

## **Presenting, Dr. Champa Priyadarshini Banagala for the conferment of the honorary fellowship of the College of Ophthalmologists Sri Lanka**

*The Journal of the College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka 2015; 21: 45-46*

Born to a respectable family from Nugegoda, her father Prof. Kaluarachchige Jinadasa Perera was a former vice chancellor of University of Sri Jayawardenepura. Her mother, Mrs. Karuna Mahathanthila was a graduate teacher. She was the second in a family of six.

She had her primary and secondary education at Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo, and excelled in studies as well as extra-curricular activities.

She entered Colombo Medical Faculty in April 1974. She was outstanding in her undergraduate career and obtained second class honours, in second, third and also in the final MBBS with distinctions in physiology and obstetrics and gynaecology.

After graduating in June 1979, she did her internship at General Hospital, Colombo under Prof. K. Dharmadasa and at the De Zoysa Maternity Hospital under Prof. Dr. D. E. Gunathilaka in 1979 and 1980 respectively. Following a short spell at the Central Blood Bank, she joined Eye Hospital, Colombo in September 1981. She obtained her DO in July 1983 and MS in October 1985. Her overseas training, was at King Edward the 7th hospital, Windsor UK and she obtained the FRCS.

Having returned from United Kingdom, she was board certified, in October 1987 and since January 1989, she served as a consultant ophthalmologist at the National Eye Hospital, Colombo, until her retirement in 2013 after a glorious innings.

During her 32 year stay at the Eye Hospital she did an extra ordinary amount of work as a surgeon, trainer, examiner, administrator and also as a social worker.

From the beginning of her career as a consultant, she was a great teacher. We who were lucky enough to work with her, knew that she would cultivate, a great trust of capabilities in the trainee's mind. It would be a miss, if I didn't comment on her brilliance, as an anterior segment surgeon, who can deal with many complicated ophthalmic situations.

Her keen interest in training, teaching and examinations, is showcased by her involvement in the Board of Study for the last 16 years in various capacity. She held the position of the Chairperson of the Board of Study, for two consecutive terms over a period of 6 years and saw to it that the ophthalmology training remains of highest standard. A land mark during her tenure was the establishment of the subspecialties in ophthalmology. She has been an examiner for MS/MD part one and two and DO since 1996.

In addition to the post graduate teaching, she actively participated in under graduate teaching at the Colombo Medical Faculty and was a member of the special senses module.

She was a founder member of the College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka and a member of the committee that drafted the constitution of the College at its inception. She held the position of the Secretary of the College in 1994-95 period, the prestigious post of President of the College in 2003 and an advisor since 2008 to date. During this time, there is no doubt that she rendered an immense service to the College. During a very successful presidency in 2003, she took the College to new heights.

She was also the Organizing Secretary of the SAARC Ophthalmological Congress held in Sri Lanka in year 2000. She was the College nominee for International Council of Ophthalmology and the Council of Women in Ophthalmology - Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology.

In 2007 when the Eye Hospital administration was in turmoil, she stepped in as the acting director and along with the goodwill of every category of staff, ran the hospital with great success.

She has also held many responsible positions, within the Ministry of Health, being a member of the Medical Devices Registration Committee, Drug Registration Committee and functioning as the national focal point for prevention of blindness programme from 2000 to 2006 and national focal point for cataract in vision 2020 programme since 2007.

She has rendered her services, not only to doctors but also to the paramedical staff by being the director of the ophthalmic technologist programme since 2006.

She has been a keen researcher as well and has several publications to her credit which appeared in the annual *Journal of College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka*.

Humanism has been very dear to her, in addition to all the academic endeavours, she undertook a lot of social work. She is a council member of Helpage Sri Lanka, to date and is an honorary member of JICA. She was a member and later treasurer of Eye Care Sri Lanka. She has organized numerous eye camps, including surgical camps, in remote parts of Sri Lanka, giving sight to thousands of poor people all over the country.

She is happily married to Dr. Upali Banagala, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon and blessed with two lovely children. Her daughter, Ishani is an English teacher at a leading International School in Colombo and son Dr. Dileepa is a post graduate trainee in Orthopaedics at National Hospital, Colombo. She is a budding photographer and loves travelling.

Madam President, without any doubt she has enabled all her trainees to become fine ophthalmologists in our country, therefore her contribution to the College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka is immense. I honestly could not think of a candidate who deserves this honorary fellowship from the College, more than Dr. Champa Priyadarshini Banagala.

Madam President, I proudly present Dr. Champa Priyadarshini Banagala for the conferment of the honorary fellowship from the College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka.