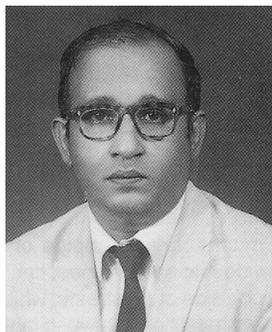


Obituary

Dr. W J Gomes

MBBS (Cey), DCH (Lond), MRCP(Edin), MD(Cey), FRCP(Edin)

Sri Lanka Journal of Child Health, 2001; **30**: 49



1922 - 2001

It was in the late 1950s that I first met Dr Win Gomes when he was a medical officer attached to the Child Welfare Service, Colombo Municipality and I had returned after postgraduate training and studies in the UK and had been appointed lecturer in Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo.

Paediatrics as an independent department of the faculty of medicine was 'born' in 1949 with the late Dr C. C. de Silva as first professor. It was a somewhat difficult 'delivery' but with help from the late Sir Nicholas Attygalle, professor of obstetrics and gynaecology and dean of the Faculty of Medicine the umbilical cord to the department of medicine was cut without much difficulty.

The entry of Win Gomes into academic paediatrics was initiated by his volunteering to do after hours clinical teaching at the Lady Ridgeway's Professorial Unit for undergraduates assigned to paediatrics and were willing to spend an hour after their routine work to benefit from the extra tutoring provided by several volunteers.

Dr Gomes who, in 1948 qualified with honours from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ceylon, did his early postgraduate training between April 1948 and December 1950 in the Colombo Group of hospitals. He then proceeded to the UK for further studies in paediatrics obtaining the degree in Child Health in 1951.

Whilst continuing as paediatrician in the Child Welfare Service he made further postgraduate academic progress and widened his clinical exposure and expertise during 1956 and 1957 in the UK teaching hospitals enabling him to obtain by examination membership of the Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh) in 1957. He subsequently succeeded in the MD (Ceylon) examination in 1959.

Realising the need to establish a Growth Pattern in the 1st year of life for a cross section of patients attending the Lady Ridgeway Hospital, Dr Gomes and I, with the blessing of Prof C.C de Silva, conducted an Infant Welfare Clinic at Wanathamulla leading to a paper read at the First Asian Congress of Paediatrics in Delhi in 1961. This was the first of his 18 publications in a wide variety of paediatric disorders, the last 17 of which were written after he was appointed lecturer in paediatrics, University of Ceylon, Colombo in 1962 when I resigned the post to work abroad.

His subsequent appointment in 1969 as Professor of Paediatrics, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya Campus came as no surprise to those who knew him including myself as was his later election as Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh in 1971.

He was involved in postgraduate studies, was Chairman, Board of Studies in Paediatrics, Institute of Postgraduate Medicine, Ceylon from 1974-1977.

He was a founder member of the Ceylon College of Physicians and Vice President of the Ceylon College of Physicians 1973-1974.

He was the Secretary of the Ceylon Paediatric Association 1958-1966, President of the Ceylon Paediatric Association 1975-1976, Editor Ceylon Journal of Child Health 1961-1966.

He retired from his professorship in 1977 for family reasons to work in Sydney, Australia, as Consultant Paediatrician for the next 10 years.

After almost 40 years in clinical teaching assignments he retired in 1987 and returned to Sri Lanka. It was only after this I again met him and his devoted wife Ellen on social occasions in Colombo. In spite of attainments in Sri Lanka and abroad I was glad to note that he remained the same gentle unassuming individual apart from the physical changes that advancing years bring to all of us. It was a pleasure to be associated with him in the early years of our careers. He is missed not only by his wife Ellen and children but also by his friends.

May his life's achievements be emulated by paediatricians who worked in his unit and towards whose careers he has contributed much.

May he attain Nirwana

Nellie Patricia Fernando

