



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

Elena Wong, CPU Manager, retires after 45 years at Chinese Hospital



Team Photo: Derek Hui, Kimmy Lee, Elena Wong, Simmy Lee

Chinese Hospital's Cardiopulmonary (CPU) Department Manager Elena Wong is retiring after 45 years of dedicated service to the hospital and the community. As a longtime member of the hospital staff and a familiar face that patients know well, Elena reflected fondly on her full and rewarding career at Chinese Hospital.

"I grew up in this community, and this was my first job," Elena said. "The reason I've stayed is that Chinese Hospital provides care for our community, our elderly, and our monolingual-speaking patients in a way unlike any other hospital. Our patients really appreciate what we do for them."

45 years ago, Elena found her way to Chinese Hospital in an unexpected and fortuitous way. At the time, Elena was finishing up her respiratory therapy program when she agreed to help babysit for a family friend. The family friend turned out to be a Chinatown community physician who ultimately recruited Elena to be the first respiratory therapist at Chinese Hospital.

"Looking back, the memory that resonates with me most is when I discovered that one of my patients owned the store that I used to go to as a kid," Elena said. "We would buy their frozen cantaloupe slices, which were one of our favorite treats. For me, that experience connected my childhood to my work at the hospital. It was like coming full circle."

During her tenure, Elena witnessed significant milestones and changes undergone by both the hospital and its community. For one, she is among the few who has the unique experience of working in all 3 hospital buildings—1925 building, '79 building, and the new hospital tower. Though more meaningful to Elena are the deep relationships she has fostered at Chinese Hospital and the experience of seeing the families of fellow colleagues and physicians grow up, with some even joining the hospital community.

"It still hasn't hit me that I am leaving," Elena says. "But I do feel sad because this place has been my second home."

Elena plans to spend more time with her family, especially her grandchildren, and will continue to work at the hospital on a part-time basis for a period of time.