

Tribute to Korean Mesothelioma Victim

by Yeyong Choi¹

Today – December 21, 2013 – is the second anniversary of the death of Rachel LEE Jung-Lim, a Korean citizen, a mother and a wife.



Rachel LEE Jung-Lim pointing to the location of a Korean asbestos cement factory near her house during 2010 press conference in Montreal, Canada



Rachel at a demonstration in front of Canadian Chrysotile Institute in Montreal, 2010

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Rachel at the strategic 2011 meeting of Asia Ban Asbestos Network in Jaipur, India; it was her last field trip.

Rachel died of mesothelioma, having been exposed in the 1990s to deadly asbestos dust liberated by an asbestos cement factory a kilometre from her home. As she learned about her disease, Rachel grew incensed about the dangers to which she and others had been exposed. She was determined to end the global asbestos epidemic and took every opportunity she could to spread the ban asbestos message: her war cry was “No More Victims.”

Rachel was a pivotal member of the Korean campaign for asbestos justice and her death was a great loss to all of her colleagues in Korea and abroad. To commemorate Rachel’s life and courage, Korean environmental NGOs and victims groups have held an annual event on the anniversary of her death entitled “Victim’s Voice for Environmental Justice.” Our determination to keep her memory alive resulted in the foundation of the annual Rachel LEE Jung-Lim Memorial Award which is presented on behalf of grassroots ban asbestos organizations in Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Canada.²

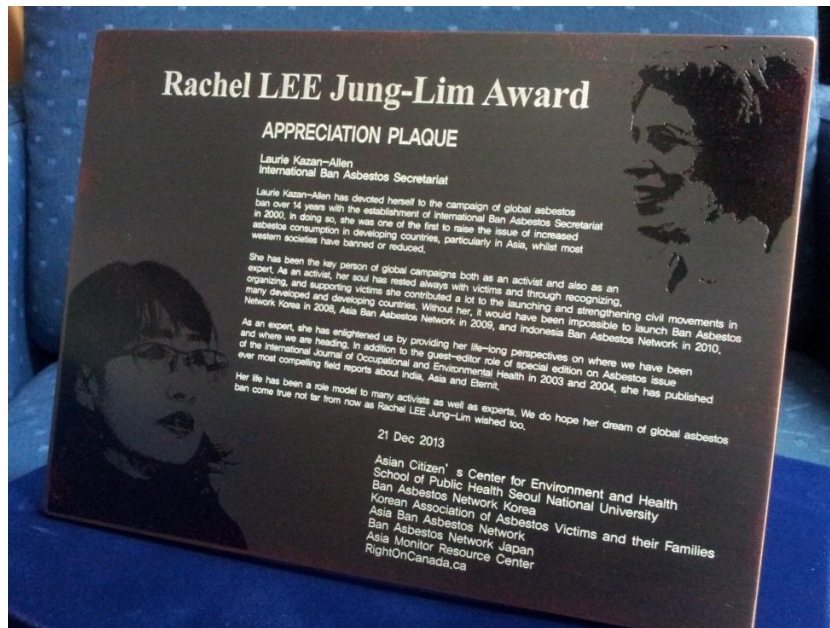
At a press conference in Seoul today, the name of the 2013 winner was announced. It is Laurie Kazan-Allen, the Coordinator of the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat. The heading on the plaque which commemorates Laurie’s achievements reads:

Rachel LEE Jung-Lim AWARD

APPRECIATION PLAQUE

Laurie Kazan-Allen
International Ban Asbestos Secretariat

² Korean announcement of 2013 winner:
http://www.eco-health.org/board_view_info.php?id=4399&seq=120



Text of citation:

Laurie Kazan-Allen has devoted herself to the campaign of global asbestos ban over 14 years with the establishment of International Ban Asbestos Secretariat in 2000. In doing so, she was one of the first to raise the issue of increased asbestos consumption in developing countries, particularly in Asia, whilst most western societies have banned or reduced.

She has been the key person of global campaigns both as an activist and also as an expert. As an activist, her soul has rested always with victims and through recognizing, organizing, and supporting victims she contributed a lot to the launching and strengthening civil movements in many developed and developing countries. Without her, it would have been impossible to launch Ban Asbestos Network Korea in 2008, Asia Ban Asbestos network in 2009, and Indonesia Ban Asbestos Network in 2010.

As an expert, she has enlightened us by providing her life-long perspectives on where we have been and where we are heading. In addition to the guest-editor role of special edition on Asbestos issue of the International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health in 2003 and 2004, she has published ever most compelling field reports about India, Asia and Eternit.

Her life has been a role model to many activists as well as experts. We do hope her dream of global asbestos ban come true not far from now as Rachel LEE Jung-Lim wished too.

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