

## **Distinguished Services Award Institute of Chemistry Ceylon**

**Awarded to Mr. Mevan Pieris**



Mr Mevan Pieris joined the membership of the Institute of Chemistry in 1978. He was elected to the Council in 1981 during the Presidency of the late Clodagh Nethsinghe and was the Hony. Secretary in 1984. During this period the Institute's journal, 'Chemistry in Sri Lanka' was launched. The first edition of the 'Manual of Chemical Industries in Sri Lanka Part 1' was also published during this time with Mr Pieris contributing two chapters on the rubber product manufacturing industry. In recent times, Mr Pieris has served the Council in the capacity of Vice-president, President-elect and President 2006/2007, and is currently serving as the immediate past President. He has from time to time served in many committees, such as House and Finance Committee, Building Project Committee, Admissions and Ethical Practices Committee and the Academic Board of the College of Chemical Sciences.

In the Building Construction project Mr Pieris played a lead role as the Chairman of the project committee and assisted in the planning and designing of the overall layout of the building. He chaired the coordination meetings with Architects, Engineers, and Contractors and supervised the construction of the building and managed the financial transactions during the entire period of construction of the building. In addition Mr Pieris painted and gifted the oils on canvas portraits of eminent chemists such as Professor P P G L Siriwardene, Professor R S Ramakrishna, Professor J N O Fernando and Professor H D Gunawardhana to adorn the walls of the those laboratories and halls named after them. He also delivered with much eloquence, the Professor J N O Fernando oration at the inauguration of the J N O Fernando hall.

Mr. Mevan Pieris has also made a significant contribution to the academic content of the Graduateship Course conducted by the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon. He has served for many years as a lecturer, examiner and course coordinator of the modules on 'Management, Finance and Economics' and 'Industrial Chemistry'. He has contributed towards developing the syllabus of these two modules and also proposed that a languages module be introduced to give a working knowledge of the two National languages to the Graduates of the Institute. Mr Pieris has awarded the prize for management studies and has donated Rs 50000/= to create a fund in memory of his late father for this purpose. He has also promoted new student activities such as musical events and debates.

During his Presidential year (2007), he introduced Memorial Orations in honour of past eminent chemists and decided to award a valuable Gold Medal to the selected orator as a token of recognition of the excellent research carried out. During that year two such memorial orations were conducted in honour of late Professor R S Ramakrishna and Professor P P G L Siriwardene. These programmes were introduced by him not only to honour and remember past Greats but also to grant deserving recognition to the best researchers amongst the membership and to stimulate research.

The international conference 'Chemtech 2007' organised by the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon, on the theme 'Chemistry, Technology and Innovation for Greater Safety and Economic Growth' and which attracted several world renowned scientists and 230 participants was undoubtedly Mr. Pieris's brainchild. The event was organised with the objectives of enhancing the professional image of the Institute globally, to develop a culture of collaborative research, and to promote greater interaction amongst chemists in Sri Lanka and abroad. The conference which was a grand success earned high praise from all who participated.

He has also contributed by making presentations at several seminars, workshops and other programmes organised by the Institute. He holds the position of the Honorary Director from the time the Headquarters building was constructed and contributes towards maintaining the infrastructure in good order.

**In recognition of the valuable and dedicated services rendered by Mr. Mevan Pieris to the Institute, the Council of the Institute of Chemistry has awarded the Distinguished Services Award to him.**