

May 2018

The Alumni Association of the University
of Peradeniya
(GTA and Suburbs)

NEWS Bulletin

(Devil's Bridge - Peradeniya)



News Bulletin

The Alumni Association of the University of
Peradeniya (GTA & Suburbs)

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Message from the Board of Management

Though we faced the brunt of a biting winter, the first half of 2018 was a happy time for us.

Amidst the heavy workload in organizing 'Back to Hantana - 2018', we successfully held our first Town Hall Meeting for the year in Guelph. As always, we saw an encouraging engagement with the families, plus entertainment in Peradeniya style. The appreciative participants were a big boost to the alumni activities, particularly toward 'Back to Hantana - 2018'.

Most of you witnessed the fruition of our effort at 'Back to Hantana -2018' event on April 7th. Responses so far from the public indicate a resounding success. We feel that our effort to provide an authentic taste of Sri Lankan culture through education and entertainment has not only been successful, but also wildly acknowledged. The visiting artists indicated that they too wished to adopt our model of entertainment and showcasing of talent.

The Inter University Alumni Cricket and Family Event will be hosted on Saturday, July 7th in Brampton. We are looking forward to seeing you in numbers at the grounds to cheer the 'Team Peradeniya'!

We still have several fellow alumni who have not yet enrolled in membership. Please encourage them to join us. We will later advise on the activities of the 2nd half of the year.

We want to say thank you for gracing the occasion with your presence at the event. We could not offer tickets to many due to capacity limitation of the theatre. Please extend our apologies. Finally, a 'Big Thank You' to everyone who worked tirelessly and helped making 'Back to Hantana - 2018' a memorable event.

Enjoy and live by Peradeniya spirit!

Back to Hantana 2018 – A Success Story

'Back to Hantana – 2018'

All the responses so far from the public indicated a resounding success of 'Back to Hantana – 2018', the 3rd episode of the "Back to Hantana series"

As most of you witnessed, our effort was to demonstrate a different and authentic Sri Lankan taste among the Canadian Sri Lankan community, within few hours through education and entertainment. Even in Sri Lanka, this kind of appearance is offered today. We are happy our efforts yielded an outcome surpassing our own expectations and the audience. Keeping the audience attracted for four hours is perhaps the best testimony. Interest expressed by the visiting artists to adopt our model for their future program is further affirmation of the same sentiments

Apart from over 60 entertainers and orchestra who performed on stage, there were over 50 other volunteers who worked determinately and tirelessly amidst heavy cold for many weeks to make the event a reality. We definitely owe them 'big time' for their contribution and spirit.

The event had a huge attraction very quickly; hence we could not accommodate quite a few due to capacity limitations of the theatre. We request you to thank them on our behalf and convey our apologies.

We are proud; once again we were able to hoist Peradeniya flag high. The next 'Back to Hantana' will be on stage in April 2020. Until then let us keep Peradeniya spirit flowing!



Back to Hantana 2018 – Memories



Guelph Town Hall Gathering

The first Alumni and family gathering of this year was held on February 17, 2018 at the United Church Auditorium in Guelph for the Alumni of University of Peradeniya living in Cambridge, Guelph, Kitchener and Waterloo area.

The opportunity provided an open forum to share highlights of the past activities of AAUPGTAS and featured its future plans with the alumni. The participants were provided a preview of 'Back to Hantana – 2018' and encouraged to join the performances and enlist the children for the same. As the event was open for the public the attendees were encouraged to reach out to the rest. The discussion that followed attendees shared some ideas that can be turned to potential engagement opportunities. The participants were also requested to reach out to the alumni, who had not enrolled so far.

Several new faces turned up for the event and the participants joined the Peradeniya style musical evening and a 'Pot Luck' dinner at the end.



Tribute to late Dr. Ranjith Wijayawardana

Dr Ranjith Laxman Wijayawardana was born in 15 January 1955 in Eppawala, Ratnapura. He obtained his formal education from Thalavitiya Village School Eppawala, Dharmapala Vidyalaya Pannipitiya and finally at Nalanda College, Colombo. He was a brilliant student and gained admission to the University of Peradeniya Science Faculty and graduated in July 1977 with BSc (Hons) in Physics with First class.

After graduation, he joined the Physics Department as an Assistant Lecture at the Faculty of Science in the University of Peradeniya. He was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to pursue post graduate studies at the State University of New York, Albany, USA and during that time (1980-1986) he obtained MSc in Physics and PhD in Experimental High Energy Physics from the same university. His research interest was in the field of Neutron/Nuclear Physics.

He was fittingly appointed the Chairman of Atomic Energy Authority (AEA) of Sri Lanka where he served until 2015. Later he reverted to his substantive role in the Physics department of the University of Peradeniya until he succumbed to his prolonged illness in 08 April 2018.



Excerpts from Jennings Life

His Dream for Peradeniya



Early Years

Sir William Ivor Jennings IV is credited for creating the University of Peradeniya 75 years ago. The following excerpts from his biography provides several valuable insights to current and future generations

Born as the son of a carpenter in England, he was encouraged to read, and **to his family, landing a clerical job in the city was the height of ambition.** Jennings was the beneficiary of an educational system that valued humanity above all else, and allowed him to **dream big.** From there, at 10 years old, **he won a scholarship** to “the city school”, Queen Elizabeth’s Hospital (QEH) in Bristol. From QEH he won more scholarships to Bristol Grammar School.

Academic Career

His academic career flourished as Lecturer in Law at Leeds University, as Holt Scholar of Gray’s Inn., called to the Bar and joined the London School of Economics as Lecturer in Law.

When Jennings accepted the post of **Principal of the Ceylon University College** in October 1940, he had already earned **an academic reputation as a constitutional expert.** He had taught law and political science at several prestigious universities in the UK, Canada and the United States.

Besides numerous contributions to international journals, he had also produced **eleven major books before he came to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) at the age of 37** (He lived only 62 years).

Best Years

He spent some of the best years of his life in Sri Lanka (1940-54). Though there were moments Jennings regretted the books that could have been written had he stayed in England, he was finally convinced that he made the right decision to **“take the road to Peradeniya”.** He was proud that he was able to help to **build “one of the finest small universities in the world.”**

Jennings was the **master mind of creating a new university for the country.** The University of Ceylon was established in April 1942 by amalgamating the Ceylon Medical College (established in 1870) and the Ceylon University College (established in 1921). Jennings hoisted the flag on July 1st, 1942 at “College House” which continues to be the administrative centre of the Colombo. **Jennings became the first Vice Chancellor of the University of Ceylon.**

What is striking is **the meticulous care Jennings planned out the new university scheme.** Besides drafting the University of Ceylon Ordinance No.20 of 1942, he had also written a large number of memoranda dealing with many aspects of university life. Referring to the last stages of establishing the new university, he says: “I had to enact more legislation in that month than the State Council did in a year.”

Excerpts from Jennings Life (cont...)

His Dream for Peradeniya

Best Years (cont...)

When the shifting of the university from Colombo to Peradeniya was underway, Jennings supervised the entire project, including the construction of buildings. He insisted: **"This University has to last a thousand years, and we do not want shoddy work."**

To his memory, his life's work is the University of Peradeniya. He had a **most glorious vision for the university, which he worked tirelessly to achieve in the little time he had.** On, April 20, 1954, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh ceremonially declared the University of Ceylon **"more open than usual"**.



In Memory

Jennings was knighted in 1948, made a QC in 1949, and awarded the KBE in 1955. After leaving Sri Lanka, he became Master of Trinity College, Cambridge in 1954 and Downing Professor of the Laws of England in 1962. Jennings passed away in Cambridge on 19 December 1965 at the age of 62. He had birthed the University of Ceylon, served as Vice Chancellor of the Universities of Ceylon and of Cambridge, taught around the globe, wrote scores of books and been an integral part of the political histories of many nations. Jennings far exceeded the highest ambitions of his family.

The University of Peradeniya was the scholarship boy's way of giving back to his beneficiaries what his benefactors had left for him. **This should also be the motto of every alumni of the University of Peradeniya.**

Vison

It is clear that Jennings' views on education were influenced by the British notion of **"the well-rounded gentleman-scholar with a background in liberal arts."** He **considered undergraduates who do not read books other than textbooks as "illiterate."** **"Such illiteracy unfortunately becomes cumulative, and standards generally will be lowered for several generations."**

He always emphasized the **importance of general education**, a long process which begins from one's childhood. He said: **"So far as examination standards are concerned you may rest assured that a graduate of the University of Ceylon is as good as a graduate of any Western university. His deficiency, if he has any, lies in his general education, his ability to do things as distinct from his ability to pass examinations. That deficiency arises from home and school environment, and therefore varies from person to person."** In order to produce men and women of high calibre, the university ought to give them not only a **"useful knowledge"** (the kind of knowledge required for vocational needs) but also what is lacking in their general education.

In order to help those students who did not have opportunities to acquire a sound general education Jennings thought that the university should be equipped to provide them with a **"belated education."** **He placed great emphasis on cultural, sports, and recreational activities.** According to Jennings, he was wrongly alleged to have said that Ceylon was a **"cultural desert"**; however, if that was the reality, he thought that the **university would constitute an "oasis" in that desert.**

Up Next

Inter-University Alumni Cricket Tournament & Family get-together

Saturday 7 July 2018

At Batsman Community Park, 398 Father Tobin Road, Brampton, ON L6R 0S1

8.00 am to dusk

Organized by the University of J'pura Alumni Association with the participation of 07 University Alumni members

Join us to cheer **(Go Pera Go!)** our team and network with the rest of the alumni.



“EngNet”

Await more details

Fellowship and Networking Event for Sri Lankan – Canadian Engineering Professionals

This is an advance announcement of a pilot event the association is planning for the benefit of Sri Lankan Engineering professionals focusing on the following objectives. It is intended to initiate similar events for the other professional areas.

Objectives:

- Create forum for fellowship and Networking among Engineering professionals of Sri Lankan Origin and Canadian professionals
- Connect them with Canadian professional bodies, Higher Education institutes and Employment with similar professionals
- Elevate the profile of a Sri Lankan Engineering Professionals in the eyes of Canadian Professional bodies, Higher Education Institutes and Recruiters
- Lay the foundation for sustainable information sharing system

Summer Event

Following the successful ‘Camp Fire’ in Peradeniya Style in last summer, several inquiries have been made by the membership about 2018 summer. **We are in the process of planning a possible event.**

Town Hall Gatherings

We hope to continue with our ongoing effort to meet the alumni and the families at their cities and **next gathering will be in Q4 2018.**



Editor's Call

It is exciting to be a Peradeniya Grad and even more so to be an active alumnus and server the alma mater and the community. Peradeniya grads are borderless; you will find them where ever you go. The Alumni Association of the Peradeniya University (GTA and Suburbs) has made many strides in the past years and has gone to great lengths to offer you even more services. Our endeavor is to offer you, the best alumni experience and feel you proud. Over the years it has become clearer that together, we can accomplish many.

Our activities covered a wide range of themes, and these events have one goal in mind, to provide you with opportunities to stay connected and meet your fellow alumni. We encourage you to stay connected by visiting our website and take advantage of benefits and activities already available to you.

We are looking for ideas and ways we can better communicate with you as well as celebrate the achievements of our alumni, so please take a moment to read about our achievements, expectations, what we've been doing and what awaits on the horizon.

Summary of our Objectives

- Renewing university ties and foster networking representing Peradeniya University and work collaboratively with other Peradeniya alumni chapters, promoting mutually beneficial networking with other Sri Lankan and Canadian university alumnus
- Supporting academic goals of Peradeniya University, creating windows for postgraduate education opportunities and enhancement of standards of education, promoting University of Peradeniya brand
- Supporting professional and personal development of the members, Peradeniya graduate newcomers, collaborate with other similar organizations
- Recognizing and felicitating outstanding achievements of Peradeniya alumni members and promote Sri Lankan culture.

The Association shall not engage or promote or participate in any political or religious activities OR any social activity that can directly or indirectly lead to engagement, promotion or participation of any political or religious activity and/or in conflict of the above objectives. Any exception will be evaluated by the committee based on merits. However, this principle does not aim at restricting individual choices.