

## Dr. S D Malinga Fernando

Dr. S D M Fernando, Malinga to his friends, was the first medical officer from the Department of Health Services to be appointed Secretary of the Ministry of Health.

Malinga was born on 19 October, 1929 and died on 9 January, 2008 after a short illness. He was the only child of wealthy parents. He became a doctor in 1954. In those days, it was rare for a medical student to come for lectures in his own car, but he did just that. He later made a hobby of collecting old cars, one of which was his own vehicle used during his days as a house officer.

Malinga's achievements in administration were many, and any doctor in his field would be proud to achieve even a few of these. He started as Registrar to the Professor of Surgery, at that time the redoubtable Milroy Paul, with whom he had an excellent relationship. Later he became, District Medical Officer at Weligama and Panadura, after which his administrative career began as Medical Superintendent of Colombo South Hospital. Doctors who worked there at that time talk about his abilities in the post, which was followed by being appointed Superintendent of the Colombo Group of Hospitals, Deputy Director of Health Services, Director of Health Services, and finally, Secretary of Health. After his retirement he worked for over 5 years with the WHO in Geneva.

When he was Surgical Registrar, he took his friends, including myself, to Nuwara Eliya about once every 6 months to stay a week or so in his uncle's vacant house by ourselves. In his company, I climbed Pidurutalagala three times. We climbed Horton Plains through Ohiya when there was only a footpath. We visited Hakgala Gardens



several times. He was keen on visiting the local cinema at Nuwara Eliya for the late show. When we walked back to the house at about 12 midnight, he kept himself quite warm with a British overcoat, while we shivered in the cold. When I returned from the UK in 1962, my wife and I paid him a visit at Weligama. By that time he was married to his batch-mate at Medical College, Chinta. They took us to see the island of Taprobane, where a luxury house was built by Count de Mauny in the 1930 s. We went there by fording the sea on foot.

His death is a great personal loss to me, and his many friends, and we convey our condolences to Chinta and his two daughters, Neluka, who is Senior Lecturer in Microbiology at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, and Vindy.

### C G Uragoda

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