

## REMEMBERING MEI LIN GOH

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**Last week, we announced that Mei Lin Goh, Watson Farley & Williams' ("WFW") long-standing and much-loved Singapore Office Head, had sadly passed away following a battle with cancer. Mei joined the firm back in 1998, when WFW set up its first Asian office in Singapore, and as one of the firm's leading lights for over half its existence, things will never be the same without her.**

Mei studied law at the University of Nottingham (UK), qualifying as a barrister in England & Wales and joining Crown Prosecution Service in London before returning to Singapore in 1994. She then spent three years with leading local firm (and then WFW correspondent law firm) Khattar Wong & Partners, requalifying as a solicitor in both Singapore and in Malaysia (and in 2004 in England & Wales) and, in her own words, falling by chance into the maritime sector.

From there she moved to Sinclair Roche & Temperley Singapore a year before WFW acquired the office. "I'm not sure that WFW wanted me along, but I was determined that if the cappuccino machine was going, I was going with it!" she recalled in an interview in 2019.

Of course, Mei joining the firm was probably the highlight of the acquisition, with former WFW Chairman Nigel Thomas, who went out to head up the newly minted WFW Singapore, recalling: "I sensed early on that with her presence, charm and intellect, Mei was destined to become a leading light both at WFW and of the profession generally. Of course, she more than met those expectations to establish herself as absolutely at the top of Asia's leading maritime lawyers".

And meet those expectations she more than did, regularly receiving prestigious awards and accolades over the course of her career. Lloyd's List Asia Pacific named her their 'Individual Lawyer of the Year' in 2017, when she was also included in the Lloyd's List 'Top 10 Maritime Lawyers' worldwide. Mei was also named 'Best in Shipping' at Euromoney's Asia Women in Business Law Awards in 2016, 2018 and 2019, and their 'Shipping and Maritime Lawyer of the Year' in 2021.

As a huge driver of the growth and success of WFW Singapore, the firm too secured several awards under her leadership, including 'Maritime Law Firm of the Year' in the Asian Legal Business South East Asia Law Awards 2017 and 'Shipping Firm of the Year' at the Asia Legal Awards in 2020.

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Most of all however, Mei touched everyone who met her, colleague, client or friend, by being a simply wonderful human being. This is highlighted by the avalanche of tributes the firm has received from around the world since her passing, including from Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Caymans, Denmark, Dubai, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand, the UK and the US. These really show her global reach and how many lives she touched: “Her ability to build relationships across cultures, and in a male-dominated industry was really something special. It’s been a reference point I have used in coaching others to do the same”, “I thought she was absolutely brilliant; clearly very impressive but also a genuinely lovely and supportive person”, “A loss to the industry, profession, and WFW as well as her family. I remember Mei Lin as having a larger than life personality and I always found her tremendously engaging”, “A force of nature, bubbly and charismatic with a ferocious appetite for her legal work and advice” and “A really great lawyer and genuinely nice person”.

But perhaps Chris Lowe, former WFW Managing Partner and Singapore Head, who was a close and dear friend of Mei sums it up best: “I will miss her special address of “Morning all”, her brews of coffee and love of hawker centre food (and her appreciative slurps), as others have said her great hugs, how she wiped her face with her hand when she was tired, her ability to switch from Singlish to the Queen’s English and her hospitality and humour. And her smile and laugh and even her stern face when I had done something she didn’t approve of or we didn’t see eye to eye on an issue”.

Our hearts go out to her husband Michael, her daughters Jasmine and Sophie and all her family and friends.

## RELATED CONTACTS



**GEORGE PALEOKRASSAS**  
SENIOR PARTNER • NEW YORK

T: +30 210 455 7301

[gpaleokrassas@wfw.com](mailto:gpaleokrassas@wfw.com)



**LINDSEY KEEBLE**  
MANAGING PARTNER  
• LONDON

T: +44 20 7814 8227

[lkeeble@wfw.com](mailto:lkeeble@wfw.com)

## MEDIA ENQUIRIES



**WILL SALOMONE**

T: +44 20 3036 9847

[media@wfw.com](mailto:media@wfw.com)

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