



26 Mar 2007

**A tribute to
Charles Fernando
Teacher, Leader
Colleague & Friend**





From The Venerable Udawatte Nanda Thera
Member of Parliament
from Kandy District
(*Mr Fernando and the monk
have been close friends since 1961*)

“පිරං ජයතු”

ශ්‍රී ජයවර්ධනපුර විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ චාල්ස් ප්‍රනාන්දු මැතිතුමා මම දැන හඳුනා ගත්තේ 1961 වසරේදීය. එතුමා මහනුවර අමීරියේ දෙව් සත්හලේ අධ්‍යාපනය ලබන කාලයේ මමද පිරිවෙත් අධ්‍යාපනය හදාරමින් සිටි අවසියේ සිටම ඇසුරු කෙලෙමි.

අප අතර කිසිම ආගමි හේදයක් නොමැතිව සහාදයන් ලෙස මේ දක්වා කටයුතු කරමු. හැමදාම හිතහොඳ කෙනෙකු ලෙස කටයුතු කල එතුමා මානව හිතවාදීව කටයුතු කිරීම එතුමාගේ උතුම්ම මිනිස් ගුණය ලෙස මම හැමදාම අගය කරමි.

අපගේ ආගමික උත්සව අවස්ථාවලදී එතුමා සහභාගිවීමත් එතුමාගේ ආගමික උත්සව අවස්ථාවලදී අප සමීඛන්ධ කර ගැනීමටත් කිසිදු දිනෙක අපහක නොකිරීම එම ගුණයන් අතර කැපිපෙනෙන ගුණයක් ලෙස මම සලකමි.

මෙම අනගි අවස්ථාවේදී මෙවැනි ප්‍රකාශයක් කිරීමට ලැබීම මම අගේ කොට සලකන අතර එතුමාට නිදුක් නිරෝග සුව ලැබ එම සේවය සිදු කිරීමට වාසනා-ශක්තිය-බෙරේ ලැබේවායි ඉත සිතීන් ප්‍රාර්ථනා කර සිටිමි.

මෙයට උඩවත්තේ නන්ද හිමි

Our logo:



Our motto:

Supporting capability and employability for tomorrow
සරසවියෙන් හෙට ලොවට පිරුණු මිනිසෙක්

වෘත්තීය මාර්ගෝපදේශ ඒකකය

Career Guidance Unit

ශ්‍රී ජයවර්ධනපුර විශ්වවිද්‍යාලය

හි ඉගෙනුම ප්‍රවර්ධනය කිරීමේ කොටස

University of Sri Jayawardenepura

Note: Leaving it to an artist to do the art work, Mr Charles Fernando was responsible for the concept and sketch of the logo. He also formulated the motto in English while other academic staff members helped with the formulation in Sinhala. The pages that follow indicate where we now are due to the pioneering work of Mr Fernando

The Career Guidance Unit

The Mission

is to be a Service Centre of quality and excellence, while also being a role-model for the Sri Lankan university system, supporting the University in its objective of helping produce capable, employable and satisfied graduates and potential leaders empowered to contribute positively to their own well being, to the economy within the context of an ever-changing macro environment, and to the society as part of the conscience of a democratic civilised, and inclusive society.

The Aims and Objectives are:

1. To provide a service in Career Education, Career Guidance and Career Management

accessible to undergraduates and recent graduates of the University offering them and/or guiding them to a variety of resources including people, data & information, and activities & programmes to support them in their efforts to plan their future career and put those plans into effect

2. To support the students and the University in the area of Employability Skills Development

making a meaningful and relevant contribution to the University's learning environment through programmes and activities offered independently by the Careers Service itself and through collaborative work particularly with academic colleagues and academic departments, being a privileged channel also for feedback from the world of work intended to inform curriculum development moving progressively into becoming a well-integrated service within university culture and life responding to feedback from stakeholders and continually improving services

3. To help the graduating students in their job search and career projects as well as prospective employers through recruitment-related services

by maintaining and communicating information to graduating students on opportunities available on the basis of a database of such persons registering for such service

by keeping major employers, Chambers and Federations and Professional Bodies informed of developments at the university and of the type of graduate being introduced into the market, and providing opportunities to such employers when so requested for them to present themselves and the opportunities they offer to the students and

by acting as an intermediary in passing information as required in either direction, and if so requested acting on behalf of prospective employers by searching for and short-listing candidates who fit a specification provided

4. To be a partner involved in the broader preparation for life and work of the undergraduate

contributing to such together with the University, inter-university bodies and other partners

and with an emphasis on knowledge, skills, attitudes and values

helping the undergraduates to build up their capacity for independent and life long learning, and continued self/professional development

so as to become capable, employable and satisfied graduates and potential leaders empowered to contribute positively to their own well being, to the economy within the context of an ever-changing macro environment, and to the society as part of the conscience of a democratic civilised, and inclusive society.

Service Delivery against stated objectives:

To provide a service in Career Education, Career Guidance and Career Management

- Currently operational mainly through relevant workshops open to undergraduates and graduating batches of students.
- As needed one-to-one support too is provided
- Two new careers related modules are being prepared (*see info later*) as two new Careers Advisers have now been recruited.
- Reference material (in hard copy form) is available
- A computer-based employability skills development support lab is being formally opened today and will make available a variety of reference and self-study material which will at the same time support the workshops being conducted or planned (*see info later*)

To support the students and the University in the area of Employability Skills Development

- Currently operational mainly through relevant workshops
- This will be a core area for the future with a plan for a variety of workshops and training programmes to be conducted on a regular basis
- Have already collaborated with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in a pilot mentoring programme where senior executives helped groups of undergraduates. Leaving formal placement as an activity to be handled by the academic programmes within which such are integrated, the Careers Service will continue to initiate and support short programmes of exposure to industry including mentoring and work shadowing
- Activities & Services to be further expanded now that extra staff have been recruited as Careers Advisers
- A computer-based employability skills development support lab is being formally opened today and will make available a variety of reference and

self-study material which will at the same time support the workshops being conducted or planned (*see info later*)

- So as to be able to better inform curriculum development, undertake in more systematic manner the study of graduate destinations, labour market trends, skills profiles in demand etc going beyond the limited studies done so far
- Have already contributed to a programme within the Faculty of Medical Sciences where Career Education was integrated into the curriculum and it is hoped to support other academic units in similar manner
- The informal links with the Faculties and academic departments developed so far will be formalized through the establishment of an Advisory Committee with delegates from the different faculties to facilitate and support better integration of Career Guidance and skills development within curricula.

To help the graduating students in their job search and career projects as well as prospective employers through recruitment-related services

- This has been a regular activity since 6 years. While we do not wish to be an employment agency but one contributing to employability of graduates, we run the service and inform the recent graduates of opportunities as such information is received. Regular mailers are done, and urgent messages are handled via the telephone and e-mail
- At the moment an excellent reputation has been built up with us being recognized as a Centre that puts in a lot of effort (though offered free) into finding graduates who fit an employer's specification. It is noted that the number of employers who request such service is on the increase.

- The finalists register themselves and input their data into a computer database. This is currently local and is processed at the unit. We are currently expanding the system to offer an opportunity for employers to search it via the web and identify graduates that appear to match their criteria. The identification will be through a serial number and the prospective employer will then request the unit to be put in contact with the graduate(s) concerned. We have recently recruited a programmer on contract basis to help complete this project – while also helping with the new Employability Skills Development Support Lab.

To be a partner involved in the broader preparation for life and work of the undergraduate

- Our collaboration within the university system has won us respect and a leadership role
- The unit now maintains for example 10 notice boards of its own where information about activities, programmes (and vacancies) etc are made known to the student community. Among other things, daily it even carries headlines from two news sources (The New York Times and Channel News Asia) to help build up interest among students about what happens in the world beyond our borders.
- While the subject area is being handled mainly through presentations and workshops, a pilot project done recently by collaborating with the University Student Union in a film festival involving 4 award-winning movies has shown that even involvement in that area through “Movies with a Message” supported by a socio-political commentary on such leads to value education. That such was a success was seen in the unit being invited to support such a festival by a Faculty Student Union and an event organized by an academic department.

Employability Skills Development Support Lab and Resource Centre

(being opened 26th March 2007)

About 150 books related to Careers and Employability Skills are available in the resource centre amongst a lot of other things considered useful for students.

The multimedia-based employability skills development support lab will be unique in that it will be totally reserved for the task. It will support the Skills Development workshops and be available also as an 'open-access' resource. The students will not be able to run office applications or typical packages. Such will in fact not even be installed. Only careers-related and skills development applications will be accessible. These will include:

- Career Guidance Resources (*e.g. opportunities for work & further study related to subject areas – foreign resources but from which students can still learn, with us hoping to eventually produce material related to the Sri Lankan context*)
- Skills development and self-development material & tools
- Other support material (e.g. entrepreneurship)
- Learning Resources (*subject-oriented, How to study, How to prepare for exams etc.*)
- Sample material on alternative methods of learning (*e.g. Business Games*)
- Training Videos (*"How To" search for jobs, prepare CVs & Applications, face interviews etc. What is an Assessment Centre. etc.*)
- Aptitude Tests / Personality Tests (*practice tests & actual ones*)
- Practice Tests (*for IELTS, TOEFL, GMAT, GRE etc*)
- Electronic Newsletters on a variety of topics
- Company Information

New Careers Modules

(These will be available from academic year 2007/08. Module 1 is for those in years 1 & 2 of study. Module 2 is for those in years 3 & 4. By next year module 2 will have a version 2 for those who would by then have already followed Module 1.)

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MODULE 1: PREPARING FOR ONE'S FUTURE CAREER

(20 hours:10 sessions at 2 hours a week. Separately in English and in Sinhala depending on demand. Prior registration required. Groups of maximum 40 with students of Years 1 and 2. Contribution of 2-3 hours if possible from academic staff and/or external resource persons

Outline of content:

1. Profiting from the University and Enhancing Employability

What employers want of graduates? Developing employability skills.
Gaining industry experience even without doing a full-time job. Being SMART and competitive

2. Study Skills

Structure and purpose of university education
Profiting from Lectures, Tutorials, Assignments
Reading, Note-taking, Using the Library, Internet Search
Graphical tools for study (e.g. mind maps, fish bone diagrams, structure charts etc.)
Referencing guides
Assessments, Exams
Issues relating to plagiarism

3. Self-evaluation

Learning Styles, Personality and Interests, Self-assessment, Aptitude Tests
Making and maintaining a Progress File

4. My degree – what the future holds?

Using CGU and other resources to explore opportunities and options
What do past graduates do. Jobs, Self-employment, entrepreneurship
Flexibility and lifelong learning

5. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Helping students to discover how academic programmes can support these

6. Communication Skills (Including presentations and report writing)

7. Time Management and Project Management

The essentials and relevance for university life

8. Team work / working in groups

Assignments, Projects

Discussions, Meetings, Managing them

Conflicts, assertiveness, negotiation

9. Dealing with problems

Health issues, stress, memory and concentration

Relationship issues

10. Leadership Issues:

Changing One's World

Through brief exposures to articles, presentations and video clips etc:

An introduction to contemporary issues such as development, democracy and inclusiveness, equity, corporate & social responsibility, business ethics, environment

Brief reference also to current controversies

Changing and Managing One's Future

Exposure to role models.

Usefulness of action plans

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MODULE 2: EMBARKING ON ONE'S CAREER

(10 hours: 5 sessions at 2 hours a week. Using a combination of Sinhala and English -unless specific demand exists. Groups of maximum 40 for students of Years 3 and 4. Prior registration required. One or two 1-hour slots for internal academic staff and/or external resource persons)

1. Enhancing Employability (combining sessions 1 & 4 of Module 1)

2. Employability Skills: (combining sessions 5, 7 & 8 of module 1)

Critical Thinking, Problem Solving,

Time Management, Project Management & Teamwork Skills

3. CV Writing and Applications

Presentation, Video & Interactive sessions

4. Aptitude Tests, Assessment Centres and Facing Interviews

Presentation, Video & Interactive sessions

5. Leadership Issues (similar to session 10 of Module 1)

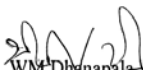
Dear Sir,

Done at the prompting of some of your students, this little booklet is a simple but hopefully meaningful token of appreciation from us, from them, and from all those who have contributed. It was done in just 10 days. So many more could have been contacted but constraints of time imposed limits. Further for about 72 hours now (to this moment of the text being submitted to the printers) our university mail server has been dead, and it is possible that some messages that were sent to us were either lost or are held up somewhere.


The Vice-Chancellor, the Dean of your Faculty, and the Head of your Academic Department have provided messages on behalf of the University. There are several dozens of past students of yours who are now academic staff members of this university. And there are the current students. We did not contact them because it was impossible to choose from among them. But just about a year back they rallied round you at the moment of your health crisis and were finally so glad that you came back to be with them and work again. And so in fact material in 'words' was not required. But we believe we were able to contact a representative sample of those who have worked with you or have benefited from your services from the 60s to today.

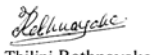
All this is proof, Dear Sir, that you can start your sabbatical leave knowing fully well that your life and work has had an impact on others.

As for us, the Career Guidance Team, we feel that the best tribute we can pay you is to promise you that what you started will be continued and developed even more on the basis of the inspiration you have been (and surely will be ... for you really cannot and will not forget us and this cause!). A part of that inspiration has been to push us towards creativity and that we will follow that path too changing our approaches and methods as problems change. Yes, we will be your partners in moving towards the realisation of your dream of supporting employability and capability among Sri Lankan graduates.


WM. Dhunapala
Senior Lecturer/Director


TMC Thennakoon
Careers Advisor


Sameera Nayawardane
Careers Advisor


Thilini Rathnayake
Programmer


Uppala Lokubogahawatta
Computer Applications Assistant

Messages of Appreciation and Tribute

I am pleased to send a brief message to this souvenir being published on the occasion of Charles Fernando's retirement from the post of Director, Career Guidance Unit.

I have known him for the last 10 years as an excellent academic. He is a deeply committed professional who undertakes whatever task assigned to him with meticulous attention to detail.

During the last 9 years he has been developing the career guidance services of this university. Starting with very meager physical facilities and human resources, through sheer hard work and commitment he has now developed this unit to a model which can be emulated in any Sri Lankan university.

On behalf of the university I would like to express my deep appreciation and gratitude for what he has done.

Prof Narada Warnasuriya
Vice-Chancellor

රිටෙක ගැඹුරු හඬින්ද, රිටක සුමට හඬින්ද, රිටක බැහුම් ස්වරයෙන්ද, රිටක අවධානීය ස්වරයෙන්ද, ඔබ මාව අමතා ඇති බව මට අමතක නැත. ජීවිතයේ රිටිට අදියරයන්හි දී ඔබ මගෙන් අනෙකුත් සහාද හිතවතුන්ගෙන් ශිෂ්‍ය චුන්‍යවගෙන් හද අමන්ත්‍රණය කළේ සැවොම හරි මග යැවිය යුතු නිසාවෙනි. රිටෙක විශෙකු ලෙසද, රිටෙක සහෝදරයෙකු ලෙසද, රිටෙක ගුරුතුමෙකු ලෙසද, පමණක් නොව, රිටෙක සමීප මිතුරෙකු ලෙසද, ඔබ වීසින් රහනා භූමිකාව කිසි රිටෙක අප මතකයෙන් ගිලිහී නොයයි. වඩාත් යථාර්ථවාදී වී වඩාත් නිහතමානීව ඔබ අපට සමීප වූයේ වී කරලක් සෑම රිටම බිමට නෑමී පවතින පරිද්දෙනි.

අභියෝග හමුවේ නොසැලෙන, සියලු දෑ හමුවේ තමන්ගේ ගමන යන, සියල්ලන්ටම හරි මග කියාදෙන මහ ඇදුරෙකු ලෙසින් ඔබ අප රීශ්වරීඥාලයේ ගර්භය තුළට සමීප විය. දැනුම මත යැපෙන උගත්කම මත තීනවන මිනිස් සන්තානයන් කුසලතාවලින් පිරිපුන් කර බුද්ධිමත් ලෙස දොරට වැඩමරීමට ඔබ දරනා වැයම වචනයෙන් අගය කිරීමට තරම් මා දන්නා දැනුම ප්‍රමාණවත් නැත. එය අපේ හදවත්වලට දැනෙනුයේ වචනය ඉක්මවා යන භාවාත්මක සියුම් හැඟීමක් ලෙසිනි.

අප ඉරදි ඇත්තේ උපන් ලොවට සේවය කිරීමට මිස තමාට සේවයක් කර ගැනීමට නොවන බව මා අදහන බර්මයයි. එමෙන්ම එය ලෝක සදාචාර සම්ප්‍රදායයි. වචනයේ පරිසමාප්ත අර්ථයෙන් ම ඔබ එවන් පුද්ගලයෙකුගේ ප්‍රතිඉර්තියක් යයි පැවසීම අභියෝගකරියක් නොවේ. මිල මුදලට යට වී ඇති, මුදල් වෙනුවෙන් සියල්ල පාවා දෙන සමාජයක් තුළ ඔබ වැන්නවුන්ගේ ක්‍රියාකාරකම් අගය කිරීම සීමාරීම පුදුමයට කරුණක් නොවේ. එබැවින් රටේ අනාගතය වන වත්මන් දුටා දරුවන්ගේ දැනුම, කුසලතා, ආකල්ප වර්ධනයට ඔබ විසින් ලබා දෙන සුරියේෂ දායකත්වය රටටම හඬ නගා කීමට අවශ්‍ය නොවන්නේ ගැඹුරු ජලය නිශ්චල නිසාවෙනි.

ඉක්කිවිනි ඔබ ගැන තවත් අප්‍රවා විකා කීම?

මා ආදරණීය ඇදුරාණෙනි,

මාගේ හදින් ම නැගෙන සුභාශිංසන ද දීර්ඝායුෂ භා තීර ජීවනය වෙනුවෙන් වූ අවංක ප්‍රාර්ථනය ද මේ සමඟ ගෙන එමි.

ඩබ්ලිව්. හිලරි ඊ. සිල්වා
 ජී.ඩා.සී.සී
 කළමනාකරණ අධ්‍යයන හා වාණිජ විද්‍යා ජී.ධය

I have much pleasure in sending this message for inclusion in a Souvenir to be presented to Mr Charles Fernando in appreciation of the pioneering work he has done in founding and developing the Career Guidance Unit at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

The initiatives undertaken by Mr. Fernando as the Founder-Director of the Career Guidance Unit are commendable owing to the fact that he started and organized the centre with very little resources both human and physical. Reference the latter, furniture and other items were mainly borrowed from various Faculties and academic departments including our own where he is attached as a Senior Lecturer and also where he worked as the Head of the Department during the period 1987 to 1989.

I believe that the enthusiasm, devotion and innovativeness in establishing and developing the Unit displayed the organizational and leadership capabilities of Mr. Fernando. I am well aware of the various hardships and obstacles that he had to face in the process, and the long and strenuous hours of work he has had to put in.

Releasing Mr. Fernando to devote himself full-time to Career Guidance work since 1998, did put a strain on departmental work and created extra workload for the other members of staff of the department who had to cover up his work. We all have however clearly understood that his services have been beneficial not only for the department but also for the whole university.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Fernando for what he has achieved and wish Mr Dhanapala the newly appointed Director and the young enthusiastic members of the staff strength and courage to carry on and build on the foundation laid with such dedication and hard work by Mr Fernando.

Dr. H.M.A. Herath
Head
Department of Public Administration

“Those who deserve respect should be respected” (Pujaca pujaneeyanan). Mr. Charles Fernando is without doubt in that category having dedicated himself from 1998 to 2006 to initiate and develop the Career Guidance Unit of our University and having agreed to continue serving the unit as an advisor in an honorary capacity.

He had a clear vision about what Sri Lankan Universities had to do in this regard. He possesses an excellent grasp of Careers work in different Universities around the world and has been able to profit from this knowledge to develop a typical model of career guidance applicable to the Sri Lankan context.

We, in Sri Lanka, struggle to find employment opportunities for our graduates and this has been a serious problem for the government and the graduates as well. Suggestions to solve this problem address even the content of courses in the Universities in order to enhance the relevance of such with a view towards supporting employability. While some positive developments are seen here and there, structural change in the University educational system as a whole appears nearly impossible due to a variety of reasons. In this context career guidance becomes an important mechanism to deal with employability problem of our graduates. The Career Guidance Unit of our University emphasizes the importance of conducting programmes aimed at achieving this goal of developing employability skills and other personal qualities so as to make our graduates competitive as they try to enter the world of work.

Mr Charles Fernando worked hard to institutionalize his concept of career guidance not only within our University but also in all other Universities in the country. He deserves a well organized felicitation for the services rendered during 9 long years. Even though a souvenir of this type is really insufficient to express our appreciation and gratitude, being an expression of the sentiments of a sample of those who have worked with or benefited from his services, we do hope it is nevertheless meaningful.

I should specially mention that Mr. Charles Fernando is a person with rare personal qualities. He strived to achieve the objectives without even being concerned about his health. He went through a difficult period only a year back, but recovered and resumed work in spite of objections from his family simply because as he said it “He wanted to complete what he began, and hand over the unit as one that functions effectively”. With that aim he has also been busy training our new staff. Such commitment and dedication are unfortunately rare in our modern society.

It is my duty as the Director of this unit to thank all who have contributed to this souvenir sending messages promptly as we did this at the last moment. Our appreciation goes to the Vice Chancellor of our University for his kind support. The Dean of the Management Faculty has been with us too as this felicitation for Mr Fernando is being combined with one for two of our distinguished alumni from that Faculty. We owe a special word of thanks to all the staff of the Career Guidance Unit for coordinating the work on the souvenir and the event, as well as the group of former students of Mr. Fernando for their bright idea and support.

And last but not least, I would like to wish a healthy and happy life to our beloved out-going Director Mr. Charles Fernando.

W. M. Dhanapala
Senior Lecturer / Director Careers Guidance Unit

Dear Charles

I know you claim that I stunted your growth along the path of wisdom by removing a wisdom tooth of yours at the University Dental Clinic way back in the 60s when you were a student at Ampitiya and I was a final year student at the Dental Faculty, Peradeniya!

But it was Career Guidance that brought us together again. You had pioneered the unit at Sri Jayewardenepura and I was starting work at Peradeniya University as its Director of Career Guidance. I had requested you to come over to Kandy and address a representative group of the academic staff and you obliged.

But we worked even closer when I became Chairman of the University Grants Commission and you were the accepted leader within the Standing Committee on Career Guidance. You had gained so much respect from the members of the Committee that even though I was its Chairman I delegated the responsibility to you on so many occasions between 2001 and 2006. All of us knew that you had a clear vision of the orientation that Career Guidance in the Sri Lankan Universities had to adopt. We were fully aware that that was not due to some sudden flash of enlightenment but due to the continuous interaction you maintained with the world of work, your quality of life-long learning, the reflective practice in which you excelled, and the readiness to really listen to other colleagues and integrate things as needed. All of us acknowledge the important role you played in preparing the national guidelines on Career Guidance in the Universities which were issued with the

UGC Circular of 2003 on the subject of Career Guidance. I still remember your emphasising that Governments, Ministers, University Grants Commission Chairmen, Vice-Chancellors, Directors of Career Guidance were all bound to change often, and that given the Sri Lankan reality one would be pushed in different and sometimes conflicting directions. You then argued for a national set of guidelines so that inspite of the changes and pressures referred to something would continue to provide direction. I remember how you argued and occasionally even 'fought' on issues. You were something of a rebel seeking change but you were keen also on continuity once goals and objectives were commonly accepted. In 2005 you pushed hard for what came to be known as "institutionalisation of Career Guidance" which was in reality a way of helping the Career Guidance Units which were late-starters to catch up with the rest and move forward.

I could certainly add more but I am happy indeed to say that as you take a well deserved break you can look back with satisfaction and happiness, and know that you have made an impact within higher education in Sri Lanka and that your colleagues respect you for that.

Prof Ranjit Mendis
Geneva, Switzerland
formerly Chairman, University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka

Mr. Charles Fernando will be remembered for his pioneering work in relation to Career Guidance within the university system of Sri Lanka. His interest in this very important aspect of undergraduate education attracted my attention during my term of service at the National Education Commission. He was a shining light in the darkness that was Higher Education. He saw the need to make the undergraduate realize that she or he was not just a person who came up the academic ladder to the point of demanding employment from the state that spent for the education, but to become a capable and competitive person who could blaze her or his own trail in the world of work.

I wish Mr. Charles Fernando many years of good health and productive work ahead.

Prof. Lakshman Jayatilleke
Chairman, National Institute of Business Management
Former Chairman, National Education Commission

Dear Charles,

Our friendship goes back many years. You have being one to whom I as the then Vice-Chancellor could give any amount of responsibility with the conviction that you would fulfill it with diligence and efficiency. As you surely recall, the beginnings of our Career Guidance Unit were humble: we had one computer, one printer and a meager number of borrowed furniture to boast of. But when I asked you whether you'd consider becoming its first director, you took up the challenge with quiet grace, at the cost of an immense loss to your career where you not only had to sacrifice the chances of advancing in the professional ranks, but where you were even denied your representation rights in the faculty board. Yet you worked so selflessly, putting in long hours at the cost of your health, spending your own money for the benefit of the CGU. It is your commitment which soon elevated our CGU to the No 01 position in the island.

Dear Charles, you did take on the road less taken: one full of challenges and obstacles. But today you can stand tall as a man who has the rare opportunity to witness the labor of one's fruits. You have the satisfaction of knowing that you have genuinely serviced our students and our country, that you have made a difference. You are an epitome of what every young professional in the public sector of our country should aspire and strive to be. I wish you and your family all God's blessings.

Dr. P. Wilson
Former Vice Chancellor (Dec 1995-May 1999)

Charles Fernando has been no different now to the first impressions he created that day when he met me, more than two decades ago, when I was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Moratuwa. He had just returned to Sri Lanka after postgraduate studies overseas. I recall then that he felt a sense of belonging to the University system. We did discuss the options suited for his background that may have facilitated his choice in joining the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. We have crossed our paths often since then, both within & outside our Universities. Each time I knew he had made a significant contribution to the University community, especially to the Students. His dedication to his duties was clearly passionate. I know in particular that his footprint in Career Guidance will be remembered by the many Graduates with much gratitude.

It is with great pleasure that I pen these few words to share with the others who have decided to collectively show how they must tell Charles of their individual thoughts.

With my own warmest personal regards.

Professor Willie Mendis
Senior Professor, University of Moratuwa

In spite of my 37 years of close association with the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (1966-2002) my first encounter with Charles took place only in 1995, when he was consultant to the Informatics Institute of Computer Studies (IICS), and I was an applicant for the post of IICS Institute Director. He called me and invited me to the IICS convocation that year, and promised to meet me there. Since I had not met him earlier, he said he would make the connection. That he did just before the convocation started and offered to meet me later during refreshments in the lobby. With that meeting, we developed a close personal and working relationship. While I became the director, Charles became the Deputy Director. Since he was a founding member of the IICS, throughout my 13 months at the institute I depended very much on his intimate knowledge of the working of the institute and its corporate culture. Though both of us were of different temperaments and held divergent views on management, there were no serious conflicts, during my short tenure.

I found Charles to be a man of many talents, and abundance of energy. His hands-on application to work was amazing. On many evenings and late nights, when every one else had departed to domestic retreats and watering holes, Charles would be working with his own tool kit, work which otherwise be done by the maintenance staff. He could bend and mend anything, including his vintage Morris minor. In personal relations he was equally on par with staff, students and management. He was a consummate troubleshooter, though occasionally trespassing into others' territory.

In the late 1990s and during the following years, my three colleagues and I found in Charles a good and energetic resource for the work we were doing through our Education Research and Study Group. He was a very effective lobbyist in taking our messages to the wider public domain. This was also the

time his services were being sought by the private sector and the academia, in promoting Career Guidance in the universities. He plunged into this work with great personal sacrifices, but with an extraordinary sense of vision and mission. If Career Guidance in the Universities has made any impact on society, much of the credit should go to Charles.

With that, may I wish Charles success in all his present and future endeavors. And of course, all our good wishes to his wife and the two children.

Dr W M K Wijetunga

I first met Charles in 1999 when he was in the UK on a familiarisation tour of a few key Careers Services Centres in and around Birmingham and Manchester. I know that he had done his homework over the internet and had identified the centres he wished to visit. When I posed a question to him recently as to why he hadn't made any such visit after that, he said "We have to be practical. There is no need to be travelling too much unless one can justify it. We can learn about what others do over the internet and share experiences via email."

During his visit in 1999, I had the pleasure of showing him around my Careers Centre at the University of Birmingham and telling him a little of what we did collectively in UK universities as well – we have over 100 years of history in organising careers work!

The following year I was very fortunate to spend a week in Sri Lanka (as a guest of the British Council and the UGC) visiting your universities and meeting staff informally and formally in seminars and meetings. All this was carefully worked out through Charles' good offices and energies. I hope that the resultant report recommending how careers work might develop locally had some small influence: if it did Charles is the person to thank, for it was he who made the whole thing possible.

I have kept in touch with the work at your university and I was more than happy to be in some way a partner occasionally responding to his queries and providing some sample material he may have been interested in. I can only say how marvellous it is to see the developments made in such a short time. In particular the development of employability skills facilities reflects what is current best practice in the UK – this is "leading edge" stuff! My congratulations go to everyone involved – and especially Charles! – and really

hope that this will be a launch pad for continued development, perhaps of skills modules.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege for me to know and work with Charles. You University is very fortunate!

Dr Richard Maynard
Formerly Director, Careers Centre, the University of Birmingham, UK

I had the honor of being mentored by Charles Fernando during the 2003-2004 year when I was in Sri Lanka on a Fulbright Fellowship.

Not only did I appreciate Charles' knowledge of career guidance in Sri Lanka, but I was enchanted by his love of a good story, a good joke (followed by his infectious laugh), and good people. I had the sense that every day, Charles blended his head and heart in his commitment to student learning, his love of his country and family, and in everything that he did.

Dr. Rees Hughes
Fulbright Senior Scholar, Organisation of Professional Associations (OPA), Sri Lanka
Humboldt State University, California

Back in 1999 Charles was my 1st 'real' international visitor and I'm still to this day not exactly sure how he was put in contact with me but am delighted that he was! It was probably a cold, wet day in Manchester, England when he turned up at my Careers Resource Centre but he was like a breath of warm, fresh air with his genuine enthusiasm and love of students and commitment to improving their employability.

I have watched the progress he has made in Sri Lanka over the intervening years as well as being kept up-to-date with what has been happening personally and professionally. I had the privilege of sharing documents and material with him. Although we only met that once I feel like I have known Charles for many years and hope to keep in contact for many years to come. I am sure that all the amazing work he has done over the years will be continued in the future.

Maddie Smith, Careers Consultant, University of Manchester

Charles Fernando: The Free Thinker

On the very first day I met Charles, he impressed me as a free thinker, not afraid of saying what he believes to be right. He has a remarkable ability to articulate his thoughts and present them very cogently, both verbally and in writing. He would look at a problem completely from a different angle which many of us would not have even thought of. One reason why his career guidance was a success was this philosophical approach he took in addressing day to day problems.

W.A. Wijewardena,
Deputy Governor, Central Bank Of Sri Lanka

Just less than a year after Mr Fernando had joined the university in 1985 the then Vice-Chancellor who was also very much involved in the work of the youth ministry introduced me to him. I was working as an Assistant Director of Employment Planning; working hard to help the university graduates to find jobs. He was invited to help us to organize and conduct employability development training programmes in the IT field for unemployed graduates which he did very successfully. The friendship that developed then between us went a long way. He helped us in many ways specially in the area of employability development of the graduates and other categories of unemployed youth. During the past two decades I have observed his unstinted dedication to serve the university students to develop their personalities and employability and to uplift the university education system in the country.

At various forums where we met I have found that we were very much on the same wavelength with regard to human resource development and together we have worked on a few projects of that type.

His dedicated efforts to improve the quality of life of the university student community has become well known since he started to develop the career guidance unit of the university of Sri Jayewardenepura. He has tried to put into practice what he believed in and he leaves behind a marvelous institution and a team for the benefit of the up coming generations of university students. The remarkable initiative and leadership shown by Mr. Fernando in developing this has been superb and marvelous and his name will surely be written in red letters in the history of "Vidudaya Matha".

D.L.Kumaradasa
Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour Relations and Manpower

Mr Charles Fernando is a unique person who has a visionary commitment to do something different for the benefit of university students to enhance their employability and entry to real life in the world of work. Through my close association with Mr Fernando for the past 15 years I personally know how passionate he is about the students.

One huge challenge faced by us in the Ministry of Youth Affairs is the burning unemployment problem of the young graduates and no doubt that Mr Fernando's efforts along the lines of the motto he chose for the unit "Supporting Capability and Employability for Tomorrow" could be really meaningful and be an inspiration even for our own future endeavors.

I congratulate and wish him good luck.

S. Wirithamulla
Secretary , Ministry of Youth Affairs

My dear Charles,

I consider this opportunity to contribute a note to the book of memoirs, to be presented to you a special privilege, having been a friend for a period of over two decades sharing our common interests in IT and Career Guidance.

I have always admired the dedication and relentless pursuit of the objectives, you possess as exemplified in your contribution to Career Guidance activities at Sri Jayewardenepura University, in particular and at all other universities in general through the UGC Standing Committee on Career Guidance in Universities, having been a member of the committee since its inception. Career Guidance in Universities is now well accepted as necessary and in fact an essential service for our undergraduates and institutionalized with facilities including cadre, budgetary allocations and all other requisites thanks to your championing of this cause. I have observed with admiration your efforts, being well beyond normal call to duty and the many personal sacrifices inclusive of your own academic progression in the University system.

I recall our early meetings, based on our then common interests in computing in which field too, your thoughts and plans were well ahead of the times and you created exemplary facilities for the students. In addition you were responsible for guiding and advising the establishment of two computer training institutes which have now blossomed out to be leaders in the field.

Charles, it has really been a pleasure to know you, and to have interacted with you. I am that much richer through these experiences and look forward to our continued association in future endeavors too.

My kindest regards and best wishes to you and family for good health, happiness and all blessings.

Yours sincerely,
Lakshman

Lakshman J.K. Hettiaratchi
Organisation of Professional Associations, Colombo

Dear Charles,

Now that you are going on sabbatical leave before retirement I am particularly happy to have associated with you as the Director, Career Guidance Unit, University of Sri Jayawardenapura for 9 years. In my days as the President of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries in Sri Lanka (FCCISL), The National Chamber of Exporters (NCE) and as the President of Young Entrepreneurs Sri Lanka (YESL) we have been carrying out various programmes to guide young children of this country for a better future. I have been very impressed with your commitment to develop the Career Guidance Unit in the University of Sri Jayawardenapura and also supporting other youth programmes, especially YESL. Working with you for a common goal has been a very satisfying experience to me.

I have seen how dedicated and how hard you have been toiling among constraints, hardships and challenges. Now that you have built up this Career Guidance Unit, I am sure you have trained others to carry on the work towards the goal that you have set.

I will still look forward to being in touch with you in future. I am sure you can be happy with the contribution that you have made to the society.

I wish you all very best in your future life good health, peace and prosperity.

Patrick Amarasinghe
President, Young Entrepreneurs Sri Lanka

Charles is a wonderful character who lived up to the ideals he upheld. He has not only guided others to shape their futures, but has been a living example himself. Young Entrepreneurs Sri Lanka (YESL) was his favorite and Charles was the favorite of YESL. He guided YESL students to excellence in business careers and as winners of international competitions, and in particular the Hewlett-Packard Global Business Challenge (HPGBC) Business Game. There are so many success stories to his credit and also so many youth and institutions impacted by him.

A man with a vision, Charles is not a person who can be on vacation or retire. He will continue to share more things with pleasure. Let us all get together to wish him all the best at the beginning of another chapter in his life. It is a pleasure to pay our tribute to him.

Premasiri Weliwita
Chief Executive Officer, Young Entrepreneurs Sri Lanka

Dear Charles

I want you to know how much we at Aitken Spence value your efforts in building character in undergraduates of 'Japura'. Your attitude towards life has certainly rubbed positively in the lives of those who have come to interact with you. You cannot imagine what a difference this makes when it comes to selecting graduates as potential managers.

You have set the benchmark in the area of career guidance in universities. From an HR Point of view you have managed career guidance with a scientific approach and with respect to humanity.

May God give you the strength to continue serving humanity your way, the right way!

Rohan

R G Pandithakorralage
Director, Aitken Spence Corporate Finance (Pvt) Ltd.
Director, Group Human Resource Development, Aitken Spence Ltd

Mr Charles Fernando is a widely recognized and much respected personality who has made a most valuable and outstanding contribution in pioneering the career guidance concept within the university system.

I had the privilege of working closely with Charles in promoting and developing the much needed links between University and Industry. It is in this context that his relentless efforts, consistent commitment and continuing dedication have enriched the lives of vast numbers of students who have moved swiftly from university to meaningful and profitable employment.

Armyne Wirasinha
Chairman
Ceylon Shipping Lines Ltd.
The Colombo International School
Ocean View Resorts Ltd Group of Hotels

Charles has been closely associated with me in the work of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce's Human Resources and Education Committee over the past 6 years. During this period he played a tireless role in developing a productive dialogue and work plan between the Chamber and the Universities towards the much needed education reforms in the university system.

One area in which Charles was actively involved was the mentoring program for undergraduate students where he did an excellent job in coordinating activities between the Career Guidance Unit of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and the Chamber. He spearheaded the CGU at Sri Jayewardenepura, led it from the front and drove its success within the university and outside against heavy odds. Clearly, his CGU was outstanding amongst all the CGUs of the universities on the mentoring program. He painstakingly ensured that success even at tremendous personal cost and sacrifices.

Charles impressed me as a simple and truly dedicated academic who aspired to see our young undergraduate students receive a university education and exposure that would leave them second to none in the world of university education. He rebelled against what he saw as impediments to reform in our university system and tirelessly battled for change.

All of us who worked on the Chamber Committee liked Charles – for his simplicity, his perseverance, his courage and the splendid contribution he made towards the success of the mentoring program.

Faizal Salieh
Past Chairman, Human Resources & Education Committee
of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce
Managing Director, Amana Investments Limited

I have had the pleasure of working with Mr Charles Fernando in the Education Sub-Committee and in the Chamber-Academia Roundtable of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. These included senior representatives of the private sector and members of the academic community, and their tasks were to identify and work on areas of cooperation and collaboration between the two interests of the quality improvement of university education and ensuring that a good product came out from them.

Charles contributed a great deal to these discussions. He was focused, genuinely interested. Took on responsibility and worked very hard. He was a person deeply committed to upholding values and constantly improving standards. He displayed qualities of courage and leadership and a genuine concern for the welfare of youth.

I am happy that a small publication is being brought out to pay tribute to him and to his work.

M D D Pieris
Deputy Chairman, Mercantile Merchant Bank Limited
Former Secretary, Ministry of Education and Higher Education

I had the pleasure of being closely associated with Charles when I was the Chairman of Tharuna Aruna Institute (TAI). I have no hesitation in saying that the Directors of TAI looked up to him and the Career Guidance Unit of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura as a model that needed to be emulated by all the Universities in Sri Lanka.

I also had an opportunity of meeting him at the University of Moratuwa, when two of us were asked to address the final year students, before they met the delegates from prospective employers. I was impressed by his depth of understanding of the subject of Career Guidance.

I hope that the University authorities will continue to make use of his expertise in the future.

Lal de Mel

It was my good fortune to meet Charles on my first visit to Sri Lanka on a feasibility study in 1998 while I was determining if it would be appropriate to develop a programme for young Sri Lankans to be able to start their own businesses. Charles spared no effort in welcoming me to Sri Lanka and in assisting me on that occasion and subsequently.

He is totally genuine and consistent in his passion to play his part in the development of young people in Sri Lanka to be good and effective citizens. He always goes the extra mile, perhaps to the detriment of other things he holds dear but always with the aim of achieving a better result.

This celebration is well deserved and I am delighted to be able to add my thanks and best wishes to a man who is an inspiration.

Sandy Ogilvie
International Director Shell LiveWIRE
CEO The PNE Group

Dear Charles,

It has been my privilege to have made your acquaintance soon upon my arrival in Sri Lanka in late 2004. Since then we have interacted many times both socially and at work where your qualities of head and heart shone brightly.

We at Shell are indebted to you for your sage advise and guidance as a Trustee at the Shell LiveWire Trust. Your contribution will be remembered always and you will continue to be our friend wherever you are.

Wishing you well.

With warm Regards

Hassan Madani
Country Chairman
Shell Companies in Sri Lanka.

Carson Cumberbatch associated with Mr. Charles Fernando, the head of Career Guidance Unit of The University of Sri Jayewardenepura for the last seven years when the company commenced its social responsibility charter towards developing capabilities of the university undergraduates.

During our association Mr. Charles Fernando influenced our effort towards facilitation of Career Guidance in Universities to reach a level of Professionalism that would benefit the student community.

He demonstrated his passion yet brought in a high degree of professionalism to bring about a sustainable development in the Career Guidance activities of the Universities. He was eager to capture external facilitation including Carsons yet highly promotes and works towards setting up sustainable systems and capabilities within the universities to lift the purpose and the result orientation of the Career Guidance activities of the university.

We observe him as a true champion in changing the public image of university undergraduates by developing much needed behavioral capabilities of the university undergraduates. He was a true visionary and therefore willing to share his views openly and was not hesitant to challenge others' point of view purely to get the best results to the ultimate recipients, the university undergraduates.

We are always willing to receive his advice and guidance in shaping our activities towards the end results that he passionately worked towards.

Shan Yahampath
Carsons Management Services Ltd

Dear Sir,

I feel blessed to be able to show my gratitude to you in this manner as I have had the opportunity of gaining at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura a “universal education” in the real sense of the word because of you.

I believe that a many people will have a lot of important things to say about you. As a former student, what I really wish to do is to emphasize how valuable your guidance and teaching had been in moulding our lives, character and personality and how vital it is to us even today.

Your lectures were inspirational in that you took us to world of IT, with the ease of taking a bunch of kids to the world of the most relished stories ever told. I even remember how, using Logo and turtle graphics designed primarily for kids, you led us to problem solving and even programming. Your methodology was not to compel us to learn by heart, but to learn on our own through trial and error.

One such instance comes to mind. It was the year 1996. The cricket craze was on then as it is now due to the world cup. Sri Lanka was in the finals and the final day & night match with Australia had been scheduled. To our great dismay the 3rd year computing final paper was scheduled for the next day. We simply could not miss the match nor could we take a chance with the exam that given also the importance of the subject we knew would affect our whole university career and our lives as well. So in desperation we came to meet you sir, hoping for a postponement of the exam. You were not ready to give in. You said *“If you have taken part in the programme attending the lectures doing the reading, practicals, group work and the assignments and learnt in that process ... you do not need to worry. Nothing in the paper can be answered with last minute study. Enjoy the match, sleep a little and come and answer the paper with a relaxed mind. You will be OK”*. So we watched the match, witnessed our team becoming the world champions for the first time in cricket history ... and all of us got through the exam with flying colours and I was in the group that got 'A'. Yes, you pushed us into a different form of study and learning than what was then common.

One more event comes to my mind. It was back in 1996/97. Internet access was extremely difficult at the university and was practically not available to

students then. We were final year students then and you wanted to give us the experience of it use before we went out into the world. You went out of your way sir, to help us, and invited us to your home where each group was given a time slot and you guided us into actual use of the internet and of browsing. Even today we remember that with respect & gratitude ... your giving us internet access and paying for it out of your own pocket.

If I were to put all these ideas into one sentence that would read: "When many tried to 'teach' us, Sir, you taught us 'how to learn!'"

I feel I must anyway add another small paragraph about something that made me feel really sad. In 2006 January I had been pestering you to come over to Kandy and conduct an orientation session for our freshers. You were not too keen but finally gave in and said "OK, I will come". Late afternoon at the end of the session a comment you made publicly made me a little concerned. You told the youngsters ... *"You know, I wouldn't come all the way from Colombo if I did not think you all were important. You can make it and go into the world as competitive people not because of the piece of paper you may achieve, but because of what you are. I know you can do it. That was why I came in spite of a minor health problem by way of a wheeze that started 3-4 weeks back. On one side Miss Sandya was pestering me ... and on the other my wife and children did not want me to travel and were saying 'you take your former student seriously but not what we say'.* You said it jokingly but I still remember walking with you to the car and telling you "Sir, please drive carefully". You smiled and drove off. I was shocked when I heard later that you were in hospital with a major problem. No, Sir, we do not want you to have problems ... but then, what happened, shows just what you are: 'doing things without counting the cost'.

Dear Sir, the sacrifices you made in guiding us, in developing our self-esteem and personality which brightens our day even now after all these years is remembered with gratitude. Also in the name of all my colleagues, and from the bottom of my heart, I wish you a long and healthy life full of joy, one where you can retain that same smile of yours always.

May the blessings of the Triple Gem be with you.

Mrs. Sandya Shiromi Bandara
Head of Department (Management)
Advanced Technological Institute, Kandy

Dear Sir,

I just could not believe it when I heard you were starting sabbatical leave prior to retirement. Yes, of course, I know for sure that you cannot really retire from the yeoman service you are rendering at present as you are so much committed to the rejuvenation of the lives of the undergraduates.

I can remember how you enlightened us during the period 1986-1987 offering an unforgettable learning experience in the sphere of information technology so competently. Further, my mind goes to the insurgency period of the late 80s when you protected us playing a fatherly role patiently. Furthermore, we know how you sacrificed many things and even your own career advancement because of your commitment to the career development of the students.

You deserve the tribute that your staff are organising, and even more, for what you have been and done for us.

K.D.S. Ruwanchandra
Senior Assistant Secretary
Ministry of Plantation Industries

It is honestly my great pleasure to send this message to the souvenir to be presented to Mr.Charles Fernando in recognition of the role played in the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and other national ventures.

Mr. Fernando is a valuable character somewhat rare within the university community. He was a great giant in our university life as he led us to enter the new world of Information Technology. His devotion which assisted and guided us to be a creative, innovative and systematic graduates was the main and basic platform for our successful careers. Though someone who came to university from a far away rustic environment, I was able to get entry into the new globalised world of today because he showed us how to face the world. This renowned professional strived to release a perfect graduate with a high level of Information Technology and personality into the society. Whenever we as batchmates get together and look back at university life, we remember his name and appreciate his sacrifices for our sake.

While a message like this is not enough to really value his life and pay tribute, I consider it an honour and a privilege to send this message as a former student of his.

Gamini Madhuraarachchi (89/90 Batch)
Manager – Business Development, World Scan (Pvt) Ltd
Formerly: Supplies Manager, Lanka Tiles Ltd

Dear Sir,

I came to know you during my studies at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. I benefited much from the workshops you organized at the Career Guidance Unit, with regard to matters such as effective CV writing, importance of making contacts and maintaining networks, the way to get assistance and work experience without asking for jobs etc.

I remember coming to you when I failed my 1st interview, and you helped me see the mistakes I had made. When I was down in life, you were kind enough to listen to me and advice me making sure I was not making important decisions when under pressure or stress. You showed me to see the good and the bad, gave me courage and supported positive thinking.

I remember coming back to the university after graduation to discuss the decision to enter the UK on a working holiday visa, and you encouraged me to profit from the opportunity and gave me your e-mail address to let you know how I progressed. After the two-year experience and exposure I am back in Sri Lanka now and am working as a branch accountant at the NGO Vision Fund Lanka. It is a big challenge which I have taken on with confidence because you armed me with the necessary qualities.

If there is success in my life, I want you to know that your tremendous support has helped me to reach that. Thank you very much for all what you did for me and in advance for what you will surely do for me if need arises.

May you be showered with blessings to continue your good work.

Dileen Chrisanthi
97/98 batch
B.Com Department

Dear Sir,

It's with great pleasure and pride that I (as a graduate of the Faculty of Applied Science) gather these words, which are not enough to express the feeling of gratitude which we have for you in our heart, for the things you have done for us, as the father figure of the Career Guidance Unit.

I can remember how dedicated you were, and how much hard work you put in to give us the maximum of service possible from the Career Guidance Unit. We were the first batch, who got the chance to participate in the Mentoring Programme supported by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. It was our very first experience of moving towards the real world of work, where we had the opportunity to nurture the skills and attributes, by which value was added to what we gained from our degree. It also made the private sector convinced, that it is not only graduates with foreign qualifications who can be assets to their companies but also the local university graduates.

If I and many others are somewhere with confidence, Dear Sir, that's because of the benefits we gained out of your sacrifices. So it is time to say how unique you are and to express our gratitude, and also to wish you a healthy and long life!

J.A.Madhushini Davindrika
Executive – Marketing, Hayleys MGT Knitting Mills Ltd

When I and some of my friends selected the course unit on 'Computing and Information Technology' within our degree programme, we were anxious but had some positive expectations with regard to the future job market. Charles Sir was our lecturer but it was his character that was really important. His teaching methodology was to guide the student to think and create something new and fruitful for their future life. Often he would bring in practical examples from his personal life, society and the world. I still remember how he gave a project to me and my friend Ravi (who is now in USA). It was to learn and present to the class a new applications package within a limited time. We did it and made the first computer-related presentation of our lives and ended up with incredibly high marks.

By end of the course (including its advanced module) we were ready without any fear of technology and confident of being able to fit into computing as it evolved. Charles Sir has his own abilities and approach in teaching, an attractive way of explaining, supporting creative ideas, and of motivating students. He showed us how to think in the correct manner and at the correct time which I learnt also from his life. All this was the key resource to enlighten and support my working life in Sri Lanka and now in Canada. I am now at the top level with the Accounting and Financial professionals in this North American Country. My success has been very much due to the training he gave us and that is the reason why I shall always respect him.

I can write many things about him and about what he has been to us as a lecturer, and the support we get when we seek his advice even now.

I wish him all blessings for a life full of happiness and joy.

Rohitha Perera
Living & working in Canada .
B.Sc Mgt – Year 1991/1995

Great organisations do not appear magically.
They are built by creative men and women!

It is with great pleasure that I write about Mr. Charles Fernando. As Public Administration graduates we had a great opportunity to work with and learn from Mr. Charles. With his broad vision he initiated the inclusion of Information Technology (IT) subjects in the Public Administration Syllabus. I can still remember some of the words he used in our 1st lecture in 1987 in the IT lab at Sumangala Building. He said (something like) *"In the near future IT will develop into being an all important subject in the world. Why don't we prepare for that already from today? Sky is the limit if you are creative. But don't expect what is in your notes to be asked for in your examination. You will have to do more and I will guide and help you. If you are ready to face this challenge let us start this journey today. Those who aren't ready for such can leave the room and find a subject where you can study a note and easily pass an exam."*

Mr Charles' lecturing style was different from that of many. Because, IT is a dynamic or evolving subject he explained it in practical and applied manner,

and introduced us to the then latest technology. Most of the time he discussed things beyond the topic to expand our knowledge. But the best I liked was the friendship and close relationship he built-up with his students. His support was not limited to educational assistance but also to life and careers.

He always appreciated front line students who actively moved with the developments in the labour market and accepted those challenges with self confidence. At the same time he encouraged and assisted the others to move with changes.

I am forever grateful to this kind hearted gentleman to whom I still owe a couple of hundred rupees. He may not be able to recollect it. Once I had to submit my Academic Transcript to the USA for sitting the CPA exam. I paid the necessary fees to the university for the service but things had not worked. Since I was out of the country at that time one of my friends personally approached Mr. Charles and explained the situation and how urgent it was. The following day I was informed by CPA that they had received my Academic transcript by FAX (with a promise from the University that the original was being mailed) and that they had decided to allow me to sit the exam. Later I understood that Mr. Charles had intervened, obtained the transcript and faxed it to the USA paying out of his pocket without expecting anything in return.

During that 1988-1990 dark period of our country with a rebellion in the south we had many difficulties as undergraduates. We could not concentrate only on studies. We were involved in many activities carried out against social injustice and to protect our rights and the motherland. One key activity we were involved with was against 'Indian Peace Keeping Force' (IPKF). Mr. Charles guided us to keep our studies and our social activities in proper balance. He taught us to manage our time and make good use of it. When we talk about our university life we will never forget two great lecturers of our department Prof Ekanayake and Mr. Charles. They were exceptional.

Let me conclude this letter stating: Sir, you are a great gentleman. We and society benefited a lot from you. We wish you good health and long life!

Lalith Chandana
Senior Internal Auditor.
Qatar Telecom.

Mrs Erandhati Randeniya, a former student of Mr Fernando is now Career Guidance Officer at the national Ministry of Labour and Human Resources.

චාර්ලස් ක්ෂත්‍රියා නම් විද්වත් ගුරුභවතා මනුෂ්‍ය චරිතයටම ආදර්ශමත් නිතරමානි නොසැලෙන පිරිසුන් සෞරභයකින් යුක්ත වූ මහත්මා ගතිගුණ වලින් පිරිසුන් අයෙකි' විශ්ව විද්‍යාල ශිෂ්‍යවත් කැටියට මා ඔහු ව හඳුනාගත් මොහොතේ සිට උසස් අධ්‍යාපනය තුලින් පිවිසිය ජයගන්නා ආකාරයත් කුලලතා වලින් එය සෞභාග්‍යමත් කරගන්නා ආකාරයත් පිළිබඳ විවිධ වූ සාකච්ඡා පවත්වන ලදී' වෘත්තීය මාර්ගෝපදේශ නිලධාරියෙක් ලෙස කමිකරු හා මිනිස් බල අමාත්‍යාංශයේ සේවය කිරීමට ලැබීම ද එතුමා ආශ්‍රය කිරීමේ ප්‍රතිඵලයක් ලෙස මා පෙන්වාදීමට කැමැත්තෙමි'

වෘත්තීය මාර්ගෝපදේශ වැඩපිළිවෙල විශ්ව විද්‍යාලය තුලට අත්‍යවශ්‍ය අංගෝපාංගයක් බව වටහාගත් චාර්ලස් මහතා ශ්‍රී ජයවර්ධනපුර විශ්ව විද්‍යාලයේ එය ස්ථාපිත කිරීමට ගත් උත්සාහය ඉතා අග්‍රගන්‍ය උත්සාහයකි' එය අද මල්විල ගැන්වෙමින් පවතිනු දැකීමට විශ්ව විද්‍යාලයේ ආදි ශිෂ්‍යවත් ලෙස මා සතුටුවෙමි'

සෑම ගුරුවරයෙක් තුලම හොඳ මනුෂ්‍යයෙකු සිටිය යුතුය යන්න සැබෑකළ මෙම දේව ලක්ෂණ සහිත චාර්ලස් නම් ගුරුවරයා ලැබීම අපගේ පිවිසියේ භාග්‍යයකි'

එතුමාට විරාත් කාලයක් නිරෝගි සම්පත්තියෙන් යුතුව පිවිත්වීමට ලැබේවායි මම ප්‍රාර්ථනා කරමි'

එරන්දුති රන්දෙනිය BSc., MA, Dip.
වෘත්තීය මාර්ගෝපදේශ නිලධාරී
කමිකරු හා මිනිස් බල අමාත්‍යාංශය

Tribute to Charles Fernando

I am from a middle class family and my father was a teacher. I could not spend on private education and was looking for avenues to find employment faster. It was at this moment that I was selected to follow some computer courses run by the University of Colombo and at the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

With no knowledge of computers and weak in the knowledge of English, it was really hard for me. When I explained my situation to Mr. Charles Fernando, he gladly accepted to help me out, inviting me several times to his home after work, and often teaching me till midnight without even taking time to change clothes or have dinner. I remember joining the family now and again for dinner and even being given a ride in his famous Morris Minor to the junction to catch a bus. Later, I was able to build up my career, working in Singapore and undertaking the much needed university education as such. I live now in United States, working as a Senior IT Consultant.

Mr. Charles Fernando is a great human being who helped me without expecting a penny in return, and I am ever so grateful to him for lending me a hand to be where I am today. I wish him good health, success and happiness in the years ahead for he certainly deserves all that.

Sagara Fernando
Senior IT Consultant, UBICS Inc., USA

My acquaintance with Charles dates back to Dec 1991 when I joined Informatics Institute of Computer Studies (IICS, now IIT) as a lecturer. IICS is an institute of Higher Education, which at the commencement conferred degrees in Information Systems and Business Administration from Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) of UK.

I greatly appreciate the professional assistance granted to me at a time in my life when it was desperately needed. He guided me throughout the formative years and I am deeply indebted to him for the position I currently hold at this prestigious Institute.

I continued my close association with Charles even after he took over the post of Director of the Career Guidance Unit of University of Sri Jayawardenapura.

I am happy to note that I was delighted to be present at the simple ceremony that was held 9 years back in March 1998 to mark the opening of the Career Guidance Unit. I know that much development has taken place since then. I feel Charles possesses a unique sensitivity and quality in his approach and style that reaches far beyond the formula approach to career guidance and career placement and that is what has helped the service to achieve significant results within a matter of only 9 years.

Assoc Prof: Alfred Perera, B.Eng (India), MSc (University College London),
MPhil (University of Glasgow)
Acting Dean.

Chris Weaver was seconded to IICS to assist in the development of their BSC in Information Systems in 1990. He spent 3 months in Sri Lanka. As he had never worked abroad before, he was apprehensive. He needn't have been. Charles took him "under his wing", and supported him throughout in his academic role. But more than that, Charles included him in his family, and being aware of the excitement of visiting an overseas country, accompanied Chris on trips to many of the sights and scenery of Sri Lanka, a country which Chris fell in love with, and would love to revisit.

When Chris came back to Sri Lanka for a short visit to coincide with the first graduation of IICS, he was able to make a link with your university. He made a presentation to the staff of the Management Faculty on the Validation Processes for Degrees within the UK university system.

And so since 1990, we have been in constant touch with Charles. In 1999 he visited the UK to get to know about Careers Services in the UK and we were pleased to give him accommodation in return for his kindness to Chris while in Sri Lanka. Tit for Tat, so some people say in the UK. In other words "One good turn deserves another". But what we are happy about is that in such and other ways we have also been close to the work that has been happening at your university.

Charles is a professional in his work, but he is also a complete man in every other way. He has supported his wife, his children, his parents, in-laws, and his friends and colleagues, and we are proud to be associated with such a person.

Margaret Weaver, University of Derby
Chris Weaver, Manchester Metropolitan University

Dear Charles,

I consider it a privilege to have known and worked with a simple, honest and dedicated professional like you at the start of my career which was at Informatics Institute of Computer Studies (IICS). At IICS, you were a role model teacher and a colleague who preached and practiced the importance of academic growth and of human qualities as equally important. Charles, you can be very happy that you have cultivated and implanted humanity among your students both in private and public sector organizations.

As a son, parent, teacher, friend and a colleague your humble and honest way of dealing with others makes you one of the few remarkable sons of our motherland. I wish and pray that you will be in good health to provide the needed advice for the future student population for many more years.

Chanaka Peiris
Consultant Application Architect, Government of Ontario, Canada
formerly Senior Lecturer/Projects Coordinator (IICS:1990-2001)

I first met Mr Fernando in 1992 during my studies at the IICS. In 1990 he had played a crucial role in negotiating the collaboration between Manchester Metropolitan University and IICS. This initiative has made a significant contribution to higher education in Sri Lanka.

Mr Fernando has a great talent for creating interactive learning environments. I have experienced many learning environments both in SL and the UK and class his lecture sessions amongst the top. Mr Fernando has been my teacher, mentor and motivator, and being his student has been my privilege.

Sir, thank you and all the best.

Dr Nirmalie Wiratunga
Research Fellow
The Robert Gordon University, UK

I first met Mr. Charles Fernando ("Charlie" as he is affectionately called) as an undergraduate at the Informatics Institute of Computer Studies in 1992. What I learnt from Mr. Fernando was so much more than the subject matter – I was shown the importance of dedication, determination, simplicity and being true to oneself. These were values exemplified by Mr. Fernando in everything he did. He also has a lively sense of humour, injecting amusing anecdotes into lectures to make it more interesting and putting up with our teasing particularly

about his 'Morris Minor'. He always unselfishly put the needs of his students and those around him before his own, and never bragged or boasted about his many accomplishments. In his quiet understated way he touched the lives of so many. To him we owe a debt of gratitude for helping us along our way as we made the transition from school leavers to professionals.

Manique Abeyratne
Project Manager, IFS

Charles Fernando taught us at Informatics during our time there, from 1991 to 1995. At a time when we were just out of school, and from different A/L streams, when we didn't understand much about organizational sciences, behavior, theories of management etc, Mr. Fernando took on the daunting task of educating us in what we thought was most remote to our mind-set at that time. Over and above that, was his passionate involvement with the Informatics Institute, in creating an institution which would eventually produce some of the finest business leaders in the country today, in creating a fantastic undergraduate environment, complete with even forming a Student Union, preparing the draft constitution and guiding the students into making the union work.

Little over 10 years from graduation, when we take a moment to look back and appreciate our own achievements, we realize how the contribution of a few individuals like Mr. Charles Fernando has shaped and formed our minds and behavior, for us to perform today as who we are, in the form of leadership positions in leading private sector organizations in the country all the way to consulting positions at the World Bank! Looking further we realize that it is not only our batch, the institution so passionately formed and shaped by Mr. Charles Fernando has annually produced the most sought-after IT Graduates ever since its formation, not surprisingly though, given that the more seniors have now progressed to strategic leadership positions around the world!

We wish our Sir Charles a very well earned break from his ever busy lifestyle, and hope that finally, he'll take things a bit slow in life... although that probably might be the most challenging for his creative and selflessly helpful mind.

With thanks & best regards

Jayesh Nanayakkara,
Client Services Manager, Virtusa
together with the '95 batch of Informatics Institute

Dear Sir / Charles,

We were both students at the Informatics Institute (IICS, now IIT) when we first got to meet you as the Student Welfare Officer and as a lecturer. Your way of lecturing inspired us at the time and no doubt was a factor in one of us taking to lecturing as well. We were impressed by your genuine concern for the students at all times and we always knew that you were one person we could count on whenever anyone of us had an issue or needed some guidance.

Well, we graduated from IICS in 1994, but ever since then we have maintained ties and links which have kept the friendship as strong as ever. This is again in no small part due to your diligence in providing all of us past students, the much looked forward to end-of-year letter detailing all that has been happening in your life. We very much appreciate all that you have done & been, for us as students, and then later as a friend over the years.

We wish you all the very best, and have no doubt you will continue to contribute to many worthy ventures as time goes on. May God Bless you and your family.

Sanjeev & Anusha Jayaratnam
Students of IICS - 1994

Dear Mr. Fernando,

The work you collaborated in for bringing Manchester Metropolitan University to Sri Lanka was a great achievement by way of creating opportunities for students who could not get into local universities but were still capable of becoming top notch professionals. I personally feel we owe you so much for this. I had also the privilege of being one of your students. You taught us to look into a problem from different perspectives, not to dismiss anyone's view "but" to critically evaluate such and take in what was appropriate. This is one key skill which has made most of us true professionals in the Sri Lankan and foreign IT industry.

I would like to thank you for your wonderful work in changing our lives and wish you all the very best in your continuing effort to guide students into their careers.

Anandakumar Varatharajah
IS Manager
Trade & Exchange Online, Auckland, New Zealand

Dear Sir,

I view this as a great privilege bestowed upon myself to email (apologies to 'pen') a few words here for the occasion of yet another first in the history of the Career Guidance Unit at the Sri Jayewardenapura University, i.e. the formal opening of the Employability Skills Support Laboratory. Rest assured that the benefits to be derived off this pioneering effort of yours will far outweigh the supreme sacrifices committed into this initiative, and its' nostalgic memories will live on for ever and above all benefit many generations of students to come.

Speaking on behalf of the "4-runners" at IICS, I feel we owe it to you for the rest of our lives given the quotient of learning and experience that you shared with us that helped groom us to take on challenges in the Industry setting vis-à-vis the technical know-how we graduated with.

Also, I do admit that our association and affiliations have matured over time although we've been more on a distant "virtual" mode of connect compared to yesteryear, but has definitely grown beyond a guru-gola relationship, given your unwavering persistence to keep in touch via the interesting updates. The last one was more solemn undoubtedly given the loss of a dear mother from planet earth however, to be reunited back again with the creator in his vineyard. May her soul RIP, Amen.

May your accomplishments be shining examples to the rest of us who have similar inclinations and interests beyond personal pride and glory, spanning onto national interests bound to enrich and benefit society at large.

Wishing you all the very best in all your future endeavors.

Dinesh Sattrukalsinghe
B.Sc.(Hons.), MBA, CEng., FBCS, CITP, MACS, PCP, MCS (SL)
Associate Global Head of Knowledge Management, Virtusa Ltd
President - Computer Society of Sri Lanka www.cssl.lk
President - South East Asia Computer Confederation www.searcc.org

Dear Charles,

I am happy to note that the Career Guidance Unit of the University is preparing a small tribute for you and am indeed honoured to be able to contribute a message. I thought I would do well to copy a few sentences from a letter of mine to you dated October 2006 after you informed us that you wished to be relieved of your responsibilities at Imperial Institute as Academic Consultant. I had stated there that your resignation was accepted but with great regret.

“I must express, on behalf of the Board as well as myself personally, the profound impact you made on the Institute by agreeing to help me resurrect Imperial during its darkest days in February 2003. We will most certainly feel the loss of your experience, expertise and wisdom.”

“With your able support, advice and guidance, we were able to make what can only be termed a miraculous recovery. We were able to ... re-establish credibility with the university of Wales, re-validate the BSc (Hons) Business Management, and validate the new BSc (Hons) Computing degree and significantly improve the quality of the education we provide at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. You can be extremely proud of your contribution towards all of this.”

“Your heart is in improving quality and relevance of education including career guidance particularly at our state universities. These ideals have spilled over into the private sector too through your involvement with two Private Sector higher education institutes including Imperial.”

“I do hope that you will be able to find the time to rest rather than work as much as you have done both at the University and at Imperial making quickly the transition from ‘mostly work’ to ‘mostly leisure’ so that you have more time to recover more fully from your recent health crisis and also to enjoy life more fully”

Thank you Charles for what you have been to Imperial, and for what you have been and are to me and particularly to my wife who has known you from 1990 and is proud to have been your student.

Rohan N Wijeratne
Director, Imperial Institute of Higher Education
Former COO, Millennium Information Technologies Group
Former Chairman / CEO, Computer & Information Technology Council of Sri Lanka

Charles is a person who commands respect and draws affection from those who work with him. He has a profound understanding of the purposes of higher education and generously shares his thoughts, knowledge and experience without attempting to dominate. His mix of good humour, high principles and sheer hard work produces excellent results from those around him.

In his work with the University of Wales and the Imperial Institute he has brought the best qualities of higher education into everyday practice at the Institute, to the benefit of both students and staff. His drive and focus have been central to ensuring that a once fledgling relationship has deepened into a confident partnership providing sound educational opportunities for an increasing number of young people; and it is this that motivates his actions.

It is impossible to overstate both how important and how reassuring Charles' presence has been for Wales' developments in Sri Lanka

Chris Burke
Bangor Business School, University of Wales
Deputy Chair, University of Wales Validation Board.

Charles Fernando is one of the most generous people that I have had the privilege of knowing well. His generosity is of the most valuable kind – he gives his time and he gives of himself, without reservation, for the good of others. These people are often young, learning the ropes of life, but they can also be old, perhaps in need of support and encouragement. I have seen him at first hand in both circumstances, and have also myself, with my wife, been the beneficiary of his generous behaviour.

Our paths crossed when we were both involved with the early growth and development of the Imperial Institute of Higher Education in Colombo. I was an external examiner for the University of Wales, and Charles was recruited on a part-time basis to develop the teaching, learning and assessment programmes, with proper assurance of quality. It was quickly apparent that he is inventive, careful, thorough, trustworthy, intellectually and practically completely honest, and a pleasure to work with. His concern was always for the students, in this case including many mature students with significant work and family commitments and needing careful and sensitive guidance. Charles could achieve this face-to-face, but also by the skilled way in which he built transparent processes, each with a student-friendly face.

But Charles is no softie. He works by encouragement, by carrots and not sticks, to help people to bring out the best in themselves, and to rise to higher standards than perhaps they thought themselves able to achieve. I am absolutely confident that he will have done this in the University too.

Charles' health was not of the best, but he made, and still makes, light of that. Everyone knows of his alcoholism where work is concerned! But his strength is not just the quantity of work he still gets through. Rather, it is its sustained and lasting high quality, and its humane approach to issues. The University must surely be very proud to have had such a man responsible for important aspects of its affairs, just as he has always demonstrated by his actions and contributions his pride in his participation in the world of learning and scholarship. I remember him with warmth and affection, and the greatest of respect.

Michael Bourn

Emeritus Professor of the University of Southampton, England
formerly Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dean Of Social Sciences & Professor of Accounting
earlier professorships at Liverpool, Canterbury & New Zealand

Dear Charles,

As my stay in Sri Lanka is still quite short, my "window" towards you, Charles, may allow too narrow a vista and may not do justice to your personality in a comprehensive way. For this I beg your indulgence at the very beginning. But as any window it "permits man to experience the essence of light", as H.L. Krysmanki puts it and "implies some sort of interaction with the unknown..." Here, it appears to me, the circle gets closed again.

Given your long association with the former Director, Manfred Broenner, it was not unusual that when I needed to discuss something about a possibility for my son to continue in Sri Lanka his university education which he had begun in Mexico and Germany, it was your name that my colleagues proposed as a contact. We had a discussion on the matter and you were among the first in Sri Lanka to offer me a lift in your car to take me to Imperial Institute. But you were kind and broadminded enough to check out with two other leading institutions. Finding anyway that their calendars did not make it easy for my son to eventually fit in, Wales was agreed upon as the best option.

A few weeks later you called on me at home telling me that you were in the process of writing a letter to Wales University to ask for a consideration of the previous studies of my son in Mexico and Germany. I told you, that at 11 p.m. you should rather go to bed and not trouble your mind with this – otherwise-commendable reference for one of your students. But you said, "No, no, I'm not at home, I'm still working in my office at the Imperial Institute of Higher Education". You left me speechless. Far beyond ordinary working hours and

bureaucratic patterns you have used your time, your energy, your spirit, even your health for the service of others.

Dear Charles, for this lifespan you have earned the respect, the love and the deepest appreciation of crowds of people, and if anybody has dramatically improved its karma for the next life(s) to come – it is you!

Richard Lang
Director,
Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka, German Cultural Centre Colombo

Dear Charlie,

I believe that your staff are doing something wonderful as a gesture. They certainly have discussed matters with you about your past and have contacted me.

Being the current Editor of the Catholic Messenger I am happy to go back not to 1869 when this weekly was started but a little closer to 1968. As the Ceylon National Synod was held that year, it was a historic year for the Catholic Church in the context of reform, renewal, and adaptation to the then post-independence complex reality of Sri Lanka. The issue of 7th September had a feature prepared by the journalist Yvonna Candappa wife of the well-known journalist-author E C T Candappa. The editor's comment stated: "We present today to our readers a set of thumb-nail sketches, firstly of the personalities involved in the preparatory work and direction of Convention proceedings and secondly...". It is noted that you were privileged to be one of the three featured in the first category. Leaving others to comment on your current work and involvements – but taking more than thrice the space the organizers have suggested ! - I wish to go back in history and pay you a tribute by providing a few extracts from that sketch about you published in 1968:

"Fair and lanky, young enough to be thought a seminarian ... As Secretary to the Secretary General of the National Synod, he was at the beck and call of the officials. All the executive work of the preparatory phase ... was entrusted to him. During the sessions he was directly responsible for the functioning of the whole machinery of the background organization.... Very few knew that he carried such a burden of responsibility. He was so unassuming that he could have been mistaken for one of the ushers. Those working under him said that he was very pleasant to work with. He knew how to get a job done although no one would describe him as a hard task master. This was echoed by the

Secretary General Bishop F Marcus Fernando who said 'He knew the correct amount of pressure to apply to get things done. He is very methodical and efficient. He is the best man in the world for this job – and you can quote me on that' ”.

Charlie, I know that you have continued to be the innovator and devoted worker you then were 40 years back. Time has in fact made you even better and elevated your contribution to higher levels. I wish you God's blessings to do even more. Ad multos annos.

Rev. Fr. Felician Ranjith Perera
Editor, Ceylon Catholic Messenger
Former Rector, St Peter's College, Colombo

I am happy to note that in preparing a tribute to Charles Fernando, the university and the organizers have sought information not only about the work Charles has been doing within the university system since 1985 but also about what he was and did much earlier. I remember him telling me that he recalls his past with pride, and that it all contributed to making him what he is today. I, as a member of the Catholic Community of Kolonnawa, who worked very closely with him in the seventies am happy to pay my own tribute to him. I hope you will permit me to quote from something I wrote 20 years back. It was the Welcome Address for the occasion of welcoming the then Archbishop of Colombo on a pastoral visitation of Kolonnawa on 19th July 1987. The comments then made, 8 years after Charles left us, I feel is the best tribute the Catholic Community of Kolonnawa can offer:

“In 1975, we had the good fortune in the appointment of a young dynamic resident pastor. With a tremendous capacity for work and a wondrous gift for calling forth the best in other people, he took things in stride ... We record with pride his various achievements including the planning and building of this beautiful edifice to the glory of God which will stand for all time as a monument to his painstaking effort and that of the Kolonnawa Catholic community he fostered. It might well be said of him that whatever he touched he adorned...” “Thank you Charles, for what you were to us then. You were there for us anytime, every time and all the time.”

I am happy that I maintained the links and continued to learn of his meaningful apostolate in the university sector for the benefit of university students. His sense of dedication in whatever he did is an eloquent prayer to God and I, my wife Dora and daughter Sylvana are with him in prayer that the Lord continue to bless and guide him.

Douglas Edirisinghe, Economist
for the Catholic Community of Kolonnawa

Dear Charlie,

I am happy that your staff have found out about our connection and that I have been given the opportunity to provide a message to a souvenir they are preparing.

I write as a classmate of yours of the late sixties at Louvain. It was strange that even though we were sitting in the same class it was my parents you met first and that quite by chance. That led to our getting to know each other starting November 1968. But the classmate relationship changed quickly into something much deeper as I began introducing you to others as "My Ceylonese Brother" while you used the expression "Belgian Sister" with regard to me. Apart from life at the University, I recall all those happy and wonderful weekends, birthdays and Christmases you spent with us as a family ... not forgetting also how my mom and dad cared for you in our home when you were down with a terrible attack of chicken pox in 1972.

I recall my several visits to Sri Lanka starting with the honeymoon in 1973. But it so happened that afterwards I even spent a few years there as Deputy at Indo Suez Bank. At a time when mobile phones were not known and when you did not even have a land phone at home, I recall how one day I had a very difficult assignment to carry out. During those trying days in the late 80s of Sri Lanka's second rebellion by the southern youth, you were held hostage by them at the university. You had managed to get a message across to me and I had to visit your family to tell Felicia and the kids a lie that you were getting late as you were held up with urgent work at the university. Yes, it was an extremely uncertain and difficult situation but fortunately it all ended up well after a 13-hour ordeal.

Looking back I realise that our relationship spans 40 years. We have always kept each other informed of each other's progress both in life and in work. I (and I know many other batchmates of that time who feel similarly) am proud of what you have been able to achieve over there in Sri Lanka. We are also happy that we were able to even help your work in small ways ... I recall for instance how after a familiarisation visit to the UK in 1999 you had over 30 kilos of books and material related to Career Guidance and knew well that your university wouldn't cover excess baggage ... and how my husband who was then with KLM managed to get it on board without cost.

Well, Charlie, our families and your other friends here in Belgium are proud of you. We are extremely happy that you will probably be taking things a little easy now working at your own pace, rather than rushing and being under stress as you have done and been in the past few years. We are with you as you begin this new chapter in your life ... and we know that surely undertaking some travel during your sabbatical, as in the past, you will always find a way route your flights to be able to spend a little time in your second country and your second home. See you soon. Bernadette Ulens

An addendum

***Addendum:** In the context of problems with the university mail server as referred to on page 10, here is a mail that had got stuck and was received late.*

I have known, and previously worked with, Charles Fernando for over ten years. Our association began (during 1998-1990) when he was Consultant helping in the planning of the then Informatics Institute of Computer Studies (IICS), Colombo and continued right through (from 1990 to 1998) with him continuing to be the consultant and later Director. Through that work Charles provided the local academic leadership and management of a private tertiary education institution which, through its collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) in the United Kingdom, was able to offer students attendance at a college in Colombo on a course validated by the University and leading to Honours degrees of MMU. This obviously opened up a significant economic advantage for students who were unable to enter Sri Lankan State Universities nor afford UK-based study.

I firmly believe the arrangement to be one of the most successful Sri Lanka-UK higher educational joint ventures at the time. Charles worked tirelessly to support the needs of those students and to maintain the learning environment necessary for them to meet the requirements of the programme and be ready for the world of work.

When he retired from that post to take up his appointment to develop a Careers Guidance Service, he left IICS with a firm academic and management foundation. By the time that the MMU-IICS (or ITT as the Institute had then become) partnership was dissolved in 2006, over 900 honours degree graduates had completed their qualifications in computer science or business subjects at the Institute.

Charles is remembered by me, and other colleagues here at MMU, as an enthusiastic, dedicated and hard-working individual who worked unceasingly for the benefit of the Institute's students and staff to preserve the quality of the education provided. His approach to matters was always highly professional and assiduous.

It has been a genuine pleasure to have known and worked with Charles and I wish him well in his future involvements

Professor Barry S. Plumb
Deputy Vice Chancellor
Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), UK

Postscript ... a message received this 26th March morning

Dear Friends,

Coming back after 5 days of extensive work as Chairman of a session of the Permanent People's Tribunal on the Philippines, held in The Hague, I have read your message just now. While I am sorry for being late for the above reason, I rush this message and hope you will be able to read it at the ceremony.

I am really glad to see that your appreciation is so high and that you want to express to Charles Fernando your sentiments of gratitude. You show that he has the students and colleagues he merited.

It is for me a great pleasure to join you in the homage to Charlie. I have known him since almost 40 years, during the various periods of his academic work, as a student and as a teacher. Charlie has been always characterized by a profound professional seriousness and a total dedication towards his students and his work.

I really hope that Charlie will be able to continue for a long time more his wonderful work of teaching and of transmitting fundamental values. His teaching but even more his life are examples for all of us.

Very best wishes for all of you.

François Houtart

Prof. Emeritus of the Catholic University of Louvain

President of the Tricontinental Centre.



Our team: (from left)

W M Dhanapala, Senior Lecturer / Director

Sameera Jayawardane, Careers Advisor

Thilini Rathnayake, Programmer

Chaminda Methpriya, Office Aide

T M C Thennakoon, Career Advisor

Charles Fernando, outgoing Founder-Director

Uppala Lokubogahawatta, Computer Applications Assistant

Career Guidance Unit
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