

College Fellowship Award

Presenting, Dr. Lalitha Lakshmi Chandrasekara Senarath for the honorary fellowship of the College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka

Citation delivered by Dr. Manishka Jayasundera, Acting Consultant Ophthalmologist, District General Hospital, Ampara at the 31st Annual Congress of the College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka

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Dr. Senarath is the youngest in a family of six, born to parents who were school teachers. She received her primary education at Good Shepherd Convent Anuradhapura and secondary education at Mahamaya Girls College Kandy. She received her MBBS from the University of Peradeniya with Second Class Honors in 1990 and completed her internship training at National Hospital Colombo under the guidance of Dr. S Weerasingham, Consultant Surgeon and Dr. S Ramachandran, Consultant Physician.

She served as a Medical Officer in Colombo and Gallewela from 1992 to 1996. Destiny would see that she joined as an in Service Trainee in Ophthalmology at Teaching Hospital Kandy in 1997 and becoming a PG trainee at Teaching Hospital Kandy later that year. Dr. Senarath went on to complete her Diploma in Ophthalmology in 2000 and MD Ophthalmology with best results in June 2001 under the mentorship of Dr. Reggie Seimon and Dr AB Abeysinghe. Her fellowship was completed at the Royal Adelaide Hospital in Australia under the supervision of Mr. Henry Newland and received board certification in June 2003.

Dr. Senarath is a true patriot who was keen to return to her motherland and serve her country. She has served peripheral stations in 6 out of the 9 provinces and with the help of the Sri Lanka Eye Foundation, improved the infrastructure in many units from a shared weekly run clinic setup to a fully-fledged eye unit with theater facilities. I must highlight that she bravely decided to serve in Trincomalee during the height of the civil conflict from 2005 to 2007, during which she even conducted outreach camps to border villages. At each hospital, she has liaised with the RDHS and local authorities to conduct many outreach camps, school screening workshops and cataract camps going beyond her expected duty. She received her end post to Teaching Hospital Karapitiya in July 2015.

Dr. Senarath is a trifecta of visionary leader, outstanding clinician and involved academic.

Her leadership was exemplified by her service as a council member and secretary to the College of Ophthalmologists since 2006, which culminated in her installation as the President of the College in 2014. In her role as the President, she hosted the 11th International Congress of the SAARC Academy of Ophthalmology in 2014. She served as the Chairperson of Glaucoma Interest Group at the College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka from 2018 to 2021 during which she initiated groundbreaking epidemiological research, conducting the first national survey of Glaucoma prevalence in Sri Lanka in all 25 districts. This was presented and published at the World Glaucoma Congress in 2023. During her tenure as chairperson, she hosted the very first Glaucoma Society Symposium in World Glaucoma Congress 2021 and was the chairperson and a speaker in this prestigious meeting. She is currently a council member of the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology representing Sri Lanka.

As an academic Dr. Senarath has made it her solemn duty to train the future generations of Doctors and Ophthalmologists. She is a post graduate trainer for MD Ophthalmology as well as an examiner and chief examiner for all MD ophthalmology components having served as a member of the Board of Study Ophthalmology since 2016. Apart from ophthalmology, she is involved in the post graduate training in MD Forensic Medicine, MD Family Medicine, MD Sports Medicine and MD Community Medicine. She is a visiting lecturer and examiner at the Faculty of Medicine, Ruhuna University. In 2019, Dr. Senarath was invited twice as an external examiner for the Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Her outstanding clinical skills were recognized when she received the award for Outstanding Service in

Prevention of Blindness at APAO Hongkong in 2018. She also received the Cataract Champion Award by the Ministry of Health for doing mega surgical cataract eye camps organized by Vision 2020. Showcasing her experience, she was the main author of the "Practice Pearls in Glaucoma Management" and Co-Author in formulating guidelines in HCQ Retinopathy screening published by the College of Ophthalmologists, Sri Lanka

She has a keen interest in research, her research in Corneal ulcer management and antibiotic sensitivity patterns in Royal Adelaide Hospital was published in

the *British Journal of Ophthalmology* in 2003. She has presented free papers at Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology and at the World Ophthalmology Congress. She has been an invited speaker through the College for many international and local meetings including All India Ophthalmological Society, World Glaucoma Congress and World Ophthalmology Congress.

I take this opportunity to thank Dr. Lalitha Senarath for her altruistic duty over the years to our country and wish her the best of health to continue serving Sri Lanka for many more years to come.