

Today we bid adieu to Professor M. Sambasivan, the giant, who raised generations of neurosurgeons in India to the height that they have reached today. 'MS', the legendary neurosurgeon, a visionary far ahead of his times, an erudite scholar, the passionate teacher, the compassionate healer and a Sanskrit Pundit, left us for his heavenly abode, but his fragrant memories linger on.

In an era when the brain was a dreaded surgical terrain, Prof. Sambasivan established the neurosurgical department at Medical College, Trivandrum, Kerala, India in 1966. Proficient in the Vedas and mythology, he struck the perfect balance between science and spirituality. Mentored by Prof Jacob Chandy at Christian Medical College, Vellore and the work culture of the Montreal Neurological Institute, Prof. Sambasivan put the city of Trivandrum and the medical college on the world neurosurgical map. The seeds of the Sree Chitra Thirunal Institute of Medical Sciences & Technology, a premier institute of national importance in India, were also sown by Prof Sambasivan's vision, when he requested the Travancore king on the king's 60th birthday, to set up an institute specialised in the care of the brain and the heart. Prof.Sambasivan's epidemiological studies on brain aneurysms and his work on "chitosan" as a haemostatic agent are legendary. Having trained several generations of neurosurgeons, the seeds sown by him have sprouted and blossomed all over the world. Impressed by his phenomenal work with limited resources, many neurosurgical giants visited his department including Charles Drake, Jean Aicardi, Earl Walker, Jacob Chandy and several others. A trendsetter in aneurysm clipping in the pre CT/ pre DSA early microsurgery era, legends about his surgical heroics, still continue to inspire and enthuse young neurosurgeons. He received many awards, accolades and recognitions. He was the President of the national society, Neurological Society of India (NSI), President of Indian Society of Cerebrovascular Surgery (ISCVS) and the ultimate honour, Honorary President of World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies(WFNS).

Heroes like Prof. Sambasivan, never die. They may leave their mortal bodies, but continue to live in our hearts. Their spark lives on, through us and the work we do. They live on through the countless lives they have saved. The generations that follow will continue to be inspired by the stories of their grit and determination. The neurosurgical fraternity is faced with a loss, with an emptiness, that can never be filled. May the Creator give the near and dear of Prof. Sambasivan and all of us ,the courage to live on despite this void, that can never be filled.

Rest in peace Professor Sambasivan. The torch you lit will keep on burning.

Suresh Nair President, Neurological Society of India Basant Misra President, AASNS

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