

Obituary

Dr. Rajeswary Rajakariar – Paediatrician MBBS (Cey), FRCP (Lond), DCH (Eng), FCCP, FSLCPaed

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Dr. Rajeswary Rajakariar was born on 14th of February, 1925 and left the shores of this mortal life on 23rd of September, 2004. She was the eldest member in a large family and was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth. However, by her own endeavours, she certainly achieved greatness in more senses than one, meaning professionally, socially and spiritually, for she, while her companions slept, was toiling upward in the night.

She graduated with MBBS Ceylon second class honours in 1950. In the mid nineteen fifties she was awarded a government scholarship and proceeded to the United Kingdom (UK) for further studies. She obtained both MRCP (Lond) and DCH (Eng) at the first attempt. On her return to Ceylon she worked as Consultant Paediatrician in the Teaching Hospital, Kandy. In the mid nineteen sixties she was appointed Consultant Paediatrician, Lady Ridgeway Hospital, Colombo. Her ready smile and friendly manner endeared her to everyone she had to work with, the minor staff, nursing staff, medical students, doctors and her little patients and their families.

She was awarded Honorary Fellowships, namely FRCP (Lond), FCCP and FSLCPaed by three prestigious Colleges. She loved Sri Lanka and gave her services very happily to it for over 30 years, not seeking greener pastures. In the mid 1980s, after retirement, when times were uncertain and ominous, she left for UK; it was not for the love of filthy lucre but to ensure her one and only brilliant son Ravi's further education. She worked as Consultant in several hospitals in UK. She returned in 1990 and continued working in the private sector.

Rajes was an eminent paediatrician, having an extensive practice including the highest in the land and the poorest

of the poor. During her entire medical career she always upheld the principles of the oath of Hippocrates. She was recognized as a kind, devoted, skilled and compassionate doctor. She realised that money cannot buy happiness and good health and carried on a very busy and fair consultation practice.

She was a pillar of support, in more senses than one, to her beloved husband Raja who pre-deceased her by 3 years. In his memory she completed a project started by him when he was President Elect – Colombo Central Rotary Club. She completed and equipped a paediatric ward in the Wellawaya district. In spite of her busy schedule she found time to visit that hospital.

She helped financially many of her less fortunate relations. She led a very happy, active and contented life. She was a member of several associations. She was elected President of the Sri Lanka Paediatric Association in the mid 1970's. She was co-editor of the Ceylon Journal of Child Health for several years.

Rajes epitomized the fact that she was born on Valentine's day. She was large hearted and very friendly and consequently boasted of having at least 10 best friends, with all these friendships exceeding 5 decades. She was indeed a rare bird and never bore a grudge and had malice towards none. I cannot, in a few words, condense a beautiful friendship of 59 years.

To sum her up in one sentence, I would say that "her inner beauty far outshone her exterior appearance and this inner fragrance blossomed and glowed with every passing day, radiating out to all who came in contact with her".

She worked efficiently and unceasingly until her final illness on 5th September and answered God's call on 23rd September and departing "left behind her footprints on the sands of time".

She was a kind and dedicated paediatrician. Her death is a great loss not only to her son Ravi – a senior registrar in nephrology, practising in London, but also to all her relations, friends and patients. No one can take her place in our lives. She continues to live in our hearts and memory.

Philine T Pieris

