

Foreword

This interview volume is a collection of all the interviews of prominent visitors to the Institute for Mathematical Sciences, conducted by Yu Kiang Leong and published in the Institute's newsletter *Imprints* from 2003 to 2009.

The concept of a newsletter with interviews as a regular feature was conceived in conversations with Yu Kiang in 2002, two years after the establishment of the Institute. We wanted to publish a newsletter which would be different from the newsletters of other mathematical sciences institutes. We also thought that interviews of successful mathematicians and scientists would be interesting to the general reader and, in particular, inspirational to students. Yu Kiang has a flair for writing, widely acknowledged by all who know him. In 1985, he had also conducted, jointly with Chi Tat Chong, an interview of the legendary French mathematician Jean-Pierre Serre, who became the youngest recipient of the Fields Medal (the mathematical counterpart of the Nobel Prize) in 1954 at the age of 28. The interview was first published in the June 1985 issue of *Mathematical Medley*, a publication of the Singapore Mathematical Society, and later in Volume 8 (1986) of the *Mathematical Intelligencer*. Since then, it has been translated into several languages including Czech, Chinese, Arabic, Japanese and Russian. Since Yu Kiang was available at that time, I invited him to be the founding editor of the newsletter entrusted with the responsibility of interviewing visiting scientists at IMS. He gladly accepted my invitation and the inaugural issue of *Imprints* was published in May 2003 featuring an interview of Roe Goodman. Since then, he has continued to conduct interviews for every issue of *Imprints* although he relinquished his editorship in 2006.

After a number of issues, Yu Kiang and I talked about compiling the interviews and publishing them in a volume at some point. Now that we have a total of 37 interviews and the Institute is approaching its 10th anniversary, it is an appropriate time for us to embark on this endeavor in commemorating the 10th anniversary. I would like to thank Yu Kiang for his invaluable contributions to the conceptualization of the newsletter as founding editor and for his tireless efforts and unfailing enthusiasm in conducting the interviews. I would also like to thank World Scientific for publishing the volume and for its friendly cooperation and help in the design and editing. Thanks also go to the current *Imprints* editors, Denny Leung and Ser Peow Tan, and former editor, Ka Hin Leung, for their careful editing of the newsletter and for ensuring its high quality.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to all the former and current members of the Scientific Advisory Board — former members Hans Föllmer, Avner Friedman, the late Jacques-Louis Lions and Keith Moffatt; and the current members Roger Howe, Pao Chuen Lui, David Mumford, Olivier Pironneau, David Siegmund and Yum-Tong Siu — for guiding and nurturing the Institute to what it is today, many of them having advised the Institute from its inception 10 years ago.

Louis Chen
Director
Institute for Mathematical Sciences