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The Geological Society of Sri Lanka

The Geological Society of Sri Lanka (GSSL) was founded in 1983 "to promote and disseminate all aspects of geological knowledge within Sri Lanka both on land as well as the oceans coming under the jurisdiction of Sri Lanka under the Law of the Sea". The Society's objectives are fulfilled through various activities and programs like lectures, discussions, workshops, seminars, symposia and publications. In addition to the Journal of the GSSL published annually, the Society also publishes a quarterly newsletter and ventures on producing occasional special publications too. Information is also disseminated through its website; www.gsslweb.org. The Annual Sessions of the Society are held at the end of February each year, and it is the forum for presentation and discussion of current research.

The Society consists of Honorary Life Members, Life Members, Institutional Members, Ordinary Members, Foreign Members, Associate Members and Student Members. Qualified geologists are eligible for membership, and details about membership

categories and fees applicable, and the procedure for application for membership are available through the GSSL website, newsletters or by writing directly to the Secretary, GSSL, at the Kandy office or Colombo office (see website). The GSSL publishes a single issue of the Journal of the Geological Society of Sri Lanka annually. It is now published as open access journal. Original and review articles pertaining to any aspect of geology are welcome, and a guide to authors on preparation of manuscript and submission of electronic and hard copies to the journal is given at the back pages of this issue. All correspondence pertaining to material submitted for publication should be directed to the Editors of the GSSL at Kandy or Colombo offices. The journal is issued free of charge to the eligible members. The journal will be dispatched to all overseas subscribers (see website for fees) by surface mail. All correspondence including orders and remittance for subscriptions, back issues, off-prints and advertisements should be directed to the Treasurer of the GSSL.

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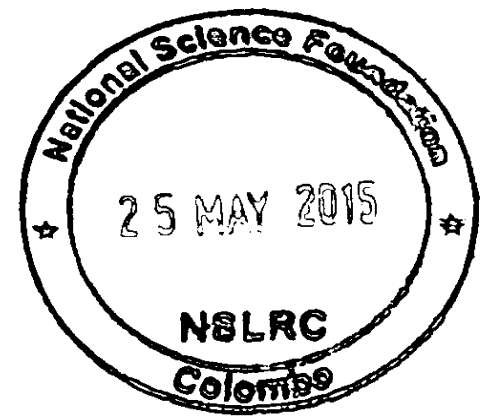
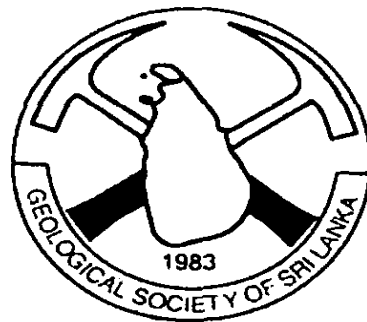
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P.G. Cooray Memorial Volume

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Nalin Ratnayake

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APPRECIATION

PROFESSOR P.G. COORAY

Professor Percival Gerald Cooray, *Gerry* to his many colleagues and friends, was an eminent Geologist of international standing acclaimed for his multifaceted geological research and numerous publications in high-tier journals, who extended invaluable services to uplift the discipline of geology in Sri Lanka. He rendered yeoman service to popularize geology among the general public of the country. He played a pioneering role in the establishment of the Geological Society of Sri Lanka (GSSL) and continued immensely with unswerving determination to elevate it to the current status until his demise on 4th January 2003 after a brief illness. In acknowledging this extraordinary contribution with deep gratitude, the GSSL unanimously decided to dedicate the present issue of this 16th volume of its journal in his memory.

Professor Cooray was born on 16th December 1920 in Malaysia and completed his early school education in that country and later at St. Thomas' College in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Subsequently, he pursued an Honours degree in the Department of Geography at the University of Colombo (then University of Ceylon) and later served in the University as a demonstrator in Geography. Subsequently, he was recruited to serve in the Department of the Government Mineralogist (DGM), the predecessor to both the Geological Survey Department (GSD) and the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB). While serving at the DGM, he completed his B.Sc. degree in Geology with First Class Honours at Imperial College in London. As a geologist at the DGM, Professor Cooray completed geological mapping of areas covered by Rangala, Alutgama, Hatton and Chilaw one-inch to one mile scale (1:63,360) sheets. In 1957, he returned to Imperial College and obtained his PhD studying crystalline rocks of Sri Lanka. His PhD work on Sri Lankan Precambrian terrain has contributed immensely towards understanding the complex geology of Sri Lanka.

In 1967, Professor Cooray moved to the University of Ife, Nigeria, as a Senior Lecturer in Geology and then held several teaching,

professional and key administrative positions until his return to Sri Lanka in 1986. Details of these appointments are given in the following article by his daughter Ms. Shantini Ann Cooray and Dr. Deryck Laming.

During his tenure at the Government Mineralogist's Department, Professor Cooray convened the inaugural meeting of the Ananda Coomaraswamy Geological Club (ACGC, precursor to the GSSL), that was held in Colombo on 30th January 1962. This was the first ever formal gathering of Sri Lankan Geologists. As the ACGC membership gradually waned, Professor Cooray again stepped in to establish another society called "Geologists' Association (GA)". The inaugural meeting of the GA was held in Colombo on 19th December 1972. Then, in 1983, Professor Cooray together with other colleagues in Colombo and at the University of Peradeniya, convened the inaugural meeting with him as Chair Pro Tem, to establish the GSSL at the Department of Geology, University of Peradeniya on 3rd September 1983 while concurrently organising a Symposium on the Geology of Sri Lanka at national level. It should be acknowledged here that the initial funds ("seed money" – in his own words) needed for this landmark event, for the Sri Lankan Geological fraternity in particular, was raised by Professor Cooray from AGID (Association of Geoscientists for International Development) and CIFEG (International Centre for Training and Exchanges in Geosciences).

In 1993 he was elected as President of the GSSL. It was the foundation laid during his tenure that enabled the GSSL to be what it is now, an entity that is rendering significant contribution to the promotion of Geology and national development.

Throughout his professional career, Professor Cooray was known for the diversity and creativity of his research in different fields of geology; namely crystalline basement rocks, Jurassic sedimentary rocks, Miocene limestones and Quaternary formations of Sri Lanka. Professor Cooray's pioneering work as a Precambrian Geologist has been published in highly ranked journals such as *Journal of the Geological Society*

of London, *American Journal of Science* and *Precambrian Research*. Professor Cooray's contribution towards understanding global petrology was highlighted by his landmark paper on "Charnockites as metamorphic rocks" published in the *American Journal of Science* in 1969. In his paper, he discussed that charnockite is a result of granite dehydration during granulite facies metamorphism forming orthopyroxene-bearing rocks. The global geological community especially those who are very familiar with this particular rock type found in India and Sri Lanka concurred with Professor Cooray's definition. The highly popular text book titled "An Introduction to the Geology of Sri Lanka" written by Professor Cooray and published in two editions in 1967 and 1984 by the Department of National Museums of Sri Lanka is an excellent piece of reading not only for geologists but also for anyone interested in the geology of Sri Lanka. The uniqueness of this book is that it contains geological facts explained in a manner comprehensible to anybody who may not have an in-depth knowledge in geology. It has gained iconic status among Sri Lanka's geology literature.

Professor Cooray, as Chairman of IUGS Committee on Geoscience Education and Training (COGEOED) in 1994, launched a two-day workshop on "Earth Science for Schools" for teachers in Sri Lanka, an activity that has now been taken over by the GSSL as an annual workshop in several provinces. At the same time, Professor Cooray, together with several other geologists, laid the foundation to include Earth Science in the school curriculum. He always stressed the importance of geoscience education in schools and universities and the need to educate and inform the general public on the vital necessities of careful use of natural resources and the conservation of the environment.

The Southeast Asian Geological Congress (GEOSAS) was a concept initiated by Professor Cooray which earned him the title of "The Godfather of GEOSAS". In 1995, he organised GEOSAS-II in Colombo with great success functioning as its National Chairman. Professor Cooray served as a visiting lecturer at the Departments of Geology and Geography of the University of Peradeniya for several years. He

also served in the Institute of Fundamental Studies (IFS), Kandy as a Senior Research Scientist of the Department of Earth Science. He was a member of the Board of Management of GSMB from 1997 to 2000. In 1993, he served for four months from April as the first Chairman of the GSMB and later as its Acting Chairman from October 1999 to April 2000. The GSMB geologists greatly appreciated Professor Cooray for sharing his extensive field experience as a Precambrian Geologist, very familiar with the Sri Lankan terrain. During his tenure as the Acting Chairman, the GSMB made the important decision of providing financial assistance every year to the GSSL to conduct its annual workshop on "Earth Science for Schools".

Professor Cooray, a field geologist par excellence, a renowned international academic and educationist, indeed a rare mix, was the recipient of the prestigious Ananda Coomaraswamy Medal awarded by the GSSL in 1989. He was a Honorary Life Member of the GSSL, a founding member of the Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) Association for the Advancement of Science (1945), Honorary Fellow of the Geological Society of America, Fellow of the Geological Society of London, Foreign Member of the Geological Society of Finland, Honorary Life Member of the Geological Society of Zambia and elected Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences in Sri Lanka. He was also the recipient of an honorary award to be included in the distinguished group of geoscientists and educators at the General Assembly of the International Geoscience Education Organization (IGEO) at Calgary, Canada, in 2003, soon after his demise.

In recognition of Professor Cooray's outstanding contributions, the GSSL annually awards the "PG Cooray Medal" to an outstanding young researcher in the field of geology in Sri Lanka. His eminent contributions to geoscience education at national and international levels are recalled with much respect and gratitude. We miss his wisdom and close partnership, but his academic legacy, contributions in the field of geology and his intellectuality, unimpeachable integrity and absolute professionalism will remain with us forever.

Tilak Hewawasam



**Professor Percival Gerald Cooray
1920–2003**