

Carillon Chimes Again at KAIST

Written by Dong-Hyuk Kim, Materials Science and Engineering, KAIST

A three-pronged blue, green, and red steel structure, “the Carillon of the Forest of Scholars” as it is known, is a structure standing firm next to the duck pond on KAIST campus in Daejeon. It has embodied the spirit of KAIST since its installation in 1992. After more than a decade of silence, the melody from the Carillon reverberates throughout KAIST campus, puzzling most students who have never heard its chimes.

The brainchild of Professor Myung-Suk Kim, the Carillon was conceptualized upon the request of Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Dong-Yol Yang. Professor Kim recalls the then president of the KAIST alumni association commissioning a design for a structure commemorating the 20th anniversary of KAIST. An interactive design was first envisioned, but budget constraints led to the simple incorporation of sound media into designing the structure. Hence, the Carillon was conceived.

The final design consisted of the largest outdoor instrument, the Carillon, supported by red, blue, and green steel structures. The three colors were chosen as they compositionally make up the light spectrum, while the zig-zag design of the steel structures is analogous to heat shimmers. Therefore, the Carillon, with primary light colors and heat shimmer design, was designed to symbolize the fundamental nature of KAIST’s studies and hope of science and technology expansion.

Prior to breaking down, the Carillon was programmed to chime at 9am, 12pm, 13pm, and 6pm to signal the start and end of the day, and after a decade of silence, the Carillon now chimes every hour. At first, Professor Kim suggested a student-led initiative in fixing the Carillon, much like the initiative shown in episodes 66 and 67 in the *KAIST* television series. This was a real possibility; after all, KAIST is Korea’s top science and engineering university. However, such a student-led initiative never materialized, and in the end, an outside contractor finally revived the Carillon, much to the disappointment of Professor Kim.

Despite this, seeing the Carillon chiming again, Professor Kim commented that he is “...happy, as if seeing the restart of the clock that counts KAIST’s history.” And although the design itself remains wanting from Professor Kim’s perspective, he hopes that the Carillon will bring about convergence of the arts and science and induce a spark in creativity. KAIST campus is, in Professor Kim’s words,

"a place for work, research, and play," and "the Carillon has been part of the master plan to create a place of convergence and gathering within KAIST campus."

The Carillon serves as a reminder that "No man is an island, entire of itself... never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." (John Donne, *No Man is an Island*). KAIST's quest for knowledge lies beyond personal satisfaction and in the realm of bettering humanity as envisioned by Professor Myung-Suk Kim some 21 odd years ago on the 20th anniversary of KAIST.

