

Dr. A.N.S. Kulasinghe

Deshabandu Vidyajothi Dr. A.N.S. Kulasinghe, foremost civil engineer and renowned researcher, who strode Colossus-like over the construction industry in Sri Lanka for well over five decades, has passed away on 14th February 2006 at the ripe age of 87.

He was a man of creative vision and original thinking. A veritable path-finder in his own right, he adorned his outstanding career with a long trail of remarkable achievements.

Born at Udamwita, a village in the proximity of Ja-Ela, on 26th October, 1919, he had his early education at Marie-Stella, Negambo and St. Benedict's Kotahena. He joined the then Ceylon Technical College, Colombo, the cradle of future technocrats in the country at the time, and eventually obtained his Degree of B.Sc. Engineering (London).

As a young graduate he joined the Colombo Port Commission in 1944 and in due course rose to the prestigious position of Port Commissioner in 1968. It did not take much time for him to be widely recognized as a leading engineer with innovative ideas and an innate ability to find practical solutions to problems irking the construction industry. Thus his help and counsel were eagerly sought after by the Government as well by the private sector.

In 1962 Dr. Kulasinghe became

the founder Chairman of the State Engineering Corporation (SEC) which, for many years, was the leading construction arm of the Government. He remained in that position until 1971. He was also the Chairman of the National Science Council, National Engineering Research and Development Centre (NERD), Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau (CECB) and the then Bureau of Standards.

Notwithstanding the great pressure on his time and energy, he found time to serve as a Director on the Boards of several state ventures such as the State Hardware Corporation, Ceylon Steel Corporation, Ceylon Tire Corporation etc.

Being the towering personality that he was in the engineering community, his association was eagerly looked for by the professional as well as the academic circles of the day. Thus he was accorded the revered position of President in the Institute of Engineers, Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Academy of Science.

The highest recognition that came Dr. Kulasinghe's way, was for his introduction of pre-stressed concrete, widely known as "Kulasinghe CPC" which was a pioneering discovery that revolutionized the construction industry in Sri Lanka as well as abroad. He played the pioneering role also in introducing the technology of construct-

ing roads, roofs and even boats using his new concept of concrete.

The Late Dr. A.N.S. Kulasinghe leaves a large legacy of constructions that are unique in character. During his life span he did a far greater volume of work than a normal human being could possibly do. What he has done proves his unparalleled ability to apply technology to find required solutions and his commitment to perform a mission for the welfare of this nation. A large number of his engineering feats scattered all over the country stand as eloquent testimony to the creative genius of the man who was, otherwise, a simple unassuming and genial personality. Kalutara Chaithyaya, Colombo Port Chaithyaya, Colombo Planetarium, Mahaweli Maha Seya and the building complexes of SEC Head Office, Labour Secretariat, Cement and Steel Corporation Head Offices, are some of the engineering marvels that he leaves for the posterity.

Dr. A.N.S. Kulasinghe had an exemplary character. He was uncompromising in his morals and had lofty ideals. The hallmark of his character was the love he bore for his country. Throughout his career, he fulfilled his duties with missionary zeal. In a country where men of expertise in some field or other run abroad at the slightest opportunity in wild pursuit of dollars, Dr. Kulasinghe, as a true patriot, remained

glued to his native soil and worked tirelessly in the tasks set before him. He gave of his very best for the country up to the last day of his life.

The vast contribution he made for the good of the country throughout his long and distinguished career has been amply recognized and valued by all Governments that came into power and by all important Institutions of the country. He was twice decorated with national honours of Vidyajothi and Deshabandu. In due recognition of his erudition and scholarship as a scientist, the University of Peradeniya conferred on him an Honorary Doctorate in Science. He was also appointed as the Chancellor of the Open University of Sri Lanka.

The Late Deshabandu Vidyajothi Dr. A.N.S. Kulasinghe bids his final adieu to his motherland having done more than his due share. The void he leaves will remain unfilled for many, many years to come.

In consideration of his distinguished career and his outstanding contribution to the country, the Cabinet of Ministers at its last meeting has rightly decided to accord the late Dr. A.N.S. Kulasinghe a funeral under State Patronage at the Independence Square on Saturday, 18th February 2006 at 4.00 p.m.

P. Weerahandi