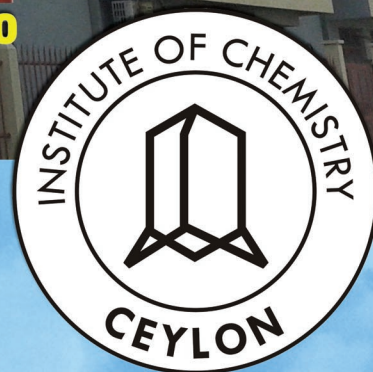


CHEMISTRY IN SRI LANKA



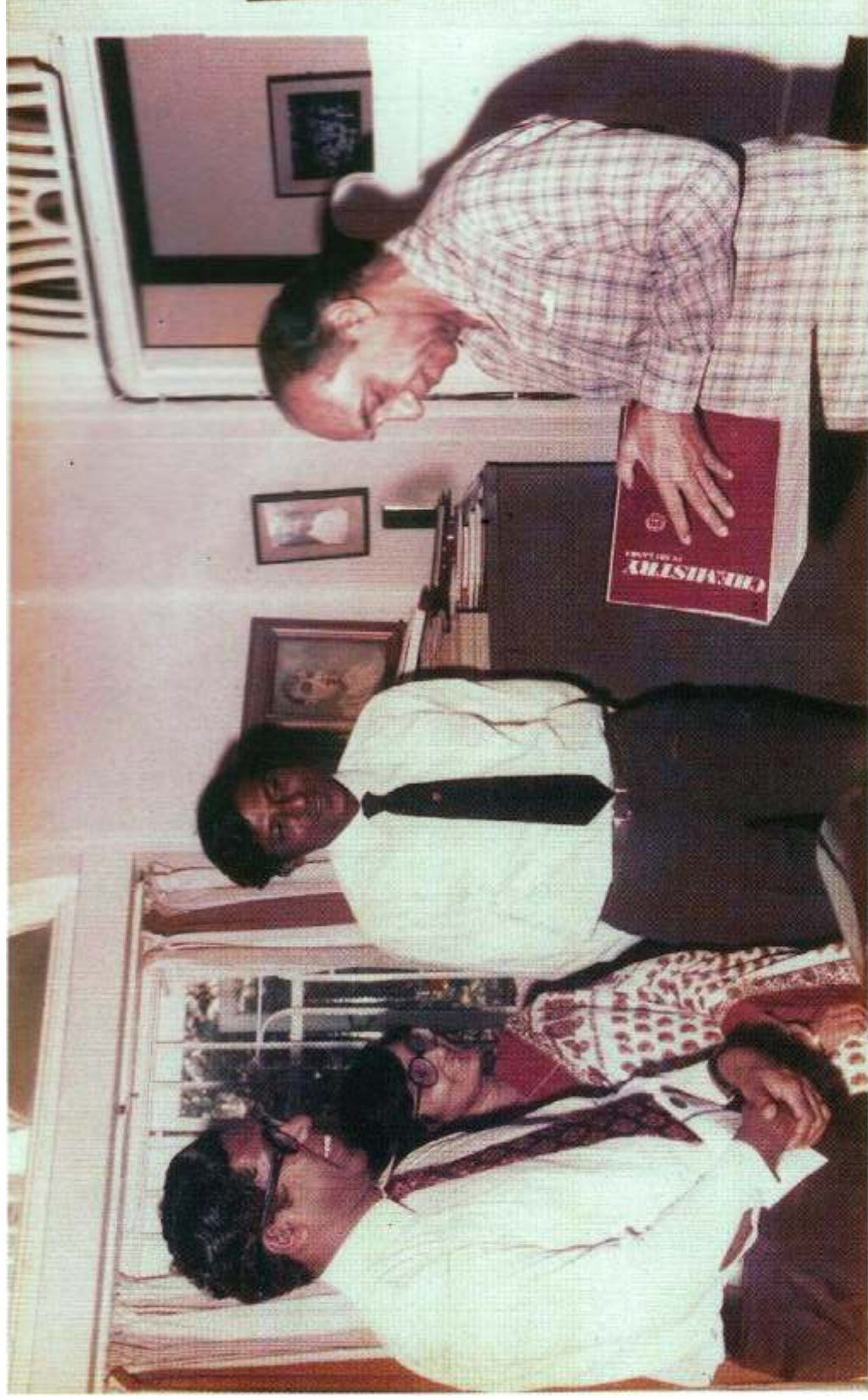
**Dedicated to
Professor J N Oleap Fernando**



The Tri Annual Publication of the
Institute of Chemistry Ceylon
ISSN 1012-8999

**PROFESSOR J N O FERNANDO
MEMORIAL ISSUE**

Presentation of the Inaugural Issue of the Chemistry in Sri Lanka



Presentation of the Inaugural Issue of the Chemistry in Sri Lanka, Vol 1 to His Excellency J R Jayawardene, then President of Sri Lanka on 20th December 1984.
L to R: Prof. J N O Fernando (President, IChemC, Ms. Dilmani Warnasuriya (Editor), Mr. H 3 S M Pieris (Secretary, IChemC, H.E. J R Jayawardene (President of Sri Lanka)

Chemistry in Sri Lanka

ISSN 1012 - 8999

The Tri-Annual Publication of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon

Founded in 1971, Incorporated by Act of Parliament No. 15 of 1972

Successor to the Chemical Society of Ceylon, founded on 25th January 1941

Professor J N O Fernando Memorial Issue

September 2015

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From the Editor

Professor Jerence Nansel Oleap Fernando – popularly known as JNO, is no more. He was a strong personality, a great leader, a chemist, an educationist, an academic and an administrator, and one wonders whether the void created at Adamantane House by his sudden demise could ever be filled by one single individual.

This special issue of Chemistry in Sri Lanka is dedicated to his memory in appreciation of his immense and invaluable contributions to the success of the Institute. The life and times of JNO as written by the members of the Council, colleagues, family, friends and students are incorporated here. The narrations of his students display his humane fatherly qualities and show how his presence touched their lives so positively and strongly. They respect him for his knowledge in Chemistry and consider him as a great teacher.

He was a disciplined, principled and upright person. His Christian upbringing and faith also contributed to his personality. He tried his best to impart the qualities he treasured so much to his understudies and students. He had mapped out a unique vision for the Institute and to achieve the goals he himself set, he worked tirelessly with determination, dedication and commitment. He achieved his dream within his life time, completing the two winged, five storeyed “Adamantane House”, the headquarters of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon and the fully furnished and equipped College of Chemical Sciences (CCS) to cater to about 600 students in a year with the hope of producing quality professional graduate chemists to serve the country. He recruited full time academic staff with postgraduate qualifications to take care of the ever growing student community at the CCS. During past few years he selected and trained understudies probably to take over the Institute activities from him one day.

As if his Mission was completed, he suddenly passed away, leaving his family, associates and students in despair. May the group of young colleagues he nurtured under his wing over many years will have the strength and passion he had, to take forward his vision and legacy.

We mourn a great loss
A man of integrity and principles
The livewire of IChemC
Professor JNO, our leader

A colleague, a friend
A father figure, a mentor
Hopes of the students
Was our “JNO Sir!”

Throughout his precious life
He worked with determination
Surmounting all obstacles
To achieve his goal

He worked with authority
With courage and commitment
Dedication and honesty
With devotion and sacrifice

He accomplished his dream
Before his final journey
Adamantane House & the CCS
Bear testimony

A life dedicated to Chemistry
To the Institute, and to its students
Remembered with love and respect
May you rest in peace

Sujatha Hewage

Council 2015/2016

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The name that echoes forever in Adamantane House

**Professor J N O Fernando, BSc (Cey), PhD (Lond); DIC; C.Chem, C.Sci.;
F.I.Chem.C.; FRSC, FRACI, FNASSL, Dip. Mgt (OUSL).**

K R Dayananda

President, Institute of Chemistry Ceylon

When browsing through the last five decades of history of the Institute, a name that repeatedly comes up is that of Professor JNO Fernando. As a matter of fact, it was the name uttered constantly by almost all the members of the institute.

In the year 1971, Professor JNO Fernando became a Council member of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon (ICChemC). In 1984 he became the youngest President of the Institute of Chemistry at the age of 40 and he held the position for two consecutive years. His influence on Institute activities even as a member was much discussed at various fora of the Institute. As a person who carried a vision for the Institute from the time he joined, his role and the influence cannot be illustrated in a short message.

Professor JNO Fernando was born in 1944. He attended S. Thomas' College where he had shown his exceptional talent by becoming first in the Island in the O/L examination having obtained 5 distinctions. He continued with his A/L studies and then entered the University of Ceylon. He read for his first degree in chemistry at the University and graduated with Honours. He served as a probationary lecturer and then proceeded to New South Wales for further training. He then joined the prestigious Imperial College, London in 1968, and obtained his PhD in 1971. He served the University of Colombo for over 15 years and then he joined the Open University of Sri Lanka as the Professor of Chemistry in 1984. He served as the Head of the Department and then as the Dean of the Science Faculty of the Open University of Sri Lanka.

Professor Fernando was the main architect of the present day Institute of Chemistry and the College of Chemical Sciences. He was the first ever Dean and then the Rector of the College of Chemical Sciences.

In the year 1978, I had the most memorable experience in my life, to have been one of Dr JNO Fernando's students at Aquinas College, in the Laboratory Technician Training Course. This was the first professional training course initiated by the Institute of Chemistry and now conducted as the Diploma in Laboratory Technology Course (DLTC). Professor JNO's voice was a constant source of

inspiration not only for me but also for thousands of laboratory technicians, who are working in local and in foreign laboratories.

In the year 1979, with his great commitment, the Graduateship in Chemistry programme was initiated and there too I happened to be one of the students. As a member of ICChemC and thereafter until his death I had the privilege of associating with him. His gigantic contributions to develop the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon and the College of Chemical Sciences are unmatched with achievement of any other personnel in the field of Chemical education. He was conversant in many other areas such as administration, education, accountancy & finance, management, law and many other areas, as demonstrated when the need arose.

With the long sighted vision of Professor JNO Fernando, it was possible to bring our institute from the small rented office at SLAAS where we were located until 2001 to the 5 storied Adamantane House. The Second wing of the institute was completed in 2014. Professor JNO Fernando spent his own money to equip the public address system of the Board Room with over 20 sets of microphones.

Apart from Universities, he served with much enthusiasm and vigor in various capacities in many other institutions and organizations: as President and Treasurer of the SLAAS, Fellow of the Academy of Sciences, Director of the Asian Chemical Education Network, Executive member of the OPA, President of the Royal Society of Chemistry, Sri Lanka section, Director of the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies (FACS), representing Sri Lanka in IUPAC, and also as a Member of Public Service Commission of the Constitutional Council, the first and only independent public service commission formed in 2002.

The Council of the Institute of Chemistry had on several occasions organized events to recognize his services by awarding the very first "distinguished service award" in 1995, naming our main lecture hall as "Professor J N O Fernando hall" and unveiling his portrait, and awarding him the "Dedicated service award" in 2005 at the silver jubilee of the Graduateship programme. Definitely, much remained to be done by



way of recognizing his vast contribution to the Institute, as good men should be recognized and appreciated during their lifetime. Among the many activities to honour and commemorate him are, to publish the tributes of his students and colleagues in this volume of Chemistry in Sri Lanka, erecting of his statue in the premises of the Institute of Chemistry, and also to establish a fund in his name to continue his services with the vision he held.

It is at a challenging and critical time that I am serving the Institute as its President, being the immediate year following the demise of this great

leader, mentor and teacher. I trust that more than the chemistry he taught me, I learnt more about courage and determination which were two vital elements of his life, may also assist me to face the challenge to drive the Institute forward from where he left.

The theme for this year, "Ethics and professional responsibilities of chemists for national development" is in line with his great ideology and principles. This is what he expected us to perform as true professionals demonstrating true human qualities. Following his example and teaching, it is now our turn to serve the Institute.

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## **Professor J N O Fernando – An Appreciation** **(The Council, The Institute of Chemistry Ceylon)**

Prepared by Professor S Sotheeswaran

Professor Oleap Fernnando passed away on 02/03/2015 at the age of 71 years. Professor Fernando was a very versatile person and played many parts as an academic. He was a research chemist, a lecturer in Chemistry, an academic administrator in several institutions of higher education in Sri Lanka and abroad, and a staunch promoter of quality chemical education. He had held many prestigious positions including that of Dean, Faculty of Science at the Open University of Sri Lanka, the President of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science, the President of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon and the Hony. Rector of the College of Chemical Sciences of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. He was also a fellow of the National Academy of Sciences of Sri Lanka.

Professor Fernando was educated at the Prince of Wales College, Moratuwa and at S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia. He shone as an exceptionally brilliant student in his schooldays. He did an Honours degree in Chemistry at the University of Ceylon and had his postgraduate and post-doctoral training at the Australian School of Nuclear Technology, New South Wales, Imperial College of Science and Technology of the University of London, where he received the degree of PhD, and the Institute of Science and Technology at the University of Manchester.

Professor Fernando's greatest achievement was coordinating the Graduateship in Chemistry programme at the College of Chemical Sciences. The programme commenced in 1979, sometime after the Licentiate in Laboratory Technology (LLTC) programme, which commenced in 1971, and which

later became the Diploma in Laboratory Technology (DLTC) programme. At the beginning, there was no office, no staff, no infrastructure, no library and no money to run these programmes. However, members of the Institute worked hard in rented premises and under trying circumstances, and produced the first batch of graduate chemists, which consisted of 4 graduates.

This year (2015), 106 graduates were conferred degrees and 80 diplomates received the DLTC qualification. A total of 1075 graduate chemists and 1026 chemistry technicians have been produced so far. The College of Chemical Sciences (CCS) now owns and accommodates students and staff at Adamantane House, which has about 20,000 square feet of floor space, an auditorium, lecture theaters, laboratories, instrument room, library, board room and staff rooms. Additional working space is rented at a nearby building belonging to the College of Surgeons.

These remarkable achievements have been made in a few decades, and the driving force behind them was Professor Fernando. If not for his initiative, vision, dedication, persistence, hard work and sheer enthusiasm these successes would not have been possible. His leadership inspired those who worked with him. They were infected by his zeal and contributed their best. Professor Fernando also expected, and got, the best from the students. CCS students, both past and present, will be ever grateful for the chance they got to do the Graduateship Programme in Chemistry when the state universities could not accommodate all students who qualified to enter those institutions.



Professor Fernando strove hard to gain recognition here and abroad for the Graduateship in Chemistry programme. His unique voice was raised at many a forum to gain this recognition. The Universities of Colombo and Peradeniya, at first, denied admission to Graduate Chemists to do their postgraduate degrees. The first Graduate Chemist to be accepted to do a postgraduate degree was admitted by the University of Kelaniya. Sarath Kumara from the first batch of Graduate Chemists did an M.Phil. degree under the supervision of Professor E R Jansz, in 1980. Later, universities in the United Kingdom and the United States began enrolling Graduate Chemists in their Postgraduate programmes.

Today, about 300 graduate chemists have obtained postgraduate degrees from prestigious universities all over the world, and, of these, about 100 have received PhD degrees.

Recognition for the Graduateship Programme in Chemistry did not come for the asking. It was earned through a well-structured programme, qualified

teaching staff and the moderation of question papers and the scrutiny of answer scripts by outside experts. These things didn't just happen. Professor Fernando worked tirelessly and argued persuasively and passionately to make them happen.

Professor Fernando touched the lives of many colleagues and students. Anyone with a problem, no matter how trivial, could be sure of a patient and sympathetic hearing and, almost always, a solution. His voice could thunder when he saw injustice, unfairness, carelessness or stupidity. Students felt instinctively that if he was stern or harsh, it was for their own good. He cared a great deal about their future and was extremely happy and proud when they did well in their careers.

The outpouring of grief when the news of Professor Fernando's demise reached relatives, friends and students is a testimony to the love, respect and gratitude they had for him. May God comfort his wife Mandrupa and his family. May Professor Fernando's soul rest in peace.

*This article was written by Professor S. Sotheeswaran on behalf of the Council of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon and was published in some daily news papers.*

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An appreciation

M R M Haniffa

President-Elect, Institute of Chemistry Ceylon

The sudden demise of Emeritus Professor J N O Fernando of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) on 2nd March 2015 sent shock waves amongst all those who were closely associated with him, both at the Open University as well as the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. We stood in silence unable to digest this piece of news as it was totally untimely and unexpected. It may be significant to mention that he had just turned 71 years on 1st March 2015 (we call that his "theoretical birth day since he was born on 29th February) and that several had conveyed birthday wishes to mark the occasion.

No words can express our sense of sorrow at the passing away of Professor J N O Fernando. As a student at the University of Colombo, as a fellow staff member at the OUSL, and a close associate of Professor J N O Fernando at the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, I am writing this appreciation with a heavy heart.

Professor J N O Fernando (well known in the academic circles as J N O) was a colossus who bestrode the corridors of higher / tertiary education. He was a teacher, mentor, confidant and friend to many of us who had known him since our undergraduate days at the

University of Colombo. Many tributes have been paid during the period of his funeral and continue to pour in via email, media etc. His associates are many and varied as he had established many links from different circles.

He excelled in his studies at S. Thomas' College Mt. Lavinia. He had the All-Island best results at both the O/L and the A/L (Science) examinations, a rare achievement that speaks volumes of his brilliance as a top scholar. He continued to shine in his studies and was an outstanding student at the University as well. It may be noteworthy to mention that he chose to enter the science faculty rather than the engineering faculty, a clear indication that he had a vision for the future very early in life. His teaching career began at the University of Colombo. He then became the Professor of Chemistry (Chair) at the Open University of Sri Lanka where he served for over three decades before retirement.

At the OUSL, Professor Fernando was the Head of the Department of Chemistry in the early eighties. He then served as the Dean of the Faculty of Science for two terms. He retired in 2009 as a Professor of



Chemistry. He was an excellent administrator who, by dint of hard work, commitment and example took the department to new heights in all its academic activities. The high standards set by him will be remembered by all those who were privileged to serve under him.

He was a life member of the Buckyball Society of the Department of Chemistry at the OUSL. He participated in many of its activities, both before and after retirement. The society is proud of the fact that we were able to establish a fund in his name, enabling the OUSL to award the prestigious **Professor J N Oleap Fernando Gold Medal for Excellence in Chemistry** at the annual convocation. Further, the society has decided to make another award named as **J N O Fernando Scholarship Award** in the year 2014/2015. It is unfortunate that we could not convey this decision to him before his demise. We are sure he would have been extremely happy to hear about it.

JNO did not mince his words in matters where his advice and opinion was sought. He was one who was able to call "a spade, a spade" without beating around, forcefully and fearlessly, without malice towards anybody. Principles and Policies guided his way of life, rare traits in the present world.

His continued association with the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon (ICHEMC) bears testimony to his efforts in elevating the status of the ICHEMC to what it is today. Many pages can be written about his contribution towards the ICHEMC. Time and space do not permit me to do so at this juncture.

He was a great organizer and an administrator; the recently held convocation of the College of Chemical

Sciences of ICHEMC was ample proof of his ability to plan, monitor and conduct such functions to almost near perfection. The date of this function (19th February 2015) was fixed well in advance, about six months ahead of time and, arrangements made accordingly. Both my wife and I took the opportunity to thank him personally for making this arrangement and for the excellent food served that day. He leaves no stone unturned in order to ensure the success of this annual event and it is in this context, that he, in typical fashion, thanked us for our comments. This was my last one to one meeting with him. Subsequently, I saw him for the last time at one of the formal meetings chaired by him held at ICHEMC on 27th February 2015. I did not stay long enough to talk to him personally. It is very difficult to imagine the post- JNO period at ICHEMC though one can be assured that he has laid a very strong foundation for the future. Personally I am devastated by his sudden departure and continue to feel a great sense of loss.

The number of scholarships, awards to students, awards to researchers and those serving in honorary capacity and many more are JNO's brainchild, a mechanism to recognize and appreciate hard work. His capacity for work, dedication and commitment to duty cannot be matched. Memorial lectures, Professorial Lectures, Orations, training seminars, debates, sports day, etc are some of the activities introduced by him over a period of time to ensure participation and interaction amongst members, staff and students.

Let us not forget the late Emeritus Professor J N O Fernando. Let us carry forward the legacy left behind by him for generations to come.

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## **Appreciation – Professor J N O Fernando** ***A distinguished educationist and administrator***

Professor S P Deraniyagala

*Honorary Rector, College of Chemical Sciences, Institute of Chemistry Ceylon*

It is with immense sadness that I pen this appreciation on behalf of Professor J N O Fernando. His demise a couple of days following his birthday was indeed a shock to all who knew him. From the first interaction with him when I was a first year undergraduate student at the University of Colombo, to our last, he has influenced my life in numerous ways. In 1988, when he was the President of Section E2 of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science

(SLAAS), it was my honour to serve as the Sectional Secretary. There were many things I learnt from him; punctuality, enthusiasm, commitment and dedication being foremost. He made me take up the GCE (A/L) Panel in 2001. In 2008, I was called in by him to serve as the Head of the Faculty, College of Chemical Sciences and to take up the Presidency in 2009/2010. In numerous instances, the never fallible J N O characteristics were always evident in him.



Professor J N O Fernando was the youngest of four children, and was born on 29<sup>th</sup> February 1944 (in a leap year). He was brought up in a religious background. As a student at S. Thomas College, Mt Lavinia, he excelled in his studies and repeatedly carried away prizes at school prize givings. He emerged as the best student in the island at both GCE O/Level and A/Level examinations. His brilliance continued as an undergraduate at the University of Ceylon where he was the recipient of the Bhikaji Framji Khan Gold Medal in Chemistry for the best performance at the final examination in 1966.

J N O, as he was famously called, commenced his professional career as an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya and moved on to serve at the University of Ceylon, Colombo where I had the good fortune of having my first lecture as an undergraduate delivered by him in Chemical Thermodynamics in 1974. In 1984, he assumed duties as Professor of Chemistry at the Open University of Sri Lanka, which he served as the Head of the Department of Chemistry and later as the Dean of the Faculty of Science. He contributed immensely as an academic and as an administrator during his tenure. He had served many universities of Sri Lanka as a visiting lecturer because lecturers of his caliber were hard to come by and was in constant demand.

He was an outspoken individual who did not heed political gain. His entire career is unblemished with not even a hint of political gain. He shunned appointments that required approval by politicians! (as duly narrated by his brother Oclen at his memorial service). Throughout his career, he had held many distinguished positions of which only a few are mentioned here. Notably he was the General President of SLAAS in 1982, and was the Secretary of the Council of the National Academy of Sciences of Sri Lanka as late as 2013 showing that age had not slowed him down.

The Institute of Chemistry Ceylon is a reality due to the commitment and visionary capacity of Professor J N O Fernando. His meticulous planning has enabled the Institute to be the proud owner of a three-storyed building at Rajagiriya, equipped with an auditorium, lecture halls, laboratories, etc. This is a big achievement in comparison with its humble beginnings where permission was granted by S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia to conduct lectures and practical classes during weekends at the commencement of the Graduateship programme in 1979. Today as many as 900 students and 14 internal academic staff are enrolled

at the Institute. He was the heart and soul of the institute where he held many distinguished positions, most notably that of the Founder of the Institute, the first Dean of the College of Chemical Sciences and at the time of his untimely demise, the Honorary Rector. J N O was a visionary leader whose administrative skills almost surpassed his academic skills; he was that good of an administrator. His immense, unique and outstanding contribution to the Institute of Chemistry and to tertiary education was recognized by the ceremonial opening of the J N O Fernando Hall and unveiling of his portrait in 2005.

He served as the Controlling Chief Examiner of the GCE Advance Level Examination which is conducted by the Department of Examinations from 2000 to 2004. It was during this time, that he made me a part of his team.

Another instance where I have been made to fill in, is as the Honorary Rector of the College of Chemical Sciences of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon; indeed a tall order. However, with reluctance, I took up the post with the hope of helping the Institute to overcome the void created by him and surpass this difficult period in time.

J N O had always been loyal to God. Brought up in a religious environment, he continued his services to the church in numerous ways. He has served as a warden, a Diocesan Councillor, and served in the General Assembly of the Anglican Church of Ceylon apart from numerous other positions.

It is my humble wish that the soul of this distinguished educationist and administrator may rest in peace. May we be able to carry forward the legacy he left behind.

### Presidential Year 1984/85



Inauguration of the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Sessions



## Appreciation - Professor J N O Fernando

Professor M D P De Costa

*Dean, College of Chemical Sciences, Institute of Chemistry Ceylon*

It is a well known fact that in the 1960's, the State universities were not in a position to absorb all the qualified students for tertiary education due to lack of adequate funds and facilities. In this era, higher education was limited only to those who were fortunate enough to join the government universities. This was the time that a few university teachers were brave enough to commence a degree equivalent course at the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon namely the 'Graduateship in Chemistry'. The late Professor J N O Fernando was the leading person who was instrumental in developing this professional chemical education programme and he developed it to a high standard with dedication and courage. Since then, he had been the leading figure for many years in widening access to tertiary education for the students in Sri Lanka. He was brave and energetic in carrying his vision forward and had an immense courage to overcome any opposition in achieving his objectives for the benefit of the students.

The Graduateship Programme in Chemistry, was commenced with a few students and with very little facilities. However, over the following years it developed rapidly leading to its current status of a viable, self-sustaining high quality tertiary education programme where more than 100 students gain the status of "qualified chemist" each year on successful completion of this programme. At present, the annual intake of students exceeds 200 thanks to the dedication, guidance and untiring efforts of Professor Fernando. Once he said "One has to visualize what commitment, drive and determination have achieved such progress, outside the State sector".

Being a great personality with principles, during his career he stood strongly against unethical practices. He was always firm and brave enough to overcome opposition and silence his opponents with logical discussions and outstanding ideas. He was firm in his views, never easily giving up and whoever came to argue with him, later became a good listener. In his steady, principle based and selfless way Professor Fernando was a hero of our times. There is no doubt that his sudden demise created a large vacuum in chemical education in Sri Lanka. This will take a considerably long time to recover. Even though he was tough when it comes to work, he was very kind hearted and gave his highest consideration and support to any student or colleague. The financial assistance provided in the form of scholarships and bursaries to the students and the

Benevolent Fund established by him are the best evidence of his kind heart towards the welfare of students and colleagues. All these were possible due to his clear cut and strong policies and great vision.

My close relationship with Professor Fernando dates back to 1992, when I became a Council member of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon although he was known to me as a teacher when I was an undergraduate at the University of Colombo in the 1980s. I was fortunate to become a Member of the Academic Board and subsequently, the Assistant Treasurer of the Institute within a short span of one year. All these were gained by me due to Professor Fernando who had a remarkable ability to identify the most suitable person for a particular task or position. Among the persons of high caliber I have encountered in my life he is one of the best and I owe him a lot for the guidance and encouragement given to me in performing my tasks at the Institute, especially in the work towards development of the Graduateship Programme in Chemistry.

I admire the way he took decisions at meetings. When he takes a decision, he had the practice of listening to the ideas of others first and then taking his own decision, which had always been better. The others were able to realise how correct this was only later! At many of the meetings in which I had the opportunity to participate during my career as a young person, I had many disagreements and heated arguments with him. However, just after the meeting he acted as if nothing had happened and was "normal", leaving behind everything that happened earlier which is a rare quality in a person. This is true professionalism! He was indeed a great personality with many such qualities and the knowledge, and experience I gained from his exemplary life, good governance and financial practices and procedures, paved the way for me to handle many problems during my career.

Professor Fernando's sudden demise makes me work hard with a view to achieving the goals set out by him and to fulfill his expectations towards the progress of his most beloved Institute and the College to become a leading organization in Sri Lanka and perhaps in the world, even though it is not an easy task for me. The vacuum created by his demise is so vast that we may need several people to fill it. He is no more with us but we can achieve the goals set out by him through dedication and by working as a team.



## **In Memoriam - J N O FERNANDO**

Dr. R O B Wijsekera

I find it most painful indeed to write about JNO Fernando. I am now a very old man, and perhaps he should have been writing of me. I recall my first introduction to JNO then a bright young prospect who had just graduated from the University with an honours degree in Chemistry. At the time I had just returned from my post graduate studies and one of my contemporary colleagues said that JNO was the brightest of the ones who had just graduated. He had won the Gold Medal for Chemistry, though JNO himself was to remark on that occasion "*I got only a white envelope*".

Since that time, I was fortunate at various stages to work with JNO within the activities of the voluntary organisations, particularly the Chemical Society of Ceylon soon to become the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, and the Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) Association for the Advancement of Science.

After JNO left the University of Ceylon in Colombo to join the Open University of Sri Lanka, I was more closely associated with him as I was a member then of the Governing Board of that University and he was the Dean of the Faculty of Science. There were some problems and I recall that he addressed them with a degree of passion and considerable involvement.

I may particularly recall also that as General President of SLAAS in 1995, I faced the situation that due to security considerations at the time, the premises of the University of Colombo at Thurstan Road were unavailable for staging the Annual Sessions. When I consulted JNO he promptly came to the rescue and proposed that we hold it at the new premises of the Open University in Nawala. He volunteered all assistance and that was indeed delivered to the fullest extent as we staged the sessions for the first time in the Nawala Campus. JNO put together a team that looked after all the logistics on that occasion.

He was also then a pioneer of "Distance Learning" and was a passionate advocate of the method as he saw it, as an avenue for those who failed to enter the University via its competitive and solely exam oriented entry methodology. In this was seen a vision of the path he was to explore in the future. None would disagree that he blazed a trail for then the Chemical Society and the early days of the Institute with a single

minded purpose, and a vision which he converted into his singular mission. He was able to move the Institute forward from that of a purely academic style to a wider, and socially active as well as economically potent model, and thereby serve the future generations with chemical education, albeit in a mode different to that of the Universities. In doing this he was able to gather volunteers from among his colleagues who were also inspired with the purpose and mission that he mapped out. This was the epic saga of the College of Chemical Sciences and the modern building that now houses the relatively affluent the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. It remains as a symbol of his endeavours and leadership.

It was in January 1985 that I was called upon to serve as the Chief Guest at the Induction Ceremony of the General President of the SLAAS. In my address I referred to "Solomon's House", as Sir Francis Bacon had described it in his "*New Atlantis*" thus: "*To summarise the findings of scientific research and make them available to the world.*" Sir Francis Bacon had understood the necessity of organising science to improve the lot of humanity.

Solomon's House was the first description of a modern scientific academy. Soon after my presentation on that occasion, JNO came to me and discussed the validity for an alternate pathway for producing chemistry graduates and I indeed agreed with his ideas. In leaving me on that occasion he very casually said: "Would not "Adamantane House" be a good name for the seat of our College of Chemical Sciences"? He was to duly propose that later. Adamantane was the logo that the Institute had decided upon earlier, so Adamantane House, became one of JNO's creations.

The spectacular services he has rendered are too numerous for me to describe and are too well known to the present generation. But to me who came from an earlier generation here was a colossus of an individual who indeed has earned himself by his deeds alone an iconic status in the Chemistry scenario of Sri Lanka. He has rendered a most unique service to his profession and his country.

Just as we grieve his demise, we must be mindful of the role of that wonderful lady, his wife Mandrupa, who played much more than a nominal part in his success with the chemical fraternity. She was so well liked in her own modest image, and colleagues were



aware of how positively supportive she was of the events of the Institute.

Not for JNO the accolades of political awards, he abhorred them. Perhaps he was too critical for that, and even too undiplomatic to be considered for such. But for him comes something far richer, the respect and

gratitude of all of us chemists as professionals for his deeds, which surpass any other in respect of the future of the Institute; and the undying goodwill of all those graduates whom he mentored at Adamantane House, now spread out far and wide.



## Emeritus Professor J N Oleap Fernando

T Kandasamy

Professor Fernando's sudden death was a great shock to me. I could not for a moment believe it. I contacted a few people in Sri Lanka and then his wife. I could not meet him or talk to him when I left Sri Lanka on August 24, 2014 for good.

Since I could not meet him before my departure I sent him a personnel note in September 2014. After that note I have been in touch with him till December 2014. In the note I mentioned the activities of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon when I was very closely associated with him. I also mentioned that I will never forget those days and I will always remember as long I live. This very close association started in the year 1978. The office bearers of the Council of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon in 1978 were – Professor Ramakrishna- the President and for the first time I came to the Council as the Vice-President, the Joint secretaries were K Jegatheeswaran and Professor Fernando and the treasurer was Dr. M Mahendran. The Council had planned several activities for that year. One of the most important activities was the Graduateship in Chemistry course (GIC) to be conducted at Aquinas Institute of Higher Studies (AIHS). The institute had been having the Laboratory Technicians course for about 3 years at Aquinas. It was therefore not difficult to have GIC course there. 72 students were selected to follow the Part 1. The classes were on Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays. As the Part 1 was nearing the end, the Institute wanted to begin laboratory classes and the Part 2 GIC course. For some reason or other Aquinas wanted the Institute to discontinue the course there. The members of the council were shocked. The Institute was in trouble. They could not let down 72 students who were completing the Part 1. There were differences of opinion at the Council but whatever the views of the members were, the Council decided to continue the GIC course and in order to do that we had to search for an alternate location. I was the President and I felt

strongly that we must not discontinue what we started and Professor JNO backed me up strongly. He did not stop there. He tried various schools with laboratory facilities and made appointments to visit the places. He would telephone me and during my lunch interval four of us (Professor Ramakrishna, Professor Fernando, Dr. Mahendran and myself) visited the schools. In this manner the group visited Zahira College, VisakhaVidalaya, Stafford Ladies College and Pembroke Academy. The group went back to Aquinas again. Professor Fernando did not stop at that. He found that his old school S. Thomas' College permitted external classes to be conducted in the school. Professor Fernando requested me to speak to Mr. GAC Srimanne, retired Government Analyst and one time my boss about our problem. Mr. Sirimanne, very highly respected old boy of S. Thomas' College and the Secretary of the Board of Governors agreed to get the permission to start the classes. It was a great achievement for the Institute. Now the collection of money (fees) and payment to staff was with the Institute. Professor Fernando and the Educational committee took charge of it and managed it well. This I have mentioned in detail because Professor Fernando took such a lot of interest during this crisis. The Institute was able to continue the GIC programme without any interruption. Continuation of the course was a great achievement and the greatest tribute must go to Professor Fernando who tirelessly took great interest for locating a place. Later his contribution to the Institute are many but in my opinion the effort to continue the programme was the greatest.

Today we have progressed in our Educational Programme and Professor Fernando was very very happy that the Institute had been able to produce over 1000 graduate chemists and over 1000 chemical technicians. It is my desire that all should know the contribution that made by Professor Fernando for the status of the Educational and other allied programmes.



It was all his effort and in my note to him I mentioned how many youngsters were benefitted. I also mentioned that if we had failed at the crucial period I do not know what would have happened to the Institute. In my note I thanked Professor Fernando specifically for his untiring effort and other members of the Council for the cooperation I had during the critical period when I was the President. I mentioned in my note I will always remember that period and never forget the days I worked happily with him.

Professor Fernando family sent a Christmas/New Year message 2014/15 to relatives, friends, Professional Colleagues, former students and well-wishers. For this message I replied him as follows. "Dear Oleap and Mandurapa Fernando, Thank you for wishing us a happy Christmas and a bright new year. Read your attachment. Wish you both a happy Christmas and a bright new year. Continue with your good work. I feel bad I am not in SL to help you with your activities. However my thoughts are always with you, Will keep in touch. With kind regards,

Kandasamy." This was my last message to him.

I do not want to go on and on about the immense contribution he had made to the Institute. He came to the Council of the Institute as the Joint Secretary in 1978 and ever since he has been with the Council, a period of 37 years. He served in several committees. He took a great interest in whatever committee he served. Finally, he was Honorary Rector / Honorary Senior Professor / Chairman Academic Board and Financial Consultant to the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. As a person in charge of Academic activities he was careful about the finances and as a result the Institute was able to put a building without a loan.

His thoughts were always with the Institute, whether he was in Sri Lanka or gone abroad on a holiday or for conferences. He had so much energy that I cannot for a moment imagine that he is not with us.

The Institute of Chemistry Ceylon can never forget the most valuable service he has rendered over the years.

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J N O As I See

N I N S Nadarasa

Registrar, College of Chemical Sciences, Institute of Chemistry Ceylon

Professor J N O was a very versatile person. He worked hard for the betterment of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. Wherever he was, his thoughts were with the Institute. He always said "Our beloved Institute" when he referred to the Institute at special occasions and meetings. He expected others also to work hard to uplift the image of the Institute and the College in the minds of the public.

As far as we have witnessed, he was a walking computer. For many activities of the Institute and the College, he remembered well the sequence of things to be done. He had a remarkable ability to remember things. He expected others also to know the sequence and carried out the programmes without any shortcomings. One word he had spoken was sufficient for us to grasp so many ideas.

When we arranged a public function at the Adamantane House, he always insisted that we ordered a generator as standby in case of power failure. It had been a general practice for a long time until we got a new generator. As a standard practice, for any public function he expected the library to arrange a sales centre to display our monographs, caps, umbrellas, clocks, T-shirts, bags etc. For all meetings

he always insisted on ordering items even refreshments in just adequate quantities which were necessary for the occasion and, requested me not to waste by ordering excess.

He was the sole author of the News Letter published by the College. He collected all the material for the News Letter; photographs, articles, details of student activities etc. He also wanted our News Letter to be sent to other professionals so that they would be in a position to know what is happening at the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. When the News Letter was printed and received at Adamantane House, he wanted it to be distributed to the students, posted to libraries, institutions and all members without any delay. He never liked to heap them up on the tables and wait. In addition, he wanted to distribute our announcements and the News Letter to anyone who came for our functions at the Institute.

During his holidays in here as well as overseas, his thoughts were with the Institute and the College. He used to send e-mails daily to update the activities going on in the Institute. He gave advice and directions to carry out the activities smoothly. When holidaying in Sri Lanka specially, when he went to Nuwara Eliya, he



used to prepare documents necessary for College activities and sent them by post, so that, I could get them typed and kept ready when he returned to Adamantane House after spending his holidays.

As far as students were concerned, he listened well to their grievances and he found a solution to their satisfaction. He always told me that, when a student came and complained, we must accept what the student said was correct until it was proven otherwise. As a practice, neither he believed in medical certificates submitted by students for not attending examinations, nor did he accepted the certificates issued by Grama Sevaka.

He encouraged the students to engage in extra-curricular activities and gave all the support for them to progress in their activities. To help students in need, he created the Deans Emergency Fund when he was the Honorary Dean of the College. Even now, students are benefitted by the Deans Emergency Fund.

Due to his efforts religious activities such as Navarathri, Bhakthi Gee, Dharma desana, Ramazan festival, Christmas party were commenced at the

Adamantane House and all of them are now held annually at the College.

J N O was a good writer. He wrote articles about our Graduateship Programme regularly and were published in most of the daily and weekend news papers. His articles appeared in many publications such as Chemistry in Sri Lanka etc. J N O always insisted on openness, transparency and genuineness in all our activities. Any letter sent from the Institute under his signature, he checked that the letter was corrected several times before sending. He had been the creator of many things in the College of Chemical Sciences as well as in the Institute. He took bold decisions at all times. He had the remarkable ability to convince his ideas to others in the audience although some may have different views on certain important issues. We have so much respect on him and no need to say that we have many things to learn from his way of living. He is a great man, born to this country and thousands of students and educationists generated by him and living here and abroad, will remember him for ever.



Professor J N Oleap Fernando

Emeritus Professor H Dasaratha Gunawardhana

My first encounter with Professor J N O Fernando was in the year 1968/69, when he taught me vibrational and rotational spectroscopy and circular dichroism as a probationary lecturer at the Department of Chemistry, University of Colombo.

After his PhD he returned to Sri Lanka in 1971 and the day he returned coincided with his father's funeral. With two of my colleagues, Thuraisingham and Hettiarachchi, who were assistant lectures at the University of Colombo, I attended the funeral. At the funeral we asked him whether he knew us. It was a surprise to us that even after 3 years he remembered our names including our research interests. This shows that he had a good memory and I believe this quality of his also would have contributed immensely to the day to day smooth running of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon.

Professor Fernando was the founder coordinator of the Graduateship programme in Chemistry (GIC) when it commenced in 1979. I was also involved in the programme since its inception and worked closely with him to improve the quality of the GIC programme over the last 36 years. At the beginning, both the

Laboratory Technician Certificate Course (LTCC) and GIC programme were conducted at Aquinas College. The office was limited to a small room at the building of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science with a part time officer to look after the interests of the Educational Committee of the Institute. However, with much effort from the members of the Institute, working under very difficult conditions the first batch of four Graduate Chemists were produced. When Aquinas College refused to conduct the GIC course Professor Fernando made a special attempt to obtain S. Thomas' College premises to conduct the course. While the Diploma in Laboratory Technician Course (DLTC) upgraded from LTCC continued at Aquinas College, the GIC programme shifted to S. Thomas' College. At this time, in parallel to the Colombo programme, a GIC programme was commenced in Kandy and conducted in alternative years.

Over the years Professor Fernando managed and conducted the programme in a manner that enabled him to collect enough funds to put up a new building dedicated to conduct the two programmes. In 2005, the



building was completed and the GIC programme was gradually shifted to the new premises. In 2014 a new wing was added and now there is adequate space with all the facilities to conduct both GIC and DLTC programmes in the new building named “Adamantane House” incorporating both the Institute of Chemistry and the College of Chemical Sciences.

In addition to the faithful service to the College of Chemical Sciences of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, Professor Fernando with Mrs. Mandrupa

Fernado contributed for many activities in cash and in kind. One significant contribution was the purchase of more than half a million rupees worth public address system installed in the Council room.

I make my own testimony in memory of the great teacher, educator, colleague and friend. “Well done though Good and Faithful Servant of the Lord”. May you rest in Peace.

The Guardian of Institute of Chemistry : Professor J N O Fernando

Dr. Lakshmi Arambewela

It is with a heavy heart that I pen my thoughts of Professor J N O Fernando who passed away on 02/03/2015 at the age of 71 years. Professor Fernando was a chemist of national and international distinctions, with a remarkable vision and imagination. This not only made him a leader in his field but often put him so far ahead of it that his contributions would only be fully recognised many years later. My first encounter of Professor Fernando was in the late nineteen sixties when he lectured Physical Chemistry to us at the University of Colombo. He was one of the best classroom teachers I had as an undergraduate. He was organized, engaged, and was able to transmit his expertise to students.

Professor Fernando was an exceptionally brilliant student in his schooldays and in the university. He did an Honours degree in Chemistry at the University of Ceylon and obtained his PhD from Imperial College, University of London. He had his postgraduate and post-doctoral training at the Australian School of Nuclear Technology, New South Wales and at the University of Manchester.

Being a very versatile person Professor Fernando played many roles as an academic. He was a lecturer in Physical Chemistry who lectured at almost all the universities in Sri Lanka. He was an academic administrator at the Open University of Sri Lanka and at the College of Chemical Sciences.

Professor J N O Fernando was the founder of the Graduateship Programme in Chemistry in Sri Lanka that commenced in 1979 and also the founder coordinator of the LTCC Course that commenced in 1971. This was later upgraded to a Diploma. At the beginning of these courses, there were no infrastructure facilities and no funds to run the

programmes. However, Professor Fernando with the help of the members of the Institute managed to complete the GIC programme. As a result, from the first batch of 72 students, 4 students obtained the Graduateship in Chemistry professional degree. Due to hard work initiated by Professor Fernando, the College of Chemical Sciences (CCS) now has all the facilities to accommodate over 600 students in an academic year.

Dedication and punctuality were hallmark qualities exhibited by Professor Fernando. The Adamantane House was opened in 2005. The unofficial shifting from SLAAS to the new building and the conduct of religious ceremonies took place in January and had to be handled by a very limited internal staff members. I can recall the early arrival of Professor Fernando at the Adamantane house on that day, before the other internal staff members, and the assistance given by him to conduct the unofficial opening. The selfless significant work of Professor Fernando over a period of many years was honoured at the ceremonial opening of the J N O Fernando Hall at the Adamantane House on June 2005.

So far CCS has produced over 1000 Graduate Chemists and also over 1000 Chemistry Technicians. He was a towering figure and without him, we can not imagine what the Institute of Chemistry would have been. His last one year in the institute had been very eventful and fruitful.

Professor Fernando's scientific and educational achievements were accomplished with an eye toward enhancement of the College of Chemical Sciences and the Institute of Chemistry. He recognized hard work and always appreciated hard working people and due recognition was given by conferring awards to them. Professor Fernando's commitments to the Institute was



extraordinary. As a member of the College of Past Presidents he was very concerned about the future of the Institute when selecting the Presidents of the Institute of Chemistry. He always looked for an honest senior person who had contributed to the activities of the institute and would do so in the future as well.

Professor J N O Fernando, an eminent Chemist,

Scientist and a Science Administrator who was honest, outspoken and respected by the society will be missed not only by everyone whom he knew but also by grateful pupils whose achievements and enthusiasm made his last years the happiest and perhaps the most fruitful of his entire career. May Professor Fernando's soul rest in peace!!!





Fond Remembrances Farewell My Friend

Mevan Pieris



oil on canvas portrait by Mevan Pieris, 2005

Jerence Nansel Oleap Fernando was born to this world under extra-ordinary circumstances as an extra-ordinary child. It was a time when the second world war was in full cry with great atrocities being perpetrated by man on man. The British empire to which Ceylon (Sri Lanka) belonged then stood threatened by Hitler on one side and by the Japanese war machinery on the other side. Yet for all, God of Love had reigned supreme at Pilberine Gardens, Moratuwa, and the news was broken that the lady of the house had found favour once more. Such joyous news must have brightened the mood of them that

dwelt there at a time when Japanese bombs had begun to fall on Colombo and a plane was shot down not too far away at S. Thomas' College, Mt Lavinia where the new born was destined to stamp his class. So, in the leap year under extra-ordinary circumstances the fourth child of Osman and Emerine Fernando saw light of day on the 29th of February 1944. Needless to say the baby's cries would have brought tears of joy to all at home at a time close to noon when the sun was yet on its upward journey on that leap day, and taking the letter O from the father's name Oleap was to be the name.

Oleap Fernando began his schooling at the nearby



Prince of Wales College and entered S. Thomas' College at the age of 7 years. A couple of years later it was my good fortune to enter the same school by the sea and more so to come to know JNO. Pilberine Gardens offered ample space for youthful exuberance and there he grew up under the watchful eye of his parents in the rich traditions of the Christian faith. Those were the days when Canon Reginal de Saram who had taken Greats at Oxford was warden, and mathematics was taught by a distinguished Cantabrian, the Revd. Bowyer Yin, who was also the chaplain and choir master. They were the days when JNO and I would start each term by offering praise to God in the Chapel of the Transfiguration, with the words of the Psalmist, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help ...". They were also the days when we learnt classical Sinhala (Hela Sinhala) at the feet of immortals such as Pinto Jayewardene and Ariyasena Ashuboda (later Ahubudu), pupils of Cumaratunga Munidasa. The lower school where JNO and I began our schooling stood against the sprawling playing fields across which the balmy breezes of the Indian ocean blew. They were also the days when JNO and I would sprint across to the modest tuck shop which stood beside the railway track to enjoy a plate full of string-hoppers, meat curry and pol-sambal which Samaris would serve for a princely sum of 35 cents. They were also the moments when JNO and I would return to Samaris with plate stretched out asking for a bit more gravy, in the same way as Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist did.

I can never forget the Tuesday morning assembly when the entire lower school would gather before Head Master Revd. J.Y. Barnabus, under the shade of two Barintonia trees. There we would assemble each week to cheer the first in class collect his weekly report from the mighty hands of that burly Indian; and each week JNO would scale the flight of steps which separated the Head-master from them that provided the cheers. Those were the moments and times when teacher and colleague heaped respect and regard on rising stars. Year after year at the College prize givings, the young Fernando carried away every imaginable prize, whether it be languages, religion, mathematics or sciences. His was a remarkable all-round mind; good in every subject. All eyes were on JNO as he entered the upper 6C form, well known in those times to be the class of the college, where the brightest 20 students were brought together to be taught by the best of teachers, so that the best possible results could be obtained for the school in the first public examination.

It was indeed my good fortune that by some stroke of luck I too entered the same class a couple of years later to be in the company of my very good friend G.L. Peiris, the brightest of us all, now known to all as 'the brilliant professor in law turned politician'. All hopes and expectations were pinned on Oleap that year to come up with a sterling performance which would do his school proud, when the news ran round the College that the young star was afflicted with a fever which refused to leave. Prayers were offered in the chapel to the Almighty by both pious and not so pious, for a speedy recovery of Fernando whose ailment the doctors had diagnosed to be a congenital defect in a small duct that led to the heart which required immediate surgery. Oleap would hear nothing of it and insisted that the use of the doctor's scalpel be delayed until he finished with the examinations and opted for a course of penicillin injections which were administered on a daily basis upward of a month. Even the class room was shifted to the ground floor to prevent the straining of his little heart. The examinations were done under trying conditions, but when results were announced Oleap had secured five distinctions in one sitting; a rare feat then. They were indeed joyous days at Pilberine Gardens and at S. Thomas' as well. Needless to say anxiety still prevailed as to what the outcome of the heart condition would be as Oleap was wheeled into the operating theatre. Although the operation itself was a success where the duct was concerned, due to accidental damage of some nerves Oleap's speech was affected converting his voice to a more musical version.

Resilience of Oleap Fernando was soon clearly visible as he prepared for the university entrance examination. The prospect of securing a Doctorate in a science discipline was more attractive to the young mind than pursuing a professional career in engineering or medicine which was there for the asking. As was expected JNO came off with flying colours securing A grades in all four subjects, chemistry, physics and double mathematics, recording the best results in the Island. Oleap entered the science faculty of the University of Ceylon and read a special degree in chemistry with physics as subsidiary and graduated with an upper second class. He was also the recipient of the Bhikaji Framji Khan Gold Medal for the best performance at the 1966 final examinations. This was one more feather in his cap which was already looking like that of a Red Indian.

Oleap began his professional career as an assistant lecturer in chemistry at the University of



Ceylon, Peradeniya, and thereafter served in the same capacity at University of Ceylon, Colombo. In 1968, he followed a short course of studies on radio isotopes at the Australian school of Nuclear Technology, New South Wales, before entering the Imperial College, University of London, as a Commonwealth postgraduate scholar to prosecute his PhD research studies, under the supervision of Professor F C Tompkins. Oleap studied heats of adsorption of diatomic gases on tungsten using the calorimetric method and obtained his PhD in 1971. Thereafter he returned to Sri Lanka and dedicated himself to be a tertiary level teacher of physical chemistry and married Miss Mandrupa Fernando soon afterwards. In 1973, he became a member of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon and of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science, and took a keen interest in professional activities. In 1977 making use of his first sabbatical, Oleap left for the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, where he furthered his knowledge in the area of surface chemistry by chromatographic determination of isosteric heats of adsorption on zeolites. On his return he was in charge of the Physical Chemistry laboratory of the University of Colombo. During this period, Professor R S Ramakrishna was the President of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, and advocated that the Institute embarks on a Graduateship course of studies. The young JNO, a fountain of energy and enthusiasm, was the logical choice to act as the founder coordinator of this course of studies, and became so, in the formative years from 1978 – 1983. The very suggestion of conducting a part time course of studies in chemistry with preposterous claims of equivalence of a special chemistry degree conducted by the universities, was viewed as heresy by many a giant in chemistry of the period. Yet for all, the Institute went forward sans lecture hall, laboratory and library of their own by conducting lectures at Aquinas College with a handful of dedicated teachers lecturing to an inaugural batch of 74 students with disastrous consequences as only a handful completed the course. Professor Ramakrishna provided the much needed leadership and during the formative years served as the Chairman, Educational Committee from 1981 – 83. In him the Institute had a person of great vision and strength, and in JNO he had an able lieutenant. Ill winds blew over the course within an year and drifted it to class rooms beside the sea, which S. Thomas' College Mt. Lavinia were able to provide. So, the Graduateship course had a baptism of fire.

In 1982, JNO was elected a Vice-President of the Institute and became President two years later. It was my honour to have been invited by him to be a joint Secretary of the Institute and enjoyed a very close working relationship with him. Together with JNO we were able to achieve much. A new constitution was drafted by the two of us spending many an hour at the SLAAS building where the Institute's modest office stood. On my suggestion Chemistry in Sri Lanka was launched as a journal and the first copy presented to His Excellency J R Jayewardene. He also agreed to my suggestion to introduce a Presidential medal but alas, the valuable large sterling silver medal which was donated by me has since disappeared and is no more. We also introduced a colourful annual session and produced a manual of the chemical industry.

In 1984, an opportunity arose for JNO to assume duties as professor of chemistry at the newly formed department of chemistry of the Open University at Nawala. He served in this capacity for thirty long years and during this period also assisted many other universities as a visiting lecturer. However, his life blood was the Institute's Graduateship programme, sharing from time to time the responsibility of being Chairman of the Educational Committee with other pioneering lecturers such as Professor E R Jansz and Professor H D Gunawardhana. Yet for all, he was unmistakably the live wire with a penchant for safe guarding the coffers which the course was now yielding in abundance. A special silver medal was conferred on him during the Silver Jubilee of the Graduateship Course in appreciation of his loyal dedicated services, although in an analysis done by me during the same period showed that the operational efficiencies of the Graduateship course left much to be desired, as only 17% of a large population of more than 2000 students who had registered in the first twenty five years had been successful in completing the course. Although visibly shaken by the revelation, JNO was quick to compliment me on the detailed analysis which I presented and was not slow either, to take some credit for himself by equating low passes to high standards maintained. About this time, JNO was instrumental in persuading me to shoulder the responsibility of erecting the Institute's building at Rajagiriya and on its completion the building was named as Adamantane House by him, and requested me to write the article on adamantane which appeared in Chemistry in Sri Lanka Vol 22 No 3, September 2005. It stirred a hornets' nest when I pointed out that the Institute's logo which was meant to be that of



adamantane had been incorrectly drawn. JNO however was large enough to accept my argument as correct but got round the problem by saying that the structure in a logo need not be precise as the name of it did not appear.

Oleap Fernando's academic excellence and dedication to duty requires no further elaboration. Whilst this is common knowledge, he has excelled best as a leader in the professional world. He presented himself as a principle centred leader whose fountain of success emanated from a combination of competency and good character. Oleap enjoyed a high degree of trust and confidence from his peers and this indeed is a characteristic of great leaders whose personality crystallizes from the noble teachings which empower and exalt their spirit. Professor Stephen Covey states that, the strengths of such leaders radiate in four directions with a sense of Guidance, Power, Security and Wisdom. They are guided by the values, norms, and other criteria which fashion their conscience and which help them to make decisions giving them a sense of security, personal strength, identity and self esteem. In short these basic strengths translated themselves to create the power that was in JNO. Power is the vital energy that enabled him to make choices and decisions and above all the capacity he had to continuously improve. On the other hand, Oleap was a man of knowledge and experience, the two sacred ingredients that create wisdom which provides a holistic understanding to make prudent judgements.

Principle centred leaders enjoy inspiring literature and are intellectually active, leading balanced lives. JNO was a voracious reader who also found time to see life as an adventure. On the 26th of December 2004, Oleap had just finished a dip in the Hikkaduwa seas when the ocean rose with devastating power, to pulverise the entire coastline. God had moved in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. On this occasion, Oleap was spared to continue his labour of love in the noble profession he had chosen. He was a leader that continuously maintained the four dimensions of his human personality, namely his, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual self. Goodness of character is the primary greatness on which he had built his secondary greatness of social status, position, fame, and skill. He was a leader who used powerful ethical methods to influence others and did so by example, fostering caring relationships among staff and students. He was also an audible mentor who instructed loud and clearly for all to hear. His passion for work developed a sense of intrinsic

worth that commanded the respect of others. Selfless service is one of the most powerful tools of influence.

Oleap had many a quality associated with great leaders. Ability to make decisions was his forte. If as a young boy he was able to take a bold decision to postpone life and death surgery to give priority to accomplish the task at hand, there indeed were the makings of a courageous leader. "Some are born great, others achieve greatness and some others have greatness thrust upon them" (William Shakespeare). Oleap's greatness lay in his achievements. He had an abundance of energy and a capacity to motivate others. He also had a capability to execute his decisions. He would move from place to place untiringly and would participate in a range of associations where he was a familiar figure. At the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science he was an active member and General President in 2001. Oleap also functioned as the Director of the Asian Chemical Education network of the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies. His presence at meetings always provided the excitement and more often than not, a surplus of energy would erupt with volcanic propensity in characteristic style.

Like all great leaders he was a man of determination, who led by example. Throughout his long association with the Institute he had been a great example of dedication to duty and the perfect example of a forthright man of independent character. He displayed resolute courage in being outspoken and I dare say, even at the cost of antagonizing many a professional. He was highly critical of the educational policies of the State and the university system, thereby earning the wrath of them that stood in high positions. He was prepared to sacrifice positions of administrative high authority in the formal education system of the country in exchange for the values and principles that were dear to him. He was a person with high initiative and had a remarkable mind which was a fountain of ideas. He was a man of confidence which resulted from the knowledge he carried, and made commitments and took responsibility for his actions. His loyalty to the Institute and to the cause of tertiary chemical education was supreme, kindling in him a sense of duty unmatched by all other leaders. "*Dux erat ille ducum*", That man was the leader of leaders.

On Saturday the 28th of February I was at the Institute when JNO walked up to me and spoke of his illness briefly. He seemed not to be too worried about his obviously serious condition and seemed happy that his condition which had been pretty bad a few days previously had improved considerably on account of



the drugs that had been administered. I asked him why he was not resting and all he had to say was that he was feeling much better and that the doctors were planning to remove his cancerous region of the colon in a few days time. I mentioned to him that I had read that Broccoli was good for colon cancer. He thanked me for the advice and bade me farewell before being homeward bound. I never realized then that it was to be the last conversation with him. On Monday, 2nd March, around noon I received the shocking news that death had visited JNO a day after his 71st birthday.

He was called upon to leave at the feet of death the full vessel of his life; all the trophies, earnings and gleanings of summer years, and start a new journey into the unknown. His voice was heard to say 'I have brought nothing to this world and take nothing away'.

'I have started my journey with empty hands and an expectant heart. Let this be my parting word, that what I have seen is unsurpassable. I have tasted of the honey of the Lotus that expands on the ocean of light and thus I am blessed – let this be my parting word. At this time of my parting, wish me good luck, my friends. The sky is flushed with the dawn and my path lies beautiful' (Rabindranath Tagore).

Farewell JNO, Farewell my friend. We knew

each other upward of six decades in time. You came to this world of gloom in as much as the brightest of stars shall appear in the darkest of skies. A man to be, a vision to have, and a mission to fulfill in selfless sacrifice and dedication to duty. I take pride that I was able to answer your call and erect the Institute's building a mission you longed to fulfill. I take joy in having had a hand in naming a hall in thy honour. I thank God for the power in my hands and eyes that created a portrait of Thee that shall adorn the walls gently to posterity. You have crossed the great divide from where no man returneth, only to be remembered by what you have done.

"They whose course on earth is o'er, think they of their brethren more. They before the Throne who bow, feel they for their brethren now. We, by enemies distressed, they in paradise at rest. We the captives – they the freed, we and they are one indeed. Saints departed even thus, hold communion still with us. Still with us, beyond the veil, praising, pleading, without fail".

Pardon me if I have gilded the lily somewhat. But the occasion demands of me that I say nothing but the very best. *De Mortuis nihil nisi bonum.*

May God grant unto you eternal life. *Esto per petua.*

You can shed tears that he is gone
Or you can smile because he has lived

You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back
Or you can open your eyes and see all that he has left

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him
Or you can be full of the love that you shared

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday

You can remember him and only that he is gone
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on

You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back
Or you can do what he would want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

David Harkins



From Family, Friends & Colleagues....

The bond with family, Christianity, Chemistry and Integrity

Tribute to Emeritus Professor J N Oleap Fernando
Delivered by his brother Eng. B. R. Oclen Fernando
at Holy Emmanuel Church Moratuwa
On 5th March 2015

We are a family of four children. I have two elder sisters and my younger brother Oleap was born on the Leap Year Day in 1944. I did not expect to stand here today before you to deliver the funeral oration for my brother who is five years junior to me. My parents gave us names coined to the names of our ancestors, Parents and God Parents. My brother's name was Jerence Nansel Oleap.

We were all brought up within a religious environment and had our family prayers daily and attended Church together on Sundays. Oleap commenced his secondary education at S. Thomas' College Mount Lavinia, where he excelled in the education sphere from the inception. He was awarded the Schneider Scholarship and was a scholarship holder for the rest of his school career. During the year he had to sit for the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination, our family doctor detected a murmur within his heart and the ailment was diagnosed as 'Patent Ductus Arteriosus' caused by a valve not closing up after birth. The doctor advised my parents to ensure that he did not fall sick or get an infection or even a mild cold before his operation. He should not exert or climb stairs, as it will be deterrent to his health. My parents then contacted Mr. C. H. Davidson, the warden of S. Thomas' College, who kindly ensured all the classes that my brother attended were brought down to the ground floor. My mother who was the first lady driver from Moratuwa drove him to school and back home daily.

When the G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) Examination results were announced, he obtained five distinctions from the eight subjects he sat and was declared as the first in the Island. At the college annual prize givings he repeatedly carried away a number of prizes. His heart operation was carried out at the General Hospital for nearly eight hours, which was attended by four surgeons, was successful. I contributed a pint of blood for the first time in my life. However due to the number of tubes that were passed through his nose and mouth during the operation and after been warded in the Merchants' ward resulted in his voice becoming

hoarse. After the G.C.E. (Advanced Level), he read for his degree in Chemistry at the University of Ceylon. During the period of his final examination my brother-in-law, late Merrill E.C. Fernando was with him in the hostel to ensure that he did not have to face any problems. He passed the final examination with honours and was awarded the Bhikaji Khan Gold medal. With pardonable pride I wish to say that due to his scholastic achievements in being awarded scholarships during his school career, my parents were able to utilize the money thus saved to spend for my engineering studies in London.

He then commenced his career as an Instructor and later as an Assistant Lecturer at the Peradeniya University. He was awarded a six month scholarship in 1968 to follow a training course on Radio Isotopes at the Australian School of Nuclear Technology, New South Wales. On his return he was awarded a Commonwealth Post Graduate Scholarship to carry out research at the Imperial College London from 1968 on heats of adsorption of diatomic gases on tungsten using the calorimetric method. After six months he returned in April 1969 to attend my wedding as the Bestman.

He was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy from the University of London in 1971, and received the appointment as a lecturer in Physical Chemistry at the University of Colombo. He became the Senior Professor of Chemistry at the Open University of Sri Lanka in 1984 and the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences in 1993. He was also a visiting lecturer at the University of Jaffna, University of Ruhuna, University of Colombo, University of Peradeniya, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Kelaniya and University of Papua New Guinea. He also served his sabbatical at the University of Manchester, Institute of Science and Technology to study surface chemistry by chromatographic determination of isostatic heats of adsorption on zeolites.

As a visionary, he commenced the graduate programme for students who failed to obtain admission to the University on weekends and conducted practical



classes at S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia from 1979. The funds thus collected over a number of years enabled him to build the three storeyed building at Sarana Mawatha in Rajagiriya where Chemistry Graduates and Technicians are trained and awarded graduateships and diplomas at the College of Chemical Sciences. A large number of graduates have subsequently obtained doctorates from universities abroad. He served as the Honorary Dean, and at the time of his demise served as the Honorary Rector and Honorary Senior Professor and Chairman Academic Board at the College of Chemical Sciences. He was the Founder of this institution. At the professional level he held important positions as both the President of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon and the General President of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science. He served on the Executive Committee of the Organization of Professional Associations and at the time of his demise was the Treasurer and a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences Sri Lanka. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, London and Fellow of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. Now you students of the College of Chemical Sciences of the Institute of Chemistry numbering over 250 and present in the Church here today, remember that Professor Fernando was a visionary and founder of your College, has left an unbroken legacy for you and the future students, and has provided an avenue to those who fail to enter the universities in Sri Lanka in the future to still pursue further studies to obtain their graduateships and also doctorates in foreign universities.

Oleap's interests in Church activities were of a profound nature. The Parish of our Church elected him as a warden in 1973 and then was the youngest warden at the age of 29 years and took upon him the task of relieving the parish from a heavy and unjust taxation imposed on our Church. The Wardens met the Inland Revenue Department officials and put up the case to settle the long outstanding taxation problem. After protracted discussions and correspondence the contention that each parish organization and fund with a separate charitable purpose should constitute a separate charitable institution, within the meaning of the Inland Revenue Act was accepted by the authorities. On the basis of the revised computation of assessments, the arrears of the tax payable for the period 1959/60 to 1974/75 inclusive was about Rs. 55, 000. As a result of this uncompromising tax assessment the Church saved a sum of Rs. 42,266 in respect of the tax assessment years 1959/60 to 1971/72. In this

connection the parish placed on record to Oleap, particularly for the single services rendered in preparing the various memoranda, submitting revised returns and the computation of the tax liability on the basis of the revised assessments.

He served as a Diocesan Councilor of the Diocese of Colombo for a very long period since 1979 to 2010 and was a long standing Diocesan Councilor elected to the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Colombo. He represented the Diocese of Colombo at the World Council of Churches held in Vancouver Canada during the year 1983. He served on the General Assembly of the Anglican Church of Ceylon from 1998 to 2009 and served on the Executive Committee of the General Assembly from 2008 to 2009, and was much involved with the preparation of the new constitution of the Church of Ceylon which was passed by the Parliament. He was elected as a Trustee of the Incorporated Trustees of the Church of England in Ceylon from 2011 to 2014. During the earlier years he was a member of the Junior Guild, Youth Fellowship and taught in the Sunday school and organized the 'Do you Know Contests'. He served on the Board of Governors of his 'Alma Mater' for a number of years and served as the Secretary. He also served as Secretary and President of the exclusive 12 member Factors' Association Moratuwa, which is now on its 85th Year. He served as a member of the Board of Compilers for the Souvenir Committee with me as its Chairman for the 125th and 150th anniversaries of Holy Emmanuel Church Moratuwa held in 1985 and 2010 when publications in Sinhala and English were produced.

Mandrupa, you have always stood by Oleap and assisted and supported him in a number of his work and assignments both at home and outside. You have been a tower of strength to him and was able to travel with him to a number of countries abroad. He was a person who loved family gatherings and was eagerly awaiting to celebrate his granddaughter's third birthday on 1st July, when he was expecting a family reunion in June this year. You are strong, and please remember that your in-laws are always here to support you and help and assist you in the long journey before you. Oshan, Gayathri and little Maia, your father was respected by the Society. He was outspoken and never gave into the trunants of politicians and to their whims and fancies. He hated the vile politics that existed in our motherland during the past decade. He was appointed as a Member to the first Public Service Commission which was an Independent Commission appointed under the 17th Amendment of the Constitution. He also served as the



Chief Examiner of the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Examination conducted by the Department of Examinations. After having served a distinguished career at the Open University of Sri Lanka for nearly thirty five years and was awarded the title of Emeritus Professor he refused his name to be nominated by senior professors as one of the three nominees to the post of a Vice-Chancellor of a University in Sri Lanka, in view of the final selection being made by the President of Sri Lanka was of a political nature. He

shunned such dirty politics breathing into a highly academic system. Such appointments made by the past regime are rejected by the learned society even today.

So Mandrupa, Oshan and Gayathri, and Maia, Oleap was an eminent Chemist, Scientist and a Science Administrator, who was honest, outspoken and respected by the Society and the Church whose demise will be missed by everyone whom he knew. He is now with heavenly grace in the presence of the Holy Angels.

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## Professor J N Oleap Fernando

Rt. Rev Kenneth Fernando

Professor J.N.O. Fernando was a close relative and friend of mine. I have known him from the time he was very young.

He was a very keen and brilliant student at S. Thomas' College and from his very young days, Chemistry was his favourite subject. He regularly carried away all the prizes at S. Thomas' College, that he possibly could.

He was also a keen Christian and he was eager to learn more about his faith so that there would be no mismatch between his academic learning and his faith. He remained a faithful member of his Parish Church in Moratuwa to the very end.

Others will write about his academic and professional achievements but I can testify to Oleap the person.

He was very impatient of any kind of injustice in the various institutions he served or in the country. He stood for the highest values and for scrupulous

honesty.

I worked closely with him both in the Councils of the Church of Ceylon and on the Board of Governors of S. Thomas' College.

He was very loyal to his alma mater and to the Church. I often turned to him for advice with regard to the administration of both these institutions and he was always a very willing collaborator.

I know how dedicated he was to the former Chemical Society of Ceylon and later to the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. It was his joy that so many were enabled to obtain professional competence in Chemistry through the Institute. He took a personal interest in its welfare and often spoke to me about its programmes.

I feel certain that he had more plans and a vision for the Institute but his somewhat premature demise prevented him from realizing them.

May his soul rest in peace and rise in glory.

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Oleap Fernando..... our classmate

Nihal De Silva (AGN)

Jerence Nancel Oleap, (JNO to most of us in school) born 1944 - a leap year - never really grew up, as he had only celebrated 18 birthdays, although in stature he was Oleaps and bounds ahead of any of us.

I first got to know him in 1952 when he entered the hallowed portals of S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia in to class 2B under Miss Bay. He was just another one of us – nothing spectacular except that he was only 2 years old in terms of strict Gregorian calculations. A bit precocious for two years, you might say.

Our lower school principal was a Rev. Barnabus from India. His name changed to Barnaiya among the boys with no malice aforethought and he taught us to

sing “My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean” at daily assembly and Thomian ingenuity even at that age changed it to “My Barnaiya Lies over the Ocean” –quite appropriate, after all, for a school by the sea. JNO could never say Barnaiya, probably out of respect for elders, and even in later years could never call teachers by their nicknames if there was even a hint of disrespect. Now, Rev. Barnabus stood at the top of a flight of stairs on a porch from which he would make his announcements. Pretty soon most of his announcements contained the name of J N O Fernando - always at the top of the class. He was beaten once by Veraan De Mel (VHL) – but that was just once and VHL could not keep up, and neither could we.



In those early formative years some of our school nicknames were generally targeted at some behavioral quality of the student. Thadiya, Kalu, Kotaa, Pol Adiya, Veddha, Puusa, Meeya, Haawa, Topiya, Crammer etc. are some I recall from our generation. Being considered a “crammer” – although a mark of distinction – was considered boring (square). However, all smart boys were not necessarily “crammers” and JNO was certainly not considered a crammer in a boring sense. Although not the athletic type he did participate in schoolboy lunchtime activities like cowboys and crooks, horaa police, football, cricket and tennis ball throwing, although he was never interested in playing marbles (or taws, as we called it). In retrospect, he might have had early signs of physiological restrictions as his interest in competitive participation was not visible. To each his own though! He, however, was well informed of all cricket scores, names and details during international test match series and also rugby. He was active in the school Student Christian Movement.

By his third Gregorian birthday JNO was an established “household” word at school. Never ever he did display any evidence of pride or arrogance in his studious reputation. Those of us at his “third” birthday party at “Pilberine Gardens” felt secretly honored at being on the invitee list. About a third of the class was from the Lunawa/ Moratuwa/ Panadura area and these guys had a camaraderie of their own. JR, VHL, LAC, LCN, JR, LH, MT (empty) Dias, KPD, KNJ, DS, IRPW were some of these guys. Some of them, from his same neighborhood, attended the same Holy Emmanuel Church and Sunday School, Moratuwa, with him. Again, JNO was just one of them (us) – never above them (us). This childhood humility was a hallmark of JNO despite his outstanding achievements.

At the annual Prize-Giving there was quite a stir as he basically carried all the prizes for his level. Once your name was called by the warden, the prizewinner would walk up the stairs to the stage from one end, receive the prize from the chief guest, and exit from the other. His name was repeatedly called so rapidly that he was basically going round in circles to the crescendo of applause and giggles of wonder “that one small head could carry all he knew”. Very fittingly, he was the chief guest at the Prize-Giving in the early 2000 and when visiting me in the USA a few months later, found the Prize-Giving souvenir/booklet (with his speech), that my mother had posted to me, on my coffee table. He was quite amused and impressed with

his mark in my living room.

Pretty soon it was time to wear long trousers. Some of us were keener than others to do so as a right-of- passage. This was also a display of fashion and of being handy, as much as a privilege of becoming a senior. However, it was also a cost to the parents on a tight budget. I distinctly remember JNO being kind of slow coming on to this catwalk. This right-of-passage, so impatiently looked forward to by most boys, obviously did not bother him at all. He was a notable absentee at the Girls' Schools' Fairs.

As we matured further, there was a tendency for the smarter boys to sit on the front rows of the class. JNO was usually front row in the middle, smack in front of the teacher. “Cribbing” (copying and cheating during exams) was another stage of adolescence that some of us went through. Cribbers were usually not in the front row. So, JNO did not crib – he didn't have to. Some of us though, at an angle behind his seat, would of course eye his answer paper for “hints” to improve our performance. Some of us were not smart enough to take the hints. The front row was also immune from questions from the teacher, who usually projected their questions to the middle or back of the class, from where ingenious replies were forthcoming, sometimes much to the amusement of the front row. “Recite Archimedes principle” was one such question at the Lower 6th and the answer by one of our most eminent lawyers in the country today (sitting at the back then) was “Sir, I have heard of Archimedes, but I never knew he was a principal”. JNO laughed out loud, and I like to think that his laugh mellowed the teacher's anger and frustration. JNO had a good sense of humor and appreciated the same in others.

Then came the GCE (O) levels, also called the SSC (Senior School Certificate) at the time. He set a new Ceylon record at the time by becoming first in the island by getting distinctions in five of eight subjects. Distinctions in those days were a very rare commodity. Our chemistry teachers, Mr. Jehoratnam and Mr. Jayasingha would never have had a premonition of the great chemist they were nurturing. They also nurtured another legendary chemist (of sorts) that JNO could not beat - ever. I believe he was a Weerasingha or Weeratunga. We had a blue hard covered chemistry text book written by a Wilkins. Weera's nickname soon became “walking Wilkins”. Why you may ask? When questioned as to how to make Oxygen, JNO very correctly replies “by heating Potassium Perchlorate with Manganese Dioxide as a catalyst”. When asked the same question, Weera would say “page 78”,



referring to Wilkin's Chemistry text. Walking Wilkins could accurately state the page number of all chemistry facts in the book but not the fact itself - something JNO could never do, despite all the distinctions. Despite all the accolades however, it never went to JNO's head – but perhaps a bit to his heart.

This was also the time when some of our less studious classmates took a curious interest in chemistry, especially the delicate chemistry related to nicotine and alcohol, and their side effects in particular. As far as we know this sort of chemistry did not turn JNO on as there was no page in Wilkins' that referred to this. So, it was a great and humorous surprise to see a trolley full of neatly laid out bottles of the best varieties of alcohols in his dining room when I visited Pilberine Gardens after about 35 years. This observation was also made by some of our other classmates who had successfully completed these chemistry practicals. JNO was very generous in his offerings and (as expected of a good chemist) seemed to have memorized the various combinations (formulae) for cocktails with distinction. Curiously though, I never saw him do the taste test on these concoctions. Perhaps, I thought, the neatly placed bottles on this mobile shelf at home gave him a sense of security and comfort, as if being in his lab – an innocent addiction of sorts!

Soon after the (O) Level results in 1959, the senior and College Form (A level) students were “demoted” to the first (ground) floor of the senior block building. This was a bit ego deflationary, as being on the second floor gave the seniors an air of superiority. Various theories as to why this happened were bandied around. Later it was revealed that it was because JNO had a heart condition that made climbing stairs too stressful. Being a “College treasure” the system adjusted itself to accommodate a bright star. He never announced it himself. This was probably a great tribute that a great school could pay to a great mere four year old.

JNO had a heart condition called a PDA (patent ductus arteriosus). The ductus arteriosus is a hole of sorts (between two major blood vessels) that closes within a few days of birth in most people. If it remains patent (open) it causes mixing of oxygenated and deoxygenated blood, lowering the available oxygen to the rest of the body. Leads to easy fatigability, chest congestion and lung infections and may even slow down physical growth depending on the size of the hole. JNO was lucky that it did not affect him till after

the (O) Levels.

He had successful surgery to correct the problem but was left with a hoarse voice as a complication of the procedure. During my training (in the USA), this same operation was the first heart operation I was allowed to do under supervision. I was nervous thinking about JNO's voice. The patient was a (real) four year old boy from Samoa who survived with his voice intact.

In 1960, one of our classmates (Charlie) and myself were hiking to Nuwara Eliya from Kandy along the railway track. At Nawalapitiya, the station master recommended that we stay at St. Andrew's School as the dormitories were available due to the holidays. We agreed, as it was a relief from sleeping under tent and we could also have a shower. The bedbugs gave us a hearty welcome and we were somewhat scratchy and anemic by morning but ready to continue our hike. When we thanked the station master he recommended that we drop by the headmaster's house (along our way) and thank him. As we approached the headmaster's house from the main road, we thought we noticed two familiar sights. One was the figure of JNO that seemed to get confirmed the closer we got. The other was a familiar blue covered book in his hands resembling Wilkin's Chemistry – which was also confirmed. He was on page 84 looking up the properties of Phosphorus. We three classmates were all surprised at this chance meeting in the middle of nowhere and exchanged stories as to how we were all here at the same time. JNO was sent to the cool climes of Nawalapitiya (to his brother's in law) to recover from his heart operation. We then got to know the details of the inside story of his health problem over some welcome Lanka Lime. Fifty four years later Charlie was also the Chief Guest at the college Prize Giving and fifty five years later JNO sent me – an Obstetrician Gynecologist - his complete medical reports, in confidence, for a second opinion. Was the reason the anatomical proximity of his problems to my specialty or was it confidence and trust in a long time friendship- or perhaps both? Either way, I felt greatly honored.

And uncannily, on March 2nd 2015, my brother and I were driving back from Nuwara Eliya along the Nawalapitiya road and along the way I was describing to him our hike of 1960. The landscape had changed somewhat but the headmaster's house was yet there. Just as we were passing the house and I was explaining meeting JNO there in 1960, my brother got a call on his mobile. He was wondering who could be calling him at 1.35 p.m. as he noted and spoke out the time aloud. I stopped the car almost in front of the house. The call



was from one of his friends and after the call we drove back home and I was informed of JNO's demise. I called Mandrupa who informed me that he passed away at 1.35 p.m.

It is my belief that JNO wanted to do medicine until his health problem was discovered. Subsequently, he changed to Chemistry, based on the anticipated stresses of studying medicine with his heart condition. Was it a great loss to Medicine or a great gain for Chemistry?

The change to chemistry required him to change to the mathematics stream at the College Form level (A level) where he was introduced to calculus by a Father Rev. Boyer Yin, the college chaplain and choirmaster, who was also a legendary mathematics teacher. There was some sort of chemistry between them I believe, as JNO was also a very dedicated follower of matters of the church. Father Yin had this conviction that all mathematical equations and formulae needed to be symmetric, and this seems to have impressed JNO quite a bit as he mentioned this many a time to me during our chats in later years. JNO's basic discipline, influenced by mathematical symmetry (order) and coupled with Christian precepts led to his exemplary character that saw him brought in as a member of the Board of Governors of his Alma Mater as well as in the Anglican Church lay hierarchy and in higher academic circles – but he never lost the common touch. About ten years ago, JNO spearheaded a project to establish a Prize in memory of Father Boyer Yin – such was the chemistry between them.

Let me give you a few examples of this common touch. JNO loved traveling. Mandrupa (his wife) accompanied him most of the time. He travelled extensively in North America staying with friends, family and colleagues. Most of this travel was done by Greyhound bus. One reason was because of the cost factor and the other was that he felt closer to the people. He lived within a reasonable budget and was never ostentatious. He was not traveling “up in the air”. They travelled like two curious teenagers with knapsacks and sandwiches and saw more country than most of us do, with never a complaint of the services and inconveniences except on one occasion when he complained that I was making the same egg and mayonnaise sandwiches three days in a row and implying I was not getting the “mixture” (formula) correct (symmetric). He consumed them anyway and we all drank tea from the same Thermos flask cup (lid) and never had to have $\text{Mg}(\text{OH})_2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (milk of magnesia, MOM) for dessert.

He told me that during the mid 1970s, when austerity measures in the country were severe, he was also seriously affected with his limited income. In the midst of this Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike decided to host the Non-Aligned Conference. There was a call for people to make available their vehicles to transport foreign participants. JNO answered the call to make some extra money and decided to be the driver himself. Schools and the University were closed and he had time on his hands. He was assigned to drive second rank people from Yugoslavia around and after the second day developed friendly relations with them. They were impressed that their “driver” was a Chemistry PhD of professorial caliber and that even got him introduced to Marshal Tito, the President of Yugoslavia, considered the then Father of the Non-Aligned Movement. Apparently he was tipped quite handsomely (and immediately), over and above the government pay that was meager and slow in coming. The Yugoslavians, at least, left with very high respect towards our local taxi drivers compared to our politicians.

JNO's love for chemistry did not stop at organic and inorganic. Another kind of chemistry – that of love – was also working. JNO discovered Mandrupa and I suggested that she be called Mandrupium, a rare and precious element indeed, with magnificent stable properties – one that did not decay with time and emit noxious rays. JNO Married in 1973 at the age of 29 with his best man also a classmate of ours (ALT).

JNO and Mandrupa were regular participants at our annual get-together of the Class of '52, held a week before the Royal Thomian cricket match. Our numbers are now down to about 20 – not bad considering we are now in our 70s. We survivors have heated but friendly discussions on mature matters (politics, religion, the economy, other's wives etc.) with some opinions boldly supported by legal brewed $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$. JNO had opinions unaided by this chemical armamentarium. One such was on the recently concluded civil disturbance of 30 years. He was of the opinion, probably greatly influenced by his Christian values, that it was an ethnic issue and needed to be settled non-militarily. Another classmate, who once had faintly heard of Archimedes, and was very vociferous in legal and political arenas, thought of it as a terrorist issue and preferred – even clamored for – the military approach. This was a potentially explosive mix but artfully catalyzed to a non-precipitate reaction by another classmate who was the then Army Commander. We had class in the class of '52 – a class



led all the way by our beloved JNO - or Oleapium as I used to sometimes call him with an element of humor. He said he could never make it to the Periodic Table.

Even on his last journey he was with his classmates. Four of us were pall-bearers. His soul is indeed resting in peace.

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## Professor J N O Fernando

Emeritus Professor Savithri Goonasekara

Professor JNO Fernando and I have been colleagues in the university system for many decades. We kept in contact even after I left the Open University of Sri Lanka, the institution in which both of us were professors in our respective disciplines. We were faced with many challenges during that time, having to cope with the turbulent political environment of an armed conflict in the North and East, and a Southern insurgency that challenged the writ of the government in the South. JNO was one of many valued colleagues who contributed with a sense of loyalty and integrity to decision making in difficult times, helping to create a collegiate environment that cushioned us from the violence that engulfed many university campuses. There were times when we agreed and also disagreed. However disagreement was neither politicised or unpleasant and personal. The concept of agreeing to disagree and maintaining a collegiate sense with respect for diversity of viewpoints were shared values.

It is only recently that I came to know of the challenges JNO faced as a student, and his courage and strength in coping with them, and ultimately achieving high standards of excellence in his academic and professional career. In some ways his commitment to ensuring high standards in all areas of university life, in an environment of compromise was perhaps born of his early experience as a student. These qualities of dynamism and passionate commitment to realising goals he set for himself, enabled him to contribute to the education system of this country and set uncompromising standards of academic excellence for the institutions he worked in and for his students.

JNO stood for honesty and integrity in public life and refused to seek the privileges of what he saw as a politicised higher education system. When colleagues crossed what he saw as accepted behaviour as holders of public office, he had the courage to denounce such actions as unbecoming of their profession. His Presidential address at the Annual sessions of the SLAAS shamed many who had signed political

statements prior to national elections. This impacted on several colleagues who refused to sign such statements on later occasions.

The last occasion when I met JNO was at the annual convocation of the College of Chemical Sciences where he made a pioneering contribution as foundation Rector of this private sector institution. On that occasion, I referred to the passion and commitment with which he helped to build this institution and provided a parallel path of access to higher education for the many talented students in our country who cannot enter our State universities. Professor Fernando was a visionary in advocating for a balanced public /private partnership in higher education, without compromising on the demand for adequate resources for State institutions, and regulation to ensure high standards in the private sector. As I said on that day, JNO "dreamt a dream, and gave leadership within the Institute of Chemistry to realise a dream that was also located in an ideal of service to his profession and his country". The pioneering achievements of both the Open University and the College of Chemical Sciences which he helped to establish will be a continuing inspiration to his family, friends, colleagues and students.

### Presidential Year 1985/86



Inauguration of the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Sessions



## Experiences Shared with Professor J N Oleap Fernando

Emeritus Professor Dayantha Wijeyesekera

I considered it a privilege to deliver at the Holy Emmanuel Church in Moratuwa a tribute to my friend and colleague Professor J N Oleap Fernando better known as JNO to most of us. During the World war torn leap year of 1944, JNO was destined to see the light of this world in between the bomb shellings on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of February and was quite aptly named by his parents as Oleap! He lived upto his given name, and truly leap frogged in many ways during exactly the 3 score and 11 years he completed.

I had known JNO from my school days at S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia from the early 1950s till such time he found that Chemistry was his best subject while it was my worst. More details on this aspect will follow. Thereafter, he and I went in two different ways till we once again got back to school at S. Thomas' College, this time to be on the Board of Governors from the mid 1980s for a while.

During the interim period on our return from overseas he had joined the University of Colombo in the academic field. Thereafter, it was our privilege to work together at the Open University of Sri Lanka from the mid 1980s when he rose the academic ladder to be the Professor of Chemistry and also the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, and in my opinion he developed the Faculty to be one of the best Science Faculties in the Sri Lanka University system. The graduates from the faculty were highly sought after by industry and they had many opportunities for post graduate studies both local and overseas mainly because of the moulding he did provide.

He fast climbed up his professional career as well in the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon to become its President in 1984 which institute had enrolled in the 44 member associations of the Organization of Professional Associations (OPA), and once again in my opinion is one of the most effective and productive Professional bodies providing tertiary education opportunities in the country. He leap frogged further in the setting up of the College of Chemical Sciences to be the founder Dean in 2002 and the Founder Rector from 2011 till his demise. The Awards Ceremony was held just two weeks before he passed away on Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup> and it was on that day he disclosed to some of us the medical ailment which has beset him.

Having mentioned all that to pay tribute to his

lustrous academic and professional career, I will dwell on his personal qualities, which are really unique and outstanding. He was an outspoken man of principles, who believed in hard work and above all deadlines and targets. When he said "Monday morning, 8.00 am....." he really meant it. He believed in "being on time is five minutes too late"! He was therefore undoubtedly a disciplinarian both as an academic and also as an administrator.

He had very strong religious convictions, high academic and professional standards, large hearted social responsibility and firm political views, and did not mince his words.

The previous Saturday when I phoned him to wish him for his birthday, he on his own told me that he had just read my article in the "Daily News". I inquired from him whether he agrees, he replied "Yes" and "No", but knowing his health situation I did not wish to pursue that topic of discussion bordering on politics.

Although there were many things on which he and I agreed, there was one issue on which we did not and each time I commented on it he used to reply with annoyance. I often told him, "You should have come forward as the Vice Chancellor of the Open University, which you developed so well as the Dean of the Faculty". He used to retort back by saying "*I do not wish to get the Office of Vice Chancellor, by going through the current stupid procedure*".

When we heard of his passing away we were all so shocked as he was so active as recently as two weeks before, with the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon and we never thought his demise would come so soon. But the good Lord thought differently, that he should be relieved from his strenuous labour of love for the youth of this land, as he may have paved the way for hundreds of thousands of them to stand on their own feet. It was the prayer of all of us that he finds rest from all his physical efforts and above all may his soul Rest in Peace.

The subject of Chemistry was so close to his heart and mind that he always intended it to be shared with non-chemists. A few years ago when he informed me that the Institute of Chemistry was contemplating conferring the Honorary Fellowship of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon to me, I was shocked and I told him that I do not deserve such an honour from the Institute of Chemistry, when Chemistry was my worst subject at



school and I just managed to scrape a pass at the G.C.E. “O-level”. But he responded that the prestigious conferment to a non Chemist is made every year. When he mentioned some of the names of those who have been conferred the honour, I was quite pleased to be among them.

However, it is very pertinent to indicate how the subject of Chemistry which I disliked at school, became one of the main subjects dealing with my research interests with some Research students at the University of Moratuwa and also from the University of Edinburgh, UK. Quite coincidentally, the other key subject in this research was Geology which was the subject I disliked during my civil engineering undergraduate career. But the lecturers in these two subjects I came across later for my tertiary level studies, Mr. Errol Fernando and late Mr. Sithamparampillai a Geological Engineer from Mahaweli Development Board at that time, completely changed by outlook and with their approach made me like the two subjects.

The research which included the contributions of Chemistry and Geology was for studies on the “Thermal hot water springs in Sri Lanka”, specially those of therapeutic value. Identifying the various minerals was essential in the samples of thermal water from the samples which were collected from different wells and which are of special benefit while bathing for various ailments such as arthritis and also beneficial for skin eruptions etc. Furthermore, in Geology the tracing of structural fractures or fissures in the bed rocks that enable the passage of water was necessary. There is much demand overseas for thermal water treatment and therefore there is great scope for development of this field in Sri Lanka as well. The moral of this academic venture is that we never know

when subjects or fields of study we dislike in our early days in life would become so important and relevant later in life!

Professor J N O Fernando and I shared an area of much interest, and that is development of tertiary education through professional education and other avenues for the youth development in Sri Lanka in addition to the conventional university system. The Institute of Chemistry which he nurtured for over two decades till he died with “his boots on” so to speak, undoubtedly conducts the best professional courses of study leading to degree level qualifications, recognized both locally and overseas for both employment and for post-graduate studies. Both of us received the impetus to go on this line due to the non-conventional foundation and conceptualization we received during our respective careers in the early days of the Open University of Sri Lanka.

He and his wife Mandrupa had a great fascination for travel and did encourage me and my wife, with details of cruises etc. He was often overseas and in the same way I used to do, combining travel with academic and professional visits. Not very long ago after the return from his last tour overseas when I complimented him on his frequent travel, he remarked “We must travel as much as we can now, as we never know when the time would come when we will not be able to travel anymore”. I do not think he nor anyone else would have thought his last journey on which he drove himself to the hospital would come so soon.

His life and example as a schoolboy, undergraduate, academic colleague, fellow professional, a devoted family member, an honourable citizen of Sri Lanka, would remain with all concerned as a sound manifestation of a great personality.



**Soft Opening of the New Building with religious ceremonies on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2005**



**Ceremonial Opening of the New Building on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2005**



## Emeritus Professor J N O Fernando

Emeritus Professor Nalini Ratnasiri

It was over three decades ago in 1983 that I came to know Emeritus Professor JNO Fernando closely when he joined the academic staff of the newly established the Open University of Sri Lanka as the Professor of Chemistry.

We were fortunate to be members of a team of committed and dedicated staff members at the Open University with whom we faced the daunting and uphill task of developing a distance education programme leading to the Bachelor of Science degree. Professor Fernando was one of the team members who played a major role in this task.

The success we achieved is illustrated by the fact that the Open University currently awards over 300 Bachelor of Science degrees annually. The total number of degrees awarded to date counts over 4,000. This was followed by many more programmes of study.

Professor Fernando made a marked contribution to the University. He had a fierce commitment to see that things were done right for the institution, the students and the staff.

I recall the Faculty and Senate meetings as well as the Council meetings where Professor Fernando was an active participant. These were occasions where issues were discussed and debated to finally disagree or arrive at consensus. However, disagreements if any, were no bar to continued friendship.

He had very strong views about discipline of

students as well as staff. I recall the sticker on his office door which read “Deadlines amuse me”. He instilled in students the value of meeting deadlines and keeping to time. He always saw to it that all deadlines were strictly adhered to whether it was submission of assignments by students, the holding of examinations or the release of results.

Professor Fernando was recognized by many national institutions for the contributions rendered by him. He was elected as the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Science at the Open University and served in that capacity for a period of six years. He was a President of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon and the Honorary Rector of its College of Chemical Sciences, a General President of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science, a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences and a member of the Public Service Commission.

I am privileged to have known JNO, to have worked with him, to have shared time with him and his loving wife Mandrupa and seeing the goodwill extended by him to all around.

JNO was a god-fearing person, a loving and devoted husband to Mandrupa who was the strength behind him. To Oshan and Gayathri he was a loving father. Mia, his grand-daughter, was his joy. He was a dear friend to all.

Although JNO is no more, fond memories of him will remain with us for the rest of our lives.

Fading away like the stars of the morning,  
Losing their light in the glorious sun -  
Thus would we pass from the earth and its toiling,  
Only remembered by what we have done.

Only remembered, only remembered,  
Only remembered by what we have done;  
Thus would we pass from the earth and its toiling,  
Only remembered by what we have done.

Shall we be missed though by others succeeded,  
Reaping the fields we in springtime have sown?  
Yes, but the sowers may pass from their labours,  
Ever remembered by what they have done.

Only the truth that in life we have spoken,  
only the seed that on earth we have sown;  
These shall pass onward when we are forgotten,  
Fruits of the harvest and what we have done.

Oh, when the Saviour shall make up His Jewels,  
When the bright crowns of rejoicing are won,  
Then shall His weary and faithful disciples  
All be remembered by what they have done.



### 'CHEMEX 2011' Exhibition and Trade Fair inauguration at BMICH



### 45<sup>th</sup> FACS Executive Council meets in Colombo for the first time on April 28<sup>th</sup> 2004.



### Conference on Chemical Education held April 29-30, 2004 in Colombo



Photograph of the delegates and representatives who were present at the Conference held to commemorate the Silver Jubilee completion of 25 years of the Graduateship Programme.

### Conference on Chemical Education and Research on April 3 & 4, 2014





*From the College of Chemical Sciences....*

## **A Historic Decade of Experience with Professor JNO Fernando**

**Dr. U S K Weliwegamage**

*Senior lecturer, College of Chemical Sciences, Institute of Chemistry Ceylon*

I heard about the Graduateship Programme in Chemistry as an alternative route to B.Sc. degree in 1990 while I was studying for GCE Advanced level. It was the only information I had about the IChemC till 2005. After graduating from the University of Peradeniya, the research culture at the Department of Chemistry created an enthusiasm on me to proceed for a M.Phil and later to a PhD from the same university. After my PhD I joined the Department of Chemical and Process Engineering of University of Peradeniya. However, not much chemistry was there at the Faculty of Engineering and I was willing to join with any other organization. At that time, I received the IChemC publications and the CCS newsletter. At one of the issues of the CCS newsletter, I saw the calling for applications for the full-time academic positions at the College of Chemical Sciences. I emailed my application with the CV to Professor JNO Fernando, the Honorary Dean of CCS at that time. I immediately received a reply saying my application was received and the reply would be sent in due course. I was very happy about the way he responded to me and thanked him in my reply. In short, I can say that I was selected as a full-time academic of CCS, really the first such appointment in the CCS. I started my service from 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2005. Professor JNO Fernando gave me a clear picture about the IChemC and CCS before and at the start of my career, and gave me several challenges. The Adamantane house constructions were completed by that time, but not many educational activities were there, other than having a few lectures and the library. Most part of the GIC programme was conducted at S. Thomas' College, Mt Lavinia. There were several tasks to undertake, such as refurbishment of laboratories with infrastructure and other necessary facilities, establishment of the H D Gunawardhana Instruments center. At the same time the GIC course structure was drastically modified. Further, with these new developments he wanted to recruit a larger number of students than previous years as more infrastructure facilities were developed, to cater for a larger student population. I am happy to mention that I could contribute to all of them with his proper guidance. As an example we conducted many popularization programmes on GIC programmes at Adamantane house and at schools such as St John College,

Panadura, Mahamaya College, Kandy etc. He participated at all those activities and educated the students on GIC qualification. GIC programme was used to be a part time weekend programme. His goal was to convert it to a more full-time programme gradually. We were first able to start some practical courses on weekdays for those who were free during weekdays. Actually before that, there was a heavy backlog of practicals as only limited time was available at week ends. Some students, those who were in their third year even could not start the practical. Gradually the problem was solved and the students were able to start practical in a few months after they start with GIC. However weekday lecture courses were not feasible at the beginning as I was the only available lecturer. However, we were able to expand on it gradually and to start two separate GIC programmes, the weekday and the weekend, about three years ago.

One major objective of Professor JNO Fernando was to establish a full-time academic culture at CCS. After I joined, Professor S Sotheeswaran came as a visiting professor for 9 months per year (became full-time after a few years). In 2007, Dr. Vinitha Thadhani joined with us. Professor S P Deraniyagala and Professor M D P De Costa spent their sabbatical years at CCS during the period 2009-2012. I have to mention that a good contribution to the development of the programme was received from all of them. Professor Fernando himself spent a six months period at CCS from his last sabbatical on honorary basis. Due to his continuous efforts, the number of academics in the College could be increased to about 10-12 at present, which ensures the smooth conduct of the GIC programme. The majority of them are former graduate chemists.

During 2006 onwards research projects could be introduced which was highlighted as a major component lacking in the GIC programme. Professor Fernando was instrumental in introducing the research course. It was not possible to find sufficient research supervisors as well as to convince the students on the importance of research. I can remember once he called me to go to S. Thomas' College to address a students meeting to give them a speech on importance of research.

We can see that the facilities for research as well



as the number of students enrolling increased largely during the past nine years. Now we have some postgraduate research students who are conducting their research at CCS laboratories to complete their M.Phil/PhD degrees.

GIC programme was recognized by the Government as an alternative qualification to a B.Sc. degree for higher studies and for employment. To make it more recognized worldwide, attempts were made to get the Accreditation of the Royal Society of Chemistry in 2012. It was received due to serious efforts made by Professor Fernando and academics.

Professor Fernando always encouraged the co- and extra curricular activities at the college. At the time of commencing the activities at Adamantane House, only a few such annual activities were there. With his guidance and fullest support many new activities could be started, such as sports day, annual blood donation campaign, all the religious programmes, annual talent show etc. I acted as the senior treasurer of the students association during 2005-2010 and was able to initiate these activities under his guidance. He further instructed us to commence the inter level and inter university debating competitions which are conducted to-date since 2006. I have to mention that he participated at all these events personally until the time of his departure, and he encouraged the students and appreciated their efforts.

Before 2005 the award of GIC certificates and medals were conducted at the IChemC annual sessions. He proposed to have a separate convocation for the graduation. The First Convocation was held in 2005.

Since 2005 many short courses and training seminars were organized at the Adamantane house. Further, some international conferences were also conducted. The ChemTech international conference organized by Mr. H S M Pieris in 2007, The International Conference on Chemical Sciences organized by Professor S Sotheeswaran in 2012 and the International Conference in Chemical Education organized by Professor JNO Fernando in 2014 are such major examples. The international year of Chemistry (IYC) 2011 was well celebrated with having a successful exhibition at BMICH as CHEMEXI.

Apart from the educational activities he was involved at IChemC activities as a very active member. He proposed to form regional sections of IChemC at different Departments of Chemistry at different Universities in the country and promote their activities by an annual sponsorship.

The Graduateship Programme in Chemistry was inaugurated in 1979, thirty six years ago. **The decade commencing from 2005 is the modern era of this programme.** I started my service at the College on the first of March 2005, a decade completed on first of March 2015. Our great teacher, the guide and the leader Professor JNO Fernando ended his historical career and passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015. Now you will understand why I wanted to name this article as such. Stepping on his way, following his principles to serve the College, Institute and the community of Sri Lanka will be the highest honor we could offer to him.

Dear Sir! You will be alive in our memories for ever.



## A Leader Like No Other

Dr. Chandani Udawatte

Professor J N O Fernando was easy to recognize in a crowd. His stature alone commanded respect. He always voiced his opinion in public, and fearlessly fought for what he believed in. He did not care whether his views were popular or not. He welcomed the challenge to endorse unpopular concepts if he believed they were correct. He was the academic parent of hundreds of students who will always be grateful to him, as was witnessed by the outpouring of grief on hearing of his sudden demise. Professor Fernando took it upon himself to address issues related to the Graduateship Programme, and he was not afraid to

confront anybody. He was a leader who led from the front.

Before I got to know his true personality, his demeanor was very scary, and most of us students at 'IChemC' did our best to avoid him. After a few years, his voice was not so intimidating, and we realized how much he cared about our future. He advised us about academic matters as well as personal matters such as balancing our finances and investing. He taught us how to invest in the stock market and how to take calculated risks. "After all", he said, "the biggest risk in life is not to take any risk at all". He told me that my



financial management was totally unsatisfactory. He was much more than a professor to me and other colleagues who were former students of Professor Fernando.

He was like another parent. In fact, he was one of the attesting witnesses at my wedding. It was a privilege to have had the opportunity to work with him, at the Open University and at the College of Chemical Sciences. His dedication to the College and Institute of

Chemistry Ceylon was unparalleled.

He was a visionary who was far ahead of his time. We will not hear his authoritative, loud, yet compassionate voice any more. We will not be able to seek his advice on academic or any other matter. We have lost our leader who cannot be replaced. We have to learn to carry on without him.

May he rest in eternal peace.

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To Sir, with love.....

Dr. H. Infas

Full time Academic, College of Chemical Sciences, Institute of Chemistry Ceylon

“But how do you thank someone,
Who has taken you from crayons to perfume,
It isn't easy, but I'll try.”
An excerpt from the song 'To sir, with love.'

In the film 'To Sir, with love' based on a semi-autobiographical novel written by E.R. Braithwaite, Mark Thackeray, an unemployed black American engineer finds work as a teacher in a notorious school in the slums of London's East End. The neophyte teacher with no experience is called upon to tackle a group of rambunctious, rough, white, high school teenagers who have been thrown out of other schools for various reasons. Thackeray, using his interpersonal skills, gets around his students to achieve what was considered unachievable by the rest of the school. His dedication and sacrifice is depicted in the last part of the film where he tears up a letter of appointment for a dream job as an engineer, which would have been more lucrative.

One might wonder why I am discussing a character in a film when I should be writing about our beloved Professor JNO Fernando, who left us suddenly on the second day of March this year. JNO Sir, as he is known to his students, and Thackeray's character have many similarities. Both took up the challenge and achieved what was deemed unachievable by others, they made sacrifices by turning down more remunerative opportunities that came their way. They stayed back for the betterment of the future generation.

In the same manner that this film inspired many teachers worldwide, Professor JNO's life story, his dedication and sacrifices have inspired many of us. I wish to share my personal thoughts of this colossus of a

man – both in size and character. Many accolades and tributes have been showered on him before and after his demise. Many have elaborated on his academic and professional achievements. For me, those are immaterial, when compared with the human behind all the medals and citations.

The female Asian Koel bird, or Koha in Sri Lanka, is a brood parasite that lays its eggs in the nests of crows, who raise its young. It removes one of the host's eggs to make room for its own. The unsuspecting crow hatches the nestlings for the Koha. In this modern era of materialism, we find people with similar characteristics as the Koha. They use others for their own benefit. They vie ruthlessly for positions and promotions and try to get it by 'hook or by crook'. But JNO Sir was a rose among the thorns. He set a good example. High political positions did not allure him.

He was a man with principles. He lived by it and never wavered from it until the end. The ethos he lived by is rarely found in people nowadays. He was a man of action who never minced his words. A strong personality, he lacked tolerance for stupidity and lethargy. If I call him an opinionated person, I wouldn't be far from the truth. We should not take the word 'opinionated' in the negative form. He is someone who does not stay quiet if he does not agree to something. He was opinionated in a very positive way. The only people who see it as bad and attach stigma to it are those who do not like to hear such people speak. I have noticed that this characteristic has brushed upon a few of us who have had the privilege of associating closely with him. He was someone who was not afraid to give his personal opinion. Eventhough he was a strong willed person, he was not stubborn. He was open to new suggestions from his colleagues, subordinates and



even from students. Back in 2003, after I completed my final examinations, he called me to his office to get my views about the course, the pros and cons, and suggestions on improving it in the future. I was moved by the fact that a man of such caliber would consider what a student had to say.

Professor JNO studied heats of adsorption of diatomic gases on tungsten for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Imperial College of Science and Technology. The metal tungsten is a hard, rare metal. The word *tungsten* comes from the Swedish language *tungsten* directly translatable to *heavy stone*. But behind his 'tough like tungsten' exterior demeanor was a huge, caring heart.

My first impression of him was not a pleasant one, which I assume everyone would agree. As fresh faced students in our post teens we found Professor JNO's gigantic build and character overwhelming. After being spoon-fed and molycoddled by our school teachers, we were thrown onto the deep end by him to swim ashore. We were clueless during his thermodynamic lectures. As most of us came from Sinhala or Tamil medium, words like isobaric, isochoric, entropy etc. were Greek to us. I still remember some of his famous phrases which he used during lectures - පට්ටපල් බෝරු (pattapal boru), ජුම්ම මාර්ක්ස් (summa marks), ගහලු බැන්නත් එකයි, බැනලු ගැහුවත් එකයි (gahala bannath ekai, banala gahuwath ekai), බැලු බැල්මට (balu balmata), You can't have the cake and eat it, budding chemist etc.

He always kept tabs on the students who passed out from the Institute. Whenever he went abroad for conferences and symposiums, he made it a point to visit his students living in USA, UK, Canada and Australia. He sent us Christmas greetings which showed that he remembered us.

As an excellent manager, he accumulated the funds of the institute and made it possible for us to have a building of our own. It was indeed a mammoth task. He is akin to a captain of a ship who steers it through stormy seas to shore. The present facilities that the

students of the College of Chemical Sciences enjoy are a far cry from what we, as students attending lectures at S. Thomas' College, enjoyed.

I still feel the void left by his demise- a feeling of loss you get when you lose someone very close to you. When I walk into the ICHEMC building every morning or attend meetings and look at the seat which he used to occupy – a feeling of emptiness and loss echoes all around me. When I joined the Institute as a lecturer in September 2014, he welcomed me back with open arms. I think, past ICHEMC students who came back to work for the Institute would also agree with me on how he gave us a sense of value. He was like a proud father who has watched and supported us in our growth. Even though I have associated him closely during my pre and post graduateship years while in Sri Lanka and abroad, I consider myself unfortunate not to have had many years to work with him.

Those of us who have graduated from the Institute owe a debt of gratitude to Professor JNO. Most of us, who could not find a place in State Universities, were able to obtain a Graduateship from ICHEMC. This graduateship has paved the way to some of us to continue our postgraduate studies in well recognized universities here and abroad while others went on to become research officers, managers and directors of companies here in Sri Lanka. If it were not for this course, we would have had to spend huge sums of money to complete our undergraduate studies abroad, which would not have been possible for everyone. Sir's efforts in strengthening this institution took us from crayons to perfume.

Sir, rest in peace, for we- your students, would carry on this legacy you have bequeathed upon us for many many years to come.

"If you wanted the moon

I would try to make a star

But I, would rather you let me give my heart

To Sir, with love."

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## Memories of my last visit to see Professor JNO

A. M. Jayasekara

*Additional Registrar, College of Chemical Sciences, Institute of Chemistry Ceylon*

Mr. N.M.S Hettigedera, a graduate of the IChemC and now attached to the Police Hospital and I had a rare opportunity to meet Professor JNO Fernando at his residence on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 before his

sudden demise on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015. Probably we were the two officers from the Institute who could see him just 21 hours before his sudden demise. Mr. Hettigedera came to my residence and I proposed that



we must go to see him on that Sunday as Mr. Hettigedara was unable to see him for a long time and Professor JNO had asked about him at several occasions. I drew my car to the residence of Professor JNO while Mr. Hettigedera seated on left side seat recalling memories of the past as a faithful student of him and how he gained his present rank in the Police Hospital and many other responsibilities he was holding in the Government due to the Graduateship Degree in Chemistry he obtained at the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon.

We reached Professor JNO's residence at 4.30 p.m. without any prior notice as I wanted to surprise him by accompanying Mr. Hettigedera. The gate was as usually not closed so that we could get in straight to the premises. I parked the car under a Thambili tree and then Mr. Hettigedera pointed out to me that some ripe king coconuts hanging as if they were nearly to fall down. I then reversed the car to a location just in front of his house. Then a voice came "*Kavuda Ave*" (who came?) two times. I said "*Sir Api Awe*" and when we stood in front of the main door Professor was surprised to see Mr. Hettigedera. "Oh, after a long time" he said. He was so happy to see Mr. Hettigedera whom he was referring to as a role model of the Institute and at least three times he expressed his pleasure in seeing Mr. Hettigedera after such a long time. We were requested to sit in front of him and at the table he was doing some work, probably marking some papers. We had a very long chat and Mr. Hettigedera being a professional dietician talked many things about the food he should take especially on soup. At that moment only we came to know that he was taking soup only for a couple of days, so that his intestine will not be blocked due to the cancerous growth. On the previous day Professor JNO attended three meetings at the Institute but there was no difference and as usual he was conducting meetings.

We were warmly welcomed by Mrs. Mandrupa Fernando, his beloved wife, who prepared sweet "*Peni Aappa*" (sweet hoppers) and served them hot to us while we were having a very good conversation. I enjoyed only two of them but Professor JNO insisted that we should eat some more. Meanwhile she wrote on a piece of paper some notes on the food recommended by Mr. Hettigedara. Mrs. Fernando said that she was preparing various types of soups. Professor JNO was very attentively listening to Mr. Hettigedera's advice on food types that he should take. After some time, Mrs. Fernando served us with very

nice pieces of chocolate cake. Mrs. Fernando said that she gets '*Nivithi*' from market and add them to vegetable soups. I told her that there is a well grown '*Nivithi*' in my home garden and we never added chemical fertilizer, in fact it has grown on its own without being planted by us. And its leaves were very thick and fleshy. I told her that, I would be sending some leaves on the following day so that spinach could be mixed with the food. I never thought that he will be not there on the following day to accept my offer. When I see that *Nivithi* supported by the stem of a Bankok Ehala Tree in front of my house I always feel very sad, because he could not survive at least a couple of days allowing me to serve them.

I was asking several persons in the Institute to send some leaves through them. At about 11.30 a.m. on the following day (2<sup>nd</sup> of March) I heard Professor JNO's sudden demise at Asiri Surgical Hospital in Narahenpita. I could not believe this news as he was talking to us very well and showed no sign of seriousness of the illness. I recollect those days when I was in the University of Ceylon Peradeniya (1965-1969) as a science student and, the opportunity I had to talk to him in the Chemistry Laboratory in several occasions. I could not meet him for many years as I was serving in various other fields except chemistry. I was lucky to meet him in 2011 when I was selected by him to assist in the activities of the 'International Year of Chemistry' which was successfully implemented by Mr. Hettigedara under the guidance of Professor JNO. Professor JNO was very happy that it had been the first ever largest Exhibition held at BMICH by the Institute and much publicity was accrued to the Institute through various programmes.

Demise of Professor JNO is a considerable loss to the Institute which he loved so much. He will be remembered through many people whose lives he touched so positively. He leaves an amazing legacy behind thousands of students here and abroad, who loved him so much. They are his legacy through them he leaves this world a better place than when he found it.

May his soul rest in the Kingdom of God!



## **In appreciation of Professor JNO Fernando**

K R Dayananda, *Graduate Chemist (1984)*

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 2015, in response to a sudden telephone message, I rushed to the Asiri Surgical Hospital. The somber expressions of the people gathered there and the weeping eyes of Mrs. Mandrupa Fernando confirmed my worst fears. I accompanied Mrs. Fernando to the mortuary where an attendant pulled out a trolley covered with a white cloth which he partially uncovered, revealing the face of that great teacher, Professor JNO Fernando.

Thus ended an era of a visionary leader of our time.

The late Professor JNO Fernando had a vision for the development of the educational programmes of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. He managed the programmes single handedly and fearlessly, with the best interest of students and the membership at heart.

In the early seventies, with the commencement of the Laboratory Technician Training Course (LTTC/DLTC) Professor JNO Fernando along with some dedicated senior Chemists of the country, laid a solid foundation for technical level Chemical Education in Sri Lanka. In 1979 the tertiary level Graduateship in Chemistry (GIC) programme was initiated.

Professor Fernando showed the highly regimented and stereotype hierarchy of Sri Lankan academia. Apart from those selected to the conventional university system there existed another segment of talented youth in the country. They included many who had the required qualifications and desired to pursue higher studies and also those who were employed at middle level, in relevant areas in the chemical sciences. His willingness to depart from the traditional concept of 'Chemical Education' was a challenge to the conventional opinions of academia on Sri Lanka's tertiary education.

Throughout his unsurpassed management of the Graduateship in Chemistry programme, his 'watch words' were educational exceptionalism, transparency and discipline.

With his vision, the upliftment of IChemC as a professional academic institution in the educational arena was a great success. This was further strengthened by the fact that the GIC programme established by him with fellow members, Professor ER Jansz, Professor R S Ramakrishna and Professor H

D Gunawardhana in 1979 was inaugurated by none other than the late Professor Stanly Kalpage, the then Chairman of the University Grants Commission.

I joined the LTTC (DLTC) programme of the Institute of Chemistry while employed as a Laboratory Technician at the CISIR. Professor JNO Fernando had just returned from abroad, and I had the privilege of following his lectures in Physical Chemistry as well as the practical classes conducted by him. We learnt about ideal gases, which I feel, could be extended to the nature of human beings as well. With the passage of time, I realised that there existed rare ideal men too such as Professor Fernando who was an exceptional 'ideal' human being. He used to call students to the black board to answer questions with written explanations. This was the most feared part of his lectures, but the lessons I learnt, I still remember with gratitude.

In 1979, I joined the first batch of the GIC Programme. Having worked at the Natural Products Section of the CISIR, I thought I had enough practical experience in physical and organic chemistry, and therefore, together with a fellow student from the SLSI, I did not follow the GIC practicals. We believed that our experience in handling the GLC, IR and UV spectrophotometers would exempt us from the practical course. However, it was not to be so! We were called up for an assessment on the practical component by Professor Fernando, and he asked only one question on the Lassaigne Test, and I was clueless about it! His stern expression was unchanged though I looked at him pleadingly for an exemption. The next day we were told in no uncertain terms that we had to follow the GIC practical course to gain the required level of knowledge. Though I obtained the Graduateship, it delayed me from graduating with the first batch of students, but I was not disappointed as the knowledge I acquired greatly supported my career thereafter. Every time I looked at Professor JNO Fernando, I noticed the determination and courage on his face, which amazingly remained the same throughout the 36 years of my association with him.

Professor Fernando was extremely attached to his family and religion, and I found out later to his students as well. He was dedicated to Chemical Education and to the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, earning respect



and maintaining authority. He never compromised any of the educational programmes conducted by the Institute.

He was a prolific writer. His exceptional capability of organizing activities well in advance was shown in all of what he did. I learnt that the dates in his diary were marked well in advance of events such as the Ruby anniversary celebration of IChemC educational programmes held in the year 2014, which he initiated planning in 2012. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Ceylon Chemical Society is due in 2016 January and the activities related to same had been already initiated by him at the time of his demise.

He encouraged teamwork and flexibility among the GIC student community, but was rigid on decisions regarding programmes of study.

He was an effective director and a manager, which roles he accomplished by his charisma and discipline rather than adhering to the 'rules of the book'. His strategies helped the development of the GIC programme and propelled the progress of the Institute. He also showed that personal qualities still mattered in educational bureaucracies. He was a 'GURU', who built generations to take over from where he left. He never allowed sentiments regarding students to hold him back from making unbiased decisions. He led from the 'Front' and lighted many young lives – including mine. He did not seek publicity in the media to promote the Institute.

He introduced a variety of topics to the GIC curriculum, and encouraged extracurricular activities in all aspects including social, religious, sports and talent shows such as AURA.

I was fortunate to be associated with him as Treasurer of the IChemC for over 10 years during his tenure as Chairman of the House Finance & Membership Committee of IChemC. One day, I asked my little son to wait for me until I finish the meeting held at the SLAAS building and after going home my son asked me, referring to Professor Fernando, "Is that gentleman your Principal?" I answered "Yes, he is my Principal in all aspects, not only during that meeting but in other aspects of my life too". Professor JNO used to write his personal/ family annual report every year, and circulate it during Christmas with his plans for the next year. He was named Oleap, being born on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February in a leap year, and he celebrated his birthday once every 4 years in a grand manner. We, his students too were among the invitees including my wife and myself. In the year 2012 however, it was not celebrated in the same manner as they were planning to

celebrate their Ruby wedding anniversary on a grand scale. Professor and Mrs. Mandrupa had planned to celebrate the occasion in 2016 when their son would also be in Sri Lanka. So I was waiting till 2016 to celebrate his 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday, but it was not to be.

Most of us can remember a single teacher above others in our school, university or other higher educational institute, as one who has had a positive impact on our lives, and in my opinion, Professor JNO Fernando hails as the best, most inspiring and influential teacher for me.

As a teacher he was a legend, disciplined, tough and unfailingly prepared. He was not only a teacher of Physical Chemistry, but also a leader who was at the core of the College of Chemical Science's disciplinary process, as well as carrying the heavy load of professional responsibility on his shoulders. It was stressful work, heartrending at times, but essential to the integrity and progress of the Institute of Chemistry. There was no limit to the lengths he would go. A leading chemical educator, he always said that those in the chemistry profession have an opportunity to create something unique. During the GIC introductory programmes, he made it known that he very much valued the profession of chemists over other professions such as medical, accountancy or engineering. He was proud of the College of Chemical Sciences and highlighted the achievements of thousands of its graduates whose professional lives were enriched. I am proud to say that I am one of them and am profoundly grateful to him.

I now appreciate the fact that he let us 'run our own show' and allowed us to establish ourselves as Graduate Chemists rather than get recognition for the GIC course through Government circulars as being equivalent to a University degree. This was because he cared about us deeply and had the utmost confidence in us. He expected us to prove by our performance that we were not second to graduates produced by the conventional university system. Most importantly, he believed and trusted that the Adamantane House is for CCS students as it was built with the funds paid by them. Today I fully endorse what he expected from his students even though I had many heated arguments with him during the meetings regarding this issue. I should also mention that all such arguments were confined to the walls of the Board Room. He never harboured any ill feeling, he was direct and open in all his dealings. If he desired to voice his thoughts on a matter he would resort to explaining himself in an email.



Professor JNO Fernando's reputation rests principally on his enthusiasm, vision and openness. He tried his best to achieve set targets. His influence on others has been immense. There are not many Professors such as him in the field of Chemistry or for that matter in any other discipline. He demonstrated that he belonged to a very rare category of polymaths. He wrote with authority, displaying his vast knowledge in education, not only in chemistry but in other areas of sciences as well, on life and in human behavior.

Even though the Institute would have been at an advantage with political influence, Professor JNO Fernando never sought the help or assistance of

politicians. He always discouraged his colleagues and students from doing so too. He despised those who thrived on political power or supported politicians. He would have dreamt of the day that those politicians / Ministers of Higher Education would witness what he had done in terms of his contribution towards the progress of chemical education in Sri Lanka. As he used to utter on many occasions with respect to the flawed administration that prevailed in the country: "Sri Lanka, a Land Like No Other" still holds true. However, with his wishes and blessing we hope that it would change for the better in the near future.



## **A Tribute to Late Emeritus Professor J N O Fernando**

Kumudini Goonethilake, *Graduate Chemist (1984)*

Emeritus Professor J N O Fernando was my teacher, mentor and excellent academic leader under whose guidance I worked for the last 35 years at the College of Chemical Sciences and at the Open University of Sri Lanka.

To many of us, who were near and dear to late Professor Fernando, March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015 was turned out to be one of the darkest days of our lives. Our hearts were shattered when we heard the sad news of his demise at an unexpected time. I still cannot come to terms with the fact that he is no more with us.

In this tribute I would like to share some of my experience as a student of late Prof Fernando at IChemC, and also as a junior colleague at the Open University of Sri Lanka.

I vividly remember the very first lecture delivered by Prof Fernando, immediately after the inauguration of the theory course, in the GIC Programme. The lecture was not on Chemistry, his own specialty which he always proudly announce as the "Central Science", but on Mathematics. When reflect on his approach towards teaching Mathematics I tend to believe that he had an innate ability to read the minds of students. He motivated us in learning Mathematics through careful guidance and continuous encouragement. Chemistry lectures were no exception. I believe those are qualities of a good teacher.

Professor Fernando's guidance was not limited to studies and I remember how I sought his advice on many occasions when I needed honest and trustworthy opinion. He had an empathetic ear and I found him as a

kind and an understanding person. He always devoted his time and energy to help his students and rejoiced listening to their progress.

When I joined the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) only I realized that the late Professor Fernando's administrative capabilities and excellent work discipline. He was well recognized in the Faculty for his straight forwardness in any matter. His guidance and the standards, work ethics made all of us at the OUSL to work hard for the betterment of the students. I had the privilege of being his research student and his encouragement blended with patience made me to complete my postgraduate studies in Chemical education on time.

GIC graduates, Alumni and the diplomates had a great deal of respect for late Professor Fernando. It is our prime duty now to see that late Professor J N O Fernando's legacy in relation to science and chemistry education is preserved, protected and strengthened for the future.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not mention the support extended to him in his endeavors by his beloved wife Mrs. Mandrupa Fernando, Oshan, Gayathri and little Mia. You have lost a loving husband, father and grandfather but I believe that he is watching over you from his heavenly home. May God Bless you!

May His Soul rest in Peace!



## Appreciation – Professor J N O Fernando

Purnima Jayasinha, *Graduate Chemist (1986)*

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, I received a call from a friend who gave me shocking and sad news; Professor J.N.O. Fernando had passed away a few minutes ago. It has been almost six months since his demise but I still find it hard to believe that our dear Sir is no more. It would be impossible for any other to fill the void his passing away has created at the Institute of Chemistry.

Thirty years ago, I came to know him as a lecturer at the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. Professor Fernando delivered the very first lecture on Units and Dimensions. I still recall how he brought us up to the blackboard to do the calculations of units and threw remaining pieces of chalk at students who dodged coming up to the board. He was a dedicated and excellent lecturer who was loved by all the students.

Soon after I graduated, he asked me to assist him with Physical Chemistry practical classes at the Institute during weekends. I joined the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) as a demonstrator, and had the opportunity to work under Professor Fernando, the Head of the Department of Chemistry. His day started very early and he was in his office as early as 7.00 a.m. He was an excellent administrator and academic, who planned and organized events well ahead. We had to pass his room in order to sign in the attendance register. He could recognize staff members by the sound of their footsteps and called them without raising his head to assign them work. He was stern when it came to work but, at the same time, he never said 'No' to us. He encouraged his young employees to enjoy themselves; to do some shopping, to take a slightly longer lunch break or to leave the office a little early to go to the movies. When he met us next, he would ask us what we bought while shopping or about the film we had watched.

He was very caring and kindhearted. I was just about to start my postgraduate studies when I lost my father. I still remember how he called me to his office and asked if I wanted to take some time off before starting my studies. He was very happy when I told him I was going to start working. He did the same for all his staff; if he didn't feel it was right to ask someone directly about a situation they were in, he called a friend and inquired about it to help in any way he could.

I was so fortunate to be the Secretary of the Academic Board of College of Chemical Sciences for nearly 10 years, where Professor Fernando was the

Chairman. He was always there whenever we needed guidance and advice. The experience and training I received were immeasurable in value. I now rejoice at the memory of him introducing me as the dedicated secretary of the Academic Board. I enjoyed working for him because I saw many of my father's qualities in him. They were both loyal Old Boys of the same school and raised their voices against injustice and unfairness. They never chased after prestigious positions or for fame in their careers, but dedicated most of their time for the well-being of the younger generation of the country.

Professor Fernando always encouraged his students to get involved with extracurricular activities. He made it a point to take part in all the activities, and acknowledged and praised his students. He gave his utmost support to students, whether in studies or personal matters. He did everything for the benefit of the students and genuinely enjoyed the successes of his students. Professor Fernando had a unique quality; he remembered most of his students by name and batch, and whenever he had a chance to talk to a graduate, he never forgot to ask about the others in their batch.

He used to ask and advise us on our future plans. He advised me many times on saving money. He was proud of himself for saving money to establish the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon without taking any loans. It was one of his greatest dreams which he made come true. He had many plans to do more to benefit the College and its students. Unfortunately, it all came to an end at a most unexpected time.

I spoke to him last at the College Convocation, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February, this year. He was very happy to see me there and thanked me for coming, as I had previously informed him that I would not be able to attend in order to be present at a meeting with the new Chairman. He was very active and was making plans to host the next Convocation at the same venue. Sir, I just cannot imagine a Convocation without your impeccable planning, and your speech, in which you proudly announce the achievements of the College and its students.

May God comfort his devoted wife, Mandrupa, who was the strength behind his success, his loving son Oshan, daughter-in-law Gayathri, and adorable little Mia.

Dear Sir, you dedicated so much for our well-



being and success. I cannot thank you enough for what you have done for us. Although you are not with us, your beautiful memory will forever remain in

our hearts.  
May he rest in peace!

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Professor J.N.O. Fernando: Ideal Role Model Under All Conditions

Dr. Piyal Ariyananda, *Graduate Chemist (1997)*

The news of the sudden demise of Professor J N O Fernando is still an unacceptable matter to many of us. He was an immortal figure for most of those who were closely associated with the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. His vision, his authority, his presence and his towering figure, and most of all his kind hearted, childish laugh, yet the sweet dictatorship have been greatly missed by many of us since his departure.

His life was a rule book, or technically speaking an instruction manual for many youngsters, and even for grown-ups. Starting from rather a jittery beginning which almost threatened his life, he conquered many battles and wars with his courage and determination. His academic achievements are discussed by many of his academic colleagues and there is no argument on his academic and professional achievements. His service to the Chemical Education in the country and especially for the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon is beyond comparison to anyone who ever lived in Sri Lanka. He held whatever the academic or professional position he had with dignity. He decorated the position with his work ethics, loyalty, efficiency, planning and knowledge. Further, he stands out among his colleagues on his unparalleled service to the position he ever served.

I met Professor J N O Fernando at the first interview held at the SLAAS premises for incoming IChemC Students in 1993. His voice was unrecognizable, let alone his English to a new comer from a rural village. Somehow, I was able to convince him that I am worthy enough material for the IChemC as a potential Graduate Chemist, and I was enrolled. First we could not recognize anything coming out of his mouth, but later, we were able to learn so much from him. However, we got used to his teaching style, some liked it, some who dropped out, did not like it. As students we feared his authority, command, figure and most of it, his voice. He was a teacher of one of a kind. Never late for any lecture, and was well prepared. It did not matter to him how many students he had in the class, even for two students, he would have taught if they were present. His knowledge is unquestionable,

and his memory was amazing; logical as a lawyer, yet mild and kind as a priest. He had all the qualities of anyone's choice.

As a student, I was fortunate to have him as a teacher and a mentor. It is not an easy task to impress a perfectionist like him, but both mine and my wife Mihiri's academic achievements made us closer and grow a bit beyond teacher-student relationship, and lately he was much closer to me than a teacher as I grew professionally to meet at least some of his expectations.

Professor Fernando planned everything well ahead. He paid meticulous attention to details. He checked and double checked before doing anything. Just after his untimely death, we got to know that he had instructed to reserve the date and venue for 2016 CCS convocation as well, he planned it almost a year ahead. When he visited the United States in 2008, for about a months' stay, I planned most of his trips by coordinating his students. From the beginning to end, he had everything written and planned, even the locations to visit. Not only that, his desire to cover the most in the visit amazed me about his stamina and perseverance. He could even walk miles without feeling tired. Still I remember the day I picked them up from Washington DC Gray Hound bus station. He was fit enough despite the long bus ride, just wanted more even in the evening. Although he was a very serious character, his sense of humor was also notable. During his stay with us we shared many light moments. While staying with us at Delaware, he did not forget to discuss the possibility of collaboration between the Departments of Chemistry at the University of Delaware and the College of Chemical Sciences, but it did not materialize as the university was not aligned to such collaborations.

He had an unconditional loyalty to the mother land. Whenever we had any discussion on my future professional plans, his first request was to come back to Sri Lanka to accept a faculty position at the Institute of Chemistry, and he persuaded me twice before finally succeeding in 2013. He was worried about the students



who stay abroad after their graduate studies. Most of his public talks to the students included some sort of request to come back to Sri Lanka and serve in any capacity. He himself made an example by staying in Sri Lanka despite being a very successful figure who could easily go abroad. His advice to me was “You are nobody abroad, but you are somebody in your own country” and it's very true. I experience his advice first hand in Sri Lanka.

He always wanted the Alumni Association of the college of Chemical Sciences, Institute of Chemistry Ceylon to become an organized, influential body to help out the Graduate Chemists and youngsters. Several times he attempted to revive the Alumni Association and even encouraged to organize social events to gather Alumni members. Even without asking, he allocated certain portion of students' fees to the Alumni Association fund, so there wouldn't be shortage of essential funds. Although we requested him to be present at the last Alumni gathering, he reluctantly declined to participate due to his medical conditions, but was concerned enough to send a message through the ex-president.

On a personal note; he communicated often with me as a mentor. He was one of the witnesses at my marriage, and he was happy about it. Just after my PhD was over, he offered me a position at the Institute of

Chemistry Ceylon. Even after two years, again he refreshed the offer, but I could only decline as I accepted the BASF position. When I decided to come back to Sri Lanka, he was delighted and immediately worked with the Institute Council and the academic board to accommodate me. Even after leaving the Institute in three months to accept the current position, he never made any negative comment. His only request was that I would be more involved with activities at the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon.

I am not sure if he would have known the plans of the new Alumni Association committee. Unfortunately, two days after the get together, we received that unfortunate news, which is still not acceptable. He created a legacy in Sri Lankan Chemical Education. He enlightened thousands of lives through the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon and the College of Chemical Sciences. “What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal”. He would have departed us physically, but he lives within each one of the Graduate Chemists ever graduated through the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, and inspires us from the heaven.

Dear Sir, You will be greatly missed!

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## My Memories of a Great Mentor

Dr. George D. Chellapa, *Graduate Chemist (2003)*

The news of Professor Oleap Fernando's passing away greatly saddened me. A giant among chemists was no more. Much has been written about his academic and professional achievements, but I want to focus on the man many of us came to admire and emulate at the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon when we passed through its doors. Everyone who has studied chemistry at the Institute, or within the state university system, has heard of Professor Oleap Fernando. But it is within the Institute that his imprint has been greatest.

I first met Professor Fernando when I walked into the SLAAS building in 2000. I heard him before I saw him, his booming voice running the show as the cohort of new students were interviewed, something which he continued to do till the very end. I also had the privilege of having my first class at the College of Chemical Sciences (CCS) on “units and dimensions”. Of course,

as students we were nervous and afraid to talk to Professor Fernando. He loomed large within the Institute and his stature and voice only added to his presence. However, soon you came to realize that Professor Fernando was an extremely fair-minded person who always looked out for the best interests of the students of the college.

I got to know Professor Fernando more closely towards the end of my graduateship course at CCS when he invited me to participate in fund raising for an international conference in 2004. It was the first time I had been asked to do such a task and with trepidation I accepted it. It was a great learning experience for me, forcing me out of my shell to speak to outsiders. The experience really helped me to become more outgoing and confident. As a teacher Professor Fernando was extremely good at bringing out the talents of students



and always encouraging us to improve ourselves. Not only students, he took great pleasure in the advancements seen in the staff at the institute. Many were the times when he spoke in glowing terms of the physical/material and social improvements that the staff had made, owing mainly to his encouragement.

There are many qualities that one can admire in a gentleman such as Professor Fernando. I think one of the things that I most admire is his ability to look beyond a person's race, religion, and economic status. What mattered to him was your ability and nothing else. This merit-based criterion was a breath of fresh air in a country such as Sri Lanka, where belonging to a certain group or having the right connections meant going forward in one's chosen career.

Everyone who met Professor Fernando would agree that despite his many accolades and achievements he always remained humble, easy going and open to new ideas and experiences.

Both Professor Fernando and Mrs. Fernando had an insatiable appetite for travelling and experiencing the world we live in. In my time away from Sri Lanka I have had the pleasure of meeting Professor Fernando in UK and in USA. It is hard to imagine that less than a year ago he was visiting us in Baltimore. Their ability to travel for long periods of time, enjoying the sights and sounds of the places they visited with an open mind is truly inspiring. It is also a rare quality to see among Sri Lankans.

Professor Fernando was able to achieve so much because of the support and encouragement that he received from Mrs. Fernando. I know that she encouraged him to involve himself at CCS knowing how transformative his work was in hundreds of student's lives, while she took on the responsibility of running the house.

It is impossible to imagine the Institute of Chemistry without Professor Fernando's vision and his determination to see it through. The hundreds of students, including me, who have pursued our dreams in science, would not have been successful without his vision and determination. This vision turned a small professional organization such as the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon into what it is today. Wanting to pursue science but not having entered the state university system or being unable to go abroad for our education, many of us were left with limited options after our Advanced Level examination. It is then that

the College of Chemical Sciences/Institute of Chemistry Ceylon graduateship came to our rescue. Today, over 75 of us have obtained PhDs while many others have gone on to read for other post-graduate qualifications, contributing to society in Sri Lanka and abroad.

It is difficult to picture walking into the buildings that stand today as the Institute of Chemistry and realizing that Professor Fernando is no longer around. I recall back to 2005 when the newly constructed buildings were opened. A life long dream and vision was then fulfilled. It was not an easy task to achieve. Even today the graduateship programme remains one of the most cost effective degree programs in Sri Lanka. To erect a building while keeping the course affordable was largely due to Professor Fernando's involvement in the Finance Committee of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon where he carefully managed the funds that led to this building and the subsequent extension.

I also admire Professor Fernando's unshakable honesty, again something that he imparted to his students and staff. Professor Fernando was someone who always went out of his way to help many of us. Many are the times I have asked him for advice and help and he has always been there for me.

Some people come into our lives and then leave, others come in and make a change for the better. Professor Fernando was one of those people who changed a multitude of lives for the better, and that influence will live on through his students. The void that he has left in our lives, and the loss at the Institute will be felt for a long time. However, I think he would be overjoyed to see this void being filled by the Institute's own graduates in the future.

I think **John Quincy Adams** (1767 –1848) captured best of what Professor Oleap Fernando is to many of us, when he said:

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."*



## I wish it was reversible

Nuwan Bandara, *Graduate Chemist (2010)*

For some people he was Professor Fernando and for most of us he was “J N O Sir”. Mere words can not elaborate how greater a loss we have encountered and how much it has impacted the IChemC community. He was a stronghold in which most of us took refuge and emerged strong through qualities and knowledge imparted into us by him. The passion to work and work hard was one of his qualities through which he took IChemC to heights that one might have thought impossible during its inception. At times he was a shepherd for lost souls, a Field Marshall for those who needed direction, a teacher for those needy of knowledge and most of all a role model of inspiration. It is impossible to write an account that would do justice to his qualities and to what he was. Hence, I apologize in advance if my commentary does not paint a perfect picture of him.

I can still recall the very first day I saw him. Even though I had heard about him through printed media I had never seen him physically until the very first day I stepped in to the IChemC premises at Rajagiriya. As I entered the council room of the old building where new students were interviewed I saw this heavily built person dressed up in his usual brown color attire speaking to a student in his deep voice. I, as a nineteen year old boy was intimidated by the first sight of him but couple of months later I realized how wrong I was. When he interviewed me during the one to one student-Dean interviews, I got the opportunity to speak with him personally for the first time in my life. I realized then how open minded this gentleman was and how much he valued the views of students. He would listen intensely to ones comments and would often write it down in a small notebook he kept with him. Most of all, he would remember most of the comments made in those interviews which showed his interest in what he does.

He was the “guru” of thermodynamics. His reputation was such, with the word *thermo* his name comes to anyone’s mind without any hesitations. I was not good at mathematics when I entered IChemC. Thermodynamics taught by Professor Fernando was a turning point for me to get over this math-phobia. I can still vividly remember how he taught us thermodynamics. One of his most memorable statements was “if you are on *watauda*, soon you will

be *kotauda*”. His level of intelligence made thermodynamics come naturally to him and he used his skills to transmit his knowledge to students at a level they understood so that one day they would also become as fluent as him. Looking back, now I realize how beautiful those days were. Learning some hardcore physical chemistry from such a skillful master was indeed a privilege and it is quite unfortunate that future generations will have to settle for hearing about this academic legend than being able to attend one of his lectures. He was a master who loved to see his students doing better than him. You can always go to him and clarify your doubts. He never humiliated you for not knowing something. He is a master irreplaceable under all conditions and fate took him irreversibly from us in an unexpected moment.

In my sophomore year, when I started doing physical section A practical sessions supervised by him, I had come to know him somewhat and had got accustomed to his teaching methods. I had heard stories about him throwing books for plagiarism. He despised plagiarism and took severe measures against it. He had a zero tolerance policy for such activities and he valued honesty above all. He went through lab reports thoroughly and the students were called to the front table to explain mistakes they had made or for them to make comments on their own work. It is hard for me to recall a single book that had gone through him without an error being identified. He was that sharp. My lab report on the other hand was graded by him on an assessment day, hence I escaped. When I was a Teaching Assistant, he trusted me in physical chemistry practical sessions and had also given me to carry out his experiment in section B on a day where he was extremely busy, I felt honored and privileged.

During examination times, we often meet him requesting a change in the proposed schedule. One can reason with him if the arguments were made under fair grounds. In times where the examination schedule has already been approved he told us “minority of one becomes the majority”. This still resonates in me and for me it shows how he cared about those students whose voice did not surface.

Professor Fernando never took a bite that was too big to swallow and he always advised us also not to take risks that are far too big for us. He had the blood of



a clever investor and never he did spend lavishly on unworthy causes. Being a member of the Student Council and most of the organizing bodies of student hosted events, I had the fortune of working under him. When he was directly involved in a project which was funded by IChemC he took special precautions to make sure it yielded a profit and not a loss. Even though at times we thought his measures were too drastic now I realize how well-thought they were, which obviously came through his maturity, experience and most of all through the sense he had in finances. His financial philosophy was risk free and it has paid good dividends to the IChemC community. It is truly fascinating to see how IChemC has developed over the last few decades. Starting in a building belonging to another party and then moving to its own premises about a decade ago and now further developing the land to address the ever-growing need for space by having another building is a remarkable step achieved by IChemC.

His attention to detail still mesmerizes me. He would not send out even a simple notice until it was perfect. His vocabulary and style of writing made every article that passed his desk look like a master piece of a professional writer. He would edit a document the old school way and would keep on changing, even his own previous comments, until he felt it was good to go. This is a prime example of the kind of dedication he showed for his work and how passionate he was about it at the same time. It is no exaggeration to say his skills were better than the embedded coding of MS Word and he had proven it over and over again in the history of IChemC by the

sheer number of paper articles, agreements, practical sessions, course contents & supplements he had authored and/or edited. He was a man of word and punctuality. Never would he get late for a ceremony nor would he tolerate ceremonies starting well past the scheduled time. He made his thoughts known clear when things got late or not got done at all. He would always send out a clear message to anyone irrespective of his/her status if things were delayed or had not met with the expectations and standards of the institute. Deep in him, he might have thought adhering to such stringent guidelines may not please others but would drive them to accomplish what was required. It certainly did help young people like me to be responsible and do the job the right way rather than in the easy way. This great authority he expressed and had naturally in him made him a strong leader in the eyes of many and all who were involved in activities related to the IChemC made sure they carried out their duties promptly and correctly.

He loved IChemC unconditionally. His whole life in fact seemed to be built around IChemC. He was never shy of cracking a joke or two or even sharing a moment with his peers as well as with his subordinates. I was fortunate to have him on my wedding day and the present he gave will be cherished and treasured for the rest of my life. The vacuum that has been created by his departure is huge and it will take some doing to fill his shoes. Even though we may not see him walking among us he would always have a special place in the hearts of those who loved him. May we be lucky to be your students in another life.



**Ceremonial Opening of J N O Fernando Lecture Hall on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2005.**  
**Chief Guest: Rt. Rev. Duleep de Chickera**



**Unveiling of Photographs of Distinguished Service Awardees in the Council Room on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010**



### *From Students....*

## **In Loving Memory of Professor JNO Fernando**

Everyone can almost recall a very special individual, who was tough but caring, an idealistic instructor, who went beyond the call of duty and left an imprint on us for the rest of our lives. He had in his hands the power to influence and mould a student's mind, the ability to promote confidence, stir thinking and awaken dreams. Professor J N O Fernando was indeed a self moralized person who dedicated his academic life for upbringing the future of many students. We, as students of the 32<sup>nd</sup> batch was fortunate enough to have received our graduation from hands of such a distinguish and an honorable person. We, "his

three musketeers" as he would always call us, make this a valuable opportunity to give tribute to Professor Fernando, who built in the foundation and the door step for our future to make our dreams a reality.

Lives of great men all remind us,  
We can make our lives sublime.  
Departing leave behind us,  
Foot prints on the sands of time.  
May you dwell in the heavenly arms of Jesus.

Michelle, Shalani & Jennifer (32<sup>nd</sup> Batch 2014)

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“To the world you maybe just a teacher, but to your students you are a Hero”

Not everyone is born extra ordinary; not everyone has the potency to touch our hearts; not everyone can leave an eternal imprint for lives. They say only legends have that legitimate authority and skill to leave behind blissful scars. Never did we realize the impact he had on us, never did we knew how much he meant to us until he was set free from this crucial world. Professor J N O Fernando, the Founder Father of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon departed from us and left all of us in a devastated alarm. The world just lost a great Master and his legendary philosophies.

Not everyone was lucky enough to learn by his soundful lectures of physical chemistry. He was one heroic icon and a man of his words. He abided and stood by his principles and laws; and with years of hard work, he got through the ladder of success and brought up like his own child, our 'second home' to where it is now. 'Thank You' is not the word of appreciation we

would pay tribute to but by our actions. We would take 'your child' to higher steps and it is our duty to do so to not let the stable foundation that you built to rumble down. Professor J N O Fernando opened up the path of success to many of us and gifting us with an ambition to live for.

There are certain things that we do not want to happen but have to accept, things we do not want to know but have to learn and people we cannot live without but have to let go. Professor J N O sure lives among us guiding and watching over his solid foundation he had to let go off. The news of his loss struck all of his family, friends and his beloved students. Our deepest condolences to his wife, Mrs. Mandrupa and Family.

May you rest in peace Sir and may God Bless You!

Level 4 (2015)
College of Chemical Sciences

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## **The best gift a person can give to another person is knowledge**

“The best gift a person can give to another person is knowledge.” The person who gives knowledge is known as a teacher. As students in the College of Chemical Sciences (CCS), we know that thousands of children were not able to enter state universities were benefitted by CCS. This great second chance was given by Professor J N Oleap Fernando, the founder of College of Chemical Sciences. This gave students

opportunity to become undergraduates equivalent to other state universities. Because of his unselfish efforts and hard work the CCS became internationally recognized. He was a great pillar standing to help children in knowledge and also financially. He appreciated students' skills, talents and personalities to make their future bright. He always taught us not to waste time but learn as much as possible and do what



you like. He was a great role model to all of us. "I say what I do and I do what I say" he said often. He was punctual all the time. This shows the greatness of his personality. He was a trustworthy friend, a good father, a great leader, a teacher of teachers and a remarkable human being who had humanity. Thank

you sir, it's an honor to be a part of this wonderful institute gifted by you.

Level 3 (2015)  
College of Chemical Sciences

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~The Guardian Angel~

The gift to the earth from the heaven,
The strength to our world the god has given
The evergreen tree who took us to his shade,
The Legend who is gone but never gets fade...

The everlasting smile with a young heart
Showing no pain but joy from the start,
The board filling cursives well ordered and neat
The soul of our alma mater; her ever heartbeat...

The hearts stinging with the pain which cannot bear
The god had taken you from us and that's unfair,
The Guardian Angel who gave us a new hope
Dear father who taught us climb up from a slope...

The young souls which you had given a vision
Will always keep in mind to succeed your mission,
To reach the highest and spread your light
Add it to your immense glory and make it more bright...

Day by day your dream reaches its way
The glory of our chemists; around the world they'll say...
"Our ever loving sir, you will last forever
In these students' hearts and will forget never..."

~On the memory of our dearest sir, Professor J. N. O. Fernando who departed from us unexpectedly. We all do not have enough words to say how much we respect and we love you sir. You still teaches us with all your publications. You will still teach and help many young students for a long time with your work. Hats off respect to your undying young soul and the strong personality...millions of thanks for all the things you've done for us, for our stable future...we really miss you sir...you are our Guardian Angel~

Level 2 (2015)
College of Chemical Sciences

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### Remembering Professor JNO Fernando

"As a well-spent day brings happy sleep, so a life well used brings happy death", says Leonardo da Vinci. The news of Professor J N O Fernando's demise reached us as a torrent of shock for it was only a few days back, that he had come to our lecture hall in his usual jovial self and told us not to be slaves of the calculator, not to be slaves of the mind.

He was a father figure for all of us and we feel unprivileged because the number of days we could spend with him was limited. But in that short time we saw how unparalleled he was to any other. At first sight we thought he must be a strict and a proud man and when we first heard him speak we feared that our assumptions were about to get proven. But as we attuned to his hoarse tone, joyful chuckle, energetic mind and his frank smile, our fears began to unfreeze. For it was then we truly began to see Professor JNO for

who he really was. He was strict and he was stern and he would always say deadlines were deadlines. But proud, he never was. Later we would learn that he had had a lot of reasons to be proud of. He had not just been our 'JNO sir' but a world known Professor. But he was never proud.

He was a scholar who excelled at all stages in life but he never looked down on our naive stupidity. He was a teacher who made us repeat our calculations till we finally mastered the art and taught us that perseverance was a discipline of the strong minded. He was a man of his word and principle. Above all, he was an amazing human who took serene delight in the simple things that life offers. He put quality above quantity and taught his students to do the same. He had a beautiful mind and a generous heart and he never pretended to be something he was not.



Being a winner of many scholarships, it in itself is an unbelievable feat that he pioneered in the opening of the Institute the Chemistry, Ceylon where students who did not receive entrance to government universities could pursue their higher studies in chemistry. Though his parting has sabotaged our dreams of working with him, it has left us with the

inspiration to be like him; to be a man of his word, to serve mankind with unconditional enthusiasm and to follow the legacy he left behind.

Level 1 (2015)  
College of Chemical Sciences

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In Memoriam...

“Pillar of strength was he to the new comers, a giant - both in word and deed - we looked up to; guiding us, the toddlers in the Chemical sciences and caringly teaching us to walk, never letting us fall. He did what he did with great class and elegance that when he was called home, there wasn't an eye that didn't shed a tear, not a single person who didn't miss him so

dearly, and none who didn't feel the great loss. We called him 'our Professor JNO'. He is still ours and he will ever be. Until we meet again Sir, may your soul rest in peace!”

Damitha Fernando, Level 1 (2015)
College of Chemical Sciences

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### Dean felicitated in London by Graduate Chemists



**Prof. J N Oleap Fernando**, Hony Dean/CCS was felicitated on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2008 at Sekara Restaurant, Victoria, London by a number of CCS Graduate Chemists & their spouses.

### J N O Fernando Felicitation Symposium on Drug Discovery and Research January 8, 2012



**Prof. Roshan Perera presents felicitation memento to Prof. J N Oleap Fernando**

### 15<sup>th</sup> FACS General Assembly & 13<sup>th</sup> Asian Chemical Congress held at Shanghai, China from Sept 13-16, 2009



This was the ninth (eighth consecutive) occasion on which the Institute has been represented by Prof Fernando as its official delegate at this biennial gathering convened by the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies (FACS).

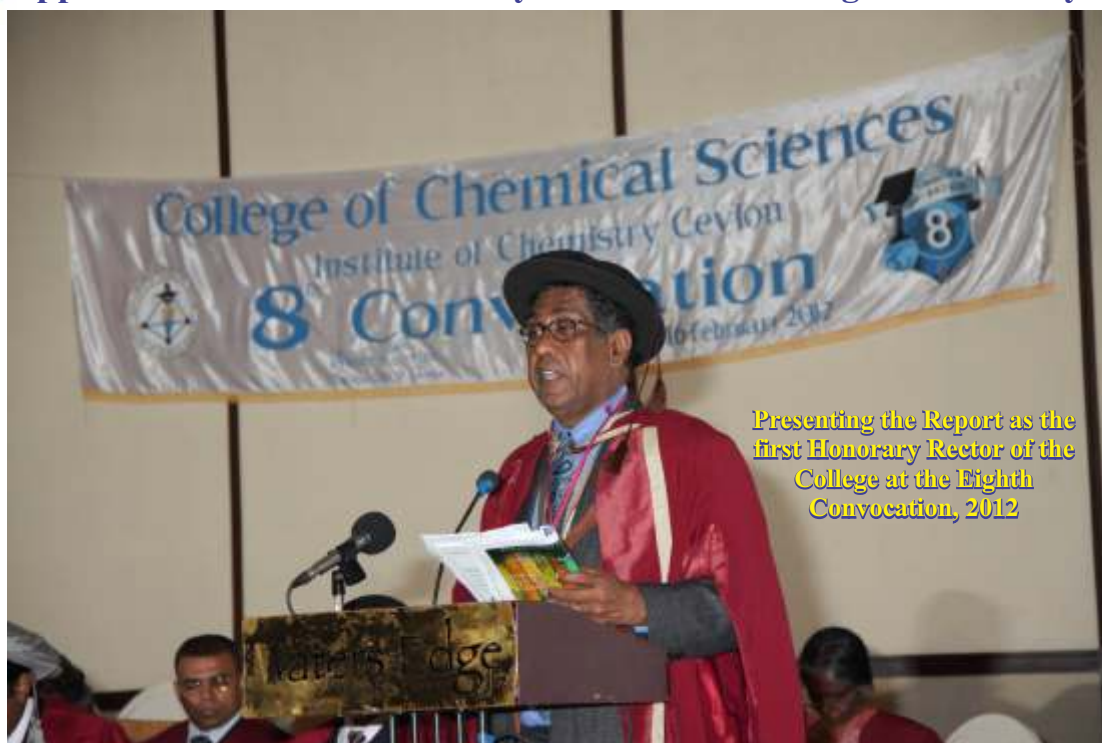
### Science & Industrial Exhibition, 2001



**Opening of Science & Industrial Exhibition held on 20th June 2001 at the SLAAS Auditorium.**



**Appointed as the First Honorary Rector of the College from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011**



**Presenting the Report as the first Honorary Rector of the College at the Eighth Convocation, 2012**



**Presenting the Rector's report at the Eleventh Convocation, 2015**

***Extract from the Report of the Honorary Rector at the Eleventh Convocation on 19.02.2015***

“We continue to go forward with confidence, enthusiasm, satisfaction and fulfillment that our alumni are doing so well that we do not need formal advertisements or paper accreditation.

I have attempted during the course of this report to show how “we have from a very small beginning been able to convert ourselves from a very modest narrow outfit that threatened to remain as such forever into a vibrant agent to give our Institute dimension and stability”.

(I am only proudly quoting here from a recent letter received from our revered Past President, Dr. R O B Wijesekara)

Before I conclude, may I therefore thank everyone, academic and non-academic, who have provided us all the support, assistance and co-operate to reach our current status and position”.



## Link Agreement signed with the Nothumbria University, UK



Ms. Rosalind Martin, International Projects Manager at Northumbria University formally handed over the letter of recognition to Professor J N O Fernando, Hony. Dean of our College at a simple ceremony held at Adamantane House on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007 in the presence of Dr. Nandanie Ediriweera, I.Chem.C. President & other I.Chem.C. Staff, Officials & Officers.

## Link Agreement signed with the University of Cincinnati



A preliminary agreement towards establishing this link with CCS was signed on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2008 at Adamantane House by Dr. Mitch Leventhal, Vice Provost, University of Cincinnati & Prof. J N O Fernando, Hony. Dean/CCS.

*"Our collective  
hearts are heavy  
with sympathy"*



*Professor J N Oleap Fernando*  
*(1944 - 2015)*