

Silent Guardians and Legacy Keepers: Chronicles of Former University Librarians in Sri Lanka

Compiled by
Thanuja C. Ranawella

University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka

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Message from the President



Dr W.M. Tharanga Dilruk Ranasingh
President, 2022/2023
University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka,

I am truly delighted to issue this message as the President of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka (ULA) on this significant occasionó the launch of the biographies of former university librarians. This compilation holds immense value for our profession.

In every profession, pioneering individuals play an indispensable role in its growth and development, and the realm of university librarianship in Sri Lanka is no exception. Our former university librarians have tirelessly dedicated themselves to establishing and elevating the professional status of university librarianship since the inception of universities in this country. Their academic and professional contributions have been pivotal in enhancing the services provided to library users over several decades. As university librarians, they have not only fostered the development of their respective institutions but have also significantly contributed to the advancement of our nation.

It is with great pride and reverence that we acknowledge their invaluable contributions. Learning from the experiences and wisdom they have amassed is essential for the continued growth of our profession. The compilation of biographies

of our former university librarians is a historic and commendable endeavour in this context.

I thank the previous ULA executive committee (2021–2022), including the immediate past president, for spearheading this initiative. I also express my profound appreciation for the painstaking efforts of the compiler of this work and all those who contributed in various ways to bring this publication to fruition.

This compilation will stand as a historical record, preserving and honouring our former librarians' extraordinary contributions. Moreover, it will serve as an invaluable resource, providing insights and inspiration to shape the future of academic librarians in Sri Lanka.

In closing, I want to convey my appreciation for our university librarians' unwavering commitment and dedication. Your tireless efforts continue to inspire us, and I look forward to a future where we build upon our predecessors' legacy to elevate our profession's standards further.

Message from the Immediate Past President

Dr. W. J. Jeyaraj

Immediate Past President: 2021/22.

University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka

Librarian

Eastern University, Sri Lanka.



In the annals of Sri Lanka's academic landscape, the esteemed University Libraries stand as iconic institutions, embodying the rich tapestry of intellectual history and the indomitable spirit of the earlier librarians who dedicated their lives to nurturing knowledge and wisdom. I take pride in the fact that this book strives to honour the priceless legacy of Sri Lanka's university librarians, illustrating their determination and passion from the early beginnings to the dynamic present.

Over time, university librarians have been steadfast custodians of knowledge, overcoming numerous challenges and ceaselessly working to elevate the standards of their libraries. The present-day impressive and alluring university library setups are a testament to the dedication and vision of these retired library professionals. Their relentless efforts have paved the way for the academic sanctuaries we now behold.

In recognizing the monumental contributions of these library legends, we, the current generation of university library professionals, are inspired to march forward, building upon the strong foundations they laid. I do not doubt that this book seeks to immortalize the stories and profiles of these extraordinary individuals, ensuring their ethos is forever etched in our hearts and minds.

During ULA 2021/22, the Executive Committee resolved to compile and publish the profiles of all retired and departed university librarians, a project we initiated with great pride and enthusiasm but could only complete after a year. Dr W. M. T. D. Ranasinghe, the current President of ULA, spearheaded this endeavour with his efficient Executive Team members, particularly Mrs Thanuja C. Ranawella as the compiler, who meticulously curated and presented the data, resulting in this insightful publication. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to them for their tireless efforts in producing this prestigious volume and unveiling this honour on the auspicious annual day of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka.

I envision future Executive Committees continuing this legacy by chronicling the comprehensive histories of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka and the individual university libraries. Such collective narratives serve as invaluable resources, offering a glimpse into the evolution of the field of university librarianship in Sri Lanka.

I extend my best wishes for a healthy and prosperous life to all the retired university librarians. Your contributions will forever remain a guiding light, illuminating the path for generations to come. May this book stand as a tribute to your immeasurable impact on the academic landscape of Sri Lanka.

Preface

Thank you for visiting "Silent Guardians and Legacy Keepers: Chronicles of Former University Librarians in Sri Lanka". The anecdotes in this book honour the committed people who once worked as university librarians in Sri Lanka.

Despite their apparent calm demeanour, librarians work in a very active environment. They are the stewards of wisdom, the keepers of the books, and the guardians of knowledge. This book unearths the forgotten stories of these unsung heroes who have toiled ceaselessly to protect and disseminate the vast amounts of knowledge kept in the libraries of Sri Lankan universities.

Through these pages, you will get to know the individuals who have dedicated their lives to discovering and preserving culture. Their tales will inspire you, and you will be reminded of the value of libraries in our society by their legacy.

Come along on a trip through time and knowledge as we pay homage to these unseen stewards of the past and heritage who have impacted Sri Lankan literature and education.

Thanuja C. Ranawella

Compiler/Senior Assistant Librarian, Grade I
General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

Acknowledgement

I thank the University Librarian Association (ULA) for allowing me to work on this assignment. Dr W.M. Tharanga Dilruk Ranasinghe, the current President and the 2022/2023 Executive Committee, as well as Dr W.J. Jeyaraj, the previous President and the 2021/2022 Executive Committee, have supported and funded this project, and I am grateful for their efforts.

I sincerely appreciate all the librarians and their staff who provided information about retired librarians to compile these biographies. Special thanks go to Senior Professor W.A. Weerasooriya, Senior Professor in Library & Information Science at the University of Kelaniya, Maheekanthi Thusithakumari, Acting Librarian at the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Dr (Ms) Champa Alahakoon, Deputy Librarian at the University of Peradeniya, Mrs Damayanthi Gunasekara, Senior Assistant Librarian at the Open University of Sri Lanka, Dr Achala Ranaweers, Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Kelaniya, Dr C.K. Gamage, Senior Assistant Librarian, Institute of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo, and Mr S. Santharooban, Senior Assistant Librarian at Eastern University, for the support rendered me to find photographs and biographical information.

I want to thank Dr Wathmanel Senevirathna, Librarian at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), for his guidance and encouragement throughout this project. I must also thank my coworkers at KDU, Mrs M.P. Rajapaksha, Mrs. U.D.H. Kanchana, and Mr. M. Aruna Thilanka, for taking over my responsibilities and inspiring me.

For their valuable contributions, I thank Mr L.A. Jayatissa, a former librarian of the University of Kelaniya, Mr Harrison Perera, a retired librarian of the University of Peradeniya, and Mr P. Vidanapathirana, a former librarian of the University of Sri

Jayewardenepura. Dr Nayana Wijesundara, Librarian at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, also deserves my thanks for her encouraging words and assistance.

I also want to thank Mrs Sriyani Perera from the University of Peradeniya and Major Wimansa Abeyawickrama, Senior Lecturer at KDU, for helping with language editing. Special thanks to Mr Muthurajah Norman Ravikumar, Senior Assistant Librarian at Eastern University, for designing the cover page.

Finally, I express my deepest gratitude to my husband, Nimal, and my two sons, Kavish and Imesh, for their unwavering support throughout the completion of this book. Their love and encouragement were invaluable in making this project a reality.

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Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka

J. A. Amaraweera (1998-2009)

Dr Chandra Karunaratne (2009-2015)

J. A. Amaraweera (1998-2009)



A remarkable individual, Jayathunga Amaraweera was born on July 15, 1944, in Pannipitiya in the Colombo District of Sri Lanka, and he was the first Librarian of the Buddhist and Pali University in Sri Lanka. His early educational journey began at Terrance de Silva Junior School in Kolonnawa, which nurtured his thirst for knowledge and set the stage for future achievements. On this foundation, he continued his academic excellence. He broadened his perspective by enrolling at the prestigious Thurston College in Colombo from 1958 to 1963. Then, from 1963 to 1966, he studied biological science at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and obtained a Bachelor of Science degree. He was also a secretary of the Science Student Union at the university.

After earning his degree, Amaraweera started his career by working as a teacher at Mirigama Maha Vidyalaya. He devoted himself for four years to this educational institution. He then spent two more years at Kotte's Ananda Sastralaya (ආනන්ද ශාස්ත්‍රාලය), where he improved his teaching techniques more to pursue his passion for education. Amaraweera changed jobs in 1972 to become the Librarian/Publications Officer at the Sri Lanka Rubber Research Institute (RRI), where he learned more about information administration and developed skills in a specialized research setting. Amaraweera was hired as the Ceylon Petroleum

Corporation's Chief Librarian in 1978 because of his experience. However, he only stayed there for one year since he joined the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in 1979 as a Senior Assistant Librarian and started his academic career. He made substantial contributions to the library of Sri Jayewardenepura University for about two decades until 1998. In 1998, Amaraweera transitioned to a new career phase as the Librarian of Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. This role allowed him to engage with a specialized academic community. He dedicated over a decade to this institution, leading the library and ensuring its resources catered to the specific needs of students, scholars, and researchers. In 2009, he retired as a Librarian at Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka.

Amaraweera's professional journey left an indelible mark on various educational and research institutions, contributing to the development of library services and promoting culture. He was a well-known Librarian and a key figure in the library and information science fields in Sri Lanka. He was a great professional who quickly turned to new technological advancements and adapted them for the betterment of his clients. He excelled as a cybrarian when readers increasingly sought information from computers rather than libraries.

Amaraweera was an active life member of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka (ULA), and the AGRINET Library Network in Sri Lanka for several decades, and he made significant contributions to the library profession. His knowledge and experience were an immense help to students at the Department of Library Science at the University of Kelaniya, the SLLA, and the National Institute of Library and Information Science (NILIS) at the University of Colombo. He was also a member of the panel of lecturers for these institutions. Amaraweera has conducted extensive research into the profession, publishing the results in numerous prestigious local and international journals and presenting them at conferences. It is admirable that Amaraweera has worked tirelessly to advance the library sector in Sri Lanka with

the help of Dr M. P. Satija, a renowned Librarian and a UGC (University Grants Commission) Emeritus Fellow at Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, India. Furthermore, he also made significant contributions to creating alliances with nations like India, the Maldives, and Western countries with the goal of cooperation and information exchange. He worked extensively to advance the library sector, disseminated his knowledge by publishing his studies, and substantially contributed to library education.

Amaraweera met Ms Korala Gamage Nandawathie Samanlatha in Mirigama, a remarkable woman who would later become his beloved wife in 1969. As time passed, their children were nurtured with love and values, achieving esteemed societal positions. A dedicated Librarian with a 37-year career, Amaraweera tragically passed away on October 27, 2015, after a sudden stroke. During his tenure, he constantly committed himself to enhancing colleagues' professional growth and students' educational experiences. His dedication to his job persisted right up until the end. The country has lost a kind-hearted intellectual well-liked by its clients and colleagues. He was also well-known for his ability to learn modern technologies and flourished as a Cybrarian throughout the shift to digital.

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Dr Chandra Karunaratne (2009-2015)



Dr Chandra Karunaratne (nee Kariyawasam) is a well-known versatile scholar and writer who functioned as a university librarian for many years. She was born on November 22, 1949, at Ganegama South, Baddegama, in Galle district, as the fifth member (first eldest daughter) of a family of six boys and six girls who are well educated. Professor Tissa Kariyawasam, a well-known Sri Lankan university don, was her elder brother, and her parents were Mr Alwis Kariyawasam and Mrs Gimara Godawatta. Dr Karunaratne's primary education was at Ganegama Thimbirigahagoda Primary School (ගනේගම නිඹිරිගහගොඩ ප්‍රාථමික විද්‍යාලය) and Baddegama Ratnasara Vidyalaya (බද්දේගම රත්නසාර විද්‍යාලය). She got double promotions from grade one to grade three. Her secondary education was at Nugegoda Anula Vidyalaya. Then, she entered the University of Sri Lanka at Peradeniya when she was seventeen and obtained a First-Class honours degree specializing in Sinhala Language and Literature in 1971. She qualified in different areas such as Library Science, Lexicography, Information Technology, Buddhist Studies, and Korean Language from recognized universities. She earned a Master of Arts in the Sinhala Language from Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka in 1984, a Higher Diploma in Korean Language from the Research Institute of Korean Language Seoul National University 1986-87, a Master of Arts in Buddhist studies

from the University of Kelaniya in 1993, and an MSc in Library and Information Science from the University of Colombo in 2001. She completed her Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Lexicography and Phonology from Seoul National University of South Korea from 1986 to 1990 and a Diploma in Buddhist Studies from the University of Kelaniya in 1992. Appreciating her academic services, the Dongguk University of South Korea conferred her Doctor of Philosophy (honorary) Degree in 2002.

Moreover, she also completed a Diploma in English for professionals from SLIDA 2003, Ordinary Level - Tamil Credit pass 1993, and Tamil for Beginners - (BCIS) to get more qualifications for different languages. She was also an active Associate Member of the Sri Lanka Library Association. During her tenure as a Librarian, she was allowed to familiarize herself with current trends in academic librarianship following a course at Riverside University and Cerritos Public Library in California.

Throughout Dr Karunaratne's time at the school and the university, her dedication and contributions were honoured with accolades. She achieved well enough to receive the 1972 Bandaranayake Memorial Award from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. She was fortunate to win a Scholarship as the first female student to pursue postgraduate studies at Seoul National University in Korea, where she studied the Korean Language and became admirably famous as a brilliant Korean teacher and writer. As an Interpreter in the Olympic sports pavilion, she received the Seoul Olympic Awards' Best Foreign Student in the Korean Language honour. In 2000, she also received the excellent award from the 8th Foreign National Cultural Programme.

Just after graduating, Dr Karunaratne started her career as an Assistant Lecturer in Sinhala at the University of Kelaniya in the Department of Sinhala from 1972 to 1973 and lectured Sinhala, Pali & Buddhist Philosophy at the University of Buddhist & Pali University of Sri Lanka, Korea Dongguk ChongPob University in Korea. She served five years from 1974 to 1979 as a Librarian at the National Commission for

UNESCO. For many years, she was a Senior Editor at the Dictionary Office, Ministry of Cultural Affairs from 1979 to 1993. Then, in 1993, she joined the library of the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka and organized it as a user-friendly library and served most of her career there till her retirement on March 27, 2015. Her exposure and experience in several foreign libraries, including the United States and Korea, benefited the library of Buddhist & Pali University of Sri Lanka for its systematic development.

Dr Karunaratne worked as a Lecturer in Buddhism and Pali at the Buddhist and Pali University in Busan, Korea, and as an Instructor at Korean Cultural Orientation Programmes (SLBFE- Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment). In addition to those enormous positions and competencies in the Korean Language, she was involved in many extra functions like working as an Interpreter for the Ministries of Education, Health, and Justice, Board of Investment (BOI), Board of Tourism, Bureau of Foreign Employment, Korea Trade Centre (KOTRA) and the Korean Embassy in Sri Lanka. She was also the Director of the Korean Lanka Social and Cultural Organization (KOLSCO). In 1993, she served as an Interpreter for Sri Lanka at the Seoul Olympic Games 1988 and the Taejon Expo World Trade Fair 1993.

Moreover, she has authored several books such as ගුරු සීත නොරිදවා (Guru Sitha Noridawa), කොරියානු ජනකතා (Koriyanu Janakatha), ප්‍රතිහාරය ශතකය රසස්වාදය (Prathiharaya Shathakaya Rasaswadaya), කොරියානු සිංහල භාෂා අත්වැල (Korean Sinhala Bhasha Athwela), Korean Language, Korean for Alien Industrial Trainee, කොරියානු බස කතා කරමු (Korean Basa Katha Karamu), කොරියානු හෝඩිය (Koreanu Hodiya), භාවිතය සහ උච්චාරණ විදි (Bhavithaya Saha Uchcharana Widi) etc. to the academia. Dr. Karunaratne has also disseminated her knowledge by publishing various research articles. The research she has done also varies, much like the themes of her books.

As the Director of the Korean Lanka Social and Cultural Organization (KOLSCO), Dr Karunaratne has done an excellent service to the people in rural areas. Even though she officially retired from academics, she dedicated her time to writing textbooks for Korean Language students. Further, she is compiling a Tri-Lingual Dictionary in Sinhala-Korean and English. Even at the age of seventy-three, she is working healthily as the Managing Director of Dream Institute and Somang Vision Lanka, a Korean Company in Piliyandala.

Dr Karunaratne has rendered an excessive service to Library and Information Science, Lexicography, and languages of Sinhala and Korean. She has a bright record of accomplishments related to both national and international academia. For many years, she was an academic writer and editor for the Etymological Dictionary of Sinhala Language, Sinhala Practical Dictionary, and Sinhala Encyclopaedia, sponsored by the Government of Sri Lanka.

In addition to her academic involvement, Dr Karunaratne has extended her service to the community. She is the pioneer of the project of sending Sri Lankan youth who work in Korea. She has, for instance, launched a project known as Vivekarama Nena Madura (විවේකාරාම නැණ මැදුර), providing reading facilities for monks, villagers, and school-going children. She was also involved in organizing training seminars for school librarians and camps. She donated books to school libraries and gave lectures at various colleges to encourage students to learn foreign languages. Dr Karunaratne could provide Korean aid to uplift the Buddhist temples and pirivenas such as Vidyodaya Pirivena, Galle Vidyodaya Pirivena, Vidyalankara Pirivena, Matale Aloka Vihara, Abhayaramaya, etc. She joined with Korean projects to develop living conditions for Tamil people by providing medicine and other needs. She is a Justice of Peace for all islands doing social services.

Dr Karunaratne married Wilfred Karunaratne, one of the Chairmen of the Participatory Institute for Development Alternatives. She is a mother of a son and a daughter and a grandmother of two granddaughters and two grandsons. Her

academic career record is colourful and multi-disciplinary, and her contribution to the library profession and as an interpreter of the Korean Language is appreciable. Among all these activities, she never forgets her duties as a mother and a grandmother and enjoys life with them. The above-mentioned is only a fraction of the services done by Dr Karunaratne. She still has the caliber to do an incredible spectrum of work for society. We wish her good health and longevity.

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Eastern University Sri Lanka

T. Arulnandhy (2009–2017)

T. Arulnandhy (2009–2017)



Thavamanidevi Arulnandhy, the first Librarian at the Eastern University of Sri Lanka, left a significant impact on the country's library science community. She was born in Jaffna in August 1952 to Mrs S. Poomathu and Mr V. Sambasivam. Having fulfilled the General Certificate of Education - Ordinary Level (G.C.E. O/L) requirements in 1973 and the General Certificate of Education - Advanced Level (G.C.E. A/L) requirements in 1974, she pursued her Bachelor of Arts (Honors) degree at the University of Peradeniya. Demonstrating remarkable intellectual ability, Arulnandhy graduated in 1978 with First Class Honors. Despite encountering numerous challenges, she chose to enhance her knowledge in Library and Information Science by enrolling at the University of Bangalore, India, where she completed her master's degree in the field in 1988.

Arulnandhy commenced her career as an Assistant Lecturer in Tamil at the University of Peradeniya in 1978 and held the position until 1981. Prior to joining as a Junior Assistant Librarian at the Batticaloa University College, established in 1981 as the first University College in the Eastern Province, she briefly worked as an Assessor at the Department of Inland Revenue in the same year. This decision aided her in developing skills in library resource management and student assistance, which later proved beneficial in her role as a Librarian.

After obtaining her master's degree, Arulnandhy embraced a new challenge and joined Eastern University, Sri Lanka (then Batticaloa University College) as an Assistant Librarian in 1988. Recognized for her competence, remarkable abilities, and achievements, she was promoted to Senior Assistant Librarian in 1994. During her tenure at Eastern University, Sri Lanka, Arulnandhy applied the knowledge and skills she gained from her previous experiences to organize the library and enhance its services, contributing to its growth and success. With no permanent Librarian, she had been performing her duties as the Acting Librarian since 1988, ultimately becoming the Librarian of the Eastern University, Sri Lanka, in 2009.

She transformed the library at Eastern University, Sri Lanka, into a fully functional and extensive resource centre with her dedication and expertise. Under the guidance of Arulnandhy, the library grew and evolved into a knowledge hub for faculty and students.

During her tenure at Eastern University, Sri Lanka, she faced numerous challenges as she endeavoured to establish the university library amid the obstacles in the region during the latter part of the 1980s. Heavy floods, civil unrest, and communal violations marked this period. Additionally, she had the task of reorganizing the relocated library within limited space and staff repeatedly from 1989 to 1991, as Eastern University, Sri Lanka, functioned as a refugee camp. Notably, during the 10th Anniversary Programs of Eastern University, Sri Lanka, in 1991, she played a significant role in organizing the event and ensuring its success. Her contributions to the growth of the library and Eastern University, Sri Lanka, have been exceptional.

Furthermore, Arulnandhy took proactive steps to modernize the library, implementing the automation of the library with the development of a "Library System" in Visual Basic created using Microsoft Access 98 and then using CDS/ISIS software in 1998. She introduced several other new platforms, such as the installation of LibSys4 in 2009. Additionally, she played a crucial role in

establishing branch libraries for the Swami Vipulanandha Institute of Aesthetic Studies and the Faculty of Health-Care Sciences. Arulnandhy also directed the construction of the current library complex, which was ceremonially opened on April 20, 2014. This significant achievement underscores her commitment to and vision for enhancing the university's library infrastructure.

Her influence extended beyond the university, playing a significant role in developing the library profession in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. She organized initiatives that improved community access to information and promoted information literacy. To enhance the skills and knowledge of librarians in the region, Arulnandhy introduced the Diploma Course in Library and Information Science, conducted by the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), to the Eastern Province in 2002. She served as the Course Coordinator for the above program until 2012. She was also one of the Lecturers and Examiners for all levels of the Diploma Course in Library and Information Science until 2018. Under her leadership, the course gained popularity and attracted more students from the Eastern Province. The dedication and hard work of Arulnandhy played a significant role in improving the quality of library services in the region. In 1997, she introduced Library Science as a 15-hour lecture, one of the compendium courses for first-year undergraduates at Eastern University, Sri Lanka. In 2002, she introduced Library and Information Sciences as a core course for 1st and 3rd-year students in the Faculty of Arts and Culture at the same university.

Furthermore, Arulnandhy demonstrated her proactive leadership by initiating and spearheading a remarkable Mega Library Week Celebration at the Eastern University, Sri Lanka, in 2002. This event was enhanced by a captivating Book Exhibition featuring prominent Sri Lankan booksellers, highlighting a diverse and enriching collection for all avid readers and enthusiasts.

Arulnandhy has made notable contributions to academia by presenting her research papers at various international conferences and publishing her articles in numerous

peer-reviewed journals. Additionally, she authored a book dedicated to the distinguished individual Vidvan F.X.C. Nadarajah, further enhancing her scholarly portfolio.

Arulnandhy, a role model for young librarians, was chosen by the Sri Lanka Library Association as the Coordinator for the Monitoring Evaluation Committee for the region's affected public libraries following the 2005 Tsunami due to the national-scale requirement for her leadership skills and expertise. Her involvement in this effort confirmed her commitment to assisting communities affected by natural disasters and consolidated her position as a prominent member of the library profession. She has made invaluable contributions to the Sri Lankan library sector, and her creative effort impacted the development of the library profession in the Eastern Province, in addition to transforming the library at Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

Additionally, Arulnandhy was the President of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka (ULA) from 2006 to 2007 and implemented remarkable welfare initiatives. Furthermore, she served as a member of the University Council at the Eastern University, Sri Lanka, from 2006 to 2008, the organizing committee of the 10th Anniversary Programmes in 1991, and the Silver Jubilee Programmes of the Eastern University in 2001. She led the committee effectively, determining the extent of the libraries' damage and creating a thorough plan for their rehabilitation. Due to Arulnandhy's commitment to her position, the damaged public libraries were rebuilt and equipped with the necessary tools and resources to serve their local communities effectively. Even today, aspiring librarians draw motivation from her extraordinary achievements in the face of adversity.

She married Dr V. Arulnandhy, a renowned Agronomy Professor at Eastern University in Sri Lanka, and has a daughter for them. However, her marriage did not hinder her from pursuing her career in the library profession. Even after her

retirement in 2017, her dedication to education is evident in her academic achievements. Arulnandhy continues to contribute significantly to the happiness and success of her community while also enjoying good health and prosperity through joyful living.

Arulnandhy significantly influenced the field of librarianship in Sri Lanka, particularly in the Eastern Region. Her commitment, knowledge, and groundbreaking efforts elevated the university library into a massive resource hub serving academics and learners. Moreover, she has inspired many new librarians to follow her lead and enhance their communities by promoting the growth of the library profession in the Eastern Province. Arulnandhy made significant contributions to the larger community of librarians by participating in national initiatives and holding executive positions in groups such as the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Library Association.

Arulnandhy dedicated herself wholeheartedly to her career, exerting considerable effort and perseverance throughout her journey. As she retired, she did so with a profound sense of fulfilment and satisfaction, knowing she had made a meaningful impact and left a lasting legacy.

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General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

S.C.A. Cooray (1991 – 2003)

S.C.A. Cooray (1991 – 2003)



Shamani Chrishanthi Antonatte Cooray was the Librarian at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence Academy (KDA), which was elevated to the status of a university and renamed General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU) in October 2007. She was born on July 6, 1955, in Uswatta, Moratuwa, to Mr Titus Weerasuriya and Mrs Trisla Weerasuriya, a Roman Catholic family. She entered the nursery at Our Lady Victories Convent in Moratuwa and continued her studies at the same school up to the Advanced Level. After finishing her secondary education, she enrolled at the University of Colombo as an undergraduate, and in September 1979, she obtained a B.Sc. Natural Science Degree. Cooray continued her education, entering the University of Kelaniya in September 1984 for her postgraduate qualifications. In October 1985, she was awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Science from the University of Kelaniya and, in February 1995, a Master's in Library and Information Science from the same university.

Just after her final year exam at the end of 1979, Cooray was capable enough to be selected for the Department of Zoology at the University of Colombo as a Demonstrator. She began her career as an Assistant Documentation Officer at the Industrial Development Board (IDB) after one year of university service, where she

performed her duties at a higher level for seven years. At the IDB, Technonet Asia sponsored her with three months of training in small industry information management (SINFOMAN-6) at the University of the Philippines. She later changed her career path to an academic position. She joined the University of Colombo as an Assistant Librarian in late 1987. She was named Librarian in Charge of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine Library at the same university. Cooray had the opportunity at the University of Colombo to broaden her knowledge and horizons by being exposed to different cultures. In 1989, she received a fellowship from the World Health Organization (WHO) to study medical bibliographical science at universities in Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia. As a result, she had the chance to interact with subject experts and learn from many viewpoints. Cooray was also invited to the 5th International Congress of Medical Librarians in India in 1990, where she could network with industry leaders, stay updated on developments in medical librarianship, and expand her knowledge of innovative techniques.

Cooray was appointed the Librarian of General Sir John Kotelawala Defence Academy (KDA) on June 3, 1991, in recognition of her background and commitment. As the KDA's Librarian, she devoted her entire time to developing and improving the library. Her exceptional abilities and expertise were crucial to the development of the KDU library, and her strong leadership qualities and skills in direct decision-making helped the library improve its services by meeting the needs of its users. The library underwent significant transformations under her leadership, particularly the computerization of the library catalogue. As a part of her unwavering commitment to improving teaching and learning, she recognized the value of a comprehensive and relevant library collection in assisting academic pursuits. She prioritized maintaining an up-to-date collection, and her expertise was crucial to developing the KDU library, which caters to the diverse needs of students and faculty.

While adding qualifications to her name, she reached an important milestone in her personal life in 1981 when she married Mr Nimal Cooray, a professionally qualified businessperson, and was blessed with two sons, Shamal and Namal. She eventually resigned from her Librarian position at KDA on January 20, 2003, and migrated to New Zealand. She found new opportunities to continue her career in librarianship after moving to New Zealand, and she took over the Senior Cataloguer position at the New Zealand National Library in Wellington. She is still working at the New Zealand National Library in Wellington but now as a Senior Collection Descriptive Librarian, even though she is now in the sixty-seventh year of her age. She has been working there for over twenty years and has seen many changes in the library during that time. Cooray is a beloved figure among her colleagues and library patrons. In appreciation of her twenty years of service at the National Library of New Zealand, in 2021, she was awarded a Long Services Certificate. Cooray demonstrated a deep passion for her profession and a genuine commitment to serving users' information needs throughout her career. Her credentials, extensive experience, and exposure to best practices in library science prepared her to excel in her role and contribute significantly to the institutions she served. Cooray was always committed to her professional duties, and the library was her highest priority, but she also balanced her personal life and cared for her loved ones.

Cooray also achieved her personal goal of providing a better education for her sons by moving to New Zealand, as one of her sons is a Senior Scientist now at the Jonson and Jonson company in Belgium, researching liver cancer. In addition to her work at the library, she spends time with her two grandsons and enjoys being with them. Despite her age, she shows no signs of slowing down and is always eager to assist anyone who needs her support. She is strong enough to continue her service for a few more years. Overall, she is a remarkable individual who dedicates herself to her work, family, and community. Her positive attitude and commitment to service make her an asset to those around her. We wish her continued success and happiness in all her endeavours.

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Open University of Sri Lanka

M N Wijesinghe (1985–1990)

S.R. Korale (1991-2005)

Dr RCW Wathmanel Seneviratne (2006 – 2019)

M N Wijesinghe (1985–1990)



Malani N. Wijesinghe, a pioneer in Sri Lankan librarianship, was the Librarian of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) from 1985 to 1990. She began her professional career as a Junior Assistant Librarian at the University of Colombo. On January 1, 1982, her dedication and enthusiasm for libraries made her the first Librarian at the Open University of Sri Lanka. Her time at the Open University coincided with a violent period in Sri Lankan history, which challenged the library's development. Undeterred, Wijesinghe created the OUSL library from ground level, bringing it up to a level that established most of the essential services.

For a start, Wijesinghe planned to offer library facilities for the OUSL students through selected public libraries. Accordingly, the students had to rely on selected public libraries for their needs in the early phases. With all the difficulties, she was fortunate to establish a branch library at the Colombo Regional Centre in 1993. Furthermore, in 1993, she arranged to purchase a rare library owned by a prominent lawyer in Sri Lanka, expanding the university's library holdings. One of her most significant accomplishments was creating an audio-visual collection, which was developed by the OUSL faculty staff with the technical help of the Education Technology Division according to the ODL (Open and Distance Learning) norms.

The collection was one of the most effective ODL resources available to students in Sri Lanka.

Wijesinghe's responsibilities went beyond her post as Librarian when she was named Director of Media in 1984. She made necessary adjustments to library accessibility throughout her term. She shifted valuable books from closed access to open access in 1988, making them more accessible to final-year students and researchers.

Wijesinghe's extraordinary career was cut short due to health difficulties. She went on sabbatical leave on July 28, 1988, and returned to work on June 1, 1989, but could not continue her duty due to her illness. Hence, she had to go on medical leave in September 1989. Tragically, she died in April 1990. Wijesinghe was a classification lecturer for the University of Colombo's diploma programme and the SLLA (Sri Lanka Library Association) courses. Her passion for the field of librarianship and her relentless efforts to enhance library resources for the benefit of the students at the Open University of Sri Lanka left an everlasting impression on the institution. Her legacy inspires individuals in library science in Sri Lanka, reminding us of the importance of knowledge access and librarians' relentless efforts to promote education and research.

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S.R. Korale (1991-2005)



Siri Ranjani Korale was born on June 22, 1940, to Mr and Mrs V.S. Nanayakkara. She was a distinguished librarian, educator, and immense contributor to the country's library science field. Korale started her schooling at CMS Ladies College Colombo 07 and continued until her university entrance at the same school. She was good at education and was fortunate to qualify for university entrance. Her academic career began after earning a Bachelor of Arts (BA) general degree from the University of Ceylon in 1959. Korale pursued professional qualifications at the Library Association of London to hone her library science expertise. Her dedication and perseverance during the examination and thesis earned her the honorary titles of Associate of the London Library Association and Fellow of the London Library Association.

Korale began her career as a teacher at Kandy's Darmaloka College and later at Kingswood College. She held various positions in the Department of Labour, DFCC Bank, and the Development Information Centre under the Treasury, which allowed her to train in collecting, organizing, and disseminating knowledge before starting her career as a librarian. She has done extensive work at the Department of Labour, such as indexing and abstracting the publications of Sri Lanka Government Press and analyzing court decisions with council references for the benefit of lawyers, etc.

Korale's impressive career path brought her to the University of Colombo's Faculty of Medicine, where she worked as an Assistant Librarian before being promoted to Senior Assistant Librarian. Her employment at the University of Colombo was another period in her career where her abilities as a manager and a leader were at their peak. Korale showed an exceptional dedication to supporting colleagues' professional development while working at the Medical Faculty of the University of Colombo. Notably, when she was offered options for overseas training through the HEALIS Network, she graciously decided to share these priceless opportunities with the entire library staff instead of keeping them just for herself. She cares about helping people, sharing knowledge, and working together in the academic community. She is very generous and dedicated to helping her team grow and succeed.

June 1, 1991, was a turning point in Korale's life when she started working as a Librarian at the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), the highest position in her career. She made significant achievements throughout her 15-year tenure, including being the first to automate the OUSL library collection in 1992. Her innovative approach included introducing primary and supplementary entries within the ISIS database framework. She also took the initiative to print the catalogue cards and create a library catalogue for the OUSL library section, introducing the main and adding entries to the ISIS database. The university community had significantly better access to materials thanks to this creative move that upgraded library services. Creating subject-keyword authority files, which resulted in standardized subject terms and keywords that improved information retrieval and cataloguing processes, was another area of competence that Korale possesses. Accordingly, she managed the library's growth as a competent administrator and manager, creating a welcoming and productive atmosphere for patrons. Her contributions, particularly those relating to automation and report-writing, were essential to the OUSL Library's growth and modernization.

In addition to being a skilled librarian, Korale was a prolific writer. She disseminated her knowledge and experience, publishing several articles about the librarian's role. She compiled a subject keyword index (a subject index to the industrial court awards) and three bibliographies: Bibliography of Medicine 1981–1998, A Bibliography of Labour Relations in Sri Lanka: Vol. 1, A Bibliography of Labour Relations in Sri Lanka: 1840–1978, showing her commitment to preserving and disseminating knowledge.

She is married to Mr R.B.M. Korale, a Statistical Consultant of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service (SLAS Statistician). Dr Ashoka Korale, a licensed Electrical Engineer, is her son. Siri Ranjani Korale devotedly worked for the OUSL library till her retirement on July 31, 2005, and the Korale family is still based in Colombo. The life and career of Korale are evidence of her unshakable dedication to knowledge, education, and the development of library science in Sri Lanka.

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Dr R.C.W.M.R.W. Seneviratne (2006 – 2019)



Dr Wathmanel Seneviratne was the second child of Mr Madduma Bandara Seneviratne and Mrs Chandra Kumari Unamboowe in the Udunuwara area of the village of Uda Aludeniya in the Kandy district. She was born on August 18, 1953, and took her first steps in schooling at St. Joseph's Convent Gampola in 1958 and later at St. Joseph's Balika Maha Vidyalaya. She excelled in school while participating in extracurricular activities like athletics, girl guiding, and painting. When she was ten (10) years old, she received an island-wide second place in the International Children's Day Painting Competition, and she went on to win several credits and positions for her paintings. She was selected to sketch the Dalada Maligawa museum collection as the only child artist among the veterans.

She completed her GCE (A/L) in the arts stream in 1973 and entered the Vidyalankara Campus of the University of Sri Lanka in 1974. In 1978, she received her BA in Economics with honours and qualified for government accounting service after earning a Higher National Diploma in Commerce at Sri Lanka Technical College. In 1986, she obtained a computer programming certificate from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Colombo. She earned her first Library Science Diploma in 1987 from the same department at the

University of Colombo. She earned her postgraduate degree in 1994 and her doctorate in 2006 from the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo. Dr Seneviratne gained her professional qualification from the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) and received an Associateship (ASLLA) and Fellowship (FSLLA). She received the ASIST (American Society for Information Science and Technology) Award in 2003 for the second-best paper at the International Scientific Paper Competition conducted by the American Society of Information Science and Technology and the Vijitha de Silva Research Award from SLLA in 2011 for the best-completed research in Library and Information Science (LIS) field in Sri Lanka.

Dr. Senevirathne had just graduated from university when he was hired as a bank clerk at Peoples Bank in 1978. There, she worked for four years before resigning to accept foreign employment as a high school teacher in 1982 at Baptist High School, Ede, Nigeria. In 1986, she joined the Ceylon Institute of Industrial and Scientific Research as a Scientific Officer (Information). From there, she progressed as a worthy library and information science professional. In 1995, she was appointed Manager of Information Services at the Postgraduate Institute of Management at Sri Jayewardenepura University and initiated many user services. The same year, she was also selected to re-establish the Central Bank of Sri Lanka library collection and services, which had been destroyed due to a terrorist bomb attack. Rebuilding the bank library was challenging because she had to start with one post-attack trauma-stricken library assistant and one binder saved from the bomb attack. She recovered most of the critical and rare materials with the support of donors and well-wishers. Amidst the loss, she successfully faced the challenge of immediately re-establishing the disturbed information service for the bank staff through information networks, BLLD (British Library Lending Division) in UK service, and generous support from other prominent libraries and librarians. She effectively exploited the challenge to launch new services and systems, such as the Online Catalogue, the World Bank report database, the daily news service, and information repackaging services in critical financial and economic areas. In 1999, Dr Seneviratne joined the library of

the University of Colombo as the Senior Assistant Librarian. She worked there until 2006, when she became the Librarian at the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), where she retired in 2019.

During her tenure at the OUSL, Dr Senevirathne understood the value of research in academic advancement and significantly contributed to education by establishing a Research Inquiry Service, which offers essential resources and research assistance to students and professors in their research activities. In addition to recognizing the importance of open education, she laid the groundwork for building a curriculum-based open educational resource collection. Further, her innovative thinking extended to sustainable library funding. She introduced continuing professional development (CPD) programmes, which not only enhanced the skills of library staff but also generated income to support the library's operations and expansion. With a solid commitment to enhancing library facilities, Dr Senevirathne sought self-generated funds through projects like the computerization of public libraries in Sri Lanka, short courses for library paraprofessionals, a degree programme for library professionals, etc., and renovated various sections of the OUSL library that ensured a welcoming and conducive environment for study and research for all library users.

Furthermore, commitment to expanding educational possibilities beyond the main campus resulted in the creation of regional centre libraries. Dr Senevirathne's leadership was instrumental in acquiring a derelict building in Kandy and refurbishing it into a modern library, setting a precedent for other regional centres. Her vision and support resulted in the construction and development of new library buildings in Matara, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Badulla, Anuradhapura, and Kurunegala. These libraries were crucial sites for study and research, bridging the urban-rural gap.

Besides, Dr Senevirathne's tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to education and library development have left an indelible mark on the OUSL community and

the broader education landscape in Sri Lanka. Her legacy inspires future educators and librarians to be effective in learning and knowledge dissemination.

Dr Seneviratne also achieved success by taking the initiative to create and make available the Bachelor of Arts Honours in Library and Information Studies through online learning at the OUSL as a lateral entrance degree for holders of LIS diplomas. It is the first time in Sri Lanka that the field of library science in higher education has offered a lateral degree for LIS students online. Additionally, she contributes to managing the BALIS (Bachelor of Arts in Library and Information Science) degree at OUSL. Her tireless efforts to improve the reputation and guarantee of the BALIS demonstrate her dedication to its success. Even after retiring from the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), she remains actively engaged in teaching and other professional pursuits.



A few years after she retired from the OUSL, in June 2022, she joined General Sir Kotelawala Defence University (KDU), Ratmalana, as a Librarian on an assignment basis to assist the military sector using her professional expertise. She initiated several projects to enhance the services and resources at the KDU Library, such as Faculty Virtual Reading Rooms (KDU-VRR), which is a gateway to the world of information, and the National Digital Repository Centre for Defence Studies (NDRCCDS), which provides access to credible national-level defence security

information published locally and internationally while also providing access to global security scenarios.

Dr Seneviratne joined SLLA in 1995 and contributed as a lecturer, council member, convener of many committees, chair of conferences, etc. She was an efficient conference organizer. She organized expert dialogue in LIS for SLLA in 2010 and 2011. Later, the other conferences followed the same tradition. She was the president of the ULA (University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka) in 2010, and the first professional international conference, ICULA (International Conference on University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka), was organized during her tenure. She was also involved in the activities of IFLA, representing Sri Lanka in the Regional Committee for Asia and Oceania (2015–2019) and serving as the Coordinator for South Asia. She still serves IFLA as a member of the five-member committee for Open Access Policy. Therefore, it is significant and necessary to acknowledge the professional services Dr Seneviratne provided to the SLLA (Sri Lanka Library Association), ULA, and IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations).

Dr Seneviratne's academic contribution to the field was remarkable and deserved mention. She has served as a LIS (Library and Information Sciences) lecturer, researcher, reviewer of research papers and books, and examiner for local and foreign universities. She has organized many CPD (Continuing Professional Development) workshops, professional conferences, and seminars for SLLA, the Open University, the University of Kelaniya, and ULA. Dr Seneviratne has many research papers, reports, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) materials, compilations, editorial work, pamphlets, and a book to her credit.

Dr Senevirathne married Mr Cyril Suduwella, a Professional Petroleum Chemist, in 1981 and settled in Kiribatgoda. She has one daughter, Indrachapa Suduwella, who lives in Canada with her husband and their little son. She finds joy in cooking and gardening during her leisure hours, fostering a balanced and rewarding lifestyle. Her

dedication to education and passion for culinary and horticultural endeavours reflect her commitment to lifelong learning and well-being. Mrs Cloda Nethsinghe, Mrs Sumana Jayasuriya, and Professor K.A.P Siddhasena, who guided and worked with her immensely, deserve a special mention.

Dr Seneviratne is one of the best librarians in the country. The lessons that can be learned from her life would include more than the number of words. She is a brightening star for the library profession in Sri Lanka. By her name, "Wathmanel", the metaphor combines her service to the Sri Lankan library profession and the smile she always wears.

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Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Professor R.A.P. Ranasinghe (1996- 1998)

Gamini De Silva (1997–2005)

Professor R.A.P. Ranasinghe (1996- 1998)



Professor Ranasinghe Arachchige Piyadasa Ranasinghe, the first Librarian of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, was a renowned scholar and educator whose life's work left an everlasting imprint on the academic landscape of Sri Lanka. On October 10, 1949, he was born to Mr Ranasingher Arachchige Charles Perera and Mrs Deguruge Emi Nona and bred in Thabbowa, Puttalama. His primary school education began in 1958 at Delgoda Kalyani Pradeepa University Pirivena. His higher education was done from 1967 to 1971 at the Vidyalankara University of Ceylon and from 1980 to 1981 at the University of Kelaniya. Professor Ranasinghe was given an Australian Government Scholarship in 1991 for his devotion and intellectual promise. This scholarship enabled him to pursue a Master of Library and Information Research Degree at the University of New South Wales' School of Information, Library from 1991 to 1994, and Archival Studies in Australia. He performed his research under the supervision of eminent researchers Professor Boyd Rayward and Dr. Jack Nelson, producing a thesis titled 'Sri Lanka National Bibliography and the Bibliographical Tradition of Sri Lanka.' This work was ground-breaking since it was the first significant study of Sri Lankan bibliographical traditions and bibliographic management.

He was fortunate to enhance his knowledge through a few overseas professional training programmes, such as the 1989 Course on Information Technology and Computerized Services conducted by the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand. In the same year, he completed a Communication Media Course at Dhurakijpundit University in Bangkok, Thailand, a Course on Information Technology for Information Management at the SAARC Documentation Centre in New Delhi, India, and a Diploma in Japanese Language.

Professor Ranasinghe began his academic career as a Temporary Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Sinhala at Vidyalankara University from 1971 to 1976. His career in libraries and information science started in 1979 as a Junior Assistant Librarian at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and worked till 1983. From 1984 to 1989, he worked as an Assistant Librarian at the same university after the promotion. However, he gained experience as an Assistant Editor of the Sinhala Dictionary from 1977 to 1978. He was promoted to Senior Assistant Librarian in 1990 with a transfer to the University of Kelaniya and worked till 1994 in the same grade. During this period, he also had to learn the responsibilities of the Head of the Department of Library and Information Science. His dedication to this work was evident in his contribution to the department's academic achievement. Professor Ranasinghe was appointed Acting Librarian at the University of Kelaniya in 1994 after completing his master's degree. He worked in that capacity until 1996 when he was appointed Librarian of the newly established Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. He played a vital role as the founding Librarian until 1998, creating the library system of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka from the ground up, demonstrating his commitment to the field. The University of Kelaniya invited him in 1998 to rejoin as Head of the Department of Library and Information Science, and he accepted the invitation. He nurtured the department as one of the best academic departments of the university, and it was a highly recognized library education centre in the country. He was elevated to Professor and remained as Head of Department for more than ten years.

Furthermore, he has left his indelible footprints for his successors. Because of this change, he could not contribute much to the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. His work also crossed borders, and his scholarship was multifaceted because, in addition to Library and Information Science, he had studied Indigenous Knowledge, Buddhism, Manuscripts, and Intangible Cultural Heritage. From 2001 to 2002, he was the recipient of the prestigious Japan Foundation Senior Fellowship for research on the Sources of Japanese Studies at Saga University, Japan, in collaboration with Urata Yoshikazu, Professor of Humanities; in 2012, he served as a Visiting Professor in the Digital Library Learning Program at University of Parma, Italy; and he also served as an expert in developing the curricula for the training course on Building Strong Library Associations of IFLA in the Hague, in 2009.

He was also a prolific writer, having written over ten monographs and approximately seventy articles on Library and Information Science and related issues. His expertise also extended to translation, as he expertly translated five literary works and four books on various themes from various languages.

In 2014, he reached his retirement age. But, even after leaving the University of Kelaniya in 2014, he continued to contribute as the Library and Information Professor at the Nagananda International Buddhist Studies Centre in Sri Lanka. Also, he remained the Director of Kelaniya's Palm Leaf Research Centre.

His dedication to the academic community was further evidenced by his participation in the UNESCO Memory of the World Project and chairing many committees of the National Library and Documentation Services Board of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Library Association. Furthermore, At the Sri Lanka Library Association, from 2007 to 2009, he was the President, in 1988/89, Treasurer, and 1995/96 was the Vice-President. In 2004, he was a member of the Manuscript Scrutinizing Board at the National Book Development Council and secretary of the American Studies Association from 2004 onwards. He held positions in many more committees in different other institutions.

Professor Ranasinghe has received numerous awards throughout his career, including the Asian Library Leaders Lifetime Achievement Award (ALL-LTAW) 2014. His sudden death (on August 04, 2023) was a significant loss for his country and the University of Kelaniya, where he was regarded as a brilliant scholar and teacher. Those who had the opportunity to gain experience from and work with him continue to celebrate and respect his legacy in education, culture, libraries, and international cooperation.

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Mr Gamini De Silva (1997–2005)



Mr W.E. De Silva and Mrs Joslin Wellala were the parents of Gamini De Silva, and he was born on June 27, 1939, in Ahangama, Galle District. He was the first Librarian of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka who made significant contributions to the systematic establishment of the library system in Sri Lanka, particularly for university libraries. His educational journey began at Mahinda Vidyalaya in Galle, where De Silva completed his G.C.E. (O/L) exams in English. Seeking further academic advancement, he transferred to St. Aloysius College in Galle for his G.C.E. (A/L) exams, and he completed his A/L exams with determination and dedication. De Silva then enrolled at the University of Ceylon. He graduated in 1963 with a solid foundation of knowledge and skills, but his thirst for knowledge was insatiable, leading him to pursue higher education abroad. When he enrolled at the University of Monash in Australia in 1986, he started a new chapter in his academic life and eventually graduated with a Master's in Librarianship.

In 1996, he became the first Sri Lankan and the second Asian Librarian to receive the Cunningham Award for university librarians from developing countries. This prestigious award provided him with six months of training and touring in the United States, including visits to the libraries at Washington University. He continuously

developed himself, participating in several workshops to enhance his knowledge and update himself. He has many publications where he shares his knowledge with others. The Library Association of London awarded him an Associateship in 1977 and a Fellowship in 1988.

De Silva started his professional career as an Assistant Librarian at the University of Colombo before being elevated to Senior Assistant Librarian in 1976. He served in this capacity for more than 20 years, from 1976 to 1997. During his tenure at the University of Colombo, De Silva served as the In-charge Librarian of the Medical Faculty Library. He was instrumental in giving staff and students the support they needed. In addition to attending two HELLIS (Health Literature Library and Information Services) seminars at the WHO (World Health Organization) headquarters in Delhi and Bangkok, Thailand, respectively, he was awarded a scholarship by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1991 for a six-month study abroad programme at the University of Wales. During this period, De Silva honed his abilities. He acquired invaluable administrative experience in a specialized library and began his career as a Librarian at the University of Ruhuna in 1997. De Silva held this position for a short period. During his time at the University of Ruhuna, he significantly impacted the development of the library's services and resources. Then, he took his sabbatical leave in 2001 and accepted the post of Librarian at the University of Rajarata. After the sabbatical leave period, he was permanently born and continued in the same position until his retirement in 2005.

His contribution is to the various classifications of academic librarians' functions, such as training university staff and students to use the facilities provided for the teaching and learning process, providing services to increase students' ability to use the facilities more effectively, and effectively and assisting students and staff in their research activities. Further, he trained Library Assistants in public libraries in the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts in Computer Technology. As a Visiting Lecturer, he conducted lectures for the students of degree courses in Library and

Information Sciences from 1975 to 2022 at the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kelaniya, and a Master's in Library and Information Sciences (MLS) from 1980 to 1990 at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo.

Further, De Silva was the Secretary of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka from 1970 to 1982 and the President of the same Association from 1998 to 2001 and 2002 to 2005, showing his administrative capacity. He also contributed to developing the Galle Public Library and the Anuradhapura Public Library.

On June 13, 1980, he married Miss Malathi Gunawardene, who was in the Awissawalla area, and they had a daughter. He retired from working as a university Librarian in 2006, but he continued to work at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Research Library (BMICH) Librarian and stayed there until 2008. His personal and professional experiences demonstrate his dedication to librarianship throughout his lifetime, and he spent his senior years in good health and happiness with his wife, daughter, and family. On April 11, 2023, Gamini De Silva passed away, leaving the realm of librarianship with an irreplaceable loss.

Gamini De Silva, the first Librarian of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, participated in developing the library systems in Sri Lanka. Further, his contributions towards improving library services, advancing research projects, and instructing teachers, students, and staff were admirable. In addition, he taught computer skills to Library Assistants, lectured at the Universities of Kelaniya and Colombo, and contributed to developing public libraries in Galle and Anuradhapura. The Cunningham Award for University Librarians was also given to him in 1996 for his contribution and commitment to the library profession. He continued to advance his career by participating in seminars and workshops and sharing the knowledge he acquired through writing books and articles.

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[Transcript was provided to T.C. Ranawella to compile the biography]



University of Ceylon

Reginald Stephen Enright (1931–1952)

S.C. Blok (1953-1963)

K. D. Somadasa (1964-1968)

Reginald Stephen Enright (1931–1952)



R.S. Enright served as the first Librarian of the Ceylon University College from 1925 until 1942 (Ceylon University College Prospects, 1936–1937, p. 51). He also served as the first university Librarian of the University of Ceylon. He was the founder of the legendary lineage of librarians. Enright earned an honours degree from the University of London in 1924 and completed his librarian training there in 1928. He started as an Assistant Librarian at Ceylon University College in 1924. There had been no Librarian at Ceylon University College until he was appointed to the position of Librarian in 1931. He had to manage the library with the support of a clerk, which gave him an excellent opportunity to get experience. Enright finished the work on the accession register and created an alphabetical catalogue entry to complement the subject catalogue in 1935. He used the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) codes to categorize the volumes on the shelves in the Economics and Mathematics areas of the library collection. It was a reason to encourage more people to utilize the library. Beyond the librarian's duties, he was appointed to help the Classics and English Departments and to manage the Christian Hostel at the University College. In addition to his academic endeavours, Enright was also a superb athlete who contributed to the college rugby football team. When the University of Ceylon was founded in 1942 by combining the Medical College

and the Ceylon University College, Enright became the first Librarian of the university system, and he contributed tremendously to enhancing the standards of library services.



The Brodie House Athletic Team in 1926
R. S. Enright (seated in the middle)
(Source: *The Ceylon University College Magazine*, 1926)

It remained the only university-level institution in the country until 1958. The University of Ceylon's library thrived under the direction of Enright. His dedication to books and education laid the groundwork for future librarians to follow him. His tireless efforts to expand the collection, implement novel cataloguing systems, and promote a reading culture left an indelible imprint on the institution.

Enright was the Librarian at the university until his death in November 1952. Mr Senadeera, a former Librarian at the University of Peradeniya, describes Enright as follows: "Mr Enright also had a lofty concept of duty, which helped him maintain a high level of library service" (cited in Jayasuriya, 2011). In its early years, the University of Ceylon Library was privileged to have a committed, dedicated Librarian with a vision of providing a high-quality service to the community.

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S.C. Blok (1953-1963)



After Mr R.S. Enright passed away in 1952, Solomon Cecil Blok assumed the University of Ceylon Librarian position. He served in that capacity until 1963. Blok, born on May 14, 1901, graduated from the University of London with a Bachelor of Arts in Classics in 1925. He was the first Librarian of the Colombo Public Library, established in 1925 by merging the Colombo Library and the Pettah Library. He later became a part of the University of Ceylon. Blok was the first Chairperson of the first Library Committee of the University of Ceylon, which was established in 1954 to make crucial decisions for the development of the library. He was also a member of the Ceylon University Press Board and the Museum Committee (University of Ceylon, 1955).

Further, he served as the first president of the Ceylon Library Association from 1960 to 1964, the advisor to the Ceylon National Bibliography, and the mastermind of the proposed Ceylon National Library Board (Ceylon Library Review, 1969). Blok resigned in 1963, following 11 years of service as the second Librarian of the University of Ceylon. Blok pioneered the library movement in Sri Lanka.

Blok has made significant contributions to the field of librarianship. He was dedicated to improving library services in the country and was always willing to share his experience and profound insight into the advancement of librarianship. His valuable contributions towards the first Library Committee and Press Board of the University of Ceylon, the Museum Committee, the Ceylon Library Association, the Ceylon National Bibliography, and the Ceylon National Library Board tremendously served the development of the library profession and the libraries in Sri Lanka. Even after he resigned from the post of Librarian at Ceylon University College in 1963, he continued his professional activities with other relevant organizations. Unfortunately, Blok died on July 10, 1969, marking the end of an era for the community, as he had been a prominent figure for over four decades.

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K. D. Somadasa (1964-1968)



Individuals dedicated to and passionate about education help shape the educational landscape, leaving an indelible mark on the institutions they serve. The third Librarian of the University of Ceylon, Somadasa, was a well-known scholar and is one of those remarkable people. Somadasa, as evidenced by his personal appearance and respect for Buddhist customs and traditions, showed his commitment to his cultural heritage and was a well-known Librarian and scholar. He began his university education with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of London, which provided him with a solid foundation and a broader understanding of the world. He earned a postgraduate degree from Columbia University to fulfill his scholarly development (University of Ceylon, 1965).

After Mr S. C. Blok resigned in 1964, Somadasa assumed the position of third Librarian at the University of Ceylon. In 1966, he restructured the library at the University of Ceylon. Blok established several significant library divisions, including Acquisitions, Cataloguing, Reader Services, Periodicals, Medical Libraries, and Departmental Libraries. To ensure efficient operations, he appointed supervisory heads for each section. He was also a forerunner in collecting palm-leaf manuscripts, which saved valuable historical and cultural artefacts. Somadasa

served on the Ceylon University Press Board and Museum Committee, among other things. He was also the manager of the University of Ceylon Review and the Ceylon Journal of Science from 1966 to 1967. Somadasa represented the university on the Ceylon National Book Trust and assisted in drafting the Ceylon National Library Services Board Bill. In 1971, he resigned as a Librarian at the University of Ceylon to become Director of the Ceylon National Library Services Board.

His commitment to knowledge acquisition, preservation, and accessibility converted the University of Ceylon library services. During his tenure, he restructured the library and encouraged the development of the collection of historical manuscripts. He also served on several committees and boards and made outstanding contributions to the library profession, which will benefit the present and future professionals. He left his librarianship in 1971 to become the Director of the Ceylon National Library Services Board.

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University of Colombo

Violet de Souza (1969–1980)

Dr. Adrian Senadhira (1980-1983)

P. Kularathnam (1983-1988)

S. Jayasuriya (1989-2011)

Violet De Souza (1969–1980)



Violet De Souza is a pioneer of librarianship in Sri Lanka and the first Librarian of the University of Colombo. Her distinguished career spanned several decades, during which she helped shape and improve library services in the country. She also demonstrated her dedication to librarianship during her academic career, earning a BA and a Postgraduate Diploma in Library Science from the University of London. Her distinguished career as a Librarian began in January 1969, when she was appointed the first Librarian of the University of Ceylon library system in Sri Lanka.

In 1972, the university changed its name to the University of Sri Lanka, Colombo Campus, and as a result, the university had to change its position and reinstate itself. De Souza was re-designated Librarian of the University of Colombo in 1979 due to constitutional changes in Sri Lanka. During her 11 years of service, her dedication and visionary leadership led to essential changes in the library, such as the expansion of the Sri Lanka Room and the development of the permanent reference collection.

De Souza's influence extended beyond her role as a Librarian. She actively participated in the Senate and contributed to newly established Faculty Academic Committees, helping shape the academic landscape of the University. Recognizing the necessity of broader library development in the country, De Souza offered her

professional services to several national organizations, including the Ceylon National Library Services Board. Her leadership in organizations like the Ceylon Library Association and her involvement in library science syllabi and Librarian Assessment Committees highlighted her dedication to advancing the profession.

De Souza retired in September 1980 after a 30-year career that included stints as a Librarian at the University of Ceylon-Colombo, the University of Sri Lanka-Colombo Campus, and the University of Colombo. Her departure marked the end of an era in Sri Lankan library science. Still, her accomplishments and legacy continue to inspire and impact the discipline.

Violet De Souza's life and work demonstrate the importance of dedication, leadership, and vision in library science. Her attitude and unwavering commitment to improving library services in Sri Lanka have left an indelible mark on the profession and inspire future librarians and researchers.

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Dr Adrian Senadhira (1980-1983)



Dr Adrian Senadhira, a former Librarian at the University of Colombo, was a prominent figure in library science in Sri Lanka. His deep commitment to education, promotion of library services, and international cooperation was evident throughout his career. A keen learner and genius, he obtained his Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Ceylon, which laid the foundation for his love of academics and knowledge. Following his interest in Library Science, Senadhira pursued an Academic Post Graduate Diploma in Library Science from the University of London. He also got a fellowship from the London Library Association by exam and thesis and a Doctorate from the USA. This formal education gave him the skills and knowledge to excel in library science.

He started his professional career as an Assistant Librarian at the University of Ceylon in 1961 and was appointed In-charge of the Medical Faculty Library. In 1980, after De Souza's retirement, the university appointed him as the Librarian of the University of Colombo. However, he was only the Librarian for three years. Senadhira left his position as Librarian at Colombo University in August 1983 to work for the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, Switzerland. This action shows his readiness to help with global health programmes. Over 22 years, he made

substantial contributions to the library system, notably the Medical Faculty Library of the University of Colombo.

Senadhira was fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in the international medical library conferences that took place at regular intervals, such as the Third Congress of Medical Librarianship in Amsterdam in 1969. Furthermore, in 1979, Senadhira had the privilege of serving on SEARO (WHO Regional Office for Southeast Asia), the subcommittee appointed by the WHO Global Advisory Committee on Medical Research to strengthen medical libraries, resulting in the formation of the Health Literature Libraries and Information Services (HELLIS) network, a consortium of Southeast Asian Health Libraries formed to address a long-standing need for easy access to health information for those working in the health sector. During Senadhira's administration, the Faculty of Medicine Library of the University of Colombo was designated the National Focal Point of HELLIS. The medical library of the University of Colombo grew into a regional network of national networks in the Southeast Asian region that linked the SEARO library.

Senadhira was well-known in the library and extended his professional services beyond the university by holding leadership positions in several organizations, such as the President of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka and Vice-President of the National Association of Graduate Librarians and Information Scientists of Sri Lanka. While at the University of Colombo, he was instrumental in expanding library education in Sri Lanka. He was also a visiting lecturer in the Department of Library Sciences, Vidyalandara Campus, for the Postgraduate Diploma programme. In addition, he developed a Diploma in library science for non-graduates in the Faculty of Science, thereby increasing access to library education.

Senadhira also played an essential role in developing libraries in Sri Lanka, and his contribution to the international cooperation provided to medical libraries through HELLIS. His legacy inspires and influences the area of library science in Sri Lanka

and abroad. His dedication to education, information availability, and worldwide collaboration left an everlasting imprint on the profession.

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P. Kularathnam (1983-1988)



P. Kularathnam, a well-known Librarian and an accomplished library cataloguer was appointed as the Librarian of the University of Colombo in 1983 and made significant contributions to the field of library science. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Ceylon and a Diploma in Library Science from the University of London. Her passion for reading, research, and organization inspired her to pursue more degrees and certifications. So, her library career began with a solid educational background and with the experience and knowledge she needed for her position. After Senadhira resigned in August 1983, she started her work as a Librarian at the University of Colombo and made a significant contribution to the library of the University of Colombo.

Under her direction, she amalgamated the materials from the science departmental libraries and the science collection of the Main Library. She developed a branch library for the Faculty of Science, increasing access to resources for science students and teachers. Further, Kularathnam managed the library's Law collection using the Universal Decimal Classification system. This organizational approach improved the library's efficiency in servicing law students and researchers. Moreover, she was dedicated to her work at the University of Colombo and simultaneously actively

participated in the Sri Lankan library profession. She served as Treasurer of the Sri Lanka Library Association, exhibiting her dedication to the advancement of the sector and the promotion of collaboration among library professionals.

Kularathnam was a founding member of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), serving as Vice President from 1964 to 1966 and Treasurer from 1970 to 1972 and again in 1975. She introduced a bookkeeping and accounting system to the SLLA during her tenure as Treasurer. Furthermore, she also devoted much of her time to teaching librarianship and worked as a part-time instructor in cataloguing, spanning from the first to the final year. Moreover, she founded and directed the Diploma in Library and Information Science Course at the University of Colombo and laid the groundwork for a master's programme there. Her expertise in cataloguing and her commitment to organizing and improving library resources have left a lasting impact on the academic community in Sri Lanka. Kularathnam displayed a love for knowledge organization and a commitment to enhancing library services and expanding the library profession in Sri Lanka throughout her career. Her contributions continue to motivate and help librarians and researchers.

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S. Jayasuriya (1989-2011)



A star Librarian, Ms Sumana Jayasuriya, had an indelible impact on the University of Colombo and, more importantly, the library and information science field. She was born in 1946, and her dedication to education and work was invaluable. She also excelled academically and passed the High School Certificate (HSC) examination in 1963 in the Arts stream. A year later, in 1964, she began her higher education career. In 1968, she obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Ceylon and, in 1975, her Post Graduate Diploma in Library Science and Information Studies from the University of Kelaniya. Later, in 1985, she received a Master of Library Science from the University of the Philippines. She became the first Librarian in Sri Lanka to obtain a two-year master's in library and information science.

She started her career as an Assistant Librarian at the University of Colombo in 1971, reporting to the then Librarian, Mrs Violet de Souza. She spent her early years overseeing the Periodicals and Acquisitions Departments, demonstrating her talent and passion for the profession. Her perseverance and achievements earned her promotion to Senior Assistant Librarian in 1979. In 1989, she became the Librarian of the University of Colombo, the pinnacle of her career, where her visionary

leadership shone through. With this appointment, she began a challenging quest to secure financing for a new library facility, and her tireless dedication paid off. In 1999, the Colombo University Library was able to move into a new building with modern facilities to encourage an appropriate learning environment, which was her aim. Her efforts fulfilled a long-standing demand for new library facilities and left an indelible mark on the institution.



Jayasuriya's outstanding contribution to the field of library science led to the awarding and development of the Master of Library and Information Science (LIS) degree by the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Colombo in 1993. From 1993 to 2007, she was the course coordinator and course module creator, and the course filled a significant gap in the field by providing opportunities for students who could not study in the Sinhala medium. Furthermore, the graduates also had the chance to pursue a two-year Master's in Library and Information Science, a mandatory requirement for promotion to librarianship. In 2008, Jayasuriya successfully started another master's degree programme in Information Systems Management at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo. Her visionary approach enabled professionals and executives to gain knowledge about information systems and information systems management and made significant contributions to the field.

Jayasuriya founded the National Institute of Library and Information Science (NILIS) and participated in preparing the project proposal for establishing the

NILIS. She was entrusted with being the NILIS Coordinator until the university appointed a new director in 2000.

Jayasuriya held leadership positions in various projects and activities during her distinguished career. She was the Project Leader in the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency, Department for Research (Sida/SAREC) Library Support Project from 2003-2007. She was the country coordinator of the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) project of the International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INAPS) in 2003. She was also instrumental in developing the Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) project, which increased the visibility of Sri Lankan researchers and research papers.



Jayasuriya, in addition to her academic and professional achievements, contributed to the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), the professional body for librarians. Her involvement as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Council Member was vital to the organization's success. During her tenure as president, she organized the first international conference and was awarded an honorary fellowship by SLLA in 2001. Her remarkable professional achievements earned her the Golden Jubilee Award in 2010, indicating her organization's long-term influence. As a founding member of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka (ULA), she was a valuable contributor and mentor in many aspects of university librarianship. She served on the Standing Committee on Library and Information Studies (SCOLIS)

for over two decades, demonstrating her dedication to setting policy and improving the LIS profession.

Jayasuriya's influence extended beyond her professional achievements; she was a mentor and role model for young professionals in the area. Jayasuriya retired in 2011 after providing exceptional service to the University of Colombo and the whole Library and Information Science sector, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to inspire and illuminate the path for future librarians and information scientists.

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University of Jaffna

Sittampalam Murugavel (1982 -1994)

Rohini Pararajasingam (1995 - 2005)

Srikanthaluxmy Arulanantham (2012 -2019)

Sittampalam Murugavel (1982 -1994)



The first Librarian at the University of Jaffna spoke English, Tamil, and Sanskrit well and was well-versed in Hinduism. He was born on February 2, 1930, in the village of Ellalai (එල්ලොයි) in Jaffna and had a distinguished academic career and personal life. He was raised in a Hindu home as the eldest son in a family of eight and had a solid commitment to his religion. He completed his primary education in a school in his hometown and continued his secondary education at Jaffna Parameswara College, which later converted to the University of Jaffna.

Murugavel then entered the Royal College in Colombo. After completing his secondary education, he enrolled at the University of Peradeniya, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a Tamil language emphasis. To obtain a Postgraduate Diploma in Library Science, Murugavel went to London in 1965 to compile a bibliography of Hinduism-related publications in European languages as part of his postgraduate studies, demonstrating his dedication to advancing knowledge and comprehension of his religious heritage.

Murugavel started his career as a Teacher at Parameswara College in Jaffna as soon as he finished his education. He was fortunate to become an Assistant Librarian at the University of Peradeniya in 1959, where he oversaw the Tamil division of the

library. Murugavel used this chance to spread awareness of the Tamil language and culture while pursuing his interest in literature. When Murugavel was appointed the first Librarian of Jaffna University in 1982, he took on the challenge of expanding the library. He put in an endless effort to enhance its resources. Murugavel was instrumental in influencing the development of the library and strengthening its support for the academic and research endeavours of the university throughout his tenure. He contributed significantly to the collection development and layout of the library of Jaffna University during the period of ethnic conflict in the Jaffna peninsula.

Murugavel was actively helping restore and reopen the severely damaged Jaffna Public Library despite the turmoil and war prevailing in the Jaffna Peninsula, especially the Jaffna Public Library. He compiled a bibliography of Siddhayurveda (சித்தாயுர்வேதம்) in 1984 and published books on Hinduism named Sivasahasta Nama Archanai (சிவசஹஸ்தா நாம அர்ச்சனை) and Suwethasvathara Upanidatham (சுவேதாஸ்வதார உபநிடதம்). Murugavel compiled a bibliography for the collection of Ola Leaves at the University of Jaffna, showing his commitment to preserving and promoting traditional literature written in Ola Leaves. The library of the University of Jaffna published it in two volumes, the first in 1992 and the second in 1997. He also worked as an advisor to the library science periodical Noolahaviyal (நூலஹாவியல்), published in the Tamil language for seven years consecutively. He retired from his service in 1994 at the University of Jaffna.

Murugavel got married in 1959 and later had three kids. Even though his retirement marked the end of his professional career, he was one of the best teachers. Murugavel continuously contributed to improving the library profession, even after his retirement in 1994 from the University of Jaffna. Finally, he tragically left us suddenly on October 2, 2014, leaving a void in the library community, for he was such a committed and significant figure in the library profession of Sri Lanka.

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Rohini Pararajasingam (1995 - 2005)



Rohini Pararajasingam served as the Librarian of the University of Jaffna from 1995 to 2005. She was born on July 30, 1940, at Point Pedro in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. She was the second of nine children born to Mr Kathiriththambi Vaithilingam and Mrs Saraswathy Vaithilingam. Her primary education began in her native Point Pedro, where she received her elementary education at the J/Methodist Girls High School. She then pursued higher studies and started an illustrious career. Pararajasingam graduated with honours from the University of Madras in India with a BSc in Zoology in 1961. She completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Librarianship programme at the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka between 1964 and 1965. 1983, she completed her Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) at the University of Madras in India.

Rohini Pararajasingam temporarily started her career as the Sales Manager at Cargills Book Centre in Colombo. Then, on March 2, 1978, she joined the University of Jaffna as an Assistant Librarian. After completing the MLIS degree at Madras University in 1983, she was promoted to Senior Assistant Librarian. She was appointed to the post of Librarian at the University of Jaffna in March 1995 and served in this position until she retired from service on September 30, 2005. She demonstrated her abilities as a capable administrator by running the University of

Jaffna Library with a limited staff during the most trying time in Northern Sri Lanka. She always remembers Mr S. Murugavel, the former Librarian of the University of Jaffna, as her guru in Library Science. Regarding decision-making, she analyses situations from multiple angles and listens to everyone's ideas. Once she decides it is the right thing to do for the betterment of the library and staff, she will stand by her decision under any circumstances.

Her ambitious work at the University of Jaffna was highlighted through several notable successes. One such turning point in her commitment to enhancing library services and her innovative mentality was the beginning of the library automation project in 2003. Additionally, she played a significant role in developing the Postgraduate Diploma programme in Library and Information Science in the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This initiative aims to train and educate the next generation of library professionals so they can succeed in their jobs. Her commitment to the library's expansion and decision to forego her sabbatical leave to ensure its success showed how fervently she felt about the subject.

She was a soft-spoken, straightforward individual who was dedicated to her profession. She fulfilled her professional responsibility and accountability, facing many challenges during her career. Her communication and administrative skills made her a successful administrator. Due to the ethnic conflict and civil war at the time, the people of the Jaffna Peninsula faced many difficulties. The people of Jaffna will never forget the brave action taken by her during the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) operation in 1987–88, saving 35,000 valuable books that were part of the library collection at the University of Jaffna. Despite the prevailing threats to her own life, she implemented it. At the time of the incident, she was only 47 years old and serving as an Acting Librarian since S. Murugavel (Librarian, University of Jaffna) was on sabbatical leave. Pararajasingam bravely moved the remaining books to a more secure place even after realizing the danger to her own life, but she was

first criticized and condemned for her quick action. However, in recognition of her bravery, she later received a plaque of honour from the University of Jaffna.

Understanding the value of improving professional skills among library employees in the area, in 2002, Pararajasingam significantly influenced the Sri Lanka Library Association's decision to restart its Diploma in Library and Information Science programme in Jaffna. She was committed to advancing the library profession. A trained workforce can be seen today because of her efforts to bring this course back to life. Pararajasingam was honoured by the Sri Lanka Library Association by awarding a Fellowship and certification as a Chartered Librarian in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the field. This acknowledgment highlights her role's significant impact and dedication to developing Sri Lanka's library sector.

She married Mr Thambithurai Pararajasingam (Postmaster) in 1964 and gave birth to two daughters. The Eldest daughter, Ms Inthumathy Dhanushiyan, is an Instructor at the Department of English Language at the University of Jaffna, and the youngest daughter, Ms Bamathy Sivananthachelvan, is a stay-at-home spouse. She always likes to spend time with her grandchildren and provides the necessary guidance for their career development. Even after her retirement, she conducted lectures for library information science courses until 2015 and contributed to the capacity development of library paraprofessionals. Further, her involvement in many charitable organizations and her teachings of the English language to the children in the Karunalayam Children Home at Thirunelvely, Jaffna, witnessed her selflessness. So, many hearts of whom she was invested will remember her. Due to her poor health condition, she moved to Point Pedro with her youngest daughter after her husband passed away. There, she lived peacefully with her daughter's family and grandkids until her passing on April 27, 2022.

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Srikanthaluxmy Arulanantham (2012 -2019)



Srikanthaluxmy Sivanesan nee Arulanantham was a Librarian at the Jaffna University and a lecturer in Library and Information Science. At Inuvil Saiva Mahajana Vidyalaya (Inuvil Central College), she received her primary education, entered Ramanathan College, and did her GCE (A/L) in 1979. She earned her Bachelor's in Economics from the University of Jaffna from 1980 to 1984 and entered Tamil Nadu's Madurai Kamaraj University in 1986, completing her Library and Information Science (B.L.I.Sc). She completed her Master in Documentation and Information Sciences (A.D.I.Sc) from 1987 to 1989 at the Documentation Research and Training Centre, Indian Statistical Institute, in Bangalore, where she further developed her commitment and interest in the subject. These educational opportunities undoubtedly contributed significantly to Arulanantham 's acquisition of knowledge and abilities and her success as a Librarian.

Arulanantham started her academic career as an Assistant Librarian at the University of Jaffna in 1989, and in 1994, she was promoted to the post of Senior Assistant Librarian. Arulanantham assumed control of the library as Acting Librarian in 2008 and was appointed Librarian of the University of Jaffna in 2012. She was the

Librarian until her sudden death on December 25, 2019. Arulanantham significantly aided the growth and modernization of the University of Jaffna library during her tenure as Librarian. She played a crucial role in developing partnerships with other academic institutions, introducing modern technology, and extending the library's collection of books and materials. The entire university community will remember her and deeply miss her commitment to and passion for her job as a Librarian.

During her time at the University of Jaffna, she played many roles in the university and as well as in the community. In particular, she was the President of the Sri Lanka Library Association from 2017 to 2019 and the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka from May 2015 to September 2016. She served as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Library and Documentation Services Board, Sri Lanka, from July 2017 to June 2019 and the National Science Foundation (NSF) working committee on libraries and information from February 2018 to June 2019. She was a consultant for Jaffna Public Library, Noolaham Foundation, and Inuvil Public Library for over a decade. Her service as a Visiting Academic is notable as she contributed to the University of Kelaniya from 2013 until her death and the College of Education, Jaffna, from 2003 to 2011. She was the coordinator for the Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Science at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Jaffna, from 2007 to 2009. The "Srikanthaluxmy Arulanantham Memorial Award" is given by the Sri Lanka Library Association to the student who performs best during the Higher Diploma in Library and Information Science, which is an honour in recognition of her outstanding academic accomplishments, contributions, and standing in the library and information science profession.

Public and school libraries were greatly enhanced by Arulanantham's classification and organization of collections. She planned student-focused activities and unveiled the "Information Eye" project, which aimed to improve education in schools by promoting reading and exhibitions. Further, more than thirty-five schools benefited

from mobile presentations named "Books Speak-My Body, My Nature, and My Soul," funded by Jaffna Public Library. She also stressed the importance of easily accessible library facilities to build a society based on information. She founded the non-profit organization, "Foundation for Library Awareness (FOLA)", intending to promote reading, especially among youngsters, focusing more on the community level. While serving as FO LA's President for ten years, she fought to encourage information sharing. She initiated several projects such as the "Three-Dimensional Library", which improved the reading habits of children and students, a reference library called "Karuththuun (கருத்துறன்)," which contains five thousand books on several subjects and a repository for image collections to preserve Sri Lankan Tamil heritage. Her involvement demonstrated how strongly she felt about doing good. When she was a postgraduate student at the Documentation Research and Training Centre (DRTC) in Bengaluru, founded by Dr S. R. Ranganathan, a prominent figure in Indian information science, she discovered her interest in library science. Her education at the DRTC from 1987 to 1989 prepared her for significantly improving the operations of the library of the University of Jaffna.

Within fifty-eight years, she made significant contributions to the librarianship. She was a wonderful, multi-talented woman who collected a wide range of unusual materials that reflected the local culture in addition to antiques throughout her life. Furthermore, she worked in many institutions to develop children's reading habits. During the interim period declared with the Jaffna attack in 1995, which delayed the functions of Jaffna University, she conducted her studies and continued with work and organized school libraries for the sake of displaced people's education. Then, she returned to her profession at the Library of the University of Jaffna in 2002. In 2012, she was selected for the post of Librarian, a position she held until her demise. During her academic career, she promoted library awareness and knowledge transfer, particularly in underprivileged areas such as war-torn areas, newly resettled areas, and deprived communities. She was a determined individual who obstinately completed the tasks she had imagined. Her leadership style and accomplishments

demonstrated that she was a singular, dynamic, diligent, and brave woman. She contributed to scholarly works in Library science and disciplines such as Gender Studies, Media Studies, and literature. She sacrificed her life for the community's welfare, particularly regarding community information. Her multifaceted efforts as an academic, archivist, collector, documenter, and educator have influenced the social progress of her community. It is noteworthy that her family donated her collections, books, periodicals, and antiques to the University of Jaffna after her sudden demise. She has authored numerous academic books, research papers, essays, and conference papers and has prepared PowerPoint presentations, cinema documentaries, etc. These scholarly works are helpful for library and information science students, as academic and public libraries, in organizing their collections and services.

Arulanantham was the eldest of seven children and spent most of her life at Inuvil, close to Jaffna. Kuperanatha Uthayan, Srikantharuby, Ananthluxmy, Ananthavathani, Kugathas, and Mukunthan are her siblings (three brothers and three sisters). Her husband, N. Sivanesan, was a great supporter of her endeavours. She lived a life that is exemplary of an academic with multiple facets. Her scholarly works and the variety of collections she left behind will continue to speak of her vision for future generations. She dedicated her entire life and accumulated wealth to her ideals. This biography might be helpful to learn more about her. Unfortunately, she passed away on Christmas Day in 2019 following a heart attack. Her untimely passing reminded us that life is fragile and that we should focus on matters crucial to the community's well-being.

Though she is dead, she will be a role model for many. She was dedicated to keeping the library's high standards and did her best to overcome challenges like interruptions and frequent, ongoing relocations due to war. Though the functioning of the library of the University of Jaffna was discontinued for some years, she continued to serve the needy students in war-torn areas without hesitation. She was

also adamant that the university library should contribute to its intellectual vitality. She argued that librarians need to be knowledgeable in all fields of intellectual endeavour to take part in its improvement actively. Her work in this regard is exceptional.

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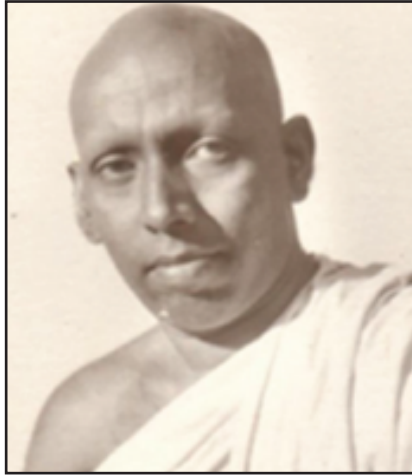
Most Ven. Nattandiye Pragnakara, 1959-1964

T. G. Piyadasa (1964 – 1985)

Professor Jayasri Lankage (1986 -2002)

Mr L. A. Jayatissa (2003 – 2017)

Most Venerable Natthandiye Pragnakara Thero (1959–1964)



Natthandiye Pragnakara Thero (නාන්දනඤ්චියේ ප්‍රඥාකර හිමි), born as Wijesinghe on February 9, 1915, to Mr. and Mrs. Wijesinghe Abekoon Sundara Appuhami Vidanearachchi Ralahami, was the first Librarian of the University of Kelaniya. He was the youngest of six children and had a twin sister. He joined the buddhist order at the age of fifteen under the guidance of the chief priest (පිරිවෙනාධිපති) of Vidyalankara Pirivena, Lunupokune Siri Dharmananda Thero (ලුණුපොකුණේ පිරි ධර්මානන්ද නායක ස්වාමින්ද්‍රයන් වහන්සේ), on October 23, 1930. He was a devout follower of the pirivena's senior priests. The young Pragnakara Thero was fortunate to learn the dharma and receive guidance from prominent priests such as Pandita Ratmalane Sri Dharmarama Thero (පණ්ඩිත රත්මලානේ ශ්‍රී ධර්මාරාම හිමි), Lunupokune Siri Dharmananda Thero, Kirivathtuduve Sri Pragnasara Thero (කිරිවත්තුවුවේ ශ්‍රී ප්‍රඥාසාර හිමි), Yakkaduve Sri Prajnarama Thero (යක්කඩුවේ ශ්‍රී ප්‍රඥාරාම හිමි), and Kotahene Pagnakiththi Thero (කොටහේනේ පඤ්ඤාකිත්ති හිමි).

Reverend Pragnakara led the religious and social service activities at Vidyalankara Pirivena during his youth and participated in monastic politics. He played a pivotal role in the freedom struggle initiated by Vidyalankara Pirivena, and he made

immense contributions to the publications related to these endeavours. Alongside Yakkaduwa Sri Prajnarama Thera and faculty members of Vidyalankara Pirivena, he helped establish the "Vidyalankara Pirivena's Statement on Monks and Politics (භික්ෂුන් සහ දේශපාලනය පිළිබඳ විද්‍යාලංකාර පිරිවෙණේ ප්‍රකාශය)" in 1946, where Pragnakara Thero also lent his support in making necessary arrangements. His leadership and organizational skills contributed to the establishment of Kelaniya Dharmaloka Vidyalaya in 1938, Gurukula Vidyalaya in 1947, and the Maha Thripitaka Sangayanava (මහා ත්‍රිපිටක සංගායනාව) at Vidyalankara Pirivena on August 15, 1950. He also served as a Lecturer at Vidyalankara Pirivena and represented Sri Lanka at various international conferences in countries like India, Soviet Russia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, and Japan.

On January 09, 1959, Vidyalankara Pirivena transformed into Vidyalankara University, and most of Pirivena's staff was absorbed into the university. As a result, Pragnakara Thero, the Librarian of Vidyalankara Pirivena, became the first Librarian of Vidyalankara University (now the University of Kelaniya) with his foundational knowledge of Librarianship. In 1959, the university library commenced with a collection of books inherited from Vidyalankara Pirivena. Pragnakara Thero organized this existing collection for easy access by researchers and faculty members of the university for their teaching, research, and learning activities. During his tenure at Vidyalankara University, Pragnakara Thero significantly expanded the library's collection by obtaining donations from different countries, including those from the Soviet Union on August 10, 1959, from Sir Paul Sinker, Chairman of the British Cultural Council, on February 25, 1960, and from the Chinese Government on October 11, 1960. In 1961, he purchased 4,000 books to develop the library's collection further.

Most Venerable Natthandiye Pragnakara Thero's tenure at Vidyalankara University concluded in 1964. As a capable writer, he authored an article titled "Purana Lankave Pothgula saha evaye Arakshawata bhikshungen Sidu Voo Sevaya (පුරාණ ලංකාවේ

පොත්ගල සහ ඒවායේ ආරක්ෂාවට හික්ෂුන්ගෙන් සිදු වූ සේවය)" for the Ceylon Library Review, published by the Sri Lanka. He served as the Deputy Chief at the Vidyalankara Pirivena from 1971 to 1986. In 1986, he fell seriously ill, and after a few years, on May 26, 1990, he passed away in the Merchant Ward of the General Hospital.

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T. G. Piyadasa (1964 – 1985)



Tirippuwasan Gallage Piyadasa, the first Librarian of the University of Kelaniya (formerly Vidyalankara University of Ceylon), was born on January 16, 1920. He began his primary education at Ahangama Rohana Vidyalaya and later transferred to St. Aloysius College in Galle. Subsequently, he joined Ananda College in Colombo in 1943 to pursue the University Entrance course and successfully passed the exam in 1944. During his tenure at Ananda College, Piyadasa excelled academically and exhibited exceptional leadership skills. He was appointed the Head Prefect of the college and held the position of Junior President of the Undergraduate Union. After completing his education at Ananda College in 1945, Piyadasa faced a significant decision, as he received admission offers from both the University of Ceylon and the University of Kolkata in India. He ultimately chose to pursue an honours degree in History at the University of Kolkata, further broadening his academic horizons.

Piyadasa's distinguished career and significant contributions exemplify his unwavering dedication to education and the development of libraries in Sri Lanka. His professional journey began as a Teacher at Gurukula Maha Vidyalaya from 1948 to 1959, where he made admirable contributions to the growth and development of

the school. His dedication led to his appointment as the principal, in which role he continued to shape the educational environment at the school positively, impacting students and the institution. Furthermore, he was a lecturer at Vidyalankara Pirivena in Peliyagoda, demonstrating his commitment to knowledge sharing and nurturing future generations.

In 1959, Piyadasa changed his career and joined as an Assistant Librarian at Vidyalankara University of Ceylon. He joined the library in this position on February 02, 1959, passionately dedicating himself to the field of library science and tirelessly working to enhance teaching and research. His pursuit of excellence led him to pursue postgraduate studies at the University of London, United Kingdom, in 1962. He rapidly progressed in his chosen field and became the Librarian at Vidyalankara University on November 25, 1964. He was instrumental in getting a new library building in 1978 and moving away from the Faculty of Science building, where the library was allocated a limited space for its operations. Under his leadership, the university library made rapid progress regarding resources and services for students and teachers. His impressive knowledge and strong personality further facilitated his role as the Librarian. The library expanded its collection and services under his guidance, earning recognition as one of the best university libraries in the country. Moreover, Piyadasa's close association with the country's political leaders played a crucial role in selecting the University of Kelaniya to establish the newly proposed Department of Library and Information Science.

His brilliance in the dual roles in librarianship and academia was confined to the University of Kelaniya library alone and radiated to the outside professional atmosphere. He was vital in establishing the University Teachers' Association at the University of Kelaniya, the Inter-University Teachers' Association, and the Ceylon Library Association (later known as the Sri Lanka Library Association - SLLA).

As the newly elected president of the SLLA, he had the unique opportunity to represent Sri Lanka at the 1971 General Council Meeting of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in Liverpool, thereby becoming the first-ever representative of Sri Lanka.

In addition, he was the official representative of Sri Lanka during the inaugural gathering of the Commonwealth Libraries and the associated International Conference on Librarianship, establishing himself as a prominent figure in the realm. Piyadasa also served as a member of the National Bibliographic Development Board. He actively participated as an executive committee member of Sri Lanka's National Book Development Council, demonstrating his commitment to promoting reading and publishing in Sri Lanka. Recognizing his services, the UNESCO Regional Centre for Book Development in Asia, Karachi, awarded him a short-term fellowship to participate in the UNESCO Regional Seminar for Executive Secretaries of National Book Development Councils held in New Delhi, India, from December 10 to 15, 1973. In 1974, Piyadasa temporarily assumed the role of Librarian at Vidyodaya University of Ceylon during the absence of its Librarian, who was on leave. In 1978, the British Council awarded him a fellowship to undertake research, allowing him to revisit UK institutions such as the British National Library, the School of Oriental and African Studies, the College of Librarianship, Wales, and the City Library in Westminster. This experience provided him with valuable insights and knowledge, ultimately benefiting the Sri Lankan library profession.

As a student of Ananda Collage, Piyadasa started his political career later, he became involved in the political arena alongside figures such as Venerable Walpola Rahula Thero, Venerable Kalalalle Ananda Sagara Thero, and Venerable Babarande Siri Seevalee Thero. As a politburo member of the Lanka Samasamaja Party (LSSP), he held various positions and functioned as an active member.

Piyadasa chose early retirement in 1985 to commit entirely to the Lanka Samasamaja Party. Nevertheless, he actively engaged in the University Teachers' Union's affairs at the University of Kelaniya during his retirement. He continued to offer leadership on matters of students and staff. Subsequently, he became a member of the Editorial Board for Official Publications of the Lanka Samasamaja Party, persistently crafting critical articles addressing the academic and political landscape.

He dedicated his life to serving the nation until his untimely passing in June 1988. His unwavering commitment to his country and its people left an indelible mark on our nation's history. In recognition of Piyadasa's outstanding contributions to the library profession and education, a section of the University of Kelaniya library was named the "T.G. Piyadasa Premises" in May 2023, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS), University of Kelaniya. This honour solidifies his enduring impact on the field and the university library community.

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Professor Jayasri Lankage (1986 -2002)



Professor Jayasiri Lankage, a former Librarian at the University of Kelaniya, has contributed to the library sector. He started his academic career in 1940 at a Buddhist mixed school in Kuleegoda, Galle, and in 1948, he transferred to Madampa Vidyalaya. Professor Lankage, who enrolled in Darmashoka College in Ambalangoda for his secondary education in 1957, had a solid academic aptitude and was well-known for his commitment to his studies. Taking it further, he enrolled in Vidyodaya University's inaugural batch in 1959 for a Bachelor of Arts degree and was one of the university's Co-secretaries of the Student Union. In 1964, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology and obtained his MPhil in Archaeology from Vidyodaya University in 1967. The same year, Professor Lankage received a scholarship from the Indian government to attend Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India. He earned a Master's in Library and Information Science with first-class honours. Professor Linkages' dedication to education and a passion for Archaeology was evident throughout his travels. His accomplishments include academic achievements and leadership roles in the university community.

Professor Lankage started his professional journey as a Library and Information Science Lecturer at the Junior University in Dehiwala in 1969 but served only for

one year. Changing his career path, on April 18, 1970, he took over the Assistant Librarian position at the Vidyodaya University, Gangodavila Nugegoda, and worked till 1973. During his stay at Vidyodaya University from 1972 to 1973, he got the opportunity to serve as an Acting Librarian. This acting appointment has allowed him to offer more to the library and the academic community. On June 01, 1973, Professor Lankage joined the Department of Library and Information Sciences at the Vidyalandara Campus of the University of Ceylon (now known as the University of Kelaniya). He started his career there as a Lecturer and stayed in that department until 1986. During this period, his dedication and contributions led to his promotion to the grade of Senior Lecturer, to Associate Professor, and the position of Head of the Department.

Professor Lankage contributed substantially to the Library and Information Science by incorporating this subject into the Department of Library and Information curriculum in 1973 and establishing a Postgraduate Diploma Programme. Further, illustrating his dedication to advancing knowledge and skill in Library and Information Science, he introduced a part-time Certificate Course in Library and Information Science for public librarians and school librarians without getting any payment in 1977. Moreover, he also introduced a Library and Information Science Special Degree programme in 1980, a part-time Postgraduate Degree programme in 1985, and an MPhil programme in 1997. In 1978, he obtained a circular (Circular, 827) from the Department of Public Administration, recognizing the degree given by the University of Kelaniya as an entry qualification and promotional qualification for jobs in the library profession. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Asia Foundation, he introduced a scholarship programme for the Department of Library and Information Science University of Kelaniya students in 1984. Professor Lankage's commitment to the growth of the field and development beyond the undergraduate level is demonstrated by the above actions.

Throughout his tenure at the department, he was also able to impart knowledge and make substantial contributions to the Library and Information Sciences field. In 1986, he accepted the position of Librarian at the same university. He worked tirelessly to enhance the library's operations and services while serving in this capacity. This commitment persisted after his 2002 retirement. He impacted the university's library system as a Lecturer, Head of the department, and Librarian and played a crucial role in its expansion and development.

After his retirement, Professor Lankage's extensive contributions spanned beyond librarianship to the cinnamon industry. His leadership in the Ceylon Cinnamon Association (CCA), Spice Council (TSC), and Cinnamon Training Academy (CTA) highlighted his dedication to spice business growth and education, leaving a lasting impact.

During his service, he held several positions in many organizations, such as Assistant Education Officer (1967–1968), Education Officer (1970–1974), General Secretary (1974–1975), Executive Member (1987–1988), Vice President (1988–1989 and 1990–1991) and Representative of the Academic Libraries Group (1991–1992) at the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA); Executive Member (1988–1990). Vice Secretary (1990–1990), President (1991–1992 and 1992–1993), Secretary (1996–1998), and Vice President (1998–2002) at the Organization of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka (OPA); Treasurer of the University Librarians Association Sri Lanka (ULA) in 1974. He was a member of the National Library and Services Board's Advisory Committee (1973-1975) and Education Committee in the 1980s. He served as Treasurer (1985-1986) and Vice Secretary (1989-1991) of the Sri Lanka National Comprehensive Education Association, as well as Treasurer of the University Teachers Union (1973-1974) and the Federation of University Teachers Association (1974). His international activities included Commonwealth Library Association membership and Asian Region Representation (1993-1994). He served on the boards of several libraries, was an honorary member

of the University of London, and was a Commonwealth Academic Fellow. His multifaceted involvement demonstrated his commitment to higher education and worldwide collaboration.

Professor Lankage, who was born on October 10, 1936, in the village Kakanadure in Matara District, married Girly Amarasekara, the eldest daughter of an Indigenous doctor, RGDS Amarasekara, at Mdampe Ambalangoda on April 21, 1978. He fulfilled his duties humanely and lived in peace, doing excellent service to the development and existence of the library service in Sri Lanka and giving it to the country's spice industry.

Furthermore, Professor Lankage has multifaceted knowledge and has researched diverse issues related to librarianship and the profession, library computerization, the spicy industry, cinnamon cultivation, and related topics. He has several published and unpublished books and articles in both Sinhala and English. He has disseminated his experience and knowledge among professionals with these books and articles. His work has significantly advanced the area and is a valuable resource for scholars and researchers worldwide. Professor Lankage's commitment to sharing his knowledge and encouraging collaboration has spanned the gap between countries and spawned novel ideas and solutions in the field of librarianship. His extensive expertise and experience have earned him high respect in the academic community, and his contributions continue to affect the future of librarianship worldwide.

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L. A. Jayatissa (2003 – 2017)



L.A. Jayatissa, a Librarian at the University of Kelaniya from 2003 to 2017, has made significant contributions as a professional librarian and an educator in Library and Information Sciences (LIS). He was born in 1951 in Eheliyagoda to Mr L.A. Daniyel and Mrs Susila Liyanage and started his primary education at R/Pahalagma Vidyalaya, the rural school in his neighbourhood. He secured a scholarship offered under the government-grade five scholarship scheme and enrolled at R/Karawita Pannananda Central College as a grade 8 student. As this school did not have advanced-level classes in the science study stream, he moved to the Kg/Tholangamuwa Central College in 1968 to continue his advanced-level studies. Subsequently, he enrolled at Vidyalankara University of Ceylon (later renamed the University of Kelaniya) in 1969 to pursue undergraduate studies in the Physical Sciences stream. He excelled in his studies and secured first-class distinction at the Bachelor of Science degree examination held in 1973. In 1974, he joined the same university as an Assistant Librarian. In 1978, he completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Library Science and Documentation Studies at the same university with a merit pass. To broaden his knowledge and expertise, Jayatissa pursued the master's degree programme in Library and Information Sciences at the University of Delhi.

He brought honours to the country by securing the Professor S Das Gupta Memorial Gold Medal awarded for the best student.

Jayatissa's professional career began in 1974 under the guidance of the late Mr T.G. Piyadasa, the University Librarian at Vidyalankara University. His initial tenure at the university lasted until 1982. In mid-1982, he joined the Arabian American Oil Company in Saudi Arabia as one of the librarians in its network of libraries. He served in this capacity until mid-1986, and then he was repatriated. In 1987, he rejoined the University of Kelaniya as a Senior Assistant Librarian. After a short period, the Department of Library and Information Sciences seconded him to serve as the Acting Head of the Department.

In an environment where academic work stopped, he managed to conduct postgraduate academic programmes and relevant examinations successfully in one of the most disastrous periods ever witnessed in the country's history. After two years as the Acting Head of the Department, he was transferred back to the library as the Acting Librarian due to the requirements of the university. He held this position until his departure to India to pursue higher studies in mid-1994. In mid-1995, he repatriated and assumed duties as a Senior Assistant Librarian (Grade I) at the same university. Once again, he served as the Acting Librarian of the same University from September 1998 to September 2003. He reached the highest career position by becoming the University Librarian in March 2003 and served until his retirement in 2017. The university again appointed him as the Librarian (on Assignment Basis) for one year, a little time after his retirement.

As the Librarian of the University of Kelaniya, he was instrumental in constructing a new building, augmenting the capacity and services available in the old building. With the university administration's cooperation, he provided additional reading rooms on the campus premises, which were helpful for students to engage in group discussions and studies. His vision and efforts in developing a modern library

infrastructure reflect his commitment to providing students and faculty with an enriching and conducive learning environment. Jayatissa endeavoured to establish a dedicated archival unit for the university with the guidance of the late Dr K D G Wimalaratne, the former Director of the National Archives. Still, later, he had to abandon the project due to a university administrative issue.

Jayatissa began teaching as a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Kelaniya in 1978, sharing his knowledge with aspiring librarians. He contributed as a Visiting Lecturer in LIS in the postgraduate programmes conducted by the University of Kelaniya, the University of Colombo, and the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences of the same University. He also served as a Visiting Lecturer in LIS in undergraduate and diploma programmes conducted by the University of Kelaniya and the Diploma in LIS programmes run by the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) and the National Institute of Education. He has served as a resource person in the Advanced Diploma in LIS Programme, a distance education programme conducted by the SLLA in Maldives, prepared course materials, and took part in workshops conducted in Maldives. Subsequently, he served in the same capacity in the Distant Education Programme in LIS organized by the SLLA for the candidates of Uva Province. Jayatissa also functioned as a Course Manager in the Special Degree Programme in LIS offered by the Open University of Sri Lanka. He was instrumental in preparing the course module on knowledge management. He has also rendered his services to the National Library and Documentation Services Board as a resource person in LIS in its training programmes.

Jayatissa, as Acting Librarian and Librarian, played a pivotal role during his over 20-year tenure as a member of the Standing Committee on Libraries and Information Sciences (SCOLIS). His most significant achievement was successfully concluding the long-standing effort to establish criteria for selecting and promoting professional university library staff, aligning them with the existing scheme for academic staff, which was achieved through collaboration with a UGC subcommittee [Professor

M.T.M. Jiffry (Vice Chairman, UGC), Professor Malik Ranasinghe (Vice Chancellor, University of Moratuwa) and Jayatissa (SCOLIS Member)], resulting in the issuance of UGC Circular 921 on April 07, 2010.

He also served as a member of the teams appointed by the UGC's Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of Sri Lanka to review the university libraries of Colombo, Moratuwa, Uva Wellassa, and Visual and Performing Arts. He has also served as the President of the University Librarians Association for two one-year terms, 1997 and 1999, and as a member of the SLLA Education Committee for one year. Jayatissa has authored three books on the Management of Libraries and Library Classification and published several research papers.

In 1988, Jayatissa married Ms I. H. Liyanage and had a son and a daughter, both well-qualified and performed well in their respective fields. He lives in Kelaniya with his wife and daughter after retiring from the university, and he finds personal satisfaction in gardening and enjoying nature outside of his professional pursuits. His diverse educational background, including expertise in the physical sciences and the library and information sciences, has given him a unique career perspective.

Jayatissa has contributed significantly to the field of LIS as a professional librarian, LIS teacher, mentor, scholar, and researcher. He has shaped the professional careers of many LIS students and professionals across Sri Lanka and Maldives. His commitment to sharing knowledge and guiding future librarians has inspired many, while his efforts in library development have created a conducive learning environment for students and faculty. As he continues to engage in academic and research-related activities, his contributions to the profession and his passion for nature through gardening remain integral to his life.

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University of Moratuwa

Mr. S Rubasingam (1989-1998)

S Rubasingham (1989-1998)



Under the direction of Sellathurai Rubasingham, the first Librarian of the University of Moratuwa in Sri Lanka, the library evolved into a knowledge hub and learning centre for students and faculty members. He was born on April 11, 1933, and was successful with a good education. In 1957, he received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, and in 1962, he completed his studies and received a Diploma in Librarianship. Rubasingham later continued his education, earning a Master of Arts in Library and Information Science from Loughborough University of Technology, UK, in 1986. This advanced degree enabled him to broaden his knowledge and expertise in his field.

Rubasingham started his career at the British Council as an Assistant Librarian from 1963 to April 1968. In 1968, he joined the Junior University System as a Librarian after a brief stint at the British Council. He laid the foundation for the six libraries of the junior university colleges, and when the courses commenced, the libraries were fully equipped with books and periodicals. From there on, he became the Chief Librarian at Junior University College, where he served from 1968 to December 1970. He was appointed Librarian at Ceylon College of Technology in 1971. Later, Rubasingham was appointed Senior Assistant Librarian and Acting Librarian of the

University of Moratuwa until April 1989. Rubasingham served as the first Librarian of the University of Moratuwa in Sri Lanka from May 1989 to December 1998. His service ended on December 31, 1998. As the Librarian of the University of Moratuwa, he played a crucial role in contributing to the library's collection development, cataloguing and classification, and Administration. He arranged a display of university library collections at the Expo Pavilion held at BMICH (Bandaranaike Memorial International Convention Hall) to promote resource availability.

During his tenure, the library building was completed from planning to operation in 1995. He aimed to make the university library a resource centre of excellence. He believed in serving the staff and student community and attending to their needs at once, his concept being "Then and There". He was the guiding spirit who motivated the team to give their best to the work assigned. He was especially concerned about staff discipline and was extremely strict in attendance, punctuality, maintenance of records, proper shelving, and cleanliness. In his vision of excellence, the library was not only a place to borrow books but also a place for research, collaboration, and innovation for the users.

Rubasingham offered his consulting services to research organizations seeking to improve their library and information centre operations on planning and organizing libraries and information centres, such as Lanka Hydraulic Institute and Southeastern University, after completing the library building in 1995. He was an active member of the Sri Lanka Library Association, taught Librarianship, and Information Science as a Part-time Lecturer, and was also an Examiner for courses conducted by the Sri Lanka Library Association. He was a Visiting Lecturer for the master's degree Programme in Library & Information Sciences led by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. He lectured on the Management of Libraries and Information Services. Rubasingham had been the Past President of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka for two terms, in

1995 and 1996. He was concerned about having a Code of Ethics for ULA (University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka) members and raising their professional standards. His legacy as the first Librarian of the University of Moratuwa lives on, and his contribution to the Library and Information Science professions is admirable.

Rubasingham is a proud father of three daughters, and he led a simple life and died on August 19, 2002. He reimagined the university library as a dynamic knowledge hub encouraging research, collaboration, and innovation. Rubasingham's contribution to the library profession, as the first Librarian at the University of Moratuwa, is still alive, and his contribution to the library and information science discipline should be greatly appreciated.

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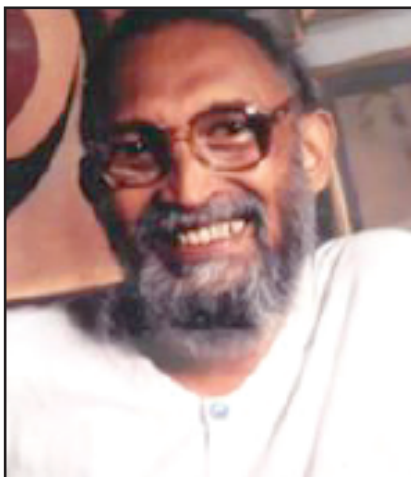
University of Peradeniya

H. A. I. Goonetilleke (1971 – 1979)

N. T. S. A. Senadeera (1982 – 2002)

P.E. Harrison Perera (2003 to 2009)

H. A. I. Goonetilleke (1971 – 1979)



Henry Alfred Ian Goonetilleke was the first Librarian at the University of Peradeniya; throughout his career, he devoted himself to education, libraries, and the social well-being of the academic community. Goonetilleke, born on January 5, 1922, had a family background with legal and literary connections, given his grandfather and granduncle's involvement in law and publishing. However, due to the sudden death of his father, the secretary of the District Court of Kandy, in 1926, he lived with his grandmother. He had to face emotional upheavals and calamities during his childhood.

Goonetilleke began schooling at St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia. Later, he transferred to Richmond College in Galle to pursue his studies. He developed a strong love of reading and spent much of his time reading books, magazines, and newspapers (Attanayake, 2022). Significant accomplishments and a deep commitment to the library and information science field marked the academic career of Goonetilleke. He enrolled at Ceylon University College and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in the early 1940s. In 1955–56, he pursued his post-graduate studies at the School of Librarianship and Archives at the University College of London. While studying at the college, the idea of compiling a bibliography came up, and he

actively engaged in this endeavour while continuing his studies. His hard work and dedication were recognized by selecting Goonetilleke as the John Duncan Cowley Prize co-winner 1956. He was the first Asian to receive this award since its inception in 1919.

Further, Goonetilleke continued his education and professional development by receiving a Library and Information Science Diploma from Madras University in India, which increased his knowledge and credibility in librarianship and bibliography. His academic career was devoted to studying books and information management, which laid the groundwork for his distinguished career as a librarian. Further, in 1991, the university awarded him an honorary doctorate (Doctor of Letters) for his contributions.

In 1953, he began his career as an Assistant Librarian at the University of Ceylon. He began teaching for the newly commenced post-graduate degree in Library Science at the University of Peradeniya in 1961. By introducing informal training sessions for Assistant Librarians, he contributed to the physical expansion of the library and the development of human resources. Recognizing his dedication and hard work, in 1971, he was appointed the same university's Librarian. Then, in 1972, the University of Ceylon was renamed to Peradeniya Campus, University of Sri Lanka, and he was also re-designated as a Librarian, Peradeniya Campus, University of Sri Lanka.

Further, the same university was renamed again to the University of Peradeniya in 1978 and renamed its designation accordingly. Therefore, he had three unique titles at the same university. In 1982, he joined the destroyed National Library of Jaffna rebuilding process.



The university library has grown under his leadership, eventually becoming one of the best academic libraries in Sri Lanka, demonstrating his dedication to excellence and his contributions to the university library. The seven-storied library building at the University of Peradeniya (formerly the University of Ceylon) is one of the best examples of his dedication to the development of the library. Besides, his efforts to preserve the library and safeguard its future ensured it would be a premier repository of information and wisdom for future generations. Therefore, significant achievements and contributions to the library and information science field in Sri Lanka marked Goonetilleke's career as a Librarian.

Further, his contribution to the university and its library system helped with its teaching, learning, and research. His leadership and accomplishments impressed Sri Lankan libraries and inspired future professionals. He committed to educating the next generation of librarians, which demonstrated his vision and commitment to the profession. In addition to his contribution to librarianship, he was, in the early 1970s, an active member of the University Teachers Association in Sri Lanka (UTA). Further, the university's authority recognized his dedication to the university, appointing him as the Chairman of the University of Peradeniya's academic community. He used this position to influence decisions and procedures that benefit the students and the staff.

Goonetilleke strengthened the status of library science in Sri Lanka and contributed to the global advancement of the discipline through his international engagements and collaborations. His dedication to excellence and continuing learning in library science was recognized when he became the first Sri Lankan Librarian awarded a doctoral thesis-based fellowship by the Library Association of England and Ireland. Furthermore, from 1977-1978, he was a member of the United Nations Library Advisory Committee and the only Sri Lankan librarian who got this opportunity. Moreover, he was the first Sri Lankan Librarian to get the chance to supervise doctoral degree theses in Library and Information Science at the University of London. Besides, Goonetilleke's influence, and achievements extended beyond Sri Lanka because he actively participated in key international conferences and collaborations with well-known library specialists. In 1961, Goonetilleke attended the Paris International Conference on Cataloguing Principles and the Copenhagen International Meeting of Cataloguing Experts. While developing cataloguing concepts and practices in Sri Lanka, he was able to share his knowledge and learn from global colleagues at these conferences.

Mr Goonetilleke spearheaded an exciting fight to keep the university library operating during a critical period. His efforts paid off and saved the whole Library, guaranteeing that future generations may benefit from its knowledge and wisdom. Goonetilleke has shown his commitment to education, libraries, and the well-being of the academic community throughout his career. His innovative leadership and achievements have indelibly impacted Sri Lanka's academic and library landscapes, inspiring future generations of professionals.

Further, Goonetilleke disseminated his knowledge and experiences, contributing to several professional magazines with essays, editing articles, and books on many elements of library science and other subjects. Even today, his reputation as a pioneering Librarian and bibliographer serves as an inspiration to the field.

Unfortunately, in July 1979, due to a dispute over the recruitment of library staff, Goonetilleke resigned from the position of Librarian at the University of Peradeniya. While Goonetilleke's decision to leave his beloved post was most likely difficult, he remained deeply attached to his homeland, Sri Lanka. After his retirement, he became the first Chairman of the newly formed Gratiaen Trust, to which he contributed significantly. Since 2003, the H.A.I. Goonetilleke Prize for Literary Translation is awarded biannually and sponsored by the Gratiaen Trust. Even after serving as a Librarian and making significant contributions to the university, on January 5, 1997, on his 75th birthday, his priceless collection of academic materials, as well as paintings and other works of art such as metal, wood, and plaster statues, were donated to the University of Peradeniya's Library as a legacy. In accomplishing this great man's tasks, he received the help of his wife, Mrs Hettiarachige Rosalin Kumarasinghe, who married in 1948 on March 24. H.A.I. Goonetilleke's journey ended on May 21, 2003, at 81. His death marked the end of an extraordinary life dedicated to library science, academia, and preserving Sri Lankan knowledge and culture. Outstanding contributions to knowledge advancement, cultural preservation, and the well-being of educational institutions and communities define Goonetilleke's legacy as a Librarian and Educator in Sri Lanka. His love of library science, academia, and preserving Sri Lankan knowledge and culture defined his life.

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N. T. S. A. Senadeera (1982 – 2002)



Nambukara Tantrige Samara Siri Aryaratne Senadeera, one of the former Librarians at the University of Peradeniya, was a visionary leader with the ownership of annals of Sri Lanka's cultural and intellectual history and was appointed to the Librarian post in January 1982. Senadeera was born in Dikwella on December 22, 1936, and he had his education at Vijita Vidyalaya, Moggaliputtatissa Buddhist Mixed School (මොග්ගලීපුත්තනිස්ස බෞද්ධ මිශ්‍ර පාසල), and Vijita Central College, Dikwella. In 1957, Senadeera entered the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) with a second-class upper division pass in Sinhala in 1961. He received a Post-Graduate Diploma in Librarianship [Dip. Lib (Lond.)] from the School of Librarianship and Archives, University of London in 1968.

He started his career as a Graduate Teacher, and from 1961 to 1963, he worked at Beliatta Maha Vidyalaya, Beliatta, and Rahula Maha Vidyalaya, Matara. He got the opportunity to serve as Beliatta Maha Vidyalaya's Acting Principal from 1962 to 1963 after the education department noticed his commitment and diligence. In 1963, he changed his career path. He became an Assistant Government Archivist in the National Archive Department, where he became In-charge of the National

Bibliography Office, responsible for compiling and publishing the Ceylon National Bibliography. He preserved and promoted Ceylon's rich literary heritage with commitment and knowledge. The expertise and knowledge gained from this role aided him in changing careers and joining the University of Ceylon Peradeniya Library as an Assistant Librarian in October 1965.

He worked as an Assistant Librarian and Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya; the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya Campus; and the University of Peradeniya from 1965 to 1981. He also led many divisions at the library, including the Periodic Section, Reader Service, and Acquisitions. During his term as head of these departments, he implemented creative methods to improve efficiency and user experience. Although he was promoted to Deputy Librarian at the University of Ruhuna Campus, he declined. His devotion and ability in library management earned him recognition and respect from his colleagues and the university's higher officials. So, in January 1982, Senadeera established himself as a visionary Librarian at the University of Peradeniya, with a deep understanding of Sri Lanka's cultural and intellectual history and guided the library to unprecedented comprehensiveness.

Senadeera's accomplishments extended beyond preservation to innovative technological innovation in library services. They led to the transformation of the Library of the University of Peradeniya into a forerunner in the application of information technology. He initiated the computerization of the library using CDS/ISIS, and he used the Alice for Windows software package to manage the library's transformation into a networked system. Accordingly, under his guidance, the University of Peradeniya Library underwent a considerable change to create a user-friendly atmosphere. His actions significantly enhanced the library's efficiency and usefulness, making it a vital resource for the university community.

Since then, he has dedicated his life to making the University of Peradeniya Library the most comprehensive university library in Sri Lanka. Being a renowned member

of the Historical Manuscripts Commission and a former Archivist, Senadeera was aware of the importance and critical need of protecting manuscripts and rare printed materials. Therefore, to protect the intellectual treasures during violence perpetrated by the LTTE, Senadeera arranged a project under his supervision to the microfilm and secured the deposition of the library's valuables within the Library Safety Vault. From 1969 to 1972, he was the Editorial Adviser for the Ceylon National Bibliography (A bibliography of materials published in Sri Lanka, National Archives Department, Nugegoda) for Vol. 12 (7-12) 1966 to Vol. 10 (1-4) 1972 and the Editor for Vol. 10 (5-12) 1972.

Senadeera was a driving force behind the formation of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka and served as its President in 1985, 1988, 1993, and 1994. He was also a member of the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Sri Lanka Standard Institution (SLSI), the Sri Lanka National Library Services Board, and the Jaffna Public Library Reconstruction Committee. The remedial actions taken by Senadeera at the University of Peradeniya in protecting and preserving essential materials attest to his unwavering commitment. His contributions towards librarianship through these organizations were incredible. In 1969, he was awarded the Associate of the Library Association (ALA (American Library Association)) [Now: Member Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (MCLIP)] from the Library Association of Great Britain and Ireland [Now: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CLIP)]. Since 1998, he has been an Honorary Fellow of the Sri Lanka Library Association (Hon. FSLLA).

On April 1, 1976, Senadeera started a twelve-month training programme on University Library Technology and Bibliographical Research. The Principal Librarian of the Royal Library, Denmark, supervised it, and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) sponsored it. Senadeera, whose lifestyle demonstrated his ability to balance his personal and academic lives, successfully

focused his time on strengthening his spiritual life after the death of his loving wife, Professor Sylvie Senadeera, who served as a Professor of Education at the University of Peradeniya.

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P.E. Harrison Perera (2003 to 2009)



Prathapathanthreege Earnest Harrison Perera was born on December 21, 1943, in Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. His early education occurred at Isipathana Maha Vidyalaya in Colombo, where he attended from 1950 to 1955, up to grade five. Subsequently, from 1956 to 1964, Perera continued his education at St. Aloysius' College in Galle. In 1964, he embarked on his higher education journey at the University of Ceylon, earning a Bachelor of Arts with Honours (in Philosophy) with a second-class division. In 1981, he achieved another academic milestone by obtaining a Master's in Library Science from the University of Western Ontario, Canada. He furthered his academic pursuits, earning a Diploma in Crisis Management from the same university in 1985,

After completing his undergraduate studies, Perera commenced his career as a Temporary Assistant Lecturer at the University of Ceylon, a role he held from 1968 to 1970. Later, he transitioned to Vidyodaya University as a Lecturer in Philosophy. His commitment to education and intellectual pursuits led him to Canada in 1974, where he subsequently assumed the position of Assistant Librarian at the National Library of Canada in 1975. The British Council in Sri Lanka selected him in 1986 as the Assistant Director of Information based on his qualifications and experience.

After returning to Sri Lanka, Perera took on the British Council Sri Lanka position to continue his commitment to information and library services. During his time there, he was named "Librarian of the Year" by the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA).

Additionally, Perera won the Best Report Award in a competition within the British Council Network for the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). Thanks to his achievements, he attended the IFLA conference and was invited to deliver a presentation. Under Perera's leadership, the Sri Lankan division of the British Council achieved remarkable success, boasting a membership exceeding 16,000. They streamlined their database operations by implementing a sophisticated computerized system powered by Libsis software purchased from an Indian supplier.

Perera also extended a heartfelt invitation to British publishers and formed the British Book Sellers Association, encouraging British publishers to take the lead in organizing book fairs in Sri Lanka. These events were not just about books; they were envisioned as celebrations of literature, offering an opportunity to make textbooks more affordable and accessible to the Sri Lankan population. By providing books at highly concessional rates during these fairs, Perera aimed to kindle a love for reading among the locals and promote a culture of literacy, thereby fostering a deeper connection with the written word. During his tenure at the British Council, Perera also significantly increased foreign training opportunities for the librarians in the library sector, providing sponsorship through the British Council for them to participate in the IFLA conferences and for short summer courses conducted by foreign universities. He provided foreign training opportunities for the other library staff by sponsoring short courses run by the British Council UK (United Kingdom).

Furthermore, Perera conducted a series of training sessions and workshops at the British Council, focusing on subjects such as Public Relations, Front Desk Marketing, and Customer Relations. He actively facilitated community gatherings,

bringing together publishers, writers, booksellers, librarians, and other stakeholders to enrich interactions, which occurred regularly over a year. He undertook substantial efforts to revamp the library's appearance and effectively delegated authority to the staff, contributing to the organization's overall success under his guidance.

During his remarkable tenure as the Librarian at the University of Peradeniya from 2003 to 2009, Perera left an indelible mark on the institution's library services. His unwavering commitment to enhancing the library's environment and user-friendliness was evident in every facet of his work. Under his leadership, the library underwent significant transformations, becoming a welcoming hub of knowledge and a dynamic learning space for students and faculty alike. Perera's dedication extended beyond the physical aspects of the library. He tirelessly worked to elevate the services offered, ensuring the library remained a valuable resource for academic research and personal growth. As a member of the SCOLIS (Standing Committee of Library and Information Science), he consistently played a pivotal role, offering his expertise and insights whenever needed. His legacy at the University of Peradeniya continues to resonate, inspiring future generations to uphold the standards of excellence he set during his tenure.

After dedicating seven years to the university, he retired in 2009 but retained a deep love for Sri Lanka, a country he did not wish to leave. Consequently, in 2012, Perera returned to Sri Lanka and worked as a consultant at the Marga Institute until 2014. After completing his assignment at the Marga Institute, he joined Aquinas College in Sri Lanka, where he continued to share his knowledge and expertise until 2016. Perera made significant contributions to libraries and the library profession in Sri Lanka. His involvement in professional organizations, such as his roles as President of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka (ULA) and as President of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) from 1997-1999 for multiple years, demonstrates his commitment to advancing the field. Additionally, his role as a

Lecturer in Master of Library Science (MLS) programmes at the University of Colombo and the University of Kelaniya highlights his dedication to educating and mentoring future librarians, further strengthening the profession. His multifaceted contributions undoubtedly positively impacted the library community in Sri Lanka.

In his personal life, Perera and his wife, a Music Teacher, have been blessed with three daughters, and all three daughters have chosen to make Canada their home. So, Mr and Mrs Perera, despite having the option to be with their daughters, have a deep attachment to their homeland and were staying in Sri Lanka. Earnest Harrison Perera's life story is a shining example of his steadfast devotion to education, library science, and improving library services in Sri Lanka. His tireless efforts in this domain and his unwavering commitment to his motherland have forged a legacy that continues to motivate future generations. Driven by an unquenchable passion, he embarked on a lifelong journey in the realm of library science, with the primary goal of broadening the reach of information and nurturing a vibrant culture of learning within Sri Lanka.

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University of Ruhuna

Kapila Jayalal Sirisena (1999–2007)

Ananda Karunarathna (2009-2019)

K. J. Sirisena (1999–2007)



Kapila Jayalal Sirisena, one of Sri Lanka's most well-known librarians, worked as a Librarian at the University of Ruhuna for one year beginning in 2006. He was born on February 13, 1957, and received his formal education at Rahula College in Matara. He earned a B.Sc. in Physical Science with honours from the University of Peradeniya in 1979 and a Postgraduate Degree in Library and Information Science at the Loughborough University of Technology in Leicestershire, UK (United Kingdom). In addition to a scholarship from the Commonwealth Academic Staff Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (UK), Sirisena was awarded a fellowship by the World Health Organization in 1987.

Sirisena began his professional journey as a Temporary Tutor at the Department of Mathematics, University of Ruhuna. After the postgraduate degree, he changed his career path to the library profession. He was appointed as the Junior Assistant Librarian of the branch library of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, in December 1980. On January 7, 1981, his designation was confirmed as Assistant Librarian Grade I. Sirisena demonstrated several skills and played several roles inside the university. Despite the importance of his contribution towards the development of the library at the University of Ruhuna, he decided to leave his

position as Senior Assistant Librarian at the University of Ruhuna in 1999 to take up the Librarian position at Rajarata University. He displayed good leadership abilities while serving as the Librarian at Rajarata University and promoted creative suggestions for developing library resources. These initiatives had a positive impact on the student community and the services provided by the library. In 2002, after serving two years as the Librarian at Rajarata University, he was again appointed to the same position at the University of Ruhuna. Unfortunately, his sudden death prevented him from doing more as the Librarian at the University of Ruhuna.

He has made a substantial contribution to the development of the library profession and must receive praise for his exceptional work. While holding essential roles in numerous organizations, Sirisena volunteered his services to further the library profession. He was secretary for the Health Literature Library and Information Services (HELLIS) Sri Lanka network from 1987 to 1988. He was the President of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka. He was an expert in the use of CDS-ISIS software. He was instrumental in developing the information management system of the library, and his contributions have impacted the development of library services in Sri Lanka. Since he was fortunate to be the Librarian of the University of Ruhuna for a truly short period, he could not do much there.

Sirisena served as a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Colombo for the Master of Library Science programme and was also a Lecturer at the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA). He served as the Editor for the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka (ULA) for several years.

Further, Sirisena has authored several books and academic papers in library science, writing down his knowledge and dedication to discipline. Throughout his career, he shared his knowledge and skills with others in the industry. Many young professionals were motivated to join him due to his commitment to raising the standard of library services in Sri Lanka.

Sirisena was a person who had an admirable personality and had a daughter and a son. He served the nation as the Librarian of the University of Ruhuna until he died in 2007. He has contributed to tremendous library advancement and won praise for his extraordinary efforts. He contributed to improving Sri Lanka's library services via devotion and knowledge exchange. Although he is not alive now, his life impacted those around him until his last breath. His memory will continue to live on through the people he touched.

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Ananda Karunarathna (2009-2019)



Ananda Karunarathna, the Librarian from 2009 to 2019, was born to Arong Karunarathna and Mrs Wimala Karunarathna in July 1954. He received his primary and secondary education at Rahula College in Matara from 1960 to 1974. Then, he enrolled in the University of Colombo for the Bachelor of Development Studies Degree programme and graduated in 1980 with a B. Dev (Hon.) in Statistics. He earned a Library and Information Science Diploma from the University of Kelaniya in 1996 and a master's degree in the same discipline from the same university in 2004.

In 1981, Karunarathna started his career as a Mathematics Instructor at Monaragala Ethimale Maha Vidyalaya. He passed the qualifying exam for the principal's position in 1989 but declined that position in 1990 and decided to change his career as a Sub-warden at the University of Ruhuna. On June 15, 1991, he again changed his career path and began working as an Assistant Librarian at the University of Ruhuna, and his appointment was confirmed the following year. On June 15, 1996, and June 15, 2002, he received promotions to Senior Assistant Librarian Grade II and Senior Assistant Librarian Grade I, respectively. When the post of Librarian became vacant in 2000, he undertook the librarian's responsibilities. He was named Acting

Librarian in 2001 and was reappointed in 2005 and 2006. Finally, his experience and commitment to developing the library system made him the Librarian at the University of Ruhuna on November 2, 2009, where he remained until his retirement on September 30, 2019. He has 30 years of experience working in the library and has amassed a wealth of knowledge in managing library resources and supplying excellent customer service to its users. His promotions and new responsibilities over the years were indications of his superiors' appreciation for his commitment and hard work.

Taking the leadership, Ananda put forward several initiatives that made the library a cutting-edge, well-equipped library at the University of Ruhuna catering to the academic community of faculty and students. His efforts enabled the library at the University of Ruhuna to become a pioneer in Sri Lanka in terms of digitalization and modernization, paving the way for other academic institutions to follow. Further, in 2008, the university saved several millions of rupees by digitalizing the library materials and integrating it with ISURU, the library management system, for the first time in Sri Lankan library history. It supplied easy access to library resources and improved the efficiency of the library, which was a significant achievement in facilitating an enhanced academic experience at the university. Under his leadership, the library collection was expanded with various reading materials, including acquired private collections. He consistently promoted the growth of the library into a multidisciplinary learning environment. He was eager to expand the library building with a new student reading area and to provide facilities for visually impaired students. During his tenure as the Librarian, all the publications produced in Sri Lanka since 1996 were added to the legal deposit collection at the University of Ruhuna library, reaching up to 260,000 artefacts. He constructed two new branch libraries at Mahamodara and Uluvitike for the Faculty of Allied Health Science.

Karunaratna served as a member of various committees within the university and for the university system, which allowed him to offer his valuable service to the development of the University of Ruhuna. He was recognized as an exclusively important member to serve on various committees by the University of Ruhuna. His contribution to many academic committees and organizations proved his commitment to uplifting the standards of the teaching/learning process of the university. Furthermore, he also worked as a member of the editorial board, the Coordinator of Rohana Research Journal, the History Compilation Committee of Ruhuna University, and a committee member of the Silver Jubilee event. In addition, he was selected as a member to serve on several selection committees and disciplinary boards.

Further, Karunaratna also offered his services to many national institutions, including government and non-governmental organizations, such as a member of UGC (University Grants Commission) Standing Committee of Library and Information Science (SCOLIS), Coordinator and Contributor for the Mahapola Exhibition, the Coordinator of “Deyata Kiruala” exhibition, and Treasurer of the Teachers Union, University of Ruhuna.

Moreover, He was also a Trainer for students under the internships of the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences (NILIS), the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA), and the University of Kelaniya for degree and diploma holders. In 2008, he actively took part in the Institutional Review Programme of the University of Ruhuna. He was also a member of the Institutional Review Board appointed to review the library of Jaffna University. Additionally, he was instrumental in developing academic sessions of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka in 2015. He secured the appreciation of organizing the 10th Educational Session and the 9th Vice Chancellors Awards in 2015. So, his dedication to the profession has been highly appreciated. His primary research interest is in the library and information sciences, and he shared his knowledge by

publishing many national and international publications throughout his career. He was well-respected in the university and was often invited to related workshops and seminars by the faculties. Undoubtedly, his contributions have impacted the development of the library and information science profession in Sri Lanka.

From his marriage to Ms Violet Muthukumarana, a capable housewife, he was fortunate to have three daughters. After getting married, one of the daughters is now a permanent resident of Australia. The middle daughter is pursuing higher education, while the younger daughter is a Lecturer at the University of Moratuwa. Karunarathna, a retired Librarian and active member of Sri Lanka's academic and professional societies, now lives in Matara with his family. His untiring efforts made the students, staff, and public use the library more frequently, increasing the library's holdings and supplying more learning and research tools.

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University of Sri Jayewardenepura

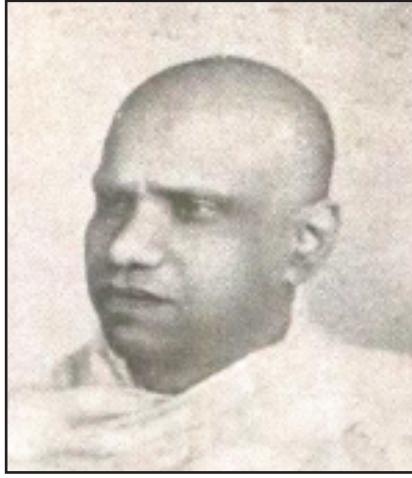
Most Venerable Weragoda Amaramoli Thero (1959-1966)

W.A. Jayawardana (1966-1969)

Professor W. B. Dorakumbura (1969–1992)

P. Vidanapathirana (1992 – 2009)

Most Venerable W. Amaramoli Thero (1959- 1966)



The Most Venerable Weragoda Amaramoli Thero, one of the forerunners of the Sri Lankan Buddhist educational system in the 19th century, was chosen to serve as the institution's first Librarian in 1959 when Vidyodaya Pirivena transformed into the Vidyodaya University. On May 16th, 1899, he was born A.D. Gurusingha, the son of Mr Endiris Gurusingha Appuhami and Mrs Weyihena Kapuge Madduma Hamine in Weragoda, Galle. A.D. Gurusingha had his education in the Sinhala medium at the Weragoda Government School, Galle, and later at the Ananda Pirivena, Galle. He joined the Buddhist Order when he was 14 years old. On August 28th, 1913, he became Weragoda Amaramoli Thero, and sub-ordination was taken place in May 1919. Amaramoli Thero completed his initial course before enrolling in the Vidyodaya Pirivena. He excelled in every subject taught in Vidyodaya Pirivena's curriculum, including Sinhala, Sanskrit, Pali, History, Astrology, and Ayurveda Studies, and excellent language skills and pure wisdom are qualities and achieved remarkable success in his academic endeavours. The reverent Kahave Sri Rathnasara, the Deputy Chief Priest, also admired his abilities.

Further, he contributed to studying Religion, Library Science, and the Preservation of Information throughout his personal and professional life. Since his days as a

student, he has authored numerous books and articles for the Vidyodaya Pirivena collection of religious works.

Integrating into the Vidyodaya Pirivena workforce was a complex task. There was a custom to choose the recipients of the Ubayasekara Swarna Mudrika Award in addition to academic excellence. However, Amaramoli Thero won the Sri Soratha Award and the Ubayasekara Swarna Mudrika Award. For a piriven student, earning these two honours was the pinnacle of their academic career. Accordingly, his next accomplishment was becoming a permanent staff member at the Vidyodaya Pirivena's academic faculty.

Further, English-medium education was an additional requirement for government jobs. As a result, Buddhists were reluctant to pursue piriven education, which made it extremely difficult to keep the Vidyodaya Pirivena running with so few students. Therefore, Vidyodaya Pirivena became Vidyodaya University in 1959 after the draft statute authorizing the conversion of Vidyodaya and Vidyasekara Pirivenas into universities was approved. Later, it developed into the most renowned university in Asia for Theravada Buddhist and Pali Language Studies. The Most Venerable Welivitiye Sri Sorata Thero was selected to serve as Vidyodaya University's Vice-Chancellor, and Amaramoli Thero was the first Librarian in the same university. From 1959 to 1966, Amaramoli Thero worked as the Chief Librarian at Vidyodaya University.

The Most Venerable Weragoda Amaramoli Thero was unassuming and had no desire for positions of authority or social standing, but he received numerous honorary titles. Amaramoli Thero devoted his entire life to teaching and writing down what he had learned for the benefit of others after receiving the Pandith Degree. Presenting facts that will help the present society is a significant aspect of Amaramoli Thero's religious teachings, but he never misrepresented Buddhist Doctrines. Therefore, Most Venerable Weragoda Amaramoli Thero is one of the essential characters in Sri Lankan Buddhist history and higher education.

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W.A Jayawardana (1966-1969)

W.A Jayawardana served as the second Librarian at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura from 1959 to 1966, and he gained experience and improved his practical administration skills as a Registrar at the University of Ceylon (Peradeniya) before being hired at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. He was able to recognize areas for growth and successfully lead the library by using his prior experiences and improving the good practices maintained earlier. During his tenure as a Librarian, the library of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura significantly enhanced its usability and accessibility because of various novel tactics introduced by him. His practical administrative experience was essential in streamlining processes and guaranteeing the efficient operation of the library.

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Professor W. B. Dorakumbura (1969–1992)



Professor Wijerathne Bandara Dorakumbura, one of the Librarians at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, was a man of many talents and did not limit himself to the position of University Librarian. He was born on September 1931 to the parents of Mr Ekanayake Mudiyanseelage Punchi Bandara Dorakumbura and Mrs Dissanayake Mudiyanseelage Dingiri Amma, in the village of Dorakumbura, Matale District. His early education commenced in 1936 when he enrolled in the School Education Mt/ Dullewa Vernacular School, followed by his secondary education at Mt/St. Thomas College in 1943. After successfully passing the S.S.C. Examination in 1949, he continued his academic journey by joining the Royal College, Colombo, in 1950, where he pursued his Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) studies. Subsequently, in 1952, he gained admission to the University of Peradeniya, where he eventually graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sinhala, with English as his second subject, in 1956. In 1960, he received a Commonwealth Scholarship to attend Magill University in Canada. He received a Bachelor of Library Science Degree (BLS) from the University of Toronto in 1961, followed by a Master of Library Science Degree (MLS) in 1962. He was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy by the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka in 2001 to honour the valuable service he offered to the country, especially the higher education sector. Following his retirement, he

returned to the field of library science as a Professor of Library and Information Science at the University of Kelaniya in 1997.

In 1956, Professor Dorakumbura started his career as an English teacher at Ananda College, Colombo. The same year, he worked as Private Secretary to the Housing and Social Services Minister, Hon. T.B. Illangarathne. Then, in 1960, Professor Dorakumbura changed his career to the library profession and began working at Vidyodaya University as an Assistant Librarian. In 1963, he worked for a few months as a Reference Librarian at Public Library Network Toronto, Canada. In September 1963, he returned to Vidyodaya University to assume the duties of Assistant Librarian. Later, his career in library science continued to flourish as he became the Deputy Librarian at the University of Vidyodaya in 1966, and he also took oath at the Supreme Courts as an Advocate in the same year. In 1972, he also became the Acting Registrar of the same university. He eventually became the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura in 1992, thanks to his academic maturity, excellent language abilities, administrative prowess, organizational skills, and practical leadership. This appointment was the first time in the history of librarianship in Sri Lanka that a librarian served in the highest position in a university. ("Newsletter: ULASL") The Faculty of Medical Sciences was established at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura during his tenure as Vice-Chancellor. On Sept. 30, 1996, he retired from the University Services.

However, he continued his academic career as a Visiting Lecturer and English Instructor at Vidyodaya University in 1959 and as an outstanding teacher who worked at the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Kelaniya in 1969 was a Visiting Lecturer at Junior University (Dehiwala), SLLA, and Lecturer in Library and Information Sciences at the Royal Melbourne Technical Institute (1972).

In addition to his role in academia, Prof. Dorakumbura was actively involved in various societies and associations related to library science. Among the many boards

he worked on, in 1973, he was an Advisor to the National Library and Documentation Services Board (NLDSB), a member of the Board of Directors of the NLDSB, a Member of the Copy Rights, Trademarks and Patent Commission and also a member of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA). In 1966, he was the education officer, and in 1968, 1973, 1980, and 1982 to 1988, he was the President of the SLLA and pinioned for developing it into a recognized professional association. During his tenure as President, he made significant contributions to the field of library science, including the compilation of the first edition of the Manual of Procedures for Vidyodaya Library Staff, overseeing many educational changes made at SLLA and for the Diploma in Library and Information Science (DIPLIS). Moreover, A founder member of the American Studies Association (ASA) and became its first President in 1982. He contributed to the growth of these two boards (NLDSB and SLLA) and the library profession as the founder and forerunner of both organizations. When establishing the National Institute of Library Science (NILIS) at the University of Colombo in 1999, he also served as the local consultant. He prepared the proposal with the professionals of NLDSB.

Dorakumbura's dedication to library science extended to worldwide platforms throughout the 1970s and 1980s. He was the Vice President of the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA) for the Asia and Pacific Region and an Associate Member of the Australian Library Association from 1972. He also attended several training sessions and conferences, including the 1983 International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) conference held in Nairobi and the Information Science Training Programme under the Colombo Plan in 1971,

In addition to serving as an academic, Professor Dorakumbura served the university community as a trade union leader. He was an early member of the University Teachers' Association of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and the Federation of University Teachers' Associations. He became President of the FUTA (Federation of University Teachers Association) in 1985.



Even after he retired from the university on September 30, 1996, he served the country by being the ambassador to Pakistan in 2007. He contributed a lot to developing the nation through international relations. In 2000, he was appointed the Advisor to the proposed Fisheries University. His contribution to librarianship is immeasurable, and he generously shared the knowledge he acquired to benefit this field. He played a significant role in establishing the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka and the Ocean University.

Professor Dorakumbura's remarkable career in education and library science, coupled with his significant contributions to various organizations and associations, left an indelible mark on Sri Lanka's academic and library communities. He was also an active politician and the organizer of the SLFP for the Matale District in 1988. His legacy continues to inspire future generations of educators and librarians. On October 22, 2012, Professor Dorakumbura passed away, leaving a rich and enduring legacy of excellence and service.

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P. Vidanapathirana (1992 – 2009)



Piyadasa Vidanapathirana, the fourth Librarian of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, was born on May 13, 1944, in Deniyaya. He started schooling at Morawaka Central Collage, Deniyaya and continued to the HSC examination. After qualifying for university entrance, he entered the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, and obtained his bachelor's degree in 1967. After graduation, Vidanapathirana joined the same university as a Library Assistant and engaged in Professional Studies in Librarianship. While working at the university (from October 01, 1967, to May 30, 1973), he completed the professional examination Part I and II conducted by the Library Association, London. He was awarded the Associateship (ALA) from the Library Association, London, in 1978. He obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Science from the University of Kelaniya in 1978. In recognition of his professional development and contribution to the library and information field, he was also awarded the Fellowship of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (FCILIP), UK, in 1999. Further, he obtained a Master's in Library Science (MLS) from the University of New South Wales, Australia, in 1991. Recognizing his contribution to the profession, The Sri Lanka Library Association also awarded him a Fellowship in 1998.

He had five years of library experience from the University of Peradeniya before joining the Vidyodaya Campus as a Junior Assistant Librarian on June 01, 1973. He was promoted to Assistant Librarian on August 26, 1979, and worked in the same university. In August 1979, he was promoted to Senior Assistant Librarian in Grade II and later to Grade I in August 1985. With the appointment of Professor Dorakumbura as the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Vidanapathirana got the opportunity to be the Acting Librarian from November 1992 to 1996. Finally, he was fortunate to be the Librarian of the University of Kelaniya from July 1999 to his retirement in September 2009.

He rendered excellent service to the university library during his tenure at the Vidyodaya Campus and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. During the country's insurgency in 1971, the Vidyodaya Campus was converted to a temporary military camp, and the library services were scattered in different locations. Before opening the library for the users, it had to be reorganized, where Vidanapathirana showed his organizing and leadership capability. In 1988, he successfully coordinated and organized a shifting programme to transfer library materials from the Sumangala building to the present library building. As the Librarian, he initiated the establishment of a branch library for the newly established Faculty of Medical Sciences in 1992.

Further, in addition to the Sumangala reading room, a 24-hour open reading room area with easy access was arranged in the present library building for the convenience of the library users. He continued the responsibility of the Vidyodaya Journal's editorial work in publishing regular and special issues, ensuring academic quality. He also streamlined customer care services and orientation programmes to improve the library's services. The re-establishment of the periodical section and continuous development of the computerization project must also be mentioned in his name.

Vidanapathirana was an excellent teacher and has taught Librarianship in universities and professional organizations since 1979. He was a Visiting lecturer in Library Science at the Vidyalkara Campus of the University of Sri Lanka (a present University of Kelaniya) from 1978. He was also a Supervisor and an Examiner of the thesis submitted for the Master of Library and Information Science Degree at the same university. Furthermore, he also started part-time lecturing in Classification, Cataloguing, Indexing, and Library Management at the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) courses, beginning in 1979. Besides, he was also an Examiner of essays and bibliographies prepared by the students in the same institution. He was a Module Director, Examiner, and Lecturer in Bibliographic Control in the Master of Library Science (MLS) programme conducted by the University of Colombo (both at the Faculty of Graduate Studies and National Institute of Library and Information Science-NILIS) starting in 1993. He has served as a resource person in the Advanced Diploma in LIS Programme, a distance education programme conducted by the SLLA in the Maldives in collaboration with the British Council. Besides teaching, he has contributed several research articles and papers to numerous journals and symposia to disseminate his knowledge and research findings.

Considering his expertise and talents, Vidanapathirana was appointed for several special assignments. A few of those are as a Coordinating Consultant in Library Services at the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM) with effect from January 01, 1989, to September 30, 1994, he organized the library services of the institute; as a Junior-Consultant Library Science at the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) for one year starting October 01, 1991 to organize the OUSL library; as a member of the Committee Appointed to make recommendations for the conservation and development of the Sri Lanka National Museum Library on August 31, 1995, by the Ministry of Cultural and Religious Affairs and as a member of the Board of Studies in the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Kelaniya for curriculum development activities. As a member of the

Review Panel of Quality Assurance, he participated in the reviewing process of three major university libraries, including the University of Peradeniya.

Vidanapathirana rendered his service beyond the library and contributed in different capacities to several committees of the universities and professional organizations. He was an active Standing Committee Member of the Classification and Indexing Section of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) from 1999-2003. He worked on several committees at the Sri Lanka National Library and Documentation Services Board (SLNLSB). A few of them are the National Advisory Committee of the APINESS (Asia-Pacific Information Network in Social Sciences) in 1996, the Publication Advisory Committee in 1995, the Public Library Advisory Committee representing SLLA from 1995 to 1997, the National School Advisory Committee in 1995, and the Advisory Committee on Acquisitions in 1995. Further, he was the President of the University Librarians Association Sri Lanka (ULA) in 1992/93 and 1995/96 and Vice-President of ULA in 1997/1998. The leading positions he held in the Sri Lanka Library Association were President in 1995/96 and 1996/97, Vice-President in 1981/82, 1985/86, 1988/89, 1993/94 and 1994/95, General secretary in 1983/84 and Council and Executive committee member from 2000/2001.

As the fourth Librarian of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Vidanapathirana was a great Librarian who contributed his service to the development of his library and most of the other libraries and library education in Sri Lanka. His contribution may be much lesser if he could not get his wife's and children's support. That is his wife, Samudra Vidanapathirana (nee Kadigamuwa) (at retirement, she was an Assistant Vice President of the National Development Bank), whom he married in 1978; his daughter, who is a doctor, and his son, who is a senior scientist (both are living abroad) gave him immense support in carrying out these tasks. After his retirement in 2009, Vidanapathirana lives calmly and peacefully with his loving wife at their home in Gangodavila, Nugegoda.

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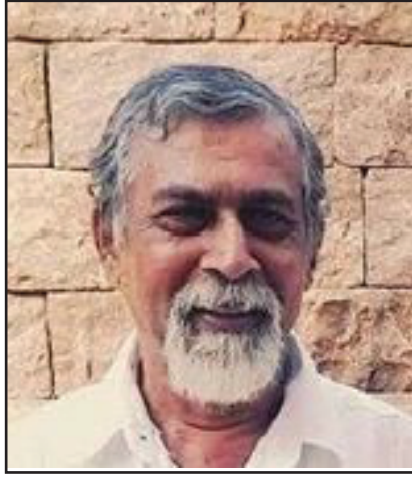
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Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Mr W.G.P. Gamlath (1997-2019)

W.G.P. Gamlath (1997-2019)



Wijendra Gamladdage Piyasena Gamlath was the second Librarian at Wayamba University Sri Lanka (WUSL) and one of the most accomplished librarians in Sri Lanka's university library network, with a charming personality. He was born on April 20, 1955, in Kaikole, a village near Kahawatheela in Polgahawela. He received his elementary education at Rathmalgoda Maha Vidyalaya in Polgahawela and was one of the talented students at many levels who could receive many accolades. He was fortunate to receive instructions from wise Buddhist monks who helped him understand Pali and Sanskrit, making him a much more responsible and mature learner. He was inclined to pursue higher education in philology at the University of Peradeniya. Gamlath graduated in 1981 with a BA (Bachelor of Arts) (Hons) degree in Sinhala and a second-class upper division. In recognition of his scholarly achievements, Gamlath was awarded the "D M D Z Wickamarathne" Memorial Prize for Epigraphy in 1981. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) awarded him a scholarship to Punjab University to earn a Master of Library and Information Science in 1990.

Gamlath began his career as a Research Assistant at the University of Peradeniya from 1982 to 1985. He was also a part-time Academic Sub Warden at Hilda

Obesekara Hall, University of Peradeniya, from 1985 to 1986. He accepted the position of Assistant Librarian at the same university in 1987. In 1992, he was promoted to Senior Assistant Librarian, and in 1997, he was selected for the Librarian position at Buddhasrawaka Bhikkhu University.

Gamlath successfully executed many measures to improve the library's resources and services during his tenure as a Librarian at Buddhasrawaka Bhikkhu University. He collaborated closely with instructors and students to understand their requirements and created a comprehensive collection of academic materials. Finally, on 02-05-2003, Gamlath was appointed the second Librarian of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (WUSL). His first goal was to entice more patrons to the library and give them amenities. So, he started restructuring the university library. His goal was to spread the word about the importance of reading among individuals and society. Gamlath actively contributed to the library's collection development by attracting donations from local and foreign sources to empower everyone in self-education. As the Librarian of the WUSL and a member of the Senate Subcommittee on Quality Enhancement and Assurance, Gamlath focused on quality enhancement and assurance-related activities from 2007 to 2019.

Furthermore, he was a Senator and the University Council's Senate Nominee for three years. Throughout his tenure, he considered the library service as one of the essential services since it connected with the pursuit of excellence of the academic staff in teaching and research and the student's learning experience. He took leadership initiatives that aided students' educational experiences. During his tenure as the Librarian at WUSL, he also assumed leadership in maintaining a continuously updated library webpage, establishing an automated library catalogue (OPAC-Online Public Access Catalogue), and library circulation system using KOHA Open-Source Information Management System. Under his leadership, a fully pledged new library building at Makandura premises of WUSL and a branch library of the newly established Faculty of Medicine, WUSL were established. Gamlath was engaged in

developing the library policies and procedures as a part of the Wayamba University Policy Framework. He revised and updated the library handbook and contributed to several university development activities to improve the student learning environment for high-quality education.

He was a well-known academician in the subject of Archaeology and also well-versed in multiple languages, such as Sinhala, Pali, Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, and English, as well as in several academic disciplines including History, Archaeology, Astrology, Philology, and Ayurvedic and Indigenous Medicine. When Gamlath worked as the Librarian at Buddhasrawaka Bhikkhu University, he also served as a Visiting Lecturer at the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kelaniya, and he taught Epigraphy to students at the Department of Archaeology at the same university.

He obtained membership in the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka (ULA). He worked with the Inter-University Committee of Librarians (IUCL) to organize a seminar on Ceylon Studies at the University of Peradeniya. In addition to being a Librarian, Gamlath was an excellent scholar who conducted research and authored manuscripts most relevant to the library and information science. He also wrote a few manuscripts related to Archaeology and other subject areas. Even though we had little knowledge about his poetic talents, he was a composer of songs and poetry.

Gamlath married Ms Dona Sumithra Chandanee Siyambalapitiya, a Graduate Teacher, and his daughter was born on November 12, 1990. His simple food habits and living standards also would not needlessly waste time or resources. Unfortunately, he died on February 3, 2019, before his retirement due to some illness. His contributions to the educational atmosphere and the library services at Buddhasrawaka Bhikkhu University and Wayamba University have been long-lasting and will be well remembered. He was a rare example of a University Librarian with strong organizational and administrative skills. He was kind to

people, pushed smart kids forward, and helped them achieve a better future. Gamlath shared his knowledge and experience with all his friends and colleagues, was a very welcoming person to all those who visited him, and was benevolent towards everybody. He was a genuine human with many admirable traits, like loyalty, dependability, flexibility, and a desire to please others. Gamlath was a sincere and trustworthy leader who never harassed his employees or library patrons. A man with admirable qualities such as empathy, simplicity, honesty, and adaptability had to leave the world untimely at the age of 64 years.

References:

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Thusithakumari, W.M. (2022, September 8). Interview with Professor WA Weerasooriya, one of the close friends of Mr WGP Gamlath. [Transcript was provided to T.C. Ranawella to compile the biography]

Thusithakumari, W.M. (2022, September 9). Interview with Ms. Sandamalee Chandrawansika Gamlath, the daughter of Mr WGP Gamlath. [Transcript was provided to T.C. Ranawella to compile the biography]

About the Compiler ...



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Chartered Librarian

Senior Assistant Librarian Gr I

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

Mrs Thanuja C. Ranawella embarked on her illustrious career in library and information sciences in September 1994 when she assumed the role of Assistant Librarian at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, previously known as the Kotelawala Defence Academy. Over the years, she steadily climbed the professional ladder, attaining the position of Senior Assistant Librarian Grade II in October 2000, and eventually achieving the Grade I position on May 2, 2013. Moreover, she became Acting Librarian at the KDU from November 22, 2018, to May 21, 2021, in addition to her previous tenure from 2001 to February 8, 2017. Mrs. Ranawella's contributions extended beyond her institutional responsibilities. She served as a resource person for the Sri Lanka Library Association's (SLLA) Course on Library Automation and as a visiting lecturer for the Diploma in Library and Information Science Program, teaching stints from 2004 to 2008 and 2015. Furthermore, during 2019/2020, she actively participated as a member in various committees at the same institution, including the IT Committee, Publication Committee, and Social Affairs and Funds Raising Committee. Her involvement also extended to the University Librarians Association, where she held the role of Treasurer for 2019/2020, served as an EXCO member in 2018/2019, 2021/2022, and 2022/2023, and contributed as a member of the organizing committees for the International Conference in 2022 and 2023.

Mrs. Ranawella's dedication to her field is clearly reflected in her extensive research publications, which serve as a testament to her commitment and expertise in the realm of library science.

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Chartered Librarian

Librarian

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University
19th October 2023

