



In Memory of Dr. Lankathilaka Jayasinghe (1967-2020)

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A child named Lankathilaka was born to a family of Mr. and Mrs. Jayasinghe in Colombo in the mid-1960s, whose mother was already in the health service. He was the eldest in a family of five children. Young Lankathilaka started his schooling in Asoka Primary School in Colombo and later moved to Mahinda College, Galle, for secondary education.



The next chapter of his life began in 1989 when he enrolled as a student at Kuban Medical University in the town of Krasnodar in Russia. Following graduation, he returned as an enthusiastic young man to start work in the health sector. His initial exposure to the Sri Lankan health service at General Hospital, Matara, and National Hospital, Colombo. Dr. Lankathilaka began his career as a young doctor with an internship at then General Hospital, Badulla. He soon moved out to begin his public service with the appointment as a Medical Officer at Rural Hospital Wadinagala, a small hospital in an extremely remote area in the Ampara district.

The golden era of his public service started when he accepted the appointment of the post of District Medical Officer of the then Base Hospital Ampara in October of Year 2000. The next few years were the best period in his career, where he transformed the neglected Base Hospital to a world-renowned healthcare service provider, upgrading the facilities and converting it to a District General Hospital in the process. The miraculously transformed hospital was the brainchild of Dr. Lankathilaka, inspiring other health leaders to follow the same path of improving healthcare services.

Dr. Jayasinghe was a pioneer in introducing the Quality Improvement concept to state



sector health institutions, with the collaboration of a few other champions in the health service. The upgraded District General Hospital, Ampara, was a model hospital epitomizing quality health care in a resource-poor setting.

Another facet of improvement of care was the introduction of Disaster Management Concepts to healthcare. Scientific management of disaster situations was born out of the necessity to improve the services in times of disasters frequently experienced at the time.

In the year 2004, when the tsunami devastated the coastal health infrastructure, Ampara Hospital was lucky to be unscathed owing to its location, but it would be well remembered

for the role it played during the humanitarian crisis under his leadership. Concepts of disaster management were effortlessly applied in catering to the demand. The commitment harnessed from the staff in the crisis was the greatest masterstroke of his illustrious career.

Lesser-known facts about his life were his love of wildlife and his love for music. He was an avid wildlife photographer who tried to engage in whatever free time he could get, patiently exploring the wilderness to experience the splendor of wildlife. Love for music was evident for most people who knew him. He was not merely a fan of music, but a songwriter who had already released two albums teaming up with renowned composers and singers.

He was a man for the people, worried about the welfare of the common man. Had a vision to uplift the healthcare services in the country by addressing the inequity of care. However, in embracing service for the public, he could have devoted more attention to himself.

People in Ampara will be eternally grateful to Dr. Lankathilaka for his contribution. The name will echo in the winds of Galoya valley for another lifetime; gone too soon, Sir, may you attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana.





