dr. Cho credits his early hands-on experiences, such as the difficult delivery at the air force base, with his passion for teaching. “What I learned from [not having clinical experience], made me a much better educator. I have to teach all these young people, must really teach, so when they confront something, they’re prepared to face it ... Whenever I go back to Korea, I try to change the education system, to make sure these young students, when they go into the field, are able to perform, because I suffered.”

Dr. Cho’s commitment to teaching led the U-M Medical School to present him with a Lifetime Achievement Award in Medical Education. In addition, Dr. Cho has received Gold Medals from the Society of Interventional Radiology and the Korean Society of Interventional Radiology, and has been recognized multiple times as one of America’s Top Doctors.

Dr. Cho credits his passion for life for his clinical, research, and teaching successes. “I show my students how I care for patients and their families, and then the trainee can see ... you practice based on convictions. My core values are respect, passion, compassion, innovation.”

Those innovations have included using carbon dioxide as a contrast agent, which can be much safer than traditional materials that contain iodine, and selective venous sampling for the localization of endocrine tumors of the adrenal, pancreatic, and parathyroid glands. The fact that such research and the resulting clinical work can save lives is, Dr. Cho says, “Why we work hard ... I love humankind, particularly someone who needs help. I always give them my all.”



Dr. Kyung J. Cho and Mrs. Young Cho

Reflections on Dr. Cho's Career and Contributions

"Dr. Cho led by example. His tremendous work ethic, attention to detail and dedication to patient care showed trainees and colleagues alike how to provide the best possible clinical care."

*N. Reed Dunnick, M.D.
Fred Jenner Hodges Professor and Chair of Radiology*

"In four decades, Dr. Cho's mentoring of physicians in the region, inside and outside of the university, has transgressed medical specialties for the betterment of Michigan patients."

*Wael Saad, M.D.
Professor of Radiology, University of Michigan*

"Dr. Cho is the ultimate diagnostician. One of the great pleasures is listening to Kyung as he teaches residents, fellows, and faculty. He has been a great friend, mentor, colleague and teacher, and a wonderful person. Congratulations Dr. Cho!"

*Thomas Wakefield, M.D.
James C. Stanley Professor of Vascular Surgery, Professor of Surgery
and Section Head, Vascular Surgery, University of Michigan*

"Kyung Cho is the reason I made the turn into Interventional Radiology. His unrelenting commitments to teaching — how to interpret images, of course, but instilling the urge to conclude the diagnostic trail and permit (and sometimes administer) conclusive treatment — and patient welfare have inspired me and a generation of angiographers at Michigan. We didn't say, for example 'No evidence of pulmonary embolism'. We said, 'No pulmonary embolism.' That spirit has never left me."

*David M. Williams, M.D.
Professor of Radiology and Professor of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan*

"I consider Dr. Cho a great teacher and 'The best physician in the world' in the field of gastrointestinal angiography. He mentored over 100 interventional radiologists in the past 40 years and today you can find his students flying the flag of University of Michigan in every part of the world, occupying various levels of academic hierarchy."

*Narasimham L. Dasika, M.D.
Associate Professor of Radiology, University of Michigan*

"Dr. Cho's passion and dedication for research and teaching have inspired and benefitted generations of interventional radiologists, both at UM and around the world. He already has a distinguished and vast legacy of past and present trainees and colleagues, and I am forever grateful for all that he has shared. His countless hours and years spent in the service of patients and teaching have made him the anchor of the division and the bridge between past, present and future; this professorship is a celebration of his career and his total commitment to UM and IR."

*Paula Novelli, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Radiology, University of Michigan*

A Dedication to Teaching and Clinical Excellence in Patient Care

The Kyung J. Cho Collegiate Professorship in Radiology seeks to do two very important things. One is to honor Dr. Cho's contributions to medicine, to the Department of Radiology, and to his many residents, fellows and colleagues. The other is to ensure that the excellence Dr. Cho exemplifies continues to thrive in the department.

A desire to become the best possible physician led Dr. Cho to come to the United States, even before he learned English. He began his radiology training in Detroit and came to Ann Arbor to work with Stewart Reuter, one of the leading vascular radiologists at that time. Kyung's desire to serve his patients resulted in exquisite imaging studies, and he helped to make them safer by developing carbon dioxide as a contrast media. The quality of his work in technically demanding studies such as pulmonary angiography and adrenal venous sampling is legendary. He helped to usher in the era of interventional radiology through his work perfecting the techniques used to alter regional blood flow by occluding bleeding vessels. He has been recognized by the University of Michigan award for Lifetime Achievement Award in Medical Education and with the Gold Medals from his professional societies, the Society of Interventional Radiology and the Korean Society of Interventional Radiology. Dr. Cho's dedication to patient care, his passion for teaching and his desire to advance the field have made him a respected leader in vascular and interventional radiology throughout the world.

It is this kind of vitality and excellence that makes the University of Michigan one of the most esteemed in the nation, able to attract and retain talent of the highest caliber. It is also what the community served by the U-M Health System has come to expect and from which it benefits.

Please consider contributing to The Kyung J. Cho Collegiate Professorship in Radiology. The generosity of alumni, faculty, colleagues, family, friends, and the community the university serves helps to ensure that the excellence exemplified by Dr. Cho continues to distinguish the university and the Department of Radiology.

To learn how you can contribute, please contact Laura Boudette at lauraabo@med.umich.edu or at 734.763.1404

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