Junda Lin (1960-2016)

Junda was born in Beijing, China in 1960 and grew up in Fujian with his loving parents and a younger brother. After graduating from high school, Junda was sent to the countryside, a Maoist policy and tradition, and then was part of the first cohort of college students after the end of the Cultural Revolution. He studied at Xiamen University where he majored in marine biology.

In 1982, he served at Shanghai Fisheries College as a teacher, where he met his future wife, Fanghua. He earned a Master’s degree in ecology in 1985 from Rutgers University and in 1989 was awarded a Ph.D. in marine sciences from UNC-Chapel Hill, followed by becoming a Smithsonian Postdoctoral Fellow. In the early 1990s he conducted molluscan and crustacean aquaculture research in various coastal habitats. His hands-on experience in the field and in the laboratory led to a position as Assistant Professor at Florida Institute of Technology, where he ultimately served as Chair of the Aquaculture Program and Director of the Marine Research Institute, a position that required his insight at the Vero Beach Marine Laboratory.

As Director of the Marine Research Institute, Junda collaborated with private aquaculture entities by offering a beautiful oceanfront laboratory that had a special ingredient—access to clean ocean water. The focus of the marine lab is to investigate various aspects of ornamental aquaculture. With a team of graduate students and academic advisors, Junda helped shed light on courtship of the caridean shrimp *Lysmata* and the soluble and contact sex pheromones involved in finding a suitable mate. In 2012, a new peppermint shrimp was described by Junda’s Ph.D. student, Dr. Andrew Rhyne, and named *Lysmata jundalini*.

With strong ties to China, Junda enjoyed helping other scholars receive the same higher education opportunities as he did in the early 1990s. In 2007, Junda brought in Dr. Lin Qiang (John) from Sun Yat-sen University in China as a post-doctoral fellow to explore seahorse behavior and aquaculture at the Vero Beach Marine Laboratory. With John’s guidance, Junda established a seahorse breeding lab in Vero Beach and successfully bred Florida native seahorses at a small commercial scale. They published many papers on seahorse aquaculture and gained recognition from colleagues around the world. Although seahorses are seen as a novelty item in the United States, they play a much larger role in China as traditional medicine.

Junda was invited to be the advisor for China’s first seahorse aquaculture and conservation laboratory. By collaborating with Chinese farmers, John’s lab helped establish the first commercial seahorse farm in China and in 2012 they scaled up their methods to produce one million seahorses a year, and then they successfully demonstrated their techniques to culture seahorse throughout the Chinese coast. By 2014, there were about 500 seahorse farms in China and approximately 20 million commercially farmed seahorses entered the traditional medicine market to decrease the need to collect wild seahorses in China.

Junda also felt that it was always very important to apply genetics to aquaculture. With Junda’s suggestion, Qiang’s lab also conducted a seahorse resource investigation, disclosing 18 seahorse species with their detailed distributions along China’s coastline so far, information that will undoubtedly be used to support seahorse conservation in China.

Junda was well respected in his field and contributed to more than 90 publications. He was diagnosed with liver cancer in 2009. He courageously fought the cancer for over seven years and never gave up. He was still teaching two months before he passed away. During his own difficult times he managed to help mold others into their careers as biologists and researchers and helped his students develop into the best possible version of themselves. Junda’s door was always open to his students. His mind was always open to new thoughts and ideas. While he is gone, Junda has left his mark on the lives of family, friends, colleagues and students.

— Nancy Kim Pham Ho

Editors Note: For WAS, Junda Lin served on the Board of Directors from 2008 to 2011 and was active in conducting outreach to China on behalf of the Society. He was also an Associate Editor of the Journal of the World Aquaculture Society.