

IN MEMORIAM

26th June 1995 was the 10th death anniversary of our former Prinapal. Mr CE Anandarajan. The appreciation wntten below. by Prof.KD. Arudpragasam,an OldJohnian. appeared in TheJuly issue of the Tamil Times - Editor.

CHELLIAH EDWIN ANANDARAJAN - An Appreciation

A Great Educationist & Principal

Born: 31 January 1932; Entered glory: 26 July 1985; Asst.Teacher:

May 1955-May1970; Co-Vice Principal: June1970-December 1974;

Vice-PrInclpal: June 1975 - February 1976;

Principal: March 1976-June1985.

A decade has passed since the day on which Chellaiah Edwin Anandarajan was torn away, cruelly, from the bosom of his family by an assassin's bullets. Jaffna lost one of its most promising sons, one of her brightest luminaries. Vivid memories remain of that traumatic event. One cannot forget the grief of the stricken family, the spontaneous lamentations of the school family the shocked unbelief of old boys, parents and people from all strata of Jaffna society. The passage of time has dulled the pain of parting and now, it is possible to look back dispassionately at his life and work.

Anandarajan became the Principal of St John's College, Jaffna following in the footsteps of a long line of illustrious and distinguished men. He did have St John's College in his heritage for his great grand-father Robert Williams had been a Headmaster and his father Mr G.S. Chelliah was a teacher. He chose the teaching profession which was fortunate for St John's and for Jaffna.

I came to know Anandarajan well as a very good teacher of Zoology, anxious to develop teacher capabilities and student achievement. I was lecturing in Zoology at the University in Colombo and was involved in curriculum development, syllabus formulation and examinations. Our paths crossed, first, at various seminars and discussions. Later on, marriage ties brought our families together. I was able to understand and appreciate Anandarajan as a family man and a social worker. I worked (closely) with him as he laboured in the interest of his students, especially during the years of the infamous medium-wise standardisation. He did me the great honour in 1983 of inviting me to be Chief Guest at the College Prize Giving. I remember the occasion vividly, his charismatic presence on and off stage. Sitting on the stage with him I thought of the prominent role he had in Jaffna society, how much he would inspire his students and the immense contributions he would make in the years that lay ahead. Alas, that was not to be.

He was a born leader endowed with special qualities of leadership. In his student days at St. John's he held numerous positions including that of scout leader, cadet leader, and senior prekct. When he moved into teaching, positions came to him easily. He was the unanimous choice for Principal, and when the mantle fell on him he wore it with ease and grace as 'to the custom born'. He was president of the Jaffna YMCA, president of Rotary and a delegate to the Colombo Diocesan Council.

Anandarajan was supremely self-confident. The members of his family circle looked up to him with trust and devotion. His students turned to him with their problems, educational and otherwise. So did their parents and teachers. People in the community came to him with their problems marriage, bereavements, disputes and disappointments. He helped them all to the extent that he could. So in time his name became a household word in Jaffna society. His period of stewardship at St. John's was perhaps

the most turbulent and difficult that any Principal before him had to face. First there was the matter of medium-wise standardisation and then the '83 riots and the ethnic conflict. The riots brought a large influx of students and he ensured that St. John's would do her utmost to help his people in the hour of their greatest need. During the troubles that developed in Jaffna during the last years of his life he rendered yeoman service. Such was his stature that he could talk to both sides and therefore was able to help those who got into difficulty. He served tirelessly on the Citizen's Committee. In the end he laid down his life in the course of these endeavours.

His efforts for the school bore ample fruit. Achievements in studies and sports were maintained at high level. St. John's remained at the forefront of education not only in the peninsula but also in the island. He undertook an extensive building programme, including the Pooranampillai Block. The Ponnudurai Block, The Arulanatham Block - These will remain as lasting monuments not only to those for whom they are named but also to the man whose initiatives and purpose made them realities.

Much has changed during the last ten years in the land that he loved so well. St. John's continues to serve to the best of her ability. Anandarajan realised from the beginning that the development of Jaffna is inextricably intertwined with education. Therefore, he dedicated himself to that field. Whatever lies before us in the future his vision remains true. St. John's must prosper and grow from strength to strength. So too must the entire system of education. That would be a lasting memorial to a great Principal and educationist.

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