

IN MEMORY OF

# EMILY C. MACFARQUHAR

TING WANG

Asia-watchers around the world lost an exemplary journalist and dear friend with the passing of Emily Cohen MacFarquhar on March 18, 2001, who died from brain cancer at the age of 62. Over a career that spanned more than thirty years, covering Asia as reporter and East Asia editor for *The Economist* and foreign editor for *US News and World Report*. Mrs. MacFarquhar is widely remembered for her scholarly commentary and perceptive analysis into many dramatic events that have unfolded in East and South Asia.

A native of Bronx, New York and a graduate of Wellesley College Class of 1959, Emily Jane Cohen worked as the secretary for Roderick MacFarquhar, the founding editor of the *China Quarterly* journal. She went on to earn a master's degree in East Asian Studies at Harvard and study Chinese in Taiwan before meeting Mr. MacFarquhar again at the funeral of Jawaharlal Nehru in New Delhi. They married in 1964 and settled in London where she was hired by *The Economist* in 1965.



The next year, Chairman Mao launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and Mrs. MacFarquhar began to decipher political slogans coming out of China and dispatch insightful reports about the developments within the tumultuous country. In 1968, her short work, "Mao's Last Leap" was one of the first detailed works on the Cultural Revolution to be published. When China opened up, she was able to gain a unique perspective on elite politics through extensive interviews with the new leadership. In 1984, she was the first to explain Deng Xiaoping's impact on Chinese negotiations with the United Kingdom over the return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule.

Her expertise was not confined to China; she maintained an active interest in the South Asian subcontinent particularly through reports on women's issues and the wars in Bangladesh. Her last project, a book-length biography of Benazir Bhutto funded by an Alicia Patterson Foundation grant in 1998, remains unfinished.

Mrs. MacFarquhar also appeared as a political analyst for the British television program "A Week in Politics" from 1982-1983 and kept covering East and South Asia for *US News and World Report* after she followed her husband to Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1984.

Far from being a detached reporter, Mrs. MacFarquhar offered compassionate support for many struggling for democracy and development across the region. At a memorial service held at Wellesley College on April 28<sup>th</sup> 2001, many whose lives were touched by Mrs. MacFarquhar expressed their gratitude. In a letter from Beijing, Dai Qing, a Chinese dissident journalist, thanked Mrs. MacFarquhar for alerting Secretary of State James Baker to her detention and working to secure her release. Wang Juntao, a leader of the Tiananmen Square Democracy Movement in 1989, credits her with helping him adjust to life in exile by giving him lessons in English and American culture. Madeleine Albright, a Wellesley College classmate and former Secretary of State under the Clinton Administration, credits Mrs. MacFarquhar with encouraging her to pursue her own professional career.

Emily MacFarquhar is survived by her husband of 36 years; son, Rory; and daughter Larissa. An internship for international journalism has been established in her name at Wellesley College. ■