

Stanley Gajanayake (May 1936 – March 2021)

After nearly 85 years of living a most humble, very happy and contented life, Stanley Gajanayake is now resting in peace, away from all of us. He left us suddenly after falling into a coma and was taken to the hospital by paramedics. He passed away soon afterwards, giving all of us an unbearable grief.



Stanley was born in May 23rd, 1936, as the eldest child of his family in Kandy, Sri Lanka – a beautiful island on the other side of the world, in South Asia. His father was a school principal and the mother a school teacher. From the second grade until he completed his university entrance class, he was a boarder at St. Anthony's College, Katugastota. In 1957 he was admitted into Peradeniya University - a rare privilege at the time. Throughout his university life, he was a popular leader in the university and was highly active in student affairs. During his final year in the university he was elected the president of a major residence hall – Mars Hall. This is the time he met his future wife – Jaya – the love of his life who was also a student on that beautiful campus. At the time he was just 24 years and Jaya was 20.

Stanley had wonderful qualities and pleasing ways of life that are worthy of recognition. He was also a hard-working person, well qualified professionally who earned five degrees in his life, three from his native country and two, including a doctorate, from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, one of the most reputed universities in the U.S. When he first came to U.S in 1979 - from Sri Lanka as a doctoral student, he was lecturer at the Sri Lanka's major teacher training college at Maharagama. After his doctorate he stayed on at the UMass campus until his son, Nishantha, completed his 3rd year at UMass and then left for Sri Lanka to join his wife and daughter. In 1991, Stanley returned to the U.S. for the second time to join his wife, who was on sabbatical leave as a visiting professor at the Northern Illinois University.

Stanley had a rare record of service as an expatriate consultant for World Education, USA, from 1995 to 1998 and after that another three years as a consultant to UNICEF, in Cambodia. In 2005 he had kidney transplant surgery and it is a miracle that his transplanted kidney survived for 16 years until the day he passed away. He had a major heart surgery about 10 years later, in 2015 and he was handling very well the new life after these surgeries until his last moment.

Stanley Gajanayake had wonderful qualities. He is well loved by all he was connected with, especially by his wife –Jaya, who took good care of him until the

very last moment of his life. He was well loved by his two children, and their spouses. In the new community, San Antonio, Texas, where he lived after moving away from the cold weather in Illinois to spend his golden years with his wife and family, he was well liked by his neighbors as well as many Sri Lankans living there. He was well loved by his relatives, friends, and close associates.

Everybody close to him was impressed by his in-depth knowledge in international politics, especially the Middle East as well as by his profound wisdom regarding the history and culture of Sri Lanka. His family asked him to put his knowledge of his native country's history into writing so that his grandchildren as well as the children from Diaspora could benefit from that rare knowledge. He started doing that and has written a very rare history book on our native country – about its 2500 year history – in a very novel way, different from the other histories of the country. He died before completing that important undertaking which he tried his best to complete, but sadly it needed a few more days of his attention.