

The CMC Alumni Association Award of Distinction to

Dr. V. BENJAMIN

at the Annual Alumni Reunion, August 13, 1994

CITATION

The most commendable aspect of medical education in CMC is the dissemination of values by example rather than exhortation. And it has been the good fortune of this institution to be endowed with convincing role models who embody in themselves the treasured values of CMC. Of none of its distinguished faculty has this been more true than of Dr. V. Benjamin, fondly known to his students and junior colleagues as V. Benjie.

Born to an illustrious lineage of physicians, he was all set for a career in Paediatrics or Internal Medicine, when he was challenged by the emerging concern in CMC for Rural or Community Medicine. The Rural Health Centre was being conceived and leadership of this innovative venture called for excellence in clinical medicine, social commitment and dedication to the disadvantaged. Naturally, the choice fell on Dr. Benjamin who willingly responded to, and steadfastly pursued, that vision. Prepared for this role with a Master's degree in Public Health from the Columbia University, U.S.A. and the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians, U.K., Dr. Benjamin returned to CMC in 1957 to take the humble role of Medical Officer at the Rural Health Centre. He played a decisive role in the development of this unique facility. He took over the leadership of the Community Health Department in 1966. Over the next 16 years he spearheaded the growth and development of this Department, its unique undergraduate programme and the field programme in the Kaniyambadi Block.

His convictions made him lead from up front when the going was tough. But his humility made him opt for the lowest place of honour or authority at all other times. His friendliness and sincerity overcame the objections and reservations that invariably face all radical innovations in medical practice and education. The strong links he developed with the rural community in Kaniyambadi by being one with them was the secret of the success of this project, which now is a prized asset of CMC.

Dr. Benjamin was endowed with exceptional clinical skills, which he devoted to a convincing demonstration of low cost effective care. For generations of students and junior colleagues, he was an authentic role model who left a lasting imprint on them. For CMC, he was a pioneer who shaped its commitment to rural and community health. Through this Award the CMC Alumni Association salutes, and gives thanks for, Dr. Benjamin's sublime example of integrity, simplicity, commitment and steadfast faith in a God who calls, empowers and brings to fruition, those who seek His face.