

In Memory of Dr. Tadahiro Sekimoto, the First Chair of JFSC

It was reported that Dr. Tadahiro Sekimoto, the first Chair of JFSC, passed away on November 11, 2007. He was 80 years old.

Dr. Sekimoto was too famous for President of NEC Corporation, Vice Chair of Federation of Economic Organizations and many opinions and/or announcements to the public for me to be able to make acquaintance with him. But when we happened to be asked by AIAA at the end of 1995 whether an AIAA International Communications Satellite Systems Conference (ICSSC) could be held in Japan, we asked him to undertake a chairperson of an ICSSC organization committee with our confidence that his chairpersonship would make the conference succeed, and it was an opening of acquaintance when he was pleased to accept it. It was an important event because Japan was assigned as a place that the conference was held outside of the North America for the first time in the ICSSC's 32-year history.

It is famous that Dr. Sekimoto conducted and managed a research of a satellite TDMA system in COMSAT Laboratory in mid-1960s. Since he had played a representative in Asian region as a member of AIAA afterwards, he was not only the most suitable for Chairperson of the organization committee, but also, we could advance the preparation for the conference in the assurance of its success. In fact, the 17th ICSSC was held in Pacifico Yokohama successfully, because more number of the participation registrants, more number of the guests to an exhibition gathered than expectation. It was very impressed for me that he enlivened the conference by greetings by chairperson of organization, by attending a reception with his wife. A photograph upper shows a snapshot in the conference. The 17th ICSSC was held so successfully that AIAA-TCCS decided to take place the ICSSC biennially in Japan (Asia) and Europe in addition to holding it in the North America biennially.



Dr. Sekimoto (center) talks with Mr. Gen Nakatani, Deputy Minister of Posts and Telecom (those days) at a waiting room for ICSSC opening ceremony. Front right is Dr. Yoji Furuhama, Director General of Com. Res. Lab. (those days)

Following the success of the 17th ICSSC, AIAA-JFSC was established with Dr. Sekimoto as the first generation chairperson in February 1999 in order to make the base that people concerned to the satellite communications can be active together. The AIAA-JFSC has published Space Japan Review and its activity continues until now. Dr. Sekimoto attended the JFSC Annual Meetings as Chairperson and had an opportunity to talk with us familiarly. In addition, the JFSC includes an activity to nominate for awards to AIAA. Dr. Yasuo Hirata, present chairperson of JFSC won AIAA Aerospace Communications Award in 2004. The photograph bottom was taken with Dr. Sekimoto who won this award in 1992.



Japan's AIAA Aerospace Communications Awardees: from right Dr. Hirata, 2004, Dr. Sekimoto, 1992, and Dr. Iida, 2002.

In fact, I glanced at Dr. Sekimoto at a lobby of a hotel in Tokyo from far away at the end of October 2007. I felt that he became elder somewhat as he used a walking stick, but he got on a car with reliable steps. I did not do imagine possibly for him to pass away in a half month. I pray for the repose of Dr. Sekimoto's soul with all of you heartily.

(Writer: Takashi Iida, JFSC Senior Advisor)