

# Shigeo Morioka

Co-President of ILC Global Alliance  
Hon. President of ILC-Japan

The first news of Dr. Butler's death came on the morning of July 6, in mail from Dr. Osako (director of ILC Global Alliance Secretariat). It was at first so unexpected that I could not believe it. This is impossible I thought and reread the mail several times but a phone call from Mr. Komuro (formerly with Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., and who got to know Dr. Butler well after helping found the ILC while living in New York) informed me of the sad reality. Only his family knew of his illness, and his death sent ripples of shock among the world that knew him.

Powerful media such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and CNN Health praised the doctor as the 'Father of Modern Gerontology' and a 'Pioneer in the Study of Aging' and gave significant coverage to his life story. His sudden death represents a great loss to the ILC Global Alliance but I confirmed with the regional Presidents that we shall keep expanding the ILC Global Alliance as he would have willed it and we are looking to quickly select another President at the board meeting to replace him at the ILC-USA.

My first encounter with him was when we seated alongside each other at a small dinner after the "Thinking of the Elderly" symposium in 1987 sponsored

by the Asahi Shimbun to which Dr. Butler was invited as special lecturer. The symposium was planned by Ms. Yukiko Okuma (currently engaged in many activities as representative for the Enishi), who was then the lead writer for the newspaper. This was also led to the establishing of the ILC.

Dr. Butler who was foremost in the world as an expert on gerontology and issues of the elderly made the following proposal to me even though I was only a businessman, this was outside my field and moreover it was the very first time we met. He said to me, "I am trying to eliminate Ageism (word he coined in 1968) or in other words discrimination against the elderly" and then started advocating his productive aging concept. He believed that the elderly can live product lives where they are capable for example of enjoying work, volunteer activities, regional activities, learning and hobbies. He wanted to build a society where those types of activities are possible. To do that, he proposed creating a joint US and Japan civil foundation for research, investigations, planning and education towards this goal.

Believing the foundation money should come from businesses and government policies should come from



Mr. Morioka and Dr. Butler at the ILC annual meeting in New York in 2003

the state, I considered this a national project, and conferred with Division Head Tada (transferred just afterwards) and Division Head Okamitsu at the Health and Welfare Bureau for the Elderly (Ministry of Health and Welfare) who then gave me their understanding, instruction, and assistance. Next, in New York, the five of us including Mr. Shiro Yamasaki sent from JETRO (currently private secretary to the prime minister) and Mr. Komuro of Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd and currently staying in New York and Dr. Butler, and also Mr. Okamitsu and I started to study how to set up this organization. At this time Dr. Butler came to Japan to provide backup for the founding. Along with visiting Mr. Tsushima, Minister of Health and Welfare (at that time), Mr. Tada and Mr.

Okamitsu, and other related parties as well as powerful supporting organizations, he had close consultations with President Hideo Ibe of the Japan College of Social Work.

Later, Dr. Hideo Ibe was selected as the President and the other directors were also chosen unofficially. Thanks to the understanding of powerful and sympathetic firms that came via my modest efforts we were able to obtain the contribution of a large sum to serve as basic fund and attain our goal by receiving annual donation membership fees from over 80 companies. We then one at a time completed the Japan-US contract, the contract for the Japan Center, set up the administrative office (in

## Rihito Kimura

President of Keisen University

Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical at that time) and chose our employees. Finally on November 2, 1990 (October in the USA) we founded the Japan Center and thanks to the support of all of you are now coming up on our 20<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary.

I want to express my gratitude for the 23 year period in which he warmly and sympathetically guided me in this field where I am a relative newcomer. At the general meeting in Paris last year when in my greeting address I mentioned that I was resigning and this would be my last attendance at the general meeting, I couldn't help but feel emotional at hearing his heartfelt parting words of praise at the dinner that night from a person I regard as the finest of human beings. Prior to Paris he was as healthy as usual and 5 years younger than me it never occurred to me that he would be the first to leave us. It seems even now I can hear his voice saying, "Hi Shigeo!"

I think that humility, sincerity, and trust are the basis and the yardstick for human relations regardless of geography or the times in we live in.

My first impression of him is still unchanged today even after some 23 years. He was not only warm, generous, humble and sincere to everyone, but also creative and skillful at looking ahead, and a great leader and pioneer skillful both with spoken and written words.

I had two great teachers in life. One was Chairman Kenji Yamauchi the founder of Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical (currently Astellas Pharma Inc.). The other was Dr. Butler founder of the International Longevity Center. I was blessed with two of the greatest teachers one could have and I feel nothing but gratitude.

Bob, See you again!

I first met Dr. Butler when he was invited to Japan for the "Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Dreams and Human Recovery" Yomiuri Shimbun's 120<sup>th</sup> Commemorative International Medical Forum held on October 5 through 7, 1994 in Tokyo. Dr. Butler, who was giving the keynote address, mixed humor along with a casual speaking style that charmed his listeners. I was also a speakers participating in the forum and so I listened attentively to Dr. Butler's speech.

I remember writing a memo at the time, it said, "Dr. Butler mentioned that rather than the English word "Aging", the word "Longevity" which is similar to the Japanese word, "Choju" is a good term and more positive." I had the chance to talk directly with Dr. Butler after that keynote address. He had a deep knowledge and understanding of my specialty which is bioethics, and

expressed his interest in bioethics and Japan's elderly.

The White House Conference on Aging was held in Washington D.C. in the US in 1995 the next year. After the speech by then President Clinton, Dr. Butler who was the conference chairman rose to the podium and delivered the keynote address leaving a strong impression on me that still remains.

The contents of the keynote address given by Dr. Butler carried an extremely strong message about a full and satisfying lifestyle for the elderly and touched on the federal government's handling of the elderly and also called for work towards basic reform in health insurance and medical treatment of the elderly. I attended that conference as an international observer and so I had the chance to meet and talk with Dr. Butler. While saying our goodbyes, he gave me a firm handshake and asked me to give



Prof. Kimura giving a lecture at the 120<sup>th</sup> Commemorative International Medical Forum held in 1994