

FFELICITATION SPEECH

Dr A.S. Seneviratne

Presented by Dr. Sirimal Premakumara

Industrial Technology Institute

It is with great honor and privilege that I present Dr A.S. Seneviratne, a humane university teacher, an unprejudiced university administrator, a long standing council member of the Institute of Biology and a biologist with an invaluable service rendered to the advancement of the field of biology.

Dr. Seneviratne had her education from Good Shepherd Convent, Kandy and entered the University of Colombo and followed a special degree in Botany. She obtained her Ph.D in Plant Biochemistry from University of London. Dr. Seneviratne joined the Department of Botany, University of Colombo in 1962 and was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1967 and then to the position of Associate Professor. She was instrumental in introducing many new courses in Botany including Plant biochemistry and Cell biology for the B.Sc undergraduates.

She served as the nucleus for vibrant research in the area of botany. Her research interests included Plant biochemistry, plants used in traditional medicine and taxonomy of angiosperms. Moreover, she has also conducted research in taxonomy, distribution, ethnobotany and phytochemistry of flora in Sri Lanka. She has served in many committees for drafting and introducing new syllabi for plant science-related courses. Dr. Seneviratne was the principle scientist and the co-supervisor for several undergraduate and post graduate students in the Department and there are several scientific publications to her merit. She has authored six books in relation to different areas of plant science. Dr. Seneviratne was awarded several fellowships

which included the Commonwealth academic staff fellowship tenable in UK and also from the International Atomic Energy Agency. She was awarded a Honorary D.Sc. from the University of Colombo in 2004.

She has rendered invaluable services to the university community. She became the President of the Science Teachers Association, University of Colombo in 1984/85. She held the positions of Senior Treasurer, Botanical Society for 11 years, was an active member of University of Colombo Alumni Association and a Counselor for student orientation programmes.

Her contribution to the field of plant sciences outside the University too is commendable. Dr. Seneviratne served as the Chief Controlling Examiner in Botany for GCE Advanced level Examination in 1979 as well as a Chief Examiner and as a member of the setting panel for several years. She has also functioned as a member of working committee on Biological Science of the Natural Resources, Energy and Science Authority (NARESA- NSF at present), invited member of the Faculty Board/ Science in the Open University to name a few. She also served as a Council member, of the Institute of Biology in 1984 and as the Secretary- Section D of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science. She functioned as an advisor as well as an invited member in different working committees in several government bodies.

I had the good opportunity of meeting Dr Seneviratne when I followed courses in Botany as an undergraduate, University of Colombo. She was an excellent, enthusiastic and specially a very charming teacher and needless to add that she possessed many qualities which are essential ingredients for making one a successful Academic and the Head of a Department. She exhibited to us that “Education is the mother of leadership”. Her actions inspired others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, as she was a real leader.

Distinguished members of the Institute of Biology, it is very fitting and appropriate that the IOB recognizes a great scholar and an academic of the highest caliber. I have a great honor in presenting to you Dr. A.S. Seneviratne for felicitation by the Institute of Biology.