

Alumni Award citation for the year 2025:

Dr. Jasper Daniel was the 6th of 7 children in Thengamputhoor in Kanyakumari district. His father was a Headmaster in a Mission school in Puthalam and his mother, a home maker. His early years were spent in this large family which catered to many other boys who lived with them so that they could attend the school his father taught in. His education was in this village school till 11th standard after which he did his pre university and Bachelor's degree in Zoology at the Scott Christian College, Nagercoil.

He wanted to pursue higher studies, but since he did not get an admission in the college of his choice, he took on a teacher's job at a government school in Arani, far away from home. His persistence in looking for an opportunity to pursue higher studies led him to an opening at CMC Vellore, where they had recently started the MSc in Medical Microbiology. He applied for the course, and was called by the Head of Microbiology, Dr. Ruth Meyers. At that time, they did not take on fresh candidates for this course and there were already candidates waiting to join. He was also informed that if he really wanted to join, he should work in the department like those before him and if his work was satisfactory, they would consider him for the course in future. Determined as he was to study further, he left the safety of his teacher's job and moved on to become a research assistant to Dr. Prema Bhat in Microbiology in 1966. He was tutored personally by Dr. Bhat over the next 1 year in Bacteriology, much of which he still remembers with great clarity.

In 1969, he was selected for M.Sc Medical Microbiology Course under the Faculty of Medicine, Madras University. On being selected for the course he was told that this was a very tough course. He accepted the challenge and completed the course in 1972 and joined the department as Lecturer in Microbiology. Accommodation during his training was in Men's hostel, C block, ground floor. There he became friends with many of the medical students. He belonged to Cochrane house and took part in a lot of student activities.

He got married in 1972, to Dr. Mary Padmini, who had just completed her MBBS from Trivandrum Medical College. She initially joined the department of Anatomy and then later went on to complete her Diploma and Masters in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

The year 1975 remains in the memory of many staff as a difficult year for the institution during which he continued to walk to work. He was even beaten up and was given a tough time. He resigned in 1978, took up a job at the Sree Chitra Tirunal Medical Centre in Trivandrum and planned to pursue his PhD. His wife joined her Alma Mater and they worked there for a couple of years.

During the Graduation Day for his wife's MD (OG) in 1980, he was called by Dr. V. I. Mathan and offered a job in the new Virology Lab of the Wellcome Research unit and the option of registering for a PhD. After much prayers, they sent back a response that they would complete their contracts in Trivandrum and join. They joined CMC again in April 1981 and never turned back. The next 23 years were spent at CMC Vellore as a Scientist in the Wellcome Lab. He completed his PhD in 1988. He then did a post-doctoral fellowship at the Collindale Reference Lab, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, UK.

His foray into administration began in 1989, when he was asked to take on the role of the Deputy General Superintendent with a primary focus on the transport department. He brought in discipline into the team and reduced losses for the institution. He was asked to take on the bigger role of General Superintendent. He served in this office for the next 10 years till he retired.

He continued to contribute to the Wellcome Lab, Microbiology classes and train PhD students during his tenure as GS. The tenure of GS was a challenging one, but being one for discipline, maintaining integrity, and welfare of the staff he worked with, he won the hearts of everyone and was able to incorporate many changes, improve the safety of the campus and instil discipline into the staff he worked with. These came with their threats, but he won over the people slowly and steadily with his personal care and concern for the grade 3 and 4 workers, the security and the drivers.

He had the opportunity of working with 3 Directors – Dr. V.I. Mathan, Dr. Joyce Ponnaiya and Dr. George M. Chandy without whose support he could not have made the changes, taken on the challenges and become loved by most of the people he worked with.

After he completed his tenure in CMC, he was requested by Dr. Benjamin Pulimood to set up the Microbiology department in Amala Medical College, Thrissur where he worked for the next 10 years. He then moved back to Trivandrum, joined Ananthapuri Hospital with Dr. Marthanda Pillai a PG alumnus from CMC Vellore and continues to work there in the department of Microbiology doing his smears and taking classes till date.

The Alumni Association joins the CMC community in thanking Dr. Jasper Daniel for his immense contribution to the Christian Medical College, its patients, staff, students, and to those in need of love and kindness through his exemplary characteristics of integrity, high level of commitment and compassion, and is proud to honour him with the Alumni Award for the year 2025.