

“In Celebration of the Life of Professor Ragunathar Kanagasuntheram”

After a month of planning at regular weekly meetings, the programme for the event “In Celebration of the Life of Professor Ragunathar Kanagasuntheram” was finalized for 24th July 2010.

At 2.00 pm, guests started to stroll in at the concourse of the NUHS Tower Block, next to the Kent Ridge Wing, National University Hospital. By 2.55 pm, more than 100 guests were ushered into the Auditorium for the ceremony. With all guests seated, the ceremony commenced with a slide presentation, capturing the life and times of Professor R Kanagasuntheram. This candid presentation was initiated by the Committee headed by Professor P Gopalakrishnakone and edited by Associate Professor K Rajendran. It related the life and times of Professor Kanagasuntheram from his PhD days in Cambridge University, his times as an Anatomy lecturer at the University of Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), subsequently at the University of Khartoum, Sudan, Africa, followed by his days at the then University of Singapore. The other side of Professor Kanagasuntheram least seen or heard about (i.e. his social/leisure life) was also well documented by members of his family.

The slide presentation was followed by the observance of a minute of silence as a mark of respect for the great teacher, researcher and mentor. This observance was followed by messages from Dr Vivian Balakrishnan (Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports) and Professor Tan Chorh Chuan (President, NUS).

The sharing session commenced with the Chief Executive of NUHS, Associate Professor Benjamin Ong, followed by the Dean, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, Professor John Wong. Others sharing their memories of and experiences with Professor Kanagasuntheram were Associate Professor Grace Ong (Dean, Faculty of Dentistry), Professor Tan Ser Kiat, (CEO, SinghHealth Group), Dr Choong Yeh Woei (President, Singapore Medical Association), Professor P B Chacha (former Head, Orthopaedic Surgery, NUS), Professor Robert Pho (Emeritus Professor, Orthopaedic Surgery, NUHS), Professor Yong Eu Leong (Head, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, NUHS), Professor Wong Hee Kit (Head, Orthopaedic Surgery, NUHS), Professor Ling Eng Ang (former Head, Anatomy). Five more messages were read to the guests; these were from Professor Lee Chuen Neng (Head, Surgery, NUHS), Professor Loh Hong Sai (Former Dean, Faculty of Dentistry, NUS), Professor Lee Tat Leang (former Head, Anaesthesia), Associate Professor Chen Fun Gee (Head, Anaesthesia) followed by a message from Professor Gillian Morris-Kay (Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Anatomy, UK).

The grandson of Professor Kanagasuntheram, Mr N Ramana delivered an eloquent speech honoring his grandfather whom he addressed as “Thatha”. This was followed by the sharing by Professor Bay Boon Huat (Head, Anatomy, NUHS) who announced that the Department of Anatomy is launching a “Professor Ragunathar Kanagasuntheram Bursary”, whereby a Committee had already been formed (chaired by Associate Professor S S W Tay) to oversee the drive in the raising of funds. One to three bursary awards will be made annually to needy

students in Medicine/Dentistry who have excelled in their examinations and showed promise of becoming good doctors/dental surgeons.

Associate Professor K Rajendran was presented with a portrait of his father drawn by Ms Madhuvika Murugan, a PhD student from the Department of Anatomy, NUHS using the “stippling method”. Associate Professor K. Rajendran took over the stage at this point to thank the guests, family members and the working committee members for remembering and recognizing his father’s achievements and contributions to the medical fraternity as an exceptional educator and mentor. The ceremony’s highlight was the lighting of candles by all guests present. These lighted candles were lined-upon the edges of the rectangular black-tiled fountain, thereby forming a rectangular perimeter of lights surrounding a lighted cylindrical central float (with a photo of Prof Kana) at the middle of the fountain. It was a spectacular sight to behold and brought back fond memories of the late doyen of Anatomy in Singapore.

Guests were then ushered to the foyer of the NUHS Tower Block for a nice reception.

P.S. Professor Rangunathar Kanagasuntheram Bursary

Past students of Professor Kanagasuntheram and well wishers who would like to come alongside for this worthy cause could send a cheque to the Anatomy Department, NUS payable to “National University of Singapore”, with the words “Professor R Kanagasuntheram Bursary” written behind.

Mailing address: **Ms Violet Teo**

Department of Anatomy

NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

#4 Medical Drive, Blk MD10

Singapore 117597



