



The Late Mr. Ponniah Ketharanathan, B. Sc

He came from a well known family in Velanai. After graduating from the University of Colombo with a bachelor of Science (B. Sc.) degree in 1958, he joined as a teacher at Velanai Central College in 1959. He continued to serve this institution and rose to the highest position as Principal of the school in 1989 and served in this capacity for five years till his retirement in 1993, with distinction and dedication. During his period of service at the college, his lovable personality made him very popular with his peers, students, parents, and old students. He was firm but very kind to his staff and students. He had also served as the head of Valluvan House (also known as Valluvan Illam). His wife, Mrs. Thirumagal Ketharanathan was also a teacher and later the Vice Principal in the same institution.

In October 1991, the college was compelled to shift to Jaffna due to the civil war and the college started functioning in various places (Koddady Namasivaya Vidyalayam and Vaitheeswara Vidyalayam) and then in a temporary shed without adequate place and furniture at Kantharmadam. In the later part of year 1992, it was almost impossible to travel from Jaffna to Colombo. The traveling was very hazardous and many people had to sacrifice their lives when they attempted to travel to Colombo.

Despite these difficulties and with his ill-health condition, Mr. P. Ketharanathan went to Colombo and personally met several old students and summoned a meeting on 30-08-1992 at the Old Town Hall. This paved the way for the inaugural meeting of Velanai Central College Old Students' Association - Colombo. He was the founder and the first President of this Association. He rendered yeoman service in helping to collect funds to develop the college at the new place in Kantharmadam. Due to his personal endeavour a large amount of money was collected and sent to the college to purchase required furniture and built extra cottages etc.

After having inaugurated an OSA in Colombo, he gathered contact information of old students in Australia, France, and Canada, and requested them to form OSAs in their countries in which they resided. Strictly speaking, he was instrumental in the formation of Old Students Associations in Sydney, Melbourne, France, and Canada. Today, the OSAs are functioning well and helping to the school with their capacity due to the enthusiasm shown by Mr. Ketharanathan.

The passage of time took Mr. Ketharanathan to Australia and later from this world in 1996 at the age of 63. We can never forget his enigmatic sense of humour, not meant for this with lesser intelligence and knowledge in Chemistry.

By: S. Elancheliyan