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A Tribute to My Father

Pioneering Nephrology and Kidney Transplantation in Sri Lanka: The Legacy of Professor Mohamed Hussain Rezvi Sheriff

The SLMA Monthly

Official Newsletter of the Sri Lanka Medical Association

APRIL 2026

● A Special Commemorative Issue

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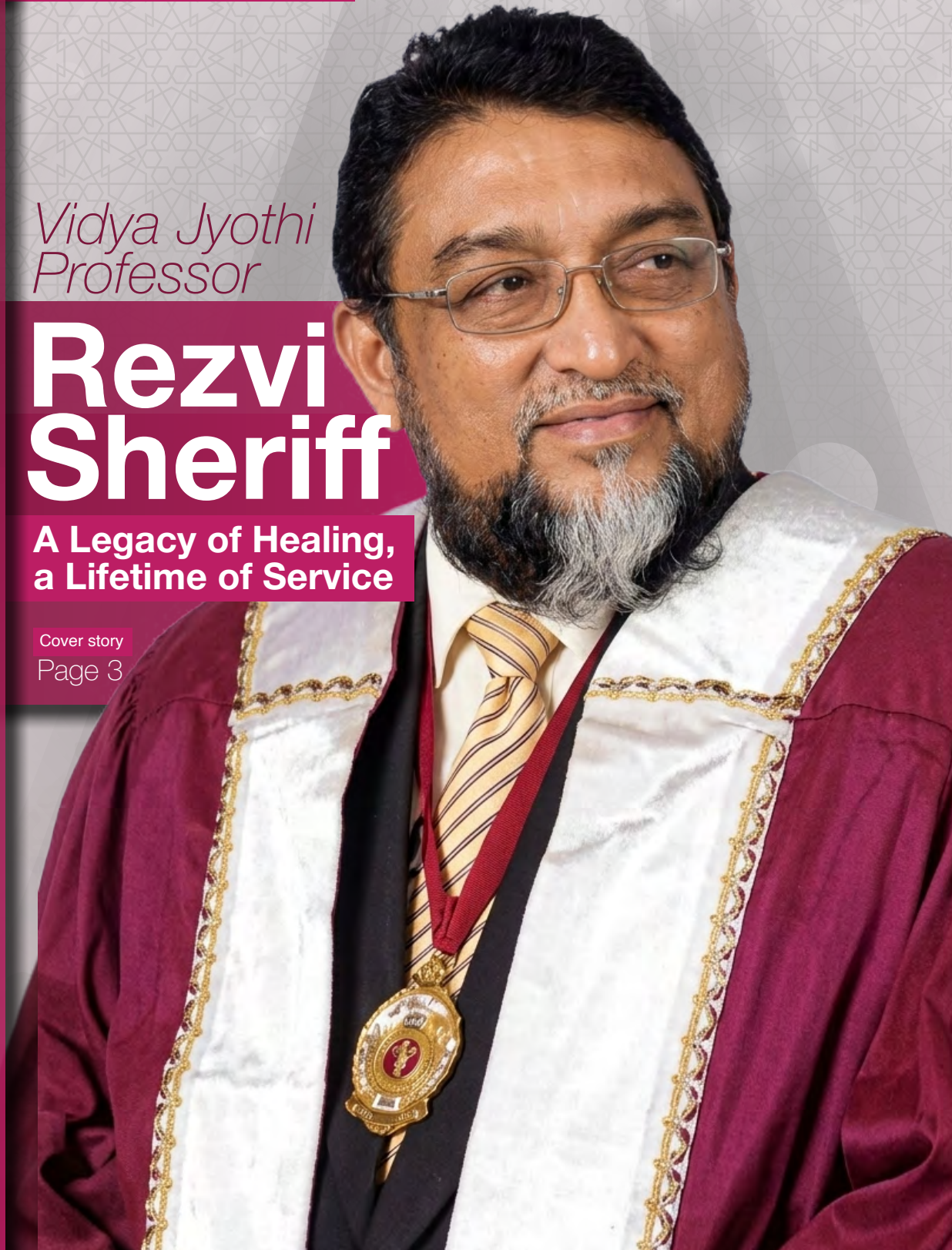


Vidya Jyothi Professor

Rezvi Sheriff

A Legacy of Healing, a Lifetime of Service

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EDITOR'S NOTE: A PORTRAIT OF A GIANT IN THE MEDICAL FRATERNITY



Dr Kumara Mendis
Co-Editor



Dr Lahiru Kodithuwakku
Co-Editor

In the history of Sri Lankan medicine, few names resonate with as much reverence and affection as Vidya Jyothi Professor Rezvi Sheriff. When the SLMA Council decided to publish a special commemorative issue on Professor Rezvi, we were deeply moved. For any medical editor, the opportunity to curate a special issue for a person of such stature is an exceptionally rare and profound honour.

Our goal for this issue was not merely to record a timeline of achievements, but to paint a comprehensive portrait of the man who shaped the landscape of medicine in Sri Lanka. In the course of curating this special commemorative issue of the SLMA Monthly, we encountered an outpouring of tributes, each revealing a different facet of a truly multifaceted life. To do justice to this distinguished figure, we have curated a diverse collection of articles that examine Professor Sheriff's through distinct perspectives:

- **Clinical Mastery:** We delve into his pioneering work as the "Father of Nephrology" in Sri Lanka, revisiting the historic milestones of the first kidney transplants and his life-saving breakthroughs in

clinical toxicology and related disciplines.

- **Leadership at the SLMA:** We look back at his tenure as the 122nd President, a period defined by his vision for a more unified and ethically grounded medical community.
- **An Academician:** We explore his pioneering contributions as a teacher at the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, Colombo and many other academic institutions of higher learning.
- **A Dear Colleague and Father:** Most touchingly, we include intimate reflections from those who knew him beyond the wards—as a trusted confidant, a humble friend, and a devoted family man.

As you flip through these pages, we hope you see more than a medical legend. We hope you find inspiration in his humility, his tireless work ethic, and his unparalleled contributions to the profession. Professor Rezvi taught us that while medicine is a science, healing is an art, one he mastered like no other.

TheSLMAMonthly
Official Newsletter of the Sri Lanka Medical Association

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COVER STORY

Dr Rikaz Sheriff

Medical Officer
Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka



PROFESSOR REZVI SHERIFF

Professor Vidya Jyothi Mohamed Hussain Rezvi Sheriff MD FRCP FRCPE FCCP
Born 1948 in Colombo
Died 30th March 2026 in Colombo



“

Pioneering nephrologist and “Father of Nephrology” in Sri Lanka whose visionary leadership established the nation’s first dialysis and transplant programmes, leaving a legacy of academic excellence, clinical innovation, and devoted community service.



Rezvi Sheriff was born in Colombo, the son of Mohamed Hussain Sheriff. His early brilliance was evident during his schooling at Zahira College, which earned him a scholarship to Royal College Colombo. He entered the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Colombo, beginning a lifelong association with the institution. He graduated MB BS and later obtained his MD, proceeding to the United Kingdom for postgraduate training. There, he became a Fellow of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of London and Edinburgh, internalizing the rigorous clinical standards he would later instill in generations of Sri Lankan doctors.

Returning to Sri Lanka, Rezvi joined the Department of Medicine under Professor Kumaradasa Rajasuriya in 1973. At a time when renal failure was often a

death sentence in the region, he displayed tireless resolve. In October 1985, alongside surgeon A.H. Sheriffdeen, he performed Sri Lanka’s first successful kidney transplant. This milestone was not merely a surgical feat but the foundation of a permanent national programme. By 2015, he had overseen nearly 1,000 transplants. His appointment as Professor of Medicine in 1990 and Senior Professor in 1998 reflected his standing as the pillar of the Colombo Medical School.

Rezvi’s influence extended far beyond the ward. He was a prolific researcher, particularly in nephrology, snake bites, and toxicology, ranking among the country’s most cited scientists. He served as Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine and held the presidency of almost every major medical body in the

country, including the Sri Lanka Medical Association and the Ceylon College of Physicians. His reach was international; he was a councillor for the International Society of Nephrology and a founding president of the SAARC Society of Nephrology. Rezvi was an External Examiner for MRCP in UK & Chennai. He was the Ceylon College of Physicians Coordinator for MRCP Examinations in Sri Lanka. He has contributed to books such as ‘Oxford Textbook of Medicine’ & ‘Kumar and Clark’s Clinical Medicine’. In recognition of his Herculean contributions to medicine, the Government of Sri Lanka conferred upon him the title of Vidya Jyothi in 1993.

A man of deep faith and community spirit, Rezvi founded the Western Hospital (Western Infirmary), ensuring a dedicated

center for renal care. Even in “retirement,” he continued to serve as Senior Professor at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. His final years showed his characteristic resilience; having spent a career saving the kidneys of others, he himself underwent a transplant in 2022.

He is remembered by his colleagues, students, and those who engaged in community service with him, as a mentor of immense compassion who balanced professional excellence with community values. He is survived by his wife Ameena, after 50 years of marriage, his eldest son and only daughter, and six grandchildren; he was predeceased by his youngest son.



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dr Manilka Sumanatillake

132nd President of Sri Lanka Medical Association



IN HONOUR OF A MEDICAL LUMINARY

It is with a heavy heart and profound reverence that I pen this message for our special commemorative issue of The SLMA Monthly, dedicated to the life and legacy of Vidya Jyothi Professor Mohamed Hussain Rezvi Sheriff.

The passing of Professor Sheriff on 30th March 2026 marked the end of an era for the Sri Lankan medical fraternity. As the 122nd President of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) in 2009, he was not merely a leader but a pillar of our profession whose influence transcended boundaries and generations.

Widely revered as the “Father of Nephrology” in Sri Lanka, Professor Sheriff’s contributions to renal medicine were transformative. In 1985, alongside surgeon A.H. Sheriffdeen, he performed the country’s first successful kidney transplant, a milestone that transformed renal care in this country. His tireless resolve led to the establishment of the national transplant programme, which has since overseen over 1,000 procedures.

Professor Sheriff’s academic tenure at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, spanned over four decades. As a Senior Professor of Medicine and

Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM), he mentored nearly every nephrologist currently practicing in our nation. His prolific research in clinical toxicology, particularly regarding snake bites and oleander poisoning, earned him global recognition as one of Sri Lanka’s most cited scientists.

Beyond his clinical and academic brilliance, Professor Sheriff was defined by his unwavering compassion and humility. He treated medical students and patients alike with equal dignity, embodying the highest ethical standards of our noble profession.

For his exemplary service to the profession and the country, Vidyajyothi Professor Rizvi Sheriff was awarded the prestigious Honorary Fellowship of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) in 2025, one of the final major professional honours bestowed upon him before his demise.

In this special issue, we celebrate his towering legacy. While we mourn the loss of a mentor, a colleague, and a dear friend, we find solace in knowing his work lives on through the countless lives he saved and the generations of doctors he inspired.

A GLIMPSE THROUGH THE AGES: CAPTURES FROM THE SLMA ARCHIVES



As President SLMA declaring open the phase 1 of office extension project



Supporting Chettikulam hospital at the end of the civil war



Meeting post intern doctors at Chettikulam relief camp



Opening of the NIROGI Lanka project office at the SLMA premises by Hon. Minister of Healthcare and Nutrition at the presence of Dr Anil Kapur, President World Diabetic Foundation and Prof. Rezvi as the SLMA president on 3rd September 2009

AN EXALTATION TO A SUPERLATIVELY GIFTED SON OF MOTHER LANKA: VIDYA JYOTHI PROFESSOR REZVI SHERIFF

Dr B.J.C. Perera

MBBS(Cey), DCH(Cey), DCH(Eng), MD(Paediatrics), MRCP(UK), FRCP(Edin), FRCP(Lond), FRCPC(UK), FSLCPaed, FCCP, Hony. FRCPC(UK), Hony. FCGP(SL)
Specialist Consultant Paediatrician



We do mourn the passing away of Emeritus Professor Vidya Jyothi Rezvi Sheriff on the 30th of March 2026. He was one of the finest doctors who served the health services of our beloved country and several other nations as well. This narrative is a final tribute to an unmatched medical scientist, a humane carer, teacher par excellence, and an academic of profound scholastic stature. I write this as a very close friend who has known Rezvi Sheriff since 1966.

The official stature of the man is portrayed as Vidyajyothi Professor Rezvi Sheriff, MBBS(Ceylon), MD(Ceylon), MRCP(UK), FRCP(London), FRCP(Edinburgh), FRACP, FCCP, Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences of Sri Lanka, and Emeritus Professor of Medicine. Needless to say, the man is so very well-known, and formulating an eulogy for him is a veritable Herculean task, similar only to one trying to sell ice to Eskimos. One could write reams about the man and still leave quite a lot unsaid and unsung.

Following a spectacular school career, Rezvi entered the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, in 1966, just one year after me, and we have been very close friends ever since. The man went through his undergraduate career, securing many distinctions and gold medals, and qualified in 1971 as the first in class valedictorian, topmost performer of the batch, and the first in the combined order of merit of the two Medical Schools that were in existence at that time, in Colombo and Peradeniya.

From then onwards, there was no looking back. It was a steady, persistent, and exponential climb in the academic ladder to finally reach the pinnacle of the Chair Professorship of the Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo. He is a great researcher and has a monumental plethora of scientific papers published in peer-reviewed, indexed, high-

impact medical journals. He has delivered many orations, countless plenary lectures, guest lectures, and taken part in numerous academic symposia as a resource person. He has been internationally recognised through fellowships and memberships from prestigious academic institutions. He has lectured in many centres worldwide, including a considerable number of universities in the United States of America, Great Britain, Australia, Norway, Japan and Pakistan.

As an Educator, he has mentored thousands of undergraduate and postgraduate students and allied health professionals. He is acclaimed for his quality clinical teaching, unbending integrity, kindness and compassion. His medical journey, culminating in the Chair Professorship of Medicine, has inspired many a generation. He retired from the University of Colombo in 2014 and then worked at the Kotelawala Defence University for another 10 years. Altogether, he has had 60 years of university service and been a professor for 41 years. He was awarded Emeritus status by the University of Colombo, following his retirement.

Rezvi and I were in the UK around the same time in the mid-1970s. In fact he started his initial training in Nephrology at the Wessex Regional Renal Unit of Saint Mary's Hospital, Portsmouth, which was the regional hub for the Southampton area in the South of England while I was doing Nephrology at the Regional Nephrology and Transplant Centre in the City Hospital in Nottingham, in the Midlands of England. He continued on that path with higher Nephrology training at Guy's Hospital, London, UK, and Saint Mary's Hospital, London, UK, while I branched off into a stint in General Medicine at Crawley Hospital in West Sussex, UK. Both of us returned to Sri Lanka in 1978, he as a Senior Lecturer in Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, while I was posted as the Consultant

Paediatrician, General Hospital, Badulla.

Most fittingly, Professor Rezvi Sheriff is the most reputed Pioneer Godfather of Nephrology and Transplant Medicine in Sri Lanka. He initiated the country's first Dialysis Unit and Kidney Transplant Programme, a vision that forever transformed renal care and paved the way for other organ transplantations in Sri Lanka as well. He has been a glittering torch-bearer for our Motherland in the global nephrology landscape. He has served for six years as the only Sri Lankan Council Member ever in the International Society of Nephrology.

Professor Sheriff's influence extended beyond the lecture rooms, wards and clinics. He was a member of the First National Health Policy Formulation Team, the University Reforms Committee, the National Education Commission and the Sri Lanka Medical Council. He was the Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine from 2006 to 2011. All these assignments being coveted administrative assignments, conferred directly by the Executive President of Sri Lanka.

Professor Sheriff founded major nationally important bodies such as the Sri Lanka Society of Nephrology, the Health Informatics Society of Sri Lanka and the Hypertension Society of Sri Lanka. He was also instrumental in building critical medical infrastructure, such as the CLINMARC building at NHSL, the National Institute of Nephrology Dialysis and Transplantation Centre in Maligawatta, the Ceylon College of Physicians Building in Rajagiriya, and the first Kidney Transplant Unit at NHSL. He also set up the most advanced Dialysis Unit in Sri Lanka at the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University Hospital.

In a kind of nostalgic rumination, Rezvi and I used to be on the opposing teams in the Physicians

Versus the Paediatricians Annual Cricket Match. If I remember right, and in a lighter vein, that is perhaps the only time anyone has been able to get the better of this great man.

Ladies and Gentlemen, legends are found not only in the movies. They are there in real life as well. Many call Rezvi a legend, but it is a word that linguistically fails to even begin to depict the man as we know him. He was a delightful combination of academic brilliance, enormous empathy and kindness with the greatest respect for others, much-admired humour, consummate honesty, as well as one with exceptional eloquence garnished with oratorical flair

Role models are remembered, not just for what they achieve, but for the lives they touch and inspire, the opportunities they create, and the kindness they perpetually exhibit. Despite his vast achievements, Professor Rezvi Sheriff remained as an extremely humble, deeply religious, superlatively kind, service-oriented person. As we honour him, we celebrate not just a brilliant academic and a superb clinician, but a man who has lived a life of purpose and integrity: a life devoted to service to the community. Some years ago, in recognition of his services to our Motherland, the Government of Sri Lanka conferred on him the National Titular Award Vidya Jyothi, the highest national honour that can be bestowed on a scientist.

With the demise of Professor Rezvi Sheriff, we have lost an excellent son of our hallowed Motherland, and I have lost a very dear friend.

Goodbye, our friend... May the turf of our beloved Homeland rest ever so gently on you.

May he rest in eternal bliss as we acknowledge the words in the Holy Quran **Inna Lillahi Wainna Illaihi Raajioon** (Verily to Allah we belong, and verily to Him, we shall return)



Sri Lanka Medical Association
Serving the Profession - Serving the Nation.



**International
Diabetes
Federation**
South-East Asia

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VIDYA JYOTHI PROFESSOR REZVI SHERIFF: SLMA PRESIDENT 2009

Dr Malik Fernando

Past President 1992



Dr Ruvaiz Haniffa

Past President 2018



Professor Rezvi Sheriff took the helm of the SLMA as President in 2009. At his Presidential Address, which was on the topic "The Challenge of Non-Communicable Epidemic Chronic Disease in Society," he set out the programme for the academic sessions in March, starting on the 9th. The Chronic Kidney Disease Epidemic of unknown aetiology in the different provinces was to be the main focus of his programme of work. He also wished to have activities to enhance medical professionalism, ethical practice of medicine, a patient centred approach and to encourage a team approach between medical professionals and other allied health staff.

[\[Medical Orations and Presidential Addresses delivered in Sri.pdf\]](https://archive.cmb.ac.lk/server/Accessed21.4.2026)
[https://archive.cmb.ac.lk/server/ Accessed21.4.2026]

The passages below are a few of the activities that took place in 2009, based on personal recollections and official records. Any opinions expressed are purely those of the writer.

Professor Sheriff soon showed himself to be a single-minded leader who knew what he wanted, and who worked till he got it.

Those were the days when the President was the boss, and he ruled the roost. There were no committees for this and committees for that overlooking what the President was planning and making suggestions that were sometimes considered "obstructionist". Perhaps the best example of the president's zeal, indeed the most enduring and obvious, was the "New Building", that now houses the Council Room and the Review Ethics office on the first floor and a parking garage on the ground floor.

An Infrastructure Development Project

The President proposed an extension of office space by 2,000 sq. ft. that was approved at the Council meeting in February 2009. The estimated expenditure of Rs. 3.5 million was approved by both the Council and the Board of Trustees-Rs. 1 mil from SLMA funds and the rest from donations. The foundation stone was laid by the President on the 31st July, and he declared open Phase 1 of the project on 21st November 2009 during the Foundation Sessions. The SLMA's Administrative Officer Mr. M.

Rajasingham, a person difficult to forget, has to be appreciated for his dedication in initiating fund collection and supervising the work. The extension was eventually completed-the story of the Great Flood and the Saga of the Jak Tree are better left for another day.

Internally Displaced Persons

The Sri Lankan Civil War-or the Humanitarian Operation, as the Government put it- officially ended on May 18, 2009. On the 22nd-23rd June 2009, a small contingent from the SLMA visited the Menik Farm camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as well as the Cheddikulam Base Hospital and the Vavuniya General Hospital, with a view to improving the healthcare facilities at Menik Farm. This was at the invitation of the Secretary of the Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition. The team comprised Prof. Sheriff (who was also the Director of the PGIM at the time,) the Hon. Secretary Dr. Ruvaiz Haniffa and Council Member Dr. Rikaz Sheriff. One of the interventions identified was the provision of Medical Record Books to facilitate continuous care and co-ordination

of future care. 30,000 books were designed, printed and handed over to the Minister of Health for issue to IDPs. The cost of the project was US\$ 5,000 and the sponsorship of the project was by the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia, through the efforts of Professor Datuk D. M. Thuralappah, Chairman of the Council of The Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia. We acknowledge his involvement with gratitude.

Provision of Continuous Medical Educational

(CME) material for use of medical personnel working at Menik Farm was another intervention identified. To this end, The SLMA in collaboration with the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, donated to the Hon. Minister of Health through the good offices of the PGIM Director, Professor Rezvi Sheriff, a collection of valuable medical text books, Journals and Compact Disks (CDs) for use by Medical officers serving at Menik Farm.

NIROGI Lanka

National Initiative to Reinforce and Organize General Diabetes care In Sri Lanka

This Diabetes Foundation funded project of the SLMA amounting to US\$ 600,000 over 3 years commenced in July 2009. The project proposal was written in concurrence with the Ministry of Health and all stakeholders in managing diabetes under the leadership of the Diabetes Prevention Task Force (DPTF) of the Sri Lanka Medical Association. The project consisted of three major components that ran concurrently. The initiative was directed at the lay public, especially persons afflicted with diabetes mellitus or at risk of diabetes. It targeted particularly the lower socio-economic groups in the city of Colombo and suburban areas. Its principal aim was to improve the quality of diabetic care and its delivery.

The project was successfully implemented on schedule. Launched during the presidency of Prof. Rezvi Sheriff the project was led by the Chairperson of the Non-Communicable Disease committee of the SLMA, who also chaired the DPTF. There were two Past Presidents who held these posts: Professor Ravindra Fernando (up to 9th September 2009) and Professor Chandrika Wijeyaratne (from 9th September 2009).



President SLMA, Laying the foundation stone

A TRIBUTE TO MY FATHER

The Father of Nephrology

Dr Habeeba Sheriff

MBBS (Manipal), MSc Organ Transplantation (Liverpool, UK),
Fellow in Critical Care Nephrology (WKA)
Director, Kidney Transplant Unit, Western hospital



There are people who pass through this world quietly, and there are people who make a mark. My father was the latter. He moved through life with a rare combination of humility and brilliance, always giving more than he took, always standing taller in service than in recognition. To write about him feels at once impossible and yet essential - because words fall short of the man he truly was.

The Lessons He Left Behind

The first and most enduring lesson my father gave me had nothing to do with medicine. "Don't ever think you're indispensable," he would say. "The world will keep turning even when you're no longer here." He lived this truth without contradiction - humble in his extraordinary achievements, grounded despite his legendary reputation, and always, always kind. He believed that generosity was not a transaction but a discipline: "Give more than you think you're able to give. Your true return is always with your Lord."

He was not a man of haste. He taught me to slow down, to reflect, to gather all the facts before acting - whether in life or in clinical practice. "Don't be hasty," he would remind me. "Take your time. Reflect." In a profession where urgency is constant, his steadiness was a form of mastery.

How He Faced Adversity

"Handle your problems head-on and with no fear. If you are honest with yourself, what happens around you does not matter."

My father's resilience was not a performance - it was his nature. He faced his challenges directly, without flinching and without complaint. He taught me to look closely at who stands beside you in your darkest moments, because those are the people worth keeping. "Keep moving forward," he would say. "Don't look back. Keep your head held high, and keep going."

In his later years, illness diminished his body but never his mind and spirit. He would smile and say, "My legs may be weak, but my mind is sharper than a knife," and then set off in his electric wheelchair - the Professor on Wheels - as unstoppable as he had ever been. When his son passed away at thirty-nine, my father entered a time of silent, dignified grief. He did not crumble. He absorbed the pain and kept moving, as he always had. His resilience was unmatched, his integrity unshakeable. He never allowed what others said to define or diminish him.

“Handle your problems head-on and with no fear. If you are honest with yourself, what happens around you does not matter.”

The Father of Nephrology

My father's life's mission was to change what kidney failure meant for a patient. He refused to accept that it was a death sentence. Through relentless dedication, international collaboration, and a courage that most clinicians would have shied away from, he pioneered transplantation and opened a door of hope to countless patients and families who had none.

He wanted to be remembered as the doctor who gave kidney failure patients a chance- new beginnings, new life. And he succeeded, beyond measure.

The Story That Captures Who He Was

Once, I accompanied my father on ward rounds to the ICU. We

came to the bedside of a woman who had been his transplant patient for over thirty years - she was critically ill, and he knew, with the quiet certainty of an experienced physician, that her time had come. He assessed her with gentleness and composure, then stepped outside to meet her family: an older husband, surrounded by men, women, and children of all ages.

My father asked the husband to sit down. Calmly, with great compassion, he reminded him of what had happened three decades earlier: how she had received a transplant against tremendous odds and become one of the few transplant patients in the country to carry a pregnancy to term. Immunosuppression in pregnancy was barely understood. Many physicians would have refused the challenge. My father reached out to colleagues in the United Kingdom, studied every available piece of evidence, and managed her with extraordinary care.

Nine months later, she had a healthy baby. Then another, and another - four children in all, who were now the grown men and women standing in that corridor: doctors, lawyers, engineers, married with children of their own. Thirty years of life. Four children. A family that would not have existed.

The husband, though deep in sorrow, took my father's hands and thanked him - not just for saving his wife, but for the thirty good years, for the family they had built, for everything those years had given them.

I stood there and understood something I will never forget: that being a truly great doctor does not only change a patient's life. It changes generations.

Father, Doctor, and Friend

At home, medicine was never 'work.' My father would talk about his patients at the dinner table with the same warmth and attention he brought to everything

he loved. We would think through treatment plans together, and did it with joy and it felt not like a burden but like a privilege - to be trusted to be included in something meaningful. He led by example in the truest sense: patient first, himself next.

He was witty. He laughed easily and often, with a humour that could light up any room. He made time for us always - taking us out, travelling, opening our eyes to the world and everything God had placed in it. He taught me everything I know, patiently, hopefully, as if every lesson might take root.

I used to tell him I could never be him. He would smile. "But you can at least try," he'd say.

He was a pillar that never fell - in good times and in difficult ones, he was always there. He was my greatest teacher, my most trusted guide, and most of all, my dearest friend. I will miss that friendship more than anything.

A Life Well Lived

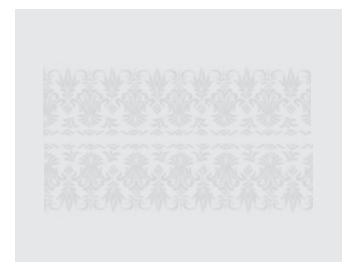
He died as he had lived: in service. He was on his way to see his patients when God took him back - swiftly, mercifully, like a sweet poem reaching its final line. It was, in every sense, a death befitting the life he had lived.

He will be missed profoundly by me, my husband, my children, my brothers, and his beloved wife, who stood faithfully by his side through every season of his remarkable life.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to him we shall return."

Alhamdulillah.





PIONEERING NEPHROLOGY AND KIDNEY TRANSPLANTATION IN SRI LANKA: THE LEGACY OF PROFESSOR MOHAMED HUSSAIN REZVI SHERIFF

Dr Udana Ratnapala

Consultant Nephrologist
MBBS, MD, FRCP (UK), FRCP (London),
MRCP SCE (Nephrology), FISN, SISN,
DipUKMED (LSTM)



The evolution of nephrology and kidney transplantation in Sri Lanka is inseparable from the life and work of Professor Mohamed Hussain Rezvi Sheriff, widely regarded as the father of modern nephrology in the country. His contributions span clinical service development, postgraduate training, research innovation, and institutional leadership, collectively transforming renal care from a limited specialty into a structured national service.

One of Professor Sheriff's most enduring achievements was the establishment of the first kidney transplant programme in Sri Lanka in October 1985. At a time when transplantation services in South Asia were still in their infancy, this initiative required not only clinical expertise but also the creation of systems for donor selection, immunosuppression protocols, perioperative care, and long-term follow-up. The sustainability of this programme is evident: more than 2,500 kidney transplants have since been performed, reflecting both continuity and progressive refinement. Importantly, this early groundwork laid the foundation for the expansion of transplant services beyond Colombo, influencing national policy and practice.

Parallel to transplantation, Professor Sheriff played a central role in developing dialysis services. His work at the National Institute for Nephrology, Dialysis and Transplantation in Maligawatte represents a landmark in renal care infrastructure. The institute, which he helped to establish and develop, has delivered over 150,000 dialysis procedures, significantly improving access to life-saving renal replacement therapy. His vision extended beyond mere service provision; he emphasized quality, safety, and sustainability, integrating modern dialysis technologies and multidisciplinary care models.

Equally transformative was his contribution to human resource development. Recognizing early that sustainable nephrology services require trained specialists, Professor Sheriff was instrumental in establishing the postgraduate nephrology training programme at the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine. This initiative, introduced over 25 years ago, has produced more than 50 consultant nephrologists, enabling decentralization of renal services across the country. His role as a trainer, examiner, and mentor ensured that these specialists were not only clinically competent but also academically oriented and ethically grounded. This contribution arguably represents one of the most impactful aspects of his legacy, as it ensures continuity of care and innovation beyond his own career.

Professor Sheriff's academic contributions further strengthened nephrology practice in Sri Lanka. With over 250 peer-reviewed publications, his research spans nephrology, transplantation, and clinical toxicology, particularly snakebite and yellow oleander poisoning-conditions of significant regional relevance. His collaboration with international institutions, including initiatives such as the Oxford-Colombo research link, brought global attention to local health challenges. His editorial roles in major textbooks such as Kumar & Clark Clinical Medicine and the Oxford Textbook of Medicine underscore his international academic standing and his role in shaping medical knowledge beyond national boundaries.

Another critical area of his contribution is the integration of nephrology with public health challenges. Sri Lanka has faced a significant burden of chronic kidney disease of unknown origin (CKDu), particularly in the North Central Province. Professor Sheriff's involvement in curating the World Health Organization's CKDu repository represents a major effort in consolidating

evidence, facilitating research collaboration, and guiding policy. His work highlights the importance of contextual nephrology-adapting global knowledge to local epidemiological realities.

Institutional leadership has been a recurring theme in his career. As Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine and later as a senior academic at the University of Colombo and the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, he influenced medical education, research priorities, and health policy. His role in establishing clinical and academic infrastructure, including the Clinical Medicine Academic and Research Centre (CLINMARC), reflects a commitment to creating environments that foster both patient care and scholarly activity. The naming of the "Vidyajyothi Prof Rezvi Sheriff Auditorium" is a symbolic recognition of this impact.

and as a council member of the International Society of Nephrology, he played a pivotal role in shaping nephrology discourse at both national and international levels. These positions enabled him to advocate for resource allocation, policy development, and regional cooperation in renal care.

Importantly, Professor Sheriff's work exemplifies the integration of clinical excellence with visionary leadership. His ability to identify gaps in healthcare delivery and respond with structured, scalable solutions distinguishes his career. Whether in establishing transplant services, expanding dialysis access, or training the next generation of nephrologists, his approach has consistently been proactive and system-oriented.

Recognition of his contributions has been both national and international. The conferment of the Vidyajyothi award-the highest scientific honor in Sri Lanka-acknowledges his pioneering role in nephrology. Additional accolades, including international merit and peace awards, reflect the broader societal impact of his work, particularly in improving access to life-saving therapies.

In conclusion, the contribution of Professor Rezvi Sheriff to nephrology and transplant services in Sri Lanka is profound and multidimensional. He not only introduced and developed critical clinical services but also ensured their sustainability through training, research, and institutional development. His legacy is evident in the robust nephrology infrastructure, the cadre of trained specialists, and the improved outcomes for patients with kidney disease across the country. For any clinician or policymaker examining the development of nephrology in resource-limited settings, his work offers a compelling model of how vision, leadership, and perseverance can transform a healthcare system.

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Professor Sheriff's academic contributions further strengthened nephrology practice in Sri Lanka. With over 250 peer-reviewed publications, his research spans nephrology, transplantation, and clinical toxicology, particularly snakebite and yellow oleander poisoning: conditions of significant regional relevance.

His contributions also extend to professional organizations and regional collaboration. As President of the Sri Lanka Association of Nephrology and Transplantation and the Sri Lanka Medical Association,

PROFESSOR REZVI SHERIFF: ACADEMIC, RESEARCHER, CLINICIAN, AND LEADER

Vidya Jyothi Professor Vajira H. W. Dissanayke

Dean, Faculty of Medicine

University of Colombo

Past President, Sri Lanka Medical Association



I first encountered Professor Rezvi Sheriff as a student in the 1990s - one among many in a crowded lecture hall, trying to keep up with the clarity and precision of his thinking. Years later, I had the privilege of working with him as a colleague, and it was only then that I began to fully appreciate the depth of the man behind the teacher.

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To us as students, he was exacting, sometimes intimidating, but always fair. As colleagues, we came to see the same qualities expressed differently - through generosity with his time, a quiet but unwavering commitment to standards (starting from his own hand writing – probably the most beautiful handwriting of any contemporary medical professional in the country if not the world), and a deep sense of responsibility to the profession.

To us as students, he was exacting, sometimes intimidating, but always fair. As colleagues, we came to see the same qualities expressed differently - through generosity with his time, a quiet but unwavering commitment to standards (starting from his own hand writing – probably the most beautiful handwriting of any contemporary medical professional in the country if not the world), and a deep sense of responsibility to the profession. His life brought together the roles of physician, academic, researcher and leader in a way that felt seamless, almost inevitable.

Academic

Professor Sheriff was, above all else, a teacher. His lectures were never about simply transferring information; they were about training the mind to think. I remember how he would pause mid-discussion and ask a question that forced us to re-examine what we thought we knew. It was uncomfortable at times - but that discomfort was precisely what made us better. Later, as a colleague, I came to understand how intentional this was. He believed that medicine could not be taught passively. It had to be questioned, debated, and defended with evidence.

His contributions to academic life at the University of Colombo and the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine reflected this philosophy - raising expectations not only of students, but of teachers and trainers themselves. He was deeply invested in building systems that rewarded good teaching and upheld academic integrity. For him, standards were not negotiable; they were the foundation on which the entire profession rested.

Researcher

As students, we were aware that he was a prolific researcher, but we only fully understood the breadth of his work much later. His research was never abstract or detached - it was grounded in the realities of our patients and our health system. Working alongside him, I saw how he approached research questions: always asking whether the answer would make a difference. His work spanned nephrology, non-communicable diseases, toxicology, and beyond, reflecting both intellectual curiosity and a keen awareness of national priorities. He encouraged younger colleagues to engage in research not as an obligation, but as a responsibility - to contribute to knowledge that mattered locally while maintaining international standards. Many of us who ventured into research did so

because he created that culture around us.

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Looking back, I realise that the lessons he taught us were not confined to medicine. They were about discipline, quiet pursuit of excellence, and a deep devotion to faith as exemplified by the life he led after retirement. As his students and later his colleagues, we carry those lessons forward - and in doing so, continue a legacy that he built over a lifetime.

Clinician

Despite his academic and research commitments, Professor Sheriff remained, at heart, a clinician. Patients trusted him instinctively. There was a quiet confidence in the way he approached complex problems - never hurried, always methodical. As a student on the wards, I remember how he would dissect a case with remarkable clarity, turning what seemed like a confusing presentation into a coherent story. As a colleague, I saw the same process unfold in real time, often under pressure, yet never compromising on thoroughness. His pioneering role in establishing dialysis and kidney transplantation services in Sri Lanka transformed patient care in ways that are difficult to overstate. What we now take for granted exists because of the groundwork

he laid, often in challenging circumstances.

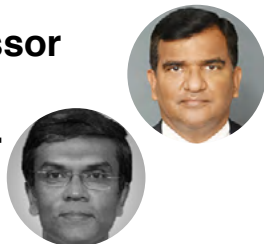
Leader

Professor Sheriff's leadership was never about visibility; it was about impact. Whether as President of the Sri Lanka Medical Association, President of the Ceylon College of Physicians, Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, President of the Health Informatics Society of Sri Lanka or in his many other roles, he approached leadership with the same clarity and discipline that defined his teaching and clinical work. What stood out most was his insistence on doing things properly. He believed that institutions must be built on fairness, transparency, and merit. Even when this made decisions more difficult, he did not compromise. For those of us who had the privilege of working with him, his influence extended far beyond formal roles. He shaped how we think, how we teach, and how we approach our responsibilities as doctors.

Looking back, I realise that the lessons he taught us were not confined to medicine. They were about discipline, quiet pursuit of excellence, and a deep devotion to faith as exemplified by the life he led after retirement. As his students and later his colleagues, we carry those lessons forward - and in doing so, continue a legacy that he built over a lifetime.

A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO ‘OUR PROF MHRS’: VIDYA JYOTHI SENIOR PROFESSOR MHR SHERIFF

**Vidya Jyothi Professor
Prasad Katulanda**
**Emeritus Professor
Saroj Jayasinghe**



For those of us who had the privilege of knowing him-as students, colleagues, or simply as fellow human beings-Professor Rezvi Sheriff was never just a teacher. He was a mentor, a guide, and a quiet force who shaped not only how we practice medicine but also how we work with others.

We first came to know him several decades ago, spanning thirty to fifty years for the two of us. Over that long stretch, what struck us most was his humility-which we try our best to continue. He was approachable at any time of the day and was a father figure, willing to lend a helping hand during any crisis, be it personal or professional. He brought together a new generation of academics from a range of finer specialties to the Department of Clinical Medicine (DCM), nurtured them into a cohesive academic team, and made them part of the ‘DCM family’, which persists to this day.

A clinician par excellence, he navigated and explained the toughest concepts in the simplest of terms. He was able to lay bare the thinking patterns and clinical reasoning of a master clinician. He never lectured from a pedestal; he simply took the time to teach, always ready to listen to the student and always willing to teach.

His contributions to Sri Lankan medicine are immense. He is rightly called the Father of Nephrology-he performed the country’s first kidney transplant in 1985 as a partnership between the university, the Ministry of Health, and the private sector through the Faculty of Medicine Kidney Transplant Programme. To support this initiative, he set up the Renal Research Laboratory in the Department. He also established dialysis services in the private sector, opened a dedicated private hospital, and collectively carried out over a thousand transplants for patients from around the world. Beyond the titles and milestones, he

trained nearly every nephrologist this country has today.

His vision extended far beyond kidneys. As a professor at the University of Colombo, Head of Clinical Medicine, and Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, he reshaped medical education. He actively participated in the curriculum reforms of the 1990s, which introduced a pioneering integrated curriculum to Sri Lanka. The subspecialty of nephrology

developed during his tenure, and he initiated several new postgraduate programs, including the MD in Nephrology. He was a key figure and initiated several collaborations-such as the Ox-Col project on snakebite research. He was a leading researcher recognized by several international professional bodies and was awarded several honorary fellowships.

He had a special talent for developing institutions along with their infrastructure. He obtained land from the NHSL, planned, and built the Clinical Medicine Academic and Research Centre- ClinMARC-which became a hub for academic activities. At the time it was opened, ClinMARC was the only purpose-built site in the country dedicated to clinical

assessments. As a tribute, its auditorium was named after him. He was a key figure in forming the Colombo Medical School Alumni Association (CoMSAA) in 2011, a long overdue needs for an institution established in 1870. He was instrumental in obtaining land in Rajagiriya and built a home for the Ceylon College of Physicians.

Physicians, the Sri Lanka Medical Association, the Nephrology and Transplantation Society, and many more-he led with wisdom, integrity, and an unwavering sense of duty. He led the Colombo Medical School Alumni Association (CoMSAA) during the year the Colombo Medical Congress was inaugurated in February 2020-fond memories, as we were the two co-chairs of the organizing committee of CMC-2020.

He was tireless in his dedication to work: visiting the ward late at night to see seriously ill patients, spending hours with those who had undergone transplants. His patients, his students, and his country always came first. And his legacy isn’t just what he built-it’s what he planted in others. Thousands of doctors carry forward his discipline, his compassion, and his pursuit of excellence. In that sense, he is still here: in every ward round, every classroom, every life touched by his teachings.

Even his final moments spoke of who he was. He took his last breath while on his way to see a patient. He completed his journey peacefully, doing exactly what he had always done.

On a personal note, we remain filled with gratitude. Whatever we have become in our professional lives was shaped by his guidance, starting from our days as medical students. He taught us not only how to be better doctors but also how to be better human beings. He encouraged us in our wide range of academic and professional pursuits, allowing us to grow intellectually and professionally.

Thank you for your service to our nation. Thank you for your dedication to medicine. Thank you for shaping so many of us. And thank you for being the mentor, and the man, we all needed. His journey here has ended, but his impact will endure for generations.

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His patients, his students, and his country always came first. And his legacy isn’t just what he built-it’s what he planted in others. Thousands of doctors carry forward his discipline, his compassion, and his pursuit of excellence. In that sense, he is still here: in every ward round, every classroom, every life touched by his teachings.”

He renovated and developed a hospital in Colombo as a tertiary care specialized facility: the Maligawatte Kidney Hospital.

These endeavours required hours of negotiation with officials, politicians, and professionals, as well as facing an unending list of administrative procedures required during the construction process. He endured, persisted, and succeeded in all these ventures. He was a prime mover in the establishment of the alumni association. All these examples illustrate his far-reaching vision and amazing capacity for institutional development.

He mentored generations of undergraduates and postgraduates, quietly and generously. In all his roles-as President of the Ceylon College of

APPA: MY GRANDFATHER, MY HERO

Aleeza Sheriff
Granddaughter



To the world, he was a pioneer and a visionary, but to me, he was simply Appa—the man who taught me that “nothing is impossible”. During my school years I was able to write my version of his biography. It was not just a project; it was a journey into the heart of a man who turned every obstacle into a stepping stone.

A Legacy of Resilience

From a young age, Appa faced challenges that would have discouraged most. Stricken by polio at four, he emerged with a characteristic gait that became his

signature—a reminder that a limp is no barrier to taking large strides in life. He taught me that difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations and that positivity is the ultimate tool for overcoming any situation.

The Professor of Possibility

Appa’s brilliance was matched only by his generosity. Whether it was sharing his meticulously written notes with colleagues or spending time guiding his students, he believed that sharing knowledge was a form of charity.

He was a man of hard work and determination, showing us that excellence is not just about passing exams, but about a lifelong thirst for learning.

A Playful Heart

Beneath the many academic hats he wore was a playful character who loved to crack jokes and share “juicy stories” from his adventures. He taught me the value of a balanced life—to work hard, but also to take time to travel, explore the world, and enjoy a friendly chat with a stranger.

My Eternal Guide

Appa, thank you for being patient with my many questions and for trusting me to tell your story. You showed me that true greatness lies in humility, kindness, and a heart that remains content with God’s blessings. You will always be my greatest inspiration and my hero.

I hope to make your dream of seeing your grandchildren succeed a reality. May Almighty Allah bless you.



REMEMBERING PROFESSOR REZVI SHERIFF WITH GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION

Dr Achala Balasuriya

MBBS, MD, FRCPE, FCCP, MSc (UK), FACP (USA)
Founder Secretary, Sri Lanka Association of Geriatric Medicine (SLAGM)
Editor, SLAGM, Treasurer, Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA)
Member, Editorial Board, Ceylon Medical Journal



Sri Lanka lost one of its most distinguished physicians this year with the passing of Professor Rezvi Sheriff. Celebrated as the Father of Nephrology in Sri Lanka and a former Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM), Professor Sheriff's contributions to medicine in this country spanned decades and touched far more lives than those his own specialty could reach. Among those lives was the nascent field of Geriatric Medicine—a discipline he had no professional obligation to support, but chose to champion with characteristic generosity.

The Sri Lanka Association of Geriatric Medicine (SLAGM) wishes to place on record its deep sense of loss, and its enduring gratitude to a man who helped make our specialty possible.

The Man Behind the Title

Those who knew Professor Sheriff speak not only of his intellect but of his humanity. He had the rare gift of making the person in front of him feel heard—whether that was a patient, a junior colleague, or a young doctor nervously presenting an ambitious idea. He was, by nature, an encourager. He believed in people before they had proven themselves, and he

used his institutional influence not to guard territory but to open doors.

As Director of the PGIM, he carried enormous responsibility for the direction of postgraduate medical education in Sri Lanka. Yet he remained accessible, unhurried, and genuinely curious about ideas that came to him from outside his own domain. It was this quality—the willingness to listen across disciplines—that would leave an unexpected mark on the care of older Sri Lankans for generations to come.

experience had instilled in me a deep conviction: that our ageing population deserved a dedicated medical specialty, and that Sri Lanka had none. Armed with little more than passion and a draft proposal, I sought an appointment with Professor Rezvi Sheriff, who was then serving as Director of the PGIM Colombo.

I remember the anxiety of that walk to his office. Professor Sheriff was by then already a legend—the Father of Nephrology in Sri Lanka, a clinician of towering intellect and academic

of absolute conviction, he said the words that I have carried with me ever since: “It is indeed a timely concept. I will support your vision.”

From a Conversation to a Specialty

True to his word, Professor Sheriff championed the establishment of a Specialty Board in Elderly Medicine under the Multidisciplinary Board of Study at the PGIM. This was no small act of administrative will—it required persuasion,



Professor A. Rezvi Sheriff as Guest of Honour at the Inaugural Academic Sessions of the Sri Lanka Association of Geriatric Medicine, 22 November 2014, which he helped make possible through his early support for Geriatric Medicine as a specialty in Sri Lanka.

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“It is indeed a timely concept. I will support your vision.”

Professor Rezvi Sheriff, to a young physician proposing Geriatric Medicine as a specialty in Sri Lanka

A Door Opened for Geriatric Medicine

The story of how Geriatric Medicine took root in Sri Lanka is, in no small part, the story of Professor Sheriff's generosity of spirit.

I had recently returned to Sri Lanka after completing my postgraduate training in Geriatric Medicine at the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney, Australia. The

stature. What would he make of a young physician's ambitious proposal to establish an entirely new specialty? I need not have worried.

He listened. That is what I remember most vividly. Professor Sheriff listened to me with the full, unhurried attention that only the truly great can afford to give. He asked thoughtful questions. He reflected. And then, with a quiet authority that carried the weight

institutional courage, and the kind of long-sightedness that is a hallmark of transformational leadership. He saw, before almost anyone else in Sri Lanka's medical establishment, that the demographic future of this island nation would demand doctors trained specifically to care for its elders. Multidisciplinary board of study after many years eventually has now become the Board of Study in Geriatric medicine

REMEMBERING PROFESSOR REZVI SHERIFF WITH GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION

by Dr Achala Balasuriya

Continued...



Professor Sheriff addressing the inaugural session - 22 November 2014.

offering MD in Geriatric Medicine and Diploma in Geriatric Medicine courses to Sri Lankan trainees.

Approximately ten geriatricians now serve Sri Lanka's ageing population across the country-a number that will grow with each passing year. Professor Sheriff lived to see this. He was present at the Inaugural Academic Sessions of SLAGM in November 2014 as our Guest of Honour, and his presence that day carried a meaning that went far beyond ceremony.

The Inaugural Sessions: A Moment He Shared With Us

The photograph from that November day in 2014 captures something that cannot easily be put into words. Professor Sheriff, in academic regalia and his distinctive colourful stole, seated at the head table of an association he had helped bring into existence-not as its founder, but as a friend of its founding. The banner behind the panel read "Towards Achieving a Healthier Ageing"-a vision he had believed in long before the occasion existed to celebrate it.

He spoke that day with the warmth of someone who genuinely cared about what the room represented. Those present recall not a formal keynote but a conversation-reflective, kind, and encouraging. He expressed pride in what had been built. He spoke of the importance of caring for older people with dignity and skill. And he expressed hope for

the young geriatricians who would carry the work forward.

For SLAGM, his presence at that inaugural event was an affirmation. For those of us in the room, it was a gift.

A Legacy Woven Into Many Specialties

It would be too narrow to remember Professor Sheriff only through the lens of Nephrology, remarkable as his contributions to that field were. His legacy is also present wherever a physician

in Sri Lanka was mentored with patience, wherever an ambitious idea was taken seriously by someone senior enough to dismiss it, and wherever institutional power was used to serve the profession rather than its gatekeepers.

Geriatric Medicine in Sri Lanka is one chapter of that wider legacy-a chapter he did not author, but without whose early support might never have been written.

The SLAGM inaugural panel, November 2014. Professor Sheriff

served as Guest of Honour at the event, which he helped make possible through his early support for Geriatric Medicine as a specialty in Sri Lanka.

Remembered with Gratitude

Professor Rezvi Sheriff leaves behind a medical community that is immeasurably richer for his presence in it. He was a clinician of the highest order, an educator of quiet brilliance, and a human being of uncommon generosity. He saw the work he supported bear fruit, and we are grateful that he did.

The Sri Lanka Association of Geriatric Medicine extends its deepest condolences to his family, his colleagues in Nephrology, and all who had the privilege of learning from him. We carry his encouragement forward in everything we do.

May he rest in peace.



Professor Sheriff celebrating the launch of the SLAGM website with colleagues- 22 November 2014.

VIDYA JYOTHI PROFESSOR REZVI SHERIFF: THE RESEARCHER AND ACADEMICIAN

MBBS, MD, FRCP, FCCP, FRCPE, FRACP, FNASL
1948 – 2026

Vidya Jyothi Professor Prasad Katulanda

MBBS, MD, FRCP (Lon), FCCP, FACE, DPhil (Oxford)
Consultant Endocrinologist & Diabetologist,
National Hospital of Sri Lanka
Professor & Head
Department of Clinical Medicine, Faculty of Medicine,
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka



Emeritus Professor Rezvi Sheriff, without doubt, is one of the most distinguished medical professionals this country has ever produced. His contributions spanned every sphere in medicine.

As a clinician he has served many hospitals over five decades and treated hundreds of thousands of patients from all walks of life. These include National Hospital of Sri Lanka (NHSL), the Kothalawela Defence University hospital, National Institute of Nephrology Dialysis and Transplantation (NINDT) and many hospitals in the private sector in Sri Lanka.

He had been a great visionary and an innovator and his contributions to medicine in Sri Lanka is immeasurable. He established renal services in Sri Lanka including dialysis, renal transplantation and National Institute of Nephrology Dialysis and Transplantation (NINDT) at Maligawatte. He is called Father of Nephrology in Sri Lanka.

Professor Sheriff had been an inspiring undergraduate and postgraduate teacher and a visionary educator. He was the Professor of Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Kothalawela Defence University, Director Postgraduate Institute of Medicine which are some of the most outstanding contributions. Establishment of the ClinMark facility at the NHSL

and introduction of MRCP UK examination in Sri Lanka are other noteworthy contributions.

He is one of the most respected and prolific researchers in many fields of medicine. These include nephrology, toxicology and toxinology including snake bite and non-communicable diseases. He has established the Herpetarium and snake venom research facility at UoC and

He had been a tireless advocate for advancing healthcare in Sri Lanka being an advisor to the Ministry of Health and as a medical leader. He had been the President of the Ceylon College of Physicians, Sri Lanka Medical Association and founded several medical bodies such as Sri Lanka Society for Nephrology and Transplantation, Sri Lanka Hypertension Society and Health Informatics Society of Sri Lanka.

Australasian College of Physicians, International Society of Nephrology (Council Member), Asian Society of Nephrology, the President of the SAARC Society of Nephrology, Urology & Transplant Surgery. He has been an examiner of many international examinations including MRCP UK. He is a founder member of SACTRC (South Asian Clinical Toxicology Research Collaboration) and founded the Ox-Col (University of Oxford Colombo link) for studies on snake bite and yellow oleander poisoning.

Across all these roles Prof. Sheriff has played, one constant has remained—his commitment to people, country and the humanity.

Prof. Rezvi Sheriff has made a large contribution to Medicine in Sri Lanka as a medical teacher, astute and sought after clinician, researcher, postgraduate trainer and examiner, administrator and has been a pioneer and entrepreneur in medicine, nephrology dialysis and transplantation locally and internationally.

Thousands of doctors who are his students will carry forward his teachings, his discipline, his compassion, and his pursuit of excellence. In that sense, his legacy is not confined to history, it will live on in every ward round, every classroom, and every patient encounter influenced by his teachings.

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He is one of the most respected and prolific researchers in many fields of medicine. These include nephrology, toxicology and toxinology including snake bite and non-communicable diseases. He has established the Herpetarium and snake venom research facility at UoC and also been a director at Institute of Biochemistry and molecular biology at the UoC. For his achievements in research he was conferred the titular award Vidya Jyothi by the President of Sri Lanka.

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In addition to above he has brought much fame and recognition to Sri Lanka with his international involvements as an advisor or fellow of Royal College of Physicians London and Edinburgh, Royal

THE RHYTHM OF A LEGACY: A TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR REZVI SHERIFF

Dr Rikaz Sheriff

Medical Officer
Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka



My father's journey was defined by a cadence that began long before he became a pioneer in medicine. Stricken by polio as a child before the age of a vaccine, he was given a new name, ****Rezvi****, to invite blessings into a life that started with a physical trial. That characteristic limp never slowed him down; it became his signature. He taught me that a perceived weakness, when met with a determined spirit, becomes a unique strength. I was born in the UK during his training, witnessing the seeds of a mission that would eventually change the landscape of healthcare in our country. When the government failed to see the value of kidney transplantation, my father did not retreat. He used lateral thinking, dug deep, and forced a path where none existed, refusing to accept that kidney failure was a death sentence.

“

...When the government failed to see the value of kidney transplantation, my father did not retreat. He used lateral thinking, dug deep, and forced a path where none existed, refusing to accept that kidney failure was a death sentence.

I remember him in those early years as a man in constant motion-whizzing through life with a speed and purpose that most could not match. He would arrive home for a "short rest," just enough to check in with us and ground himself, before heading back to the theater for his transplants. Despite his legendary reputation and the constant urgency of his profession, he "invested" his time in us with the same precision he used in clinical

practice. Our Sundays at parks, restaurants, and visiting relatives were not merely outings; they were lessons in presence. He taught me that no matter how high one rises, you are never too busy to be a father. It is a lesson of time-management and family-first service that I now strive to pass on to my own children.

My father did not just teach medicine; he trained character. I was not a natural student, and I often reflect that without his relentless persistence, I might be singing in a bar today rather than tackling health problems as a doctor. He saw potential in me when I didn't see it in myself-a gift he extended to countless undergraduates and postgraduates throughout his career. He was a man of discipline who believed that honesty was the only foundation for success. Even a simple loan from him came with a syllabus on the value of one's word and the importance of financial integrity. He led by example, ensuring he was a pillar that never fell, regardless of how difficult the season.

His influence did not stop with his children; it flowed effortlessly into the next generation. When my daughter, who chose psychology over medicine, asked him if she had let him down, his response was a testament to his humility: "Just be the best in what you do". He encouraged the trailblazing spirit in everyone, regardless of their chosen path. My sister's eldest son spent countless hours absorbing his wisdom, and as I look at the new generation-their smiles, their behaviors, and their drive-I see flashes of him. Someone will undoubtedly look at one of these children one day and say, "There is a bit of Rezvi in them." While no one can replace the unique, kind soul that was my father, his essence is already being reborn in the family he built.

Ultimately, his greatest gift to me was a spiritual grounding that kept us all humble. He lived by the wisdom of ****Surah Al-Asr****, frequently reminding us to use our time wisely before we are called to give an account of it



to Allah."Don't ever think you're indispensable,"he would say."The world will keep turning even when you're no longer here". He died as he lived-in service, on his way to see his patients, moving forward until the very last moment. He was my greatest teacher, my most trusted guide, and my dearest friend. We belong to Allah, and to Him we return, grateful for the windows of life he opened for others and the eternal lessons he left for us.



SLMA IN APRIL

Highlights

Advancing ‘Medicine for All’: SLMA Regional Meeting in Matara

The Sri Lanka Medical Association, in partnership with the Ruhunu Clinical Society, recently hosted a regional clinical meeting in Matara themed “Medicine for All.” The event gathered distinguished experts and clinicians from across the Southern Province for a day of insightful academic sessions and technical discussions. The SLMA extends its gratitude to Council Member and Consultant Cardiologist Dr. Sandamali Premaratne, as well as the Ruhunu Clinical Society’s leadership, for their instrumental roles in making the event a success.



Doctors Clinch Thrilling Victory at 17th Law–Medical Cricket Encounter

The Doctors secured a thrilling 3-wicket victory at the 17th Annual Law–Medical Cricket Encounter, held at the BRC Grounds in Colombo. Beyond the competition, this annual tradition highlights the vital role of physical activity and sports in professional life while fostering sportsmanship and camaraderie between the country’s legal and medical fraternities. Doctors’ Cricket is organized under the SLMA Sports Forum, led by Prof. Chathuranga Ranasinghe.



SLMA IN APRIL

Highlights

Empowering Women in Healthcare: SLMA Marks International Women’s Day 2026

The SLMA Women’s Health Committee celebrated International Women’s Day 2026 with a timely webinar: **“Give to Gain: Supporting Women in Healthcare in the Age of Burnout”**. Led by Committee Chair Prof. Anuruddhi Edirisinghe alongside expert panelists Dr. Dulani Kottahachchi, Dr. Santhushya Fernando, and Dr. Kaumudee Kodikara, the event focused on tackling the “dual burden” of work and home. The session provided actionable insights into creating safer, non-discriminatory medical environments and addressing the rising challenge of professional burnout.



Enhancing Clinical Practice through Practical Microbiology and Virology

The SLMA, in collaboration with the Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists (SLCM) successfully conducted a workshop titled, **“From Sample to Script: Practical Microbiology, Virology & Parasitology for Clinicians”**.

This intensive session enhanced the knowledge and skills of medical professionals to bridge the gap between diagnostic sampling and clinical management. Highlights of the workshop include,

- Smart Microbiology: Dr. Dharunee Narmadha Weerakoon on the critical role of cultures in infectious diseases.
- Primary Care Virology: Dr. Sevewandi Abeywardana providing guidance on managing common viral infections.
- Practical Parasitology: Dr. Lalindi De Silva on the essential parasites clinicians cannot afford to miss in Sri Lanka.
- Antibiotic Stewardship: A joint session by Dr. Shirani Chandrasiri and Dr. Upul Dissanayake on empirical vs. culture-guided antibiotic management.



SLMA IN APRIL

Highlights

Towards a TB-Free Sri Lanka: SLMA Marks World TB Day 2026

The SLMA hosted an expert-led webinar for World TB Day 2026, focusing on the goal of a TB-free Sri Lanka by 2030. From introducing rapid point-of-care diagnostics, implementing new paediatric treatment cycles to address the treatment gap, experts discussed important public health concerns regarding ending TB. This programme was conducted in collaboration with the National Programme for Tuberculosis Control and Chest Diseases (NPTCCD), bringing together public health officials, clinicians, and researchers to preserve the hard-won gains in TB control.



Exploring Medical Futility in Palliative Care: SLMA Lunch Time Webinar

A Lunch Time Webinar was conducted by Dr. Udayangani Ramadasa, Specialist in Internal Medicine and Senior Lecturer in Medicine, University of Sabaragamuwa on “The Art of Medical Futility in Palliative Care”.

SLMA
in
APRIL

SLMA Saturday Talks

Following Saturday Talks were conducted with a very high participation of junior doctors and medical students.

- **Obstructive Jaundice** by Professor Ishan De Zoysa, Senior Professor in Surgery at the University of Colombo.
- **Approach to Haematuria** by Dr Ranga Wickramarachchi, Consultant Urological Surgeon at the General Sir John Kotelawala Defense University

Time-Critical Decisions in the ED: SLMA Monthly Clinical Meeting Highlights

A Monthly Clinical Meeting was organized in collaboration with Sri Lanka College of Emergency Physicians on “**Shock: Time-Critical Decisions in the Emergency Department**”. Dr M.H.F Haseena and Dr Piniuru Perera conducted the session with expert guidance from Dr Inuka Wijegunawardana and Dr Bandara Ekanayake.

Session 1
Compensated till Collapse- Approach to Sepsis at ED
Dr M.H.F Haseena
Senior Registrar in Emergency Medicine

Session 2
Paediatric Shock – Opening the Right Path at the Right Time
Dr Piniuru Perera
Senior Registrar in Emergency Medicine

Session 3 (Quiz)
Undifferentiated Shock in the ED: A Case-Based Rapid Fire Quiz
Conducted by **Dr M.H.F Haseena** & **Dr Piniuru Perera**

Expert Panels
Dr Inuka Wijegunawardana (Consultant Emergency Physician) & **Dr Bandara Ekanayake** (Consultant Emergency Physician)

22nd April 2026
12.30pm to 2.00pm
SLMA Auditorium

Meeting ID : 863 5727 1441
Passcode : 955653

For More Information +94 11 269 3324 or visit slma.lk



International
Diabetes
Federation
South-East Asia

Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA)
in collaboration with
International Diabetes Federation

139th ANNIVERSARY
INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS 2026



DATES:
22nd – 25th July 2026



VENUE:
Cinnamon Life at
City of Dreams, Colombo

ORATION SUBMISSIONS

- SLMA Oration
- Dr. S.C. Paul Memorial Oration
- Dr. S. Ramachandran Memorial Oration
- Prof. N.D.W. Lionel Memorial Oration
- Murugesar Sinnnetamby Memorial Oration
- Sir Nicholas Attygalle Memorial Oration
- Sir Marcus Fernando Memorial Oration

EXTENDED DEADLINE:
15th MAY 2026

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Guidelines



ACHIEVEMENTS BY SLMA COUNCIL MEMBERS

Flying the SLMA flag high

1. Dr Padma Gunaratne, past President and current Council Member of the SLMA has been appointed to the National Commission on Women (NCW) in recognition of her leadership in the health sector. The NCW is mandated to investigate rights infringements, provide legal guidance on gender-based injustices, and safeguard women's interests across both public and private sectors. Recently, Dr Gunaratne was part of the NCW delegation that engaged in high-level discussions with the visiting UN Women Regional Director. ▼



UN Women Regional Director Ends Sri Lanka Visit, Calls to Close Gender Gaps

2. Dr Lahiru Kodituwakku, former Secretary and current Public Relations Officer of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA), recently completed the prestigious fellowship in Mediation and Conflict Resolution at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael in The Hague. This highly competitive global programme recognized Dr. Kodituwakku's extensive work in building networks among communities and policy makers during disasters and crises.



3. Dr Dulani Kottahachchi, current Vice President of the SLMA was awarded the prestigious fellowship of American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists in recognition of her services to the endocrinology in Sri Lanka and beyond.

Sri Lanka Medical Association
in collaboration with
Sri Lanka Society of Gastroenterology

Pre-Congress Workshop 1
Navigating the MASLD Epidemic: Beyond Biopsies

7th April 2026 9.00 AM to 1.00 PM SLMA Auditorium

Programme

- 9.00 AM - 9.15 AM Registration & Pre-Assessment
- 9.15 AM - 9.30 AM Opening remarks
Dr Manilka Sumanatilleke, President-SLMA
Dr Sujeewa Kumarasena, President-SLSG
- 9.30 AM - 9.50 AM "Beyond biopsies": Navigating the MASLD Epidemic"
Dr Eranga Thalagala
Consultant Gastroenterologist, DGH Chilaw
- 9.50 AM - 10.10 AM From NAFLD to MASLD: A Paradigm Shift for Clinicians
Dr Hiruni Jayasena
Hon. Consultant Gastroenterologist
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University
- 10.10 AM - 10.20 AM Q & A
- 10.20 AM - 10.40 AM Tea Break ☕
- 10.40 AM - 11.00 AM Identifying MASLD in Everyday Practice
Dr Mananjala Senanayake
Consultant Gastroenterologist, Colombo South Teaching Hospital
- 11.00 AM - 11.20 AM Beyond Biopsies: Modern Approaches to Liver Assessment
Professor Madunil Niriella
Professor in Gastroenterology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya
- 11.20 PM - 11.40 AM Selecting Patients for FibroScan: Clinical Pathways and Priorities
Dr Uditha Dassanyake
Hon. Consultant Gastroenterologist,
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya
- 11.40 PM - 12.00 PM Tailoring Treatment: Using Fibrosis Data to Manage MASLD
Vidyajyothi Professor Arjuna P De Silva
Senior Professor in Medicine,
Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya
- 12.00 PM - 12.15 PM Q & A
- 12.15 AM - 12.45 PM Interactive Case discussion
"Empowering Decision-Making: Putting It All Together"
Dr Tharanga Liyanaarachchi
Consultant Gastroenterologist,
DGH Gampaha
- 12.45 PM - 1.00 PM Closing remarks and lunch

Registration fee LKR 2500

CPD Points & Certificates Awarded | Refreshments Provided | Duty Leave Approved

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30
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In the heart of Colombo Seven,
where stories unfold.

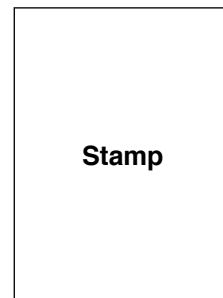
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