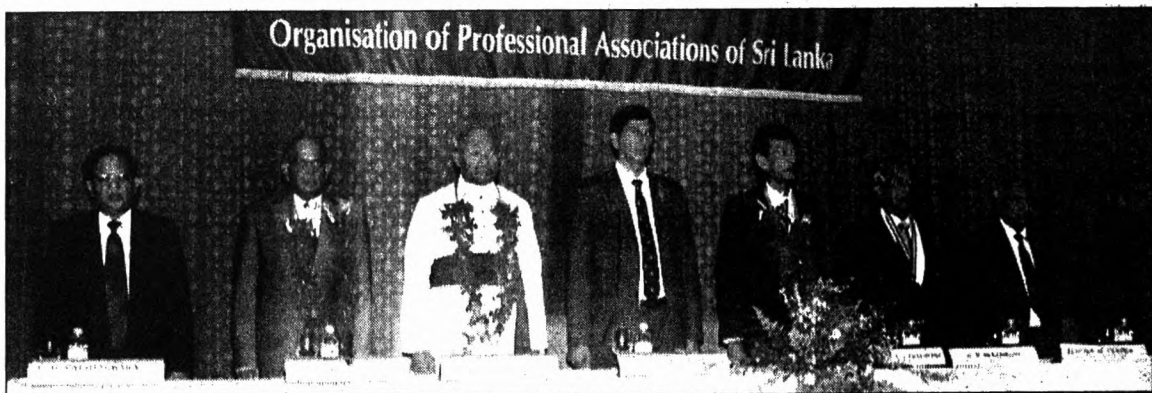




DAILY NEWS OPA at you

All professions need to middle level technician



INDUCTION CEREMONY: The Induction Ceremony of the 26th President of the OPA - Dr Hilary W.M. Cooray. Here, from left U.H. Pallihakkara, Romesh de Silva PC, Archbishop of Colombo Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis (Chief Guest) Dr. Hilary Cooray, Prof. Asoka Ekanayake, H.H. Subasinghe, Elmore M. Perera and Ditta de Alwis.

OPA President, Dr. Hilary Cooray at the Induction ceremony of the 26th President of the Organisation of Professional Associations said that he will limit his address to two subjects, namely the Professional's Role in Society and second Standards and Ethics.

Here are excerpts:

"All professionals, apart from the practice of their respective professions have a vital role to play in society. Most of us are products of free education. We have been educated by the tax payers of this country. Therefore, we owe a debt of service to the society. The valuable role the professionals should play cannot be over-emphasised. The professionals can be considered as occupying the apex position in any society's wealth of human resources," he said.

Dr. Cooray said, "there are serious problems besetting our society today. The most serious one being the issue of the need for peace and reconciliation. This is an issue which had been with us for the last two decades. I like to quote from a passage of Charles Sumner who said in 1811 during the American war, I quote 'give me the money that has been spent in war and I will clothe every man, woman and child in an attire of which kings and queens would be proud. I will build a school house in every valley, over the whole earth. I will crown every hillside with a place of worship consecrated to the gospel of peace.'

Again I say this to all professionals in Sri Lanka, we as a nation, and especially we as professionals who hold respected positions in society, it is imperative that we get ourselves intricately involved in the yearning for peace in this country. We have a duty to promote realistic scenarios for peace and keep the hopes of our nation alive.

"We have an excellent opportunity to talk and educate them on these matters. The attitude of the majority of people of this country has to change and they ought to believe in a pluralistic society, where people of all races and religions could live in harmony. People of all walks of life must accept and respect the fundamentals of essential freedom, such as the freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. No democracy can survive if it does not accept as fundamental to its very existence the recognition of the rights of the minorities. We as professionals need to speak out without fear of favour. These are principles of civilised living. Last year, the OPA set up a committee on peace and reconciliation under the chairmanship of Engineer Taldena and it meets regularly to discuss these issues, he said.

Moral standards and ethics: The maintenance of moral standards by a professional is an important issue. In the recent times, I feel there is a serious erosion of moral and ethical

standards of the professionals. The OPA has responded to this by having the year 2005 annual sessions chaired by Immediate Past President Lakdasa Taldena comprehensively addressing this all important aspect of professional behaviour and ethics. Some of the recommendations and outcomes of this, I have incorporated here.

Personal standards: How could you transform your professional skills to something more meaningful, rewarding and gives personal satisfaction? You will enhance and refine your knowledge and skills, if you have concentration, commitment and focus which gives you greater experience, depth, maturity and balance.

President Abdul Kalam, the distinguished scientist who is the President of India, in one of his addresses asked a most important question. This is what he asked - "got 10 minutes for your country? You say your government is inefficient, you say our laws are too old, you say the railway is crumbling, the roads are full of potholes, airlines never depart and arrive on time, mails never reach their destinations. You say our country has been fed to the dogs, you say and say. What do you do about it? He goes on 'we go to the polls to choose the government and after that forfeit all our responsibilities. We sit back waiting to be pampered and expect the government to do everything for us, while our contribution is totally negative.

We expect the government to pick up when we are not chucking garbage all over the place nor are we going to a stray piece of paper into the bin. We expect the government to provide clean bathrooms, we are not going to let the hospitals to provide the services, medicines we are not going to the least opportunity even to some of the on, but I have quoted.

Archbishop of Colombo Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis chief guest said: "We have our competence in the field of knowledge was limited, but of practice maintenance of standards based on values and principles. Knowledge the professional that time was optimum for humanity to the best while naturally but also to them. Unfortunately, the process reversed today. Knowledge the professional today endowed exploited more for professional than whose service the professional it in the field of medicine or any other in most of the professional.

Archbishop Gomis first flush of our modernism, all elements close their ranks a sufficient measure build a moral science in the country, in the period that has been a marked spiritual and moral of our ancestors.

Guest of honour Silva, PC at the 26th President of the in the society we do not see that equal, there being more equal than of patronage.

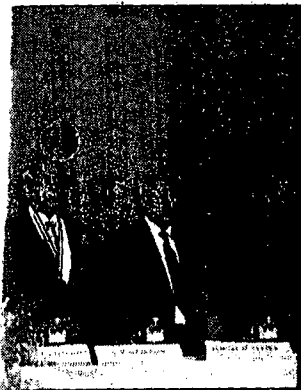
He said, "A professional to a trader. takes upon himself enters the professional factor of a professional.

OPA at your service

Daily News

need to develop technicians

- OPA President Dr. Hilary Cooray



of the OPA - Dr Hilary W.M. Cooray, President of Colombo Rt. Rev. Dr. C.H. Subasinghe, Elmore M.

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Professional standards: How could we transform your professional life to something more meaningful, rewarding and gives personal satisfaction? You will enhance and use your knowledge and skills, if you have concentration, commitment and focus which gives you better experience, depth, maturity and balance.

President Abdul Kalam, the distinguished scientist who is the President of India, in one of his addresses asked a most important question. What is what he asked - "got 10 minutes for your country? You say your government is inefficient, you say laws are too old, you say the highway is crumbling, the roads are full of potholes, airlines never depart and arrive on time, mails never reach their destinations. You say our country has been fed to the dogs, you say and say. What do you do about it? He goes on "we go to polls to choose the government and after that forfeit all our responsibilities. We sit back waiting to be empowered and expect the government to do everything for us, while our contribution is totally negative.

We expect the government to clean up when we are not going to stop chucking garbage all over the place nor are we going to stop to pick up a stray piece of paper and throw it into the bin. We expect the railways to provide clean bathrooms, but we are not going to learn the proper use of bathrooms. We want the hospitals to provide the best medical services, medicines and food, but we are not going to stop pilfering at the least opportunity. This applies even to some of the staff." He goes on, but I have quoted enough.

Archbishop of Colombo Rt. Rev. Dr. Oswald Gomis who was the chief guest said: "While in the past our competence in most of the fields of knowledge was limited, the realm of practice maintained very high standards based on certain ethical values and principles. The limited knowledge the professionals had at that time was optimised to serve humanity to the best of their ability, while naturally bringing dividends also to them. Unfortunately with many, the process appears to have reversed today. The wealth of knowledge the professions are today endowed with is being exploited more for the benefit of the professional than for the client at whose service the professional is, be it in the field of medicine, law, engineering or any other. This is evident in most of the professions today."

Archbishop Gomis said: "In the first flush of our newly found freedom, all elements in the country close their ranks and there was a sufficient measure of cohesion to build a moral and ethical conscience in the country. Unfortunately, in the period that followed, there has been a marked decline of the spiritual and moral ideals upheld by our ancestors."

Guest of honour, Romesh de Silva, PC at the induction of the 26th President of the OPA said that, in the society we see around us, we do not see that all persons are equal, there being several persons more equal than others out of political patronage.

He said: "A professional is different to a trader. The professional takes upon himself a duty when he enters the profession. The motivating factor of a professional is not

money, but the responsibility to carry out his duties properly and conscientiously. Money cannot be the basis of his work and in fact not even the reward for his work. Money is not and cannot be the foundation of a profession. The professional has several duties. First and foremost, he has a duty to himself to act according to his conscience. Secondly, he has a duty to the person who engages his professional services. And thirdly, he has a duty to his profession and to the country."

"Today, in society we see around us, we do not see that all persons are equal. There are several persons more equal than others out of political patronage or perhaps out of the race to which they belong, or the religion they profess. As professionals, it is our duty to ensure that all persons of whatever religion, race or creed are equal in this country. There are no citizens more equal than others. This country belongs to all citizens and belongs equally to all citizens."

Secondly, we must know to act with courage and fortitude. It is apt to remember what John Kennedy said when he was inducted as the President of the United States of America. "Let every nation know, whether it bears us ill or bears us well, that we shall support any friend, oppose any foe in the quest of freedom." And when I took oaths as the President of the Bar Association, I changed it somewhat and said, "let every person know, whether he bears me ill or bears me well, that I shall oppose any friend and support any foe in the pursuit of my duty, because the pursuit of my duty transcends the bonds of friendship."

The need of the hour is for professionals to ensure that all persons are equal. Let the cancer of favouritism be excised. There can be no real peace in this country unless all persons recognise, not only in words, but also in deeds, that all persons are equal. Not until Sri Lanka forms a lovely mosaic of individually unique pieces can peace descend on this our beloved motherland," he said.

Professor Asoka N. J. Ekanayake, guest of honour speaking at the

induction ceremony said: "To every batch of new students I quote the time honoured criteria that are said to define a good dentist. It is said that a good dentist must be firstly, technically competent. Secondly, biologically oriented and that means standing firmly on a bedrock of scientific evidence based medicine and thirdly, socially sensitive. So important. And I do feel that Hilary tends to epitomise those qualities to a considerable extent. Admittedly there are many honest and truly dedicated professionals in Sri Lanka. But it seems to me, the dominant public image of at least the medical and legal professions in this day and age is of hard headed, conceited professionals who are largely enslaved to money."

Professor Ekanayake said, the international community seems to be observing Sri Lanka's human rights record with great anxiety. There is the seeming, unprecedented public anxiety about the credibility, integrity and independence of the Judiciary. Neither should be expected that our universities would be the last bastion of reason, rationality and enlightenment in these dark days. In many parts of our universities, ragging which is an euphemism for campus torture, perpetuates a degraded, mass undergraduate culture, that is the very antithesis of the liberal values that define a university.

"And with too many academics pre-occupied with lucrative private earnings, when they are not assiduously amassing the points required for their promotions, there is a lack of moral outrage against such things in the academic community. In my own faculty, the small number of idealistic students who resist getting ragged are largely ostracised, treated with contempt and subject to chronic harassments, both within the faculty and in public places. And remember, those torturers active in our campuses today are the professionals of tomorrow."

He recalled the work of two professional men, a Lawyer, Paul Ekanayake and the other a Doctor, Dennis Berkitt, from whose inspiring life and example professionals may learn a thing or two.