

24th Feb 2006 "The Island"

Open University pays tribute to its Chancellor, Dr. A. N. S. Kulasingha

Open University is profoundly sad at the demise of the Chancellor Dr. A. N. S. Kulasingha and conveys its condolences to his bereaved family.

As a mark of respect to his great personality the whole university joins in appreciating his remarkable services to his motherland.

The late Dr. Kulasingha who was recently appointed as the Chancellor of the Open University has been earlier, an elected member of the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Engineering Technology. Besides his great input as an engineering professional par excellence and a man of the people, his input to the academic field included valuable contributions for the academic development of the Faculty of Engineering Technology OUSL, as a Board Member and guidance rendered to postgraduate research students in Engineering. The University paid tribute to him by conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Engineering 1 Honoris Causa for his contribution to the country at large and the Open University in particular. He is held in high esteem not only by the academic and professional community but by all Sri Lankans. Well known as the "Unsung Engineering Wizard", the late Dr. Kulasingha joined the public service in 1944 as a Junior Assistant Harbour Engineer of the Colombo Port Commission after a brilliant academic record at school and at the Ceylon Technical College. In 1968 he rose to the position of Ports Commissioner thus becoming the first engineer to be promoted to the post.

At the Ports Commission, he introduced pre-stressed concrete as the best answer to many construction problems. His own system of pre-stressed concrete construction was granted patent in 1955 as the Kulasingha CPC system. The late Dr. Kulasingha was awarded the President's Award by the Institution of Engineers, India for the best invention in pre-stressing and also India Prize for his research on "Recent advances in pre-stressed concrete in Sri Lanka". He was the first Sri Lankan to build a fishing boat in Ferro-cement and he is also remembered for the variations introduced in the Wirecon method to suit the needs of the industry.

The long list of engineering feats attributed to Dr. Kulasingha surpasses excellence. To mention a few he was associated with the construction of Marine Drive at Colombo, the development of Galle Harbour setting up of fishing ports in North and South of Sri Lanka, construction of steel rolling mills for the Ceylon Steel Corporation, "Tyre Factory, Colombo Planetorium, Cement Factory at Puttalam, Hardware Factory, Thulhiriya Textile Factory (the biggest in South East Asia) Woodworking Complex for Ceylon Plywood Corporation, State

Engineering Corporation, Headquarters, Labour Secretariat, Polgolla Dam, Kalutara Bodhi Chaithiya & Kotmale Maha Seya. As an engineer par-excellence Dr. Kulasingha is not merely an individual but a veritable institution of our time. He was actively involved in many Professional Associations, a corporate member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London, Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, London, Fellow of the Institution of Engineers India and Sri Lanka, President of the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka in 1969, President of the SLAAS in 1957, Fellow of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects, Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences Sri Lanka in 1987, Chairman of the National Science Council Sri Lanka in 1968, the Founder President of the Association of Consulting Engineers Sri Lanka and the Vice President of the International Federation on pre-stressing.

His prowess in the field of engineering was acknowledged in his own motherland when he was appointed as the Founder Chairman and General Manager of the State Engineering Corporation of Sri Lanka (1962) Director of State Hardware Corporation, Ceylon Steel Corporation, Lanka Leyland Ltd, Ceylon Tyre Corporation and Colombo Low Lying Areas Reclamation Board. He was also the Chairman of NERD, CECD and Sri Lanka Bureau of Standards. He also served as the Commissioner of Inventors' Commission, Sri Lanka, and Additional Director General of National Building Research Organisation.

His fame spread overseas as well and it was evinced in the responsibilities thrust upon him as Engineering Manager and Consultant of Chendering Port Project, Malaysia, Consultant of United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and Far East and Consultant to Negatra East Asiatic Company Ltd, Malaysia.

Dr. Kulasingha was honoured by the University of Moratuwa with the award of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science. The nation has paid a much deserving tribute to his conspicuous and indefatigable service by the conferment of "Vidya Jothi" and "Deshabandu" national honours and by awarding of the title of "Visva Prasadhini" in recognition of his immense contributions for scientific research.

Dr. Kulasingha is no more. But his invaluable services has left an indelible imprint and has created a lasting forte in the annals of Engineering Technology of this country.

The Open University mourns the loss of its Chancellor.

May he attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana.