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Dr. Subramanian Kalyanaraman was born in Tiruchirapalli, a town 300,mtr south of Chennai in Tamil Nadu, famous for its temples like Srirangam and Rock Fort. Sir C. V. Raman was born there and what is of more immediate interest to us,Prof. B. Ramamurthi also hails from that town. Dr. Ramamurthi's father and Dr. Kalyanaraman's father were neighbours, probably explaining why Dr. Ramamurthi was a hero to Dr. Kalyanaraman right from his childhood days.

He was always first in all the examinations and when he scored 521 out of 600 in 1948 in the SSLC examination it was a new record for the school and the district. Two years later despite a handicap of 38 marks for taking biology instead of mathematics, he scored the second rank in the " Madras University in the Intermediate examination and set up a new, record in the university for biology students and a record for his own college.

Brilliance however did not help him to clear the age bar of the Medical Council of India which insisted on a candidate completing 17 years of age before entering the Medical College. The young aspirant to . medical college spent the next year studying mathematics and managed to secure admission at the end of the year to both engineering and medical colleges.

He was posted to Stanley Medical College. He spent a lot of time in extracurricular activities like oratorical competitions, medical exhibitions and social service in villages but managed to get the first rank in the university in all the university examinations. He secured 8 out of the 9 available gold medals in the final examination. He was enthusiastically encouraged by his professor of Surgery Dr. C. Raghavachari in all his social service work especially during the year when he was the secretary of the college's Rural medical and Social service League. That year he managed to run three free medical dispensaries every Sunday in three separate villages. He also conducted a summer camp at Alamadi when the medical students under his leadership lived in the village for three weeks and conducted a house to house leprosy survey of all the surrounding villages.

His brilliance brought him problems too. when he scored 98% in medicine theory he was asked in the oral examination ..what was Napoleon's pulse rate and why was it abnormal". (He did not know as an athlete, Napoleon had bradycardia). when he tried to tell an examiner that the irradiation of forces made the inner table skull fracture larger than the outer table he was sent out for impertinence and given a zero out of fifty in the oral examination in forensic medicine. Fortunately he had scored 78% in the theory and managed to pass the subject and get the first rank too in the total.

House surgeoncy was real hard work. There were only four residents for the Professor of Surgery with a hundred and twenty patients. The day started at 4.30 AM with a cold water bath followed by doing fractional test meals for patients in the ward. He had to report to the Op at 6.45 AM after a quick round of the post-operative ward. The surgical list usually consisted of 15 to 20 procedures and lunch was at any time between 4 and 6 PM. That was the year when peptic ulcer got established. After writing case sheets, dressings started at 8 PM and ended at 10 PM.

General surgery postgraduate days were equally ,bad,. The pass percentage was very low. In 1957, 3 candidates passed out of 53 in the Madras University. In 1959 when Dr. Kalyanaraman and only one more first attempt candidate and four repeaters passed out of 60 who appeared for the examination.

The common wealth scholarships scheme brought suddenly a new opportunity. only two were medical scholarships out of a total of 40 for all subjects ranging from Astronomy to zoology. Nearly a thousand candidates had applied. The Health secretary ask Dr. Kalyanaraman during the interview, "why should we select you for this scholarship at the age of 26 years when there are so many other candidates with much more knowledge and experience?"

Dr. Kalyanaraman replied, "If you select me and make me a neurosurgeon I will serve the Government for 30 years whereas if you select a person aged 40 years and who is already a professor he will serve the government for only 15 years. I can give you double the value for the same money!"

He worked for four years at Edinburgh with Prof. Norman Dott and Prof. John Gillingham (who became President of the Royal College later). At that time Edinburgh was among the top 4 or 5 neurosurgical centres in the world and an endless stream of visitors and trainees used to come. there from all continents. This enriched his experience and developed an international outlook. In addition to training in all aspects of neurosurgery he also managed to secure, working in the late evening hours, FRCS's of both London and Edinburgh. He also became the first Neurosurgeon not only in India but also in Britain and probably in the world to get a Ph.D degree in neurosurgery.

He showed by stimulation studies in the living human brain that the pyramidal tract occupied only a small part of the posterior limb of the internal capsule contrary to earlier descriptions in standard anatomy books. He demonstrated that transcapsular surgical lesions can be made in the Parkinsonian patients without producing pyramidal deficit, and abolishing tremor and rigidity. Unfortunately the Edinburgh university regulations at that time forbade publication of Ph D thesis material and other workers who arrived at this truth much later got the credit in textbooks and journals.

He joined Dr. Ramamurthi's team as Assistant Professor at Madras in June 1964. For an uninterrupted period of 28 years he continued in the Madras Medical College and Government General Hospital becoming reader in '67, Additional Professor in '68, Professor in '84 and Director of the Institute of Neurology in '86. With Dr. Ramamurthi and other colleagues, he was responsible for putting Madras on the stereotaxic map of the world as an outstanding centre. His work on bilateral stereotaxic surgery, stereotaxic surgery for pain, stereotaxic leucotomy, stereotaxic capsulotomy for epilepsy and stereotaxic hypothalamotomy are well known and has been published in Neurology India and other international journals. The Government of India recognised his merit by conferring the Sir Shanthi Swarup Bhatnagar Award in 1969. He is one of the very few medical men on the clinical side to get this prestigious award and probably the only one among clinical neuroscientists to be given this award in the past four decades.

His work in ward 20 of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh stimulated in him an early interest in head injuries. With Dr. B. Ramamurthi he organised the first separate head injury ward in 1967 in the Madras Government General Hospital and managed to bring down the overall mortality of head injuries to 4% in the first 2000 cases, a feat which was equalled at that time by only one other centre, Edinburgh.

His paper on stereotaxic biopsy was the first on this subject in the world published by the Journal of Neurosurgery. His another paper in the Journal of Neurosurgery on growing fractures of the skull is still quoted as being the first attempt to challenge the conventional views on management of this condition.

Almost all the chapters on Head Injury in the first edition of our National Textbook on Neurosurgery were written by),Dr. Kalyanaraman.

Apart from being a good clinician, an excellent surgeon and a popular teacher, one of the greatest qualities of Dr. Kalyanaraman is his ability to fit into a team and carry out all departmental work very smoothly providing inspiring leadership whenever necessary, maintaining excellent personal relations with all colleagues and following the captain of

the team as disciplined soldier at all times, Nearly fifty neurosurgical trainees have passed through his hands during his quarter century of professorship at the Madras Institute of Neurology and many of them remember how he used to lend them books and journals, attend to their financial needs by inviting them to participate in his surgical operations in outside clinics and take classes for them at 7.30 A.M on weekdays and on many Sundays. He has been an examiner for M Ch in more than a dozen universities and institutes all over India and many candidates have expressed the view that he always tried to bring out the best in them during the examination.

Another great quality of Dr. Kalyanaraman is his willingness to help juniors. It is not widely known that three out of the present six paid posts of neurosurgical consultants in the Madras Institute of Neurology were created by his initiative when he was the Director. He has stimulated his juniors to do research and three candidates have obtained Ph D under his guidance. He is encouraging his junior colleagues to take special interest in fields like stereotaxic radiosurgery, paediatric neurosurgery, skull base surgery and vascular neurosurgery so that each one of them can make a name in that field and develop it further.

Probably Dr. Kalyanaraman's greatest contribution to neuroscience in particular and medical education in general is his introduction of the concept of Continuing Medical Education in this country. After attending the meeting of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons in Honolulu in 1973 he forcefully pleaded with the NSI executive committees year after year to set apart a day for CME during the Annual Conference. He succeeded only after four years since such a concept had not been heard of in India at that time. He organised the first CME programme in India along with the NSI conference at Pune in 1979. Participants still remember the lively discussions which went on till late in the evening with stalwarts like Prof. Mathai, Prof. Dalal and others. The concept caught like wildfire and today there is hardly any society, college or conference without a number of CME programmes in all branches of medical sciences. He was also the first to print the entire CME lectures as a book and got it sold for Rs. 40/- at the NSI conference at Bangalore another first achievement to his credit. For eight years from the Pune Conference in 1979 to the Varanasi Conference in 1986 he was the CME convenor of NSI. During 1990 he and his colleagues organised 40 CME programmes at Madras to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Madras Institute of Neurology.

He was Editor of Neurology India for 6 years and increased the frequency of publication of the journal from 4 to 6 times per year. He was also a member of the International Advisory Board of the British Journal of Neurosurgery during its first ten years.

He was the President of the Neurological Society of India in 1987. His presidential oration at Hyderabad on 'stereotaxic surgery -past,present and future', foretold many of the advances which are now current practice. He is now the ruling President of the Indian Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery. He was the Vice President of the Asian Australian Society of Neurosurgeons from 1987 to 1991.

He retired from Tamil Nadu government service in 1992 at the age of 58 years. Immediately he started organising a teaching department at Apollo Hospitals, Madras. Within two years he got recognition from the National Board of Examinations to train candidates. At present he is the Head of the Department of Neurosurgery at Apollo Hospitals, Madras. The average number of neurosurgical patients on any given day there, is about 60 and there are nine full time consultant neurosurgeons and fourteen other surgical staff in that department making it one of the biggest neurosurgical departments in the private sector in this country today-a phenomenal growth indeed in just six years ! As the convenor of the Madras Neuro Club he is still organising fortnightly clinical and journal club meetings of all the neurologists and neurosurgeons at Madras.

In spite of his busy fifteen hour work schedule even at the age of 65 years, he still manages to continue his extracurricular activities. A past president of the Rotary Club of Madras West and an active Rotarian for 30 years, he periodically attends free medical camps and epilepsy camps organised by the Rotary Club.

A deeply religious person, he has climbed up the Tirupathi hills by foot more than twenty times. He is the Managing Trustee of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Sankaracharya Swamigal Bikshavandana Trust and also the Treasurer of the Madras Neuro Trust. However his greatest pleasure even now is to sit in his personal library at 10 p.m and browse through his enormous collection of books on literature and fiction. His favourite authors include Agatha Christie, Arthur Hailey, Jeffrey Archer and Sidney Sheldon. His is probably one of the largest private neurosurgical libraries in the country and is partly housed in the Appollo Hospital for the benefit of the postgraduates.

His wife Pattammal has been a source of constant support and strength to him. Like many neurosurgical wives she says that the longest periods she spends with him are when she accompanies him for conferences in India and abroad. It is a great satisfaction to him that his son has taken up a career in surgical neurology and his daughter has taken up a career in medical neurology.