

The CMC Alumni Association Award of Distinction to

Dr. SHEILA PEREIRA

at the Annual Alumni Reunion, August 14, 1999

CITATION

Can there be a single person in CMC who has not heard about Dr. Sheila Mary Pereira. Dr. Sheila is truly the daughter of the soil for she was born at Chittoor. Her father was one of the eminent engineers of the then Madras Presidency. Dr. Sheila would often point to the sturdy and beautiful bridges in and around Vellore which were constructed by her father. She would not have thought that the major part of her life was going to be spent in the place where she grew up as a small child.

Dr. Sheila graduated from the Stanley Medical College, Madras. She belonged to the batch of 1945 and qualified in 1950 after a brilliant academic career. She had the unique distinction of being one of the early students of the eminent pediatrician Dr. S.T. Achar. Her fun loving and vivacious nature complemented her brilliant academic career.

Dr. Sheila joined the Christian Medical College & Hospital as Paediatric registrar in 1954. She worked with the pioneering Pediatricians of CMC Dr. M.D. Graham and Dr. J.K.G. Webb. This young registrar of Dr. Webb had no hesitation to go as a field research assistant to Virus Research Centre, Pune and the Mysore Forests to study the Japanese B Encephalitis and Kyasanur Forest disease. Her contribution to the study of these two diseases is noteworthy. She went on to acquire the MRCP in Edinburgh, and returned to CMCH in 1962.

Dr. Sheila was in the department of Child Health. Ever since her return, from England her major contribution to the children of the world was her work in Nutrition research, protein calorie malnutrition and Vit. A deficiency. Her work in Vit. A deficiency has won her international acclaim. Her inclusion to the WHO expert advisory committee on Nutrition and the International Vitamin. A Consultative Committee, is a well deserved honour. She has published 65 scientific papers in various other fields of Paediatrics notable on nutrition and Vit. A. She has also written many WHO technical reports, chapters and booklets which have won acclaim from International Pediatricians. She was the Head of the Department of Child Health CMCH from 1974 until retirement.

In 1974 she was elected as Fellow of Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh. This is a unique honour given to a person in the developing country. This is a unique honour given to a person in the developing country. Dr. Sheila is an outstanding teacher. My colleagues past and present in the department of Child Health and I consider it a great honour to have been her students. Her teaching was appropriate for all levels of students. It included the most mundane to the esoteric subjects of Paediatrics. She could make the most difficult subject seem very easy. Her students wherever they were will testify to the fact that what they imbibed from her is internalized and practiced. Her patient care was meticulous. The kindness she showed to the family and the child was extraordinary. Her

unswerving dedication to her work had a vital role in the functioning of the department. Her ingenious formulations in the field of nutrition saved the lives of many children. Dr. Sheila was also the Additional Medical Superintendent of the CMCH when the institution going through a difficult and stormy period. She served unobtrusively in many committees which had to make very difficult decisions. The clarity with which she approached a problem delving deeply and from multiple angles was characteristic of her. Her ability to mete out justice tempered with kindness was unique and a model to many other administrators.

I will not be doing justice if I do not commend Dr. Sheila's special assets and talents. She is extremely artistic and turns out the most beautiful pieces of embroidery and tatting. Every year in the M-ward Christmas sale there is a big demand for the pillow cases beautifully embroidered by Dr. Sheila. She is a very good cook and a good hostess. Her sense of humour is something remarkable. If you hear chuckles, giggles and laughter from any group you can be sure that Dr. Sheila is the cynosure of all attention. Her sense of humour has relieved many postgraduate students of their tension and depression.

Dr. Sheila is a role model worthy of praise, worthy of emulation.

The Alumni Association of Christian Medical College is pleased to present the Alumni Award for the distinguished services of Dr. Sheila Pereira.

14th Aug. 1999

President

CMC Alumni Association