Allen Chan
36-Year Life Member

Allen Chan retired after 33 years with Linde Inc. (formerly Praxair Inc.). Most of that time he served as an argon oxygen decarburization (AOD) process specialist, providing sales, start-up and technical support for AOD systems. He graduated from Carnegie Mellon University with degrees in metallurgical engineering and materials science.

How did you get involved in the steel industry?
Like many undergraduates in metallurgy, I was a student member of The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society. I changed my affiliation to the Iron & Steel Society (ISS) when I was a grad student working for Richard Fruehan at Carnegie Mellon University. When I was accepted into the grad program, he said, “Congratulations! Instead of being a poorly paid undergraduate research assistant, you have been promoted to a criminally underpaid graduate student. Now get to work!”

How did your involvement in AIST progress over the years?
Prof. Fruehan had us presenting papers at conferences. My employer (Linde Division of Union Carbide Corp./Praxair/Linde) also encouraged participation in ISS/AIST. I was chair of the Specialty Alloy & Foundry Technology Committee (SAFTC) in 2007–2008. I’ve been education chair of the SAFTC since then.

How has AIST membership benefited you in your career?
The contacts and the resources (Digital Library, Training Seminars) are well worth the cost of membership. The SAFTC has visited some interesting places as part of our meetings; two that stand out in my mind are Lincoln Electric and All-Clad (high-end cookware).

How have you seen the industry change over the years?
Research and development has shifted to suppliers — partly due to divestitures and mergers. Steel companies have become truly global. But for me, China’s rise is the most important story. For a time, each time I traveled to China, I landed in a new airport and slept in a new hotel.

What advice would you give to young professionals who are just coming into the steel industry?
Joining might be the smartest thing you’ll do.