

## CITATION

### Alumni Award of Distinction 2016

*Mrs. Susie Koshi*

The Christian Medical College Alumni Association is honored to present the Alumni Award of Distinction 2016 to Mrs. Susie Koshi for her years of selfless service to the community and students of the Christian Medical College, Vellore.

Mrs. Susie Koshi was born in Mavelikara, a small mofussil town in Kerala. Her father, Mr. G.P. Tharyan, was Secretary to the Assistant Commissioner of Excise, an office under the British government. The frequent transfers exposed Mrs. Susie Koshi to life in a variety of places in South India. In 1947, Mrs. Susie married Dr. KG Koshi, who after a brilliant career in Madras Medical College and the British Medical Corps, came to CMC Vellore, with Dr Koshi planning to train in Cardiology. However, at the Institution's request, Dr Koshi opted to train in the specialty of Hygiene, as Community Health was then known. On Dr Koshi's return to India after his training in Liverpool, they joined the small but growing community of CMC Vellore where she was to play an indelible role.

One of Mrs. Koshi's outstanding achievements was initiating the development of the College Hill Nursery School in 1954, a school that is alma mater to hundreds of staff children. She was very involved in the running of the school, even making porridge in her home for children of the school. She remained Secretary of the School from its inception to 1974, when Dr Koshi retired.

For 14 years, Dr. Koshi was a much loved Warden of the Men's Hostel, and Mrs. Koshi opened her home to the students. Apart from Sunday afternoon fellowship lunches, every Christmas, she would invite the men students who had been unable to go home. This led to the Big Bungalow Christmas Pot-luck dinner, a tradition that still continues. Later, she and Dr Koshi started the Senatus farewell dinner for the Final Year students.

When Dr. Koshi took up the responsibility of Principal and later Director, Mrs. Koshi took on the role of the Hostess of Big Bungalow and many alumni and friends recall the graciousness and generosity with which she embraced that role. In the book, *'Passing on the Torch of Life'*, Dorothy Clarke Wilson recalls Dr. Koshi and his *'sparkling wife'* who made the Big Bungalow a *'haven of hospitality for guests'*. Not just guests, but students, too, were always welcome to the Big Bungalow. Findlay House had a special place in her heart, and its house parties were replete with delicacies and unlimited home-churned ice cream from Mrs. Koshi's kitchen. And yes, this charming hostess was a tennis champion too!

Mrs. Koshi found her calling in an unusual manner. On Good Friday, 1959, Dr. Paul Brand ended his sermon by challenging the congregation: *'Christ died for you, what are you doing for Him?'* This led Mrs. Koshi to the New Life Centre, a home started by Dr Paul Brand for young men afflicted with leprosy. Here they were taught to care for their anaesthetic hands and feet, as well as given vocational training. Every month, Mrs. Koshi would take their finished products- toys, puzzles and other items to Madras and sell them. She supervised their kitchen and helped them in their daily activities. She may have been the

Superintendent of the Centre, but to these men, starting life afresh from the fringes of society, Mrs. Koshi was simply '*akka*'.

She continued her work with the differently abled as a close friend of Dr Mary Verghese. As a Board Member and Honorary Managing Trustee of the Mary Verghese Trust, Mrs. Koshi oversaw the construction of the Home for the Disabled as well as the vocational training provided to rehabilitated patients.

At the heart of all that Mrs. Koshi did was an abiding awareness of God, His love, grace and provision. Recently, her younger sister called her life one of '*faith with deeds*' and recalled her '*great love for CMC*'; another old friend reminisced Mrs. Koshi's '*spirit of inclusiveness, her warmth and kindness*'. Incidentally, these are qualities that comprise the CMC spirit and embody the CMC community that Mrs. Koshi so selflessly helped evolve.

The Alumni Association joins the CMC community in thanking Mrs. Susie Koshi for her immense contribution to the Christian Medical College, its staff and their children and to those in need of love and kindness through her exemplary characteristics of integrity, high level of commitment and compassion, and is proud to honour her with the Alumni Award for the year 2016.