

Giving life its quality

Professors not only teach classes and keep students on track, but they also challenge themselves to innovate and improve the world around them. For Jerry Lin, interest in improving the quality of people's lives is what keeps him going. Lin is not only a scholar focused on proposals and projects in the lab, he's also aware—perhaps more keenly than most—of the impact that a clean environment has on the quality of life for his family and others. His contributions to the science community have earned the associate professor of civil engineering the distinction of Lamar University's highest honor recognizing research and creative activity.

Lin is Lamar's 2008 University Scholar. The title recognizes a full-time faculty member for outstanding contributions to scholarship, research, proposal writing, grant awards and creative activity. Lin's body of work is extensive and reflects excellence in each of these categories.

"Since he joined Lamar in 1999, he has been consistently a top performer among the faculty of the College of Engineering in research, teaching and service," wrote Jack Hopper, dean of the College of Engineering, in nominating Lin for the award.

While earning his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Tatung University in Taiwan, Lin set his sights on correcting the pollution problems created by human activity.

"At that time—in the '80s and '90s—a lot of pollution, at least in East Asia, was generated simply because of all the kinds of human industrial activity. I saw a lot of pollution created by the direct discharge of different kinds of con-

taminates into the natural system. That kind of intrigued me, and I felt that I should do something about it," he said.

His main passion became his work with air quality and drinking water because these are critical needs of all people on a daily basis. "In my master's studies, I primarily looked into the treatment of drinking water. When you get up in the morning and get a cup of water, that water actually went through a lot of engineering treatment before you can get nice, clear water to enjoy," said Lin.

Lin earned a master's degree from Duke University and a doctorate from the University of Cincinnati, both in environmental



BRIAN SATTIER

engineering. He married his college sweetheart, Debby, also an engineer, who works at Chicago Bridge & Iron Co., a global specialty engineering and construction corporation. They live in Beaumont with their daughters, Jessica, 7, and Cynthia, 11.

Today, Lin serves on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and on the Technical Coordination Council for the Texas Air Research Center. As a teacher, he hopes his students become influential professionals in their own right.

Outside the classroom, many of his students consider him a friend. "As a teacher, he is good, but as a person he is even better," said Sehul Patel, an environmental engineering graduate student assisting Lin with his research in wastewater treatment.

Under Lin's guidance, Patel also understands that hard work is the key to success. "Under Dr.

Lin's leadership, we are used to doing work. Until the project is finished, we cannot sleep for one moment," said Patel.

But that dedication just reflects Lin's beliefs. "I personally enjoy challenges. One of my fundamental philosophies is you only achieve excellence by doing difficult work," Lin said.

His major research contributions include work on the current understanding of mercury chemistry in the atmosphere and leading the assessment of atmospheric mercury models in the mercury research community. At Lamar, Lin is responsible for establishing the Air Quality Modeling Laboratory and Membrane Filtration Laboratory. —MS

**"I personally enjoy challenges.
One of my fundamental philosophies
is you only achieve excellence by
doing difficult work."**

—JERRY LIN
