

## APPRECIATION

### Dr. Stanmore de Alwis

MBBS, FRCS, FCSL

Dr. Stanmore de Alwis evokes in my mind the words '*courage*', '*hard work*' and '*integrity*'.

Hard work as he being educated at Royal College, Colombo, where he excelled in his studies and on acquiring a double promotion, entered the Medical Faculty of Colombo. After internship at the General Hospital, Colombo, he obtained his FRCS and had the privilege of working with world-renowned heart surgeons, namely Dr. Donald Ross of the UK and Dr. Denton Cooley of USA.

On his return to Sri Lanka, Dr. Stanmore served at the General Hospital Colombo and then at the Welisara Chest Hospital where he continued thoracic surgery (including chest work with acupuncture after his Chinese training), and then back to the National Hospital Colombo, where he carried out open heart surgery - at that time done using the heart-lung machine as well as hypothermia. Much hard work and the added distinction of successfully operating on a patient replacing all three heart valves in one and the same operation!

In addition, his dedicated service in the field of thoracic surgery included serving as President of the Anti-smoking Federation of Sri Lanka, and later as thoracic surgeon at Sri Jayewardenepura hospital. His wife, Shanthi, supported him for many years in all his activities. His hard work was also demonstrated when he became President elect of the College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka and he spent time in Kandy helping me with organizing the sessions - including rushing down to Colombo and back for Dr. Shelton Cabraal's funeral just before the sessions. His support before, during and after the sessions outside his home town was invaluable and the hard work continued in the next year (1997) when he was President of the College, and later as President of the Organisation of Professional Associations (OPA).

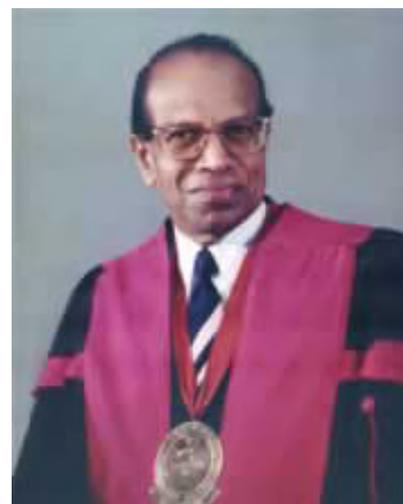
The combination of hard work, integrity and courage were very well demonstrated in his time on the committee and as President of the GMOA, his decision-making being unaffected by physical risk and personal issues arising out of his daughter being at the 'North Colombo Medical College'. Dr. Stanmore de Alwis was a regular participant at the monthly committee meetings. He contributed immensely to the discussion both as a senior surgeon and as an official of the Welisara Chest Hospital branch of the GMOA.

Later on in the Executive Committee of the GMOA, he was always true to his principles and presented his views clearly and firmly - the right of doctors were his prime concern. At that time the GMOA was not only concerned about the members' rights, but also about the way the health service were being run and developed. His contribution towards both these areas was immense, more in deeds than words. After he became President of the GMOA - again the three qualities in the first line of this tribute were illustrated when in 1986 during the conflict between the LTTE and the Government forces there was a claim by the GMOA branch of the Jaffna hospital that the army was shelling the Jaffna hospital. The GMOA on behalf of their Jaffna branch protested to the government about the shelling of the Jaffna hospital. The GMOA executive committee decided to visit the Jaffna hospital and the Fort army camp to see the situation for themselves. It was also to show how caring the GMOA which had a predominantly Sinhalese membership was towards their Tamil brethren. A team comprising of Dr. Stanmore de Alwis as President, Dr. Lalitha Piyarisi (Committee Member) and Dr. Ratnapreya (Secretary) visited Jaffna with the approval of the Government and the LTTE. They inspected the hospital premises, the Fort Army Camp and reported matters to the government to resolve the conflict between the Army and the LTTE thereby facilitating the functioning of the Jaffna hospital.

Latterly Dr. Stanmore was not in good health, but again courage was demonstrated when he used to attend many College of Surgeons functions, clearly with difficulty. His presence always increased the value of the event. He also led a leisurely life, being close to the Dhamma. His son Dittha and two daughters, Ajani and Dr. Kamini are all professionals who have a very high standard to emulate.

Having served a fruitful and exemplary life, Dr. Stanmore passed away peacefully on 25th December 2015. May he attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana and may God bless him.

Arjuna Aluwihare



## APPRECIATION

### Vidyajothi Professor Dayasiri Priyalath Anura Fernando

MBBS, FRCS (Edin) FRCS (Eng), Vishwaprashadani (1996)

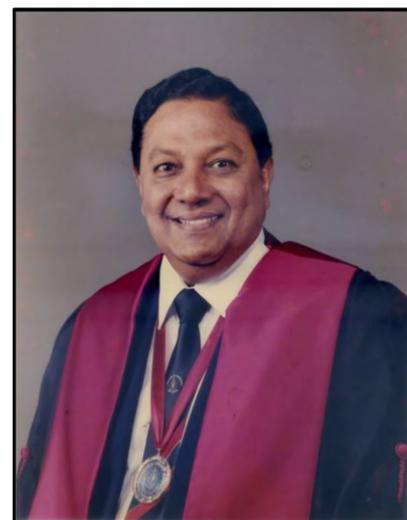
*Lives of great men all remind us*

*We can make our lives sublime,*

*And, departing, leave behind us,*

*Footprints on the sand of time;-'*

*- Psalm of Life – H W Longfellow*



If there ever was an embodiment to the words in Longfellow's invocation to mankind, it was Professor Dayasiri Fernando, who indeed, lived by the words of this sacred psalm. Never having the pessimistic attitude of taking life lightly, his entire existence on this earth was a constant journey of learning, acquiring tremendous skills in his chosen field and striving to impart this knowledge on everyone he came into contact with.

Prof. Dayasiri Fernando was called to eternal rest on the 28th November 2015, while holding the prestigious posts of Emeritus Professor of Surgery of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and Chairman of the Public Service Commission of Sri Lanka. His immeasurable service to the country spans five decades and he was most proud of achieving his life's ambitions of being a 'Surgeon and a Teacher'.

To this end, he pioneered the establishment of the profession of Gastroenterology in Sri Lanka and created the country's first ever Gastroenterology Unit at the Colombo South Teaching Hospital. He was the Founder Professor of Surgery at the Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, and was a much loved and respected teacher. He was Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences (2002-2004) and was also appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura on several occasions. Prof. Dayasiri Fernando was the Founder President of the Gastroenterological and Digestive Endoscopy Society of Sri Lanka, its patron since 1999, and the President of the College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka in 1998. All of the above, however, only barely skim the surface of all his numerous achievements and services, and they exemplify the achievement of his life's ambition.

Prof. Dayasiri Fernando also served on numerous National Commissions and Committees and was a member of the Board of Governors of St Thomas' College, his Alma Mater since 1991.

His talents were many. Ever a supporter of the arts, he was patron of the Sri Jayewardenepura Medical Faculty Arts Circle and was involved in many stage plays and dramas staged at the University and SLMA. More notably, he performed in Henry Jayasena's stage drama "Apata Puthe Magak Nethe" and had a supportive role in the movie "Chalitha Rangali"; a drama career that he honed at St Thomas' College Mount Lavinia.

All posts and positions aside, what most embodied Prof. Dayasiri Fernando as a person was his great humanity. There is no student or patient of his, to this day, who does not remember him with a smile on their face, a tear in their eye and love and gratitude in their heart. As he always said, "Good teachers are always remembered. They don't die, because to live in the hearts of those who love you, is never to die". As both a surgeon and teacher, he lived by the words "Turn the searchlight inwards – and look at yourself" as he believed that every bad performance, be it in a student or in patient outcome should be looked at in the light of one's own performance.

He always saw human beings as human beings, without any ethnic, religious or social prejudice and took great pains to instill this thought in his students. His everlasting and profound belief was that one should give back to one's society and country much more than one received. And give back he did. His many achievements in surgery, teaching and government service are testament to the great leader and mentor he was. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word and followed these words of one of his own teachers to the letter. "You cannot choose your battle fields – God will do that for you. But you can fly a standard where a standard never flew". He was our professor, our teacher and a father to all his students, teaching us much more than surgery. We will miss him, but he will always live on in our hearts.

Dearest sir, may you rest in peace.

Yamuna & Kavinda Rajapakse