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25 Scientific Sessions



# April Adventures: A Reminiscence of Washington's Wonders

Text and photos by Dr Lim Ing Haan, Editorial Board Member

April marks the season when Washington, DC, US emerges from winter's quiet grip, coming to life in the energy of spring – blossoms in full bloom, a gentle buzz in the air and visitors relaxing on the expansive lawns of the National Mall.

For me, a visit to Washington, DC is a cherished tradition. Since the days of my training in Duke University, I have returned to this city many times to participate in the annual Transcatheter Cardiovascular Therapeutics® (TCT®) interventional cardiovascular conference. This year, I was invited to deliver some lectures at the Society of Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions (SCAI) Scientific Sessions in late April 2025.

I remember the surge of emotion that rose within me the moment this opportunity arose – a mix of excitement, gratitude and anticipation. The chance to return to a city filled with cherished memories, to reconnect with old friends through shared knowledge, and to visit my cousin stirred a deep sense of warmth and nostalgia.

My last trip to Washington, DC was in 2016, a year charged with political tension as Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump vied for the presidency. Just two years earlier, Hillary had stood at the podium of TCT® 2014, delivering the keynote address at the four-day cardiology meeting which had 1,200 faculty, 15,000 attendees and 161 concurrent sessions.

## A meaningful return

I arrived in the early evening after sunset, the city cloaked in a quiet, reflective dusk. Donald Trump had been freshly elected. Drawn by an impulse, I made my way to the White House and captured a photo that still lingers in my memory. The Equestrian Statue of General Andrew Jackson – 7th President of the United States – on horseback framed perfectly against the glowing facade of the White House, a moment of history frozen in the soft hush of evening.

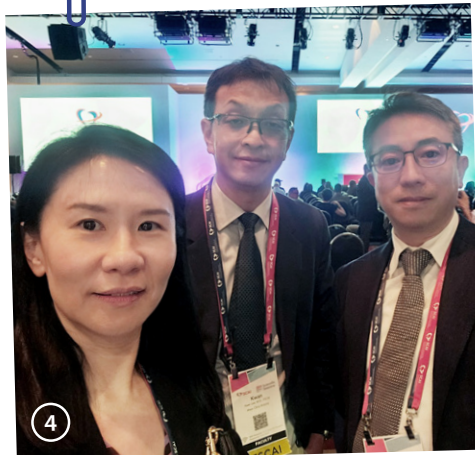
As I made my way east around the White House, the rich scent of grilled steak drifted through the air. Drawn by

the aroma, I found myself at the doors of Old Ebbitt Grill. I was lucky to secure a seat at such short notice at this historic American restaurant. With an hour to spare till seating, I continued my walk south, heading toward the Washington Monument, its towering silhouette guiding me through the evening. From there, I managed a glimpse of the Lincoln Memorial which was captured using the digital zoom of my handphone. The evening ended with a perfectly charred Linz Heritage Angus Ribeye, half a dozen oysters and a vanilla bean pavlova desert. With that, I returned to my hotel to settle in for the night.

The following two days were filled with conference engagements. I delivered two lectures, chaired one session and participated as a panelist in another. In between, I had the pleasure of reconnecting with a few dear friends from both the US and around the globe.

Over the years, sunrise runs have become a cherished tradition among interventional cardiologists during





### Legend

1. The equestrian statue of Major General Andrew Jackson silhouetted against the White House
2. Delivering a lecture
3. With President Elect of SCAI 2026 Dr Dawn Abbott, an interventional cardiologist
4. Dr Lim with good friends Dr Kwan Lee from USA and Dr Lam Ho from Hong Kong
5. Washington monument at the break of dawn
6. The icon of National Museum of Natural History – 11-ton African Bush Elephant
7. Inside view of the Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building, Washington DC

overseas conferences. This year was no exception. Joined by colleagues from the US, Cambodia and Hong Kong, we gathered at dawn on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to welcome the sunrise. From there, we set off for a run through the tree-lined paths of the National Mall, taking in the elegant architecture of the Smithsonian museums. The streets were almost entirely empty – no traffic, no crowds – just the quiet beauty of the city waking up.

### Revisiting familiar sights

The Library of Congress is always my first destination when I visit Washington, DC. It holds Thomas Jefferson's vast personal library, which replaced the original 3,000-volume congressional collection lost during the British invasion of 1812. The impressive architecture and the vast collection spanning science, engineering, politics and art never cease to astonish me.

The Smithsonian museums are among my favourite haunts too. On this trip, I visited the National Museum of Natural

History and stood beneath the iconic 11-ton African Bush elephant under the Rotunda, and walked under the leaping tiger in the towering Hall of Mammals. I also retraced my steps through the National Air Space Museum beneath the historic aircraft that touched the edge of space and strolled through the National Gallery of Art to admire the brushstrokes of the American masters.

On the final day, I visited my uncle, who had gone to the US to study at Princeton in the late 1960s and eventually made it his home. He now lives with his family in Virginia, along the banks of the Potomac River with wild horses in his backyard. Our families have remained closely connected across four generations. My cousin even sent his children to Singapore on a student exchange, continuing the bond that has linked our families over the years.

After four fulfilling days in Washington, DC, I departed with a full heart and the hope of returning soon – next time, with my family by my side. ♦

Dr Lim is the first female interventional cardiologist in Singapore. She is an early adopter of new technology and is a key opinion leader in international cardiology conferences. She shares a clinic with her twin, Dr Lim Ing Ruen, an ENT surgeon at Mount Elizabeth Hospital. Both believe in the power of food, travel, laughter and loyalty in forming strong family bonding.

