

CITATION

Alumni Award of Distinction 2017

Mrs. Ann and Mr. Brian Witchalls

The Christian Medical College Alumni Association is honoured to present the Alumni Award of Distinction 2017 to Mrs. Ann and Mr. Brian Witchalls for their selfless service to the community and students of the Christian Medical College, Vellore.

As an engineer, Mr. Brian had always wanted to do something meaningful with his engineering skills and so joined the Church Mission Society (CMS). In 1962, he arrived in Vellore from the UK, and was asked to take charge of the Transport Department. They were married in October 1963 in the St. John's Church, Vellore, with the reception held in Big Bungalow and their honeymoon in Aunt Ida's *Hilltop Bungalow* in Kodaikanal. Their elder son, Nigel, was born in CMC and both Nigel and Jeremy attended Vidyalayam, along with the other campus kids. Interestingly, Nigel and his wife, Mary worked in CMC for three years - he in the Air Conditioning Department and Mary, in the Promotion and PTP Office.

Mr. Brian became more widely involved in engineering in CMC from 1966. He set up the first Refrigeration section and was involved in projects such as the Williams Building, the Engineering Block, Laundry, CSSD and the EMD. He was in-charge of the College Maintenance for a number of years, focusing on improving the water supply to the College Campus. Mr. Brian also served as the Deputy Superintendent for Engineering for 6 years. He remains an active member of the College and St. John's Choir.

Initially, Mrs. Ann helped in Vidyalayam and was also in-charge of the St. John's Sunday School. Along with Mrs. Webb, Mrs. Baker and Mrs. Carman, she started the Foster System, one of the highlights of campus life in CMC. Several senior staff are among their first foster children. Mrs. Ann also worked in the Public Relations Office, helping produce several annual publications. Both Mrs. Ann and Mr. Brian were actively involved in extra-curricular activities, directing and helping with numerous productions for College Day, Hostel plays and Staff Entertainments. Their modified 'mini bus' was overflowing with students on Saturday afternoon for the ride to the Katpadi Farm for swimming. And as Mrs. Ann says, *'We were always staunch members of Cochrane House, and their music practice often took place in our home.'* Senior alumni fondly remember the cake and other treats that were always and readily available in their home!

In 1983, they returned to the UK for their sons' tertiary education. While in the UK, Mrs. Ann became involved with the Friends of Vellore, UK. She has been particularly active in the Person-to Person (PTP) scheme, tirelessly campaigning for funds and donations for this innovative programme for poor patients from in and around Vellore. When Mr. Brian retired in 1999, they offered their time and service to CMC again. Since then they have been coming back to CMC for 5 months every year. Mr. Brian continues to help with the Engineering Department, using his expertise to set up water reclamation and recycling systems in the campus. Mrs. Ann continued her work with the Friends of Vellore and the PTP scheme, having only recently handed over charge to Dr Dayalan Clarke. She remains a trustee of the Friends of Vellore, UK, seeing in what ways this organisation can continue to contribute to CMC. They are a familiar sight on campus, cycling their way around. And Mrs. Ann is always admired for the beautiful saris she so elegantly wears.

Mrs. Ann and Mr. Brian have given so much of themselves - their time, skills, talents, resources; things that cannot be priced but are invaluable to the building of an institution and a community.... '*to building God's kingdom*' as Aunt Ida eloquently put it.

The Alumni Association and the CMC community thank Mrs. Ann and Mr. Brian Witchalls for their immense contribution to the Christian Medical College, its staff and students through their dedication and commitment, and is proud to honour them with the Alumni Award for the year 2017.