Obituary

Tribute to Prof. WAS de Silva

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Ceylon College of Physicians is deeply saddened by the loss of a past president of the College and, more importantly, a significant contributor to the field of medicine and postgraduate education in this country. I had a long association with Professor WAS de Silva, fondly known as “WAS”, and under his wings I spent my internship and then entire postgraduate training. We both moved to the relatively young medical faculty in Galle in 1991 where he accepted the Chair in Medicine and I began my journey as a lecturer.

Professor WAS de Silva was born in Ambalangoda and initially attended Dharmasoka College. Then he moved to Ananda College in Colombo and entered the Colombo Medical College. He qualified with first class honors in the final MBBS with two distinctions; Medicine and Gynaecology/Obstetrics, and the gold medal for Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Professor WAS de Silva served as a physician in hospitals of Rathnapura, Kandy and Colombo South. We worked in NHSL (Colombo General Hospital then) from 1977 to 1991. After retirement, he joined the Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Galle and served for another five years. He was a superb clinician with impeccable clinical acumen and managed his patients with minimal investigations. His prescriptions were simple, uncomplicated and cost-effective in any setting.

His contribution for MD postgraduate training in this country should always be remembered and appreciated. The famous Saturday clinical meeting in NHSL was his brain child and he was the discussion leader for many years. Further, he had a keen interest in tropical medicine and made a significant contribution to the fields of leptospirosis, Hepatitis B and chronic liver disease in Sri Lanka. His contribution to the functioning of the Post graduate Institute of Medicine in its early years were significant and he served as a member and also Chairman of the Board of Study in Medicine for many years.

His passion for undergraduate teaching was remarkable and in exams he was fair, unbiased, and objective. Professor WAS de Silva was the President of the Ceylon College of Physicians in 1985, President Sri Lanka Medical Association in 1990 and President SLAAS (Section A) in 1981.

The College of Physicians will always remember this great clinician, ardent teacher and devoted and much loved Fellow and past President. “May he attain Nibbana”

Prof. Sarath Lekamwasam
Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Galle and Past President CCP

The College is happy to announce the generous endowment made by Dr. Malini de Silva and family for the Dr. WAS de Silva Memorial prize for the Best paper on Tropical Health to be presented at the Annual Academic Sessions of the Ceylon College of Physicians Commencing in 2015.