

# People span the bridge for Vietnamese science



Professor Pham Quang Hung  
*Hoang Trong*

In July, the International Center for Interdisciplinary Science and Education (ICISE, in Binh Dinh Province) signed a memorandum of understanding on scientific cooperation and exchange with the Brazilian Center for Physical Research. This is the first time that Vietnam and Brazil have cooperated in the field of physics. The bridge to create this partnership is Professor Pham Quang Hung (70 years old), lecturer at Virginia University - USA.

## Timeless friendship

Professor Pham Quang Hung was born in Ninh Binh and followed his family to Saigon to live. In 1968, graduating from high school, he went alone to Canada to study at Ecole Polytechnique. At the end of the first year, he transferred to study at the Illinois Institute of Technology (USA). Graduated from university, he continued to UCLA University (University of California, USA) as a graduate student. "When I was a kid, I liked studying physics, but when I was in high school there was a time I

didn't pay attention to it and liked playing music, especially rock music. We have a rock band in which I play the guitar. At that time, many young people were passionate about this passionate music and I was fascinated by it, absorbed in performing. Fortunately, I still have a hobby of reading and it brought me back to my passion for science ", shared the professor.

In the first graduate school at UCLA, Pham Quang Hung wanted to move towards plasma industries. But when he met Mr. Sakurai (Japanese), Pham Quang Hung turned to prefer particle physics. Professor Hung said: "Studying particle physics with Mr. Sakurai is very interesting. He always told us never to believe that prevailing theories were the last, be skeptical. It was Sakurai Sensei who guided me to my doctoral thesis. Up to now, I still have many influences from Mr. Sakurai."

Also in the first year at UCLA University (1972), Pham Quang Hung met Ronald Shellard (now Director of the Brazilian Center for Physics Research), studying basic particle physics with another teacher. Studying in the same school, studying particle physics, the two met quite a lot and became friends. After graduation, both of them kept in touch. "When I invited Vietnam to cooperate with ICISE, Ronald Shellard was very excited. He also learned a lot about the ICISE Center through his scientific colleagues. After 41 years, we had the opportunity to meet at ICISE. As for Professor Tran Thanh Van, we contact each other more. In 1973, when Mr. Van from France came to the US to attend the seminar, we had our first meeting. At that time, I admired Mr. Van for his ability to work, his confidence and the more he exchanged each other because he always turned to Vietnam and wanted to do something for his homeland. That makes us very close and contact each other a lot later," Professor Hung said.



**Professor Pham Quang Hung talks with Professor Ronald Shellard at ICISE**

Having completed his doctorate at UCLA, Professor Hung was invited to do postdoctoral research on theoretical particle physics at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (also known as Fermilab,

USA). Two years later, he continued to be invited to do research at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory (USA).

In 1982, he was invited to be a professor at the University of Virginia and to teach until now. At this school, he met Professor Simonetta Liuti (Italian American) in 1991 and they married the following year. Professor Hung and his wife have 2 sons and 1 daughter.

## **Always ready for the homeland**

Professor and Mr. Pham Quang Hung - Simonetta Liuti returned to Vietnam for the first time in 2004 to participate in international physics conferences Meet Vietnam organized by Professor Tran Thanh Van in Hanoi. Two years later, he and his wife continued to attend the Meeting with Vietnam, also held in Hanoi. In 2019, Ms. Simonetta Liuti participated in the organization of an international physics conference at ICISE Center. And Professor Hung is constantly returning home to contribute to the science and education of the country. He was the one who laid the first "brick" for the advanced physics training program at Hue University and was invited to be the coordinator of this program.



## Prof. Pham Quang Hung with Prof. Tran Thanh Van and Mr. Nguyen Phi Long, Vice Chairman of Binh Dinh Provincial People's Committee

In late 2006, Hue Pedagogical University (belonging to Hue University) contacted Professor Hung to ask him to help him develop advanced physics training programs from the original program of the University of Virginia. Thanks to the influence and support of Professor Hung, in March 2007, Hue University and Virginia University signed a memorandum of cooperation on advanced physics training program. By this time, Hue Pedagogical University has recruited and trained more than 200 students under advanced physics program, of which about 150 have graduated. Many graduates have taken masters and doctoral degrees in the US, Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea, Taiwan ... are highly appreciated by foreign professors.

"If we can do anything for our homeland, we, Mr. Tran Thanh Van, Mr. Dam Thanh Son, Mr. Ngo Bao Chau ... are always willing. The most practical is organizing educational and scientific activities in Vietnam to attract young people to follow science and technology, helping them to boldly pursue their passion for scientific research. The ICISE Center, the Vietnam Meetings Science Association of Professor Van is doing a great job. Hopefully, our efforts will have a good effect on young people in Vietnam, "Professor Hung said.

### **The professor is always enthusiastic, enthusiastic**

Dr. Tran Thanh Son, Deputy Director of the International Center for Interdisciplinary Science and Education (ICISE), shared: "Meeting with Professor Pham Quang Hung, first one will pay attention to the small physique but very self believing, blending a little with his long hair like an artist. When exposed to many will know he is an enthusiastic scientist, colleagues and students rated teachers both in terms of ability and work attitude. Since 2004, he has always been a member of the Organizing Committee of the International Meeting of Physics Meet Vietnam. In recent years, due to health problems , travel has been difficult but Professor Hung has returned home to participate in organizing or hosting an international physics conference at ICISE Center, teaching physics for students ... so a lot of people admire and respect".