"Seest thou a man diligent in his business he shall stand before kings" said King Solomon in the book of Proverbs in the Holy Bible (Proverbs Ch 22 : V : 29). Professor R V Rajam was one such. He passed away on 29th October, 1992 at Madras, a few months before his 100th birthday. He leaves behind three married daughters: his wife pre-deceased him a few years ago.

Ramakrishna Venkata Rajam was born on 9th January, 1893 at Kumaralingam, Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu (former Madras State), India. He had his schooling at Erode and in the diamond Jubilee High School at Gopichetipalayam, Coimbatore District from 1899 to 1911 and obtained his school leaving certificate in 1911. He did his Inter Science at the Madras Presidency College from 1911 to 1913 and then joined the Madras Medical College for his MB, BS, from 1913 to 1918, passing with a First Class and First Rank in the Madras University. He was awarded the Prizes in Pathology, Surgery, Clinical Medicine and the Ramabadra Medal for the highest mark in the MB, BS Examination with distinction in Medicine, Surgery and Midwifery. He was the Johnstone Gold Medalist - given to the best outgoing Medical Graduate.

He obtained his MS(Madras) in April, 1930; MRCPE in July, 1931 (Speciality - Venereal Disease); FRCP in 1953; FRSE in 1958 and FAMS of the Indian Academy of Medical Sciences in 1961.

He served as temporary commissioned officer of the Indian Medical Service (IMS) from April, 1918 to October, 1920; became an Assistant Professor of Surgery, Madras Medical College: 1920-21; Assistant District Medical Officer: 1921-1924; Lecturer in Surgery, Medical School, Tanjore: 1924-1928; Assistant Professor of Surgery, Madras: 1928-1930; Assistant to Venereal Disease Specialist, Government General Hospital, Madras: 1930. He was sent on study leave to Edinburgh 1930-31. On return with his MRCPE he was appointed lecturer in Venereal Diseases, Madras Medical College and Venereal Disease Specialist, Government General Hospital, Madras from 1931 to 1948.

He became the First Dean of the Madras Medical College and the Government General Hospital, Madras: 1949-1952, and later Director of the Institute of Venereology, Madras Medical College and Government General Hospital, Madras, 1952-1959. After retirement he was appointed Professor Emeritus in Venereal Diseases, Madras Medical College and Government General Hospital, Madras. He also held many other posts of distinction:

Honorary Surgeon to the Last Governor General of India Sri C Rajagopalachari: 1948-1959.

Member and Vice-Chairman WHO Expert Committee on Venereal Disease: 1948-1958.

A WHO consultant and visitor to Thailand and Indonesia.

First President of the Indian Association of Venereology and Dermatology: 1947.


Member Selection Committee to Select the Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

President of Indian Academy of Medical Sciences: 1971-1973.

President of the Voluntary Health Services, Adyar, Madras for two terms.

A man of extraordinary energy and wisdom he brought to bear on his day to day work an interest and skill which was the envy of all his colleagues. His Patient Care, Teaching and Research have never been equalled by any one before nor would it be in the future too. His knowledge of his speciality was encyclopedic and also his knowledge of the English literature which he was fond of. He had mastered the art of communication so well indeed that every one in an audience, be he a noted scientist or an ordinary medical man, knew that they were listening to a master of the subject he was handling. He could with ease explain the intricacies of the scientific knowledge which is possible only by the most knowledgeable.

Mathew Arnold in his poem Rugby Chapel when paying a tribute to his late father Dr Arnold, had said that "most men move about in an eddy of purposeless dust; live, love, chatter and hate and when they fade away no one remembers them as no one remembers which wave rose in mid-ocean and disappeared", but Dr Arnold was different. In reviewing the achievements and stature of R V Rajam in the Medical Profession one can say that most medical men move about in an eddy of purposeless dust, live, love, chatter and hate and when they fade away no one remembers them, but Professor Rajam was different. He will continue to be in the minds and hearts of the elite of the medical profession always. He was a friend, philosopher and guide to many a member of the medical profession.

I gratefully acknowledge the help of the following in preparing this notice: Dr Jayaram, MD, grandson of Professor Rajam; Dr T M Kumarasamy of the Indian Medical Association; Dr (Miss) C N Sowmini, Emeritus Professor of Venereology; Dr (Mrs) N Masillamani, Professor of English, Women's Christian College; Dr (Mrs) A Kamalam, Additional Professor of Dermatology and Dr (Mrs) G Senthamil Selvi, Assistant Professor of Dermatology.