

UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA CHAPTER



# HANTHANA NIGHT

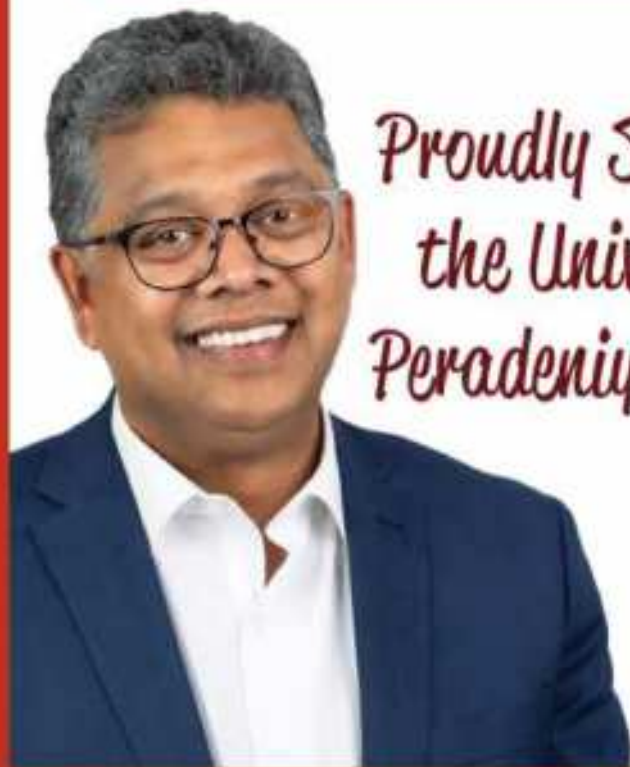
FUNDRAISER DINNER DANCE  
&  
GET TOGETHER  
2024

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There constant communication and updates reassured us of his commitment to speed the sale of the property. There is no one else I would recommend other than Team Spicy  
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Hasi & Raveen were everything you would hope to get from a real estate agent. They were friendly, knowledgeable, professional and one of the most hard-working agents they knew which we hoped to achieve and he worked hard to get that for us. I can't thank them enough for doing my mum and dad's property justice.  
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TEAM Spicy



Raveen

Hasi **'K'**

# Program

## Hanthana Night

26 October 2024

- 
- 6:30 pm Arrival of Guests
- 7:00 pm Opening Dance
- 7:10 pm Welcome the Audience
- 7:15 pm Welcome Address – President UPAAWA: Mrs. Senika Gunawardena
- 7:20 pm Introduction of the Chief Guest
- 7:25 pm Address by the Chief Guest: Mr. Anuruddha Liyanage
- 7:50 pm Vote of Thanks – Secretary UPAAWA: Dr. Hafeel Kalideen
- 7:55 pm Slow Rhythmic Music and Ballroom Dance
- 8:00 pm Pawan Mallawarachchi with Swasthi – Session 1
- 8:45 pm Dinner
- 9:30 pm Door Prizes and Raffle Draw
- 9:45 pm Pawan Mallawarachchi with Swasthi – Session 2
- Midnight End of Proceedings

This fundraising dinner dance is conducted under the charitable collections licence CC23527 issued to The University of Peradeniya Alumni Association



# President's Message



Dear members, friends and families,

On behalf of the University of Peradeniya Alumni Association, Western Australian Chapter, it is an absolute honour and privilege to warmly welcome you to our 19th Annual Fundraiser Dinner Dance. Tonight, we gather not only to entertain but also to make a meaningful impact on the lives of university students in need in Sri Lanka. The proceeds from this event will go towards our scholarship fund, providing essential assistance to those who are in need.

This year, our chapter embraced transformation, focusing on growth while preserving our traditions. Our scholarship program remains at the heart of our mission, but we have also expanded with new projects that create opportunities and uplift communities, in both Perth and Sri Lanka.

In May 2024, we proudly hosted the lively "Pera Pedura" networking event, bringing our members and friends together for a memorable evening filled with music, laughter, and great company, showcasing the talents of our alumni and friends.

We sent over 100 valuable books on Soil Sciences and Engineering to the University of Peradeniya, generously donated by Professor Laurie Davidson, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Murdoch University, WA. These books will benefit students and researchers in years to come.

Our efforts to strengthen community connections have also flourished. We participated in a friendly cricket tournament alongside alumni associations of other Sri Lankan universities, fostering friendships. Furthermore, we contributed to several community fundraising initiatives cementing our role as active members of the wider community here in Western Australia.

I would like to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to all of you—our incredible alumni, sponsors, and friends. Your unwavering support reminds us that our mission goes beyond just a goal; it is a responsibility to give back to our motherland, which gave us the gift of a world-class free education and shaped us to become global citizens.

Before I conclude, I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated committee and their families. Your tireless efforts and unwavering commitments have made this evening possible, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

To our generous sponsors and contributors who have provided advertisements, gifts, and endless encouragement, and to all the families and friends who have joined us tonight—thank you for your continued support and belief in our cause.

I wish you all a delightful evening filled with joy!

Thank you.

Senika Gunawardena

BSc in Physical Sciences (Peradeniya)

PGDipEd (Peradeniya)

MPA, ECU (AU)

President, University of Peradeniya Alumni Association WA Chapter 2024-2025





*Front row- left to right*

Nilanthy Jayasundera, Hafeel Kalideen(Secretary), Senika Gunawardena(President), Dinu Ekanayake(Ex Officio President), Kapila Katulanda(Treasurer)

*Back row- left to right*

Ajith Pandithasekara, Tharindu Weerasinghe, Dushantha Dissanayake, Jinendra Bandara, Prasanna Hetti Arachchige, Manjula Nanayakkara, Gayan Weerasooriya(Vice President)

*Absence*



Sunil Samaraweera



Maduranga Alahakoon  
(Editor)

# University of Peradeniya Alumni Association WA Chapter Executive Committee 2023-24

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Senika Gunawardena

Vice President

Gayan Weerasooriya

Secretary

Hafeel Kalideen

Treasurer

Kapila Katulanda

Ex Officio President

Dinu Ekanayake

Editor

Maduranga Alahakoon

Committee Members

Sunil Samaraweera

Dushantha Dissanayake

Prasanna Hetti Arachchige

Nilanthi Jayasundera

Ajith Pandithasekara

Jinendra Bandara

Tharindu Weerasinghe

Manjula Nanayakkara

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## Secretary :

secretary@upaawa.org.au

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# Vice Chancellor's Message



Dear Alumni and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you on this momentous occasion of the fundraising dinner dance 2024 organized by the Western Australian Chapter of the University of Peradeniya Alumni Association. First and foremost, let me thank you all for continuing this important tradition and organizing the dinner dance for the 18th consecutive time.

Over the past eight decades, the University of Peradeniya has produced nearly 140,000 successful graduates who are making significant contributions in various fields worldwide, and you are a testament to this esteemed group. Throughout the years, the university has grown immensely, achieving prestigious accolades, such as being ranked as the only Sri Lankan university selected by the US News & World Report in 2022 and securing the top position in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for four consecutive years. Today, the university comprises nine faculties, four postgraduate institutions, and nearly twenty centers and units, educating over 14,000 undergraduates, 8,000 postgraduates, and 10,000 distant learners.

Among all alumni associations of the university, the Australian chapters of AAUP have played a pivotal role in supporting the university in numerous ways. Recently, they assisted in recruiting professional counselors for the newly established Center for Psychological Support Unit (CaPSU). This center, set up in the aftermath of the global pandemic and economic crisis, has significantly improved the psychological well-being of the university community, saving many lives.



# Vice Chancellor's Message

In just 18 years, the university will celebrate its centenary. Under the visionary leadership of the current Vice-Chancellor and the governing council, we have developed a comprehensive roadmap known as the 'Centenary Development Plan.' This plan includes initiatives such as establishing a solar power generation system sufficient to power the entire university, setting up an international branch campus, developing a multi-residential and commercial complex, modernizing sports facilities, upgrading the health center, uplifting the existing WUS premises, enhancing student cafeterias and setting up multidisciplinary research service laboratories.

As you come together, you may reminisce about the cherished memories of our beloved alma mater, which has provided not only an education but also values that have guided you throughout your lives and careers. I hope it serves as a platform to reconnect with old friends, forge new friendships, and strengthen our bonds with the university.

Through this association, you have the opportunity to give back to our university—mentoring the next generation of students, supporting academic initiatives, and contributing to the development of our alma mater as it approaches its centenary in 2042. Together, we can make a difference and leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.

I once again congratulate the organizers of the fundraiser dinner dance on October 26th and extend my heartfelt thanks to all who participated in and contributed to the fundraiser. Your dedication and commitment are truly commendable.

Warmest regards,

Professor Terrence Madhujith  
Vice-Chancellor



# Message from Alumni Association of University of Peradeniya



It gives me great pleasure to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the University of Peradeniya Alumni Association, Western Australia Chapter, on the occasion of their 19th fundraiser Dinner Dance. The steadfast commitment of this Chapter to fostering strong bonds between the University and its alumni, while enhancing the quality of education and student life at our beloved alma mater, is truly commendable.

The Chapter's continued support, particularly through initiatives like the awarding of 15 studentships over the past two years, has had a meaningful impact on the lives of many deserving students. The stipends provided not only help alleviate the financial burden for these students but also offer them a foundation to pursue their studies with dedication, knowing they have the backing of a supportive alumni community. Additionally, the compassionate assistance provided to female students affected by the unfortunate fire incident in 2022 exemplifies the Chapter's deep sense of responsibility and care for the welfare of our students.

As you gather for this wonderful event on the 26th of October 2024 at the Sicilian Club, Balcatta, I encourage all attendees to continue supporting the Chapter's noble efforts. Every contribution helps sustain the ongoing mission of empowering the next generation of leaders who will contribute to the advancement of Sri Lanka and beyond.

On behalf of the AAUP, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Western Australia Chapter for their dedication and wish the event every success.

Warm regards,

Professor Siril Wijesundara  
President AAUP 2025-2024



# Message from Honorary Consulate of Sri Lanka in WA



It is always a pleasure at this time of year to support the University of Peradeniya Alumni Association in their annual fundraising event – Hanthana Night. As a leading organisation within the West Australian Sri Lankan community, the Peradeniya Alumni Association has prioritised charitable actions and philanthropy since its inception, guided by a strong vision of service. UPAAWA understands the power of education and works tirelessly to create equal educational and social opportunities for all. It is heartwarming to witness the success stories of gifted students who, with the invaluable support of your organisation, have been able to reach their full potential.

Hanthana Night, the annual charity fundraising event, is founded in the spirit of unity, cohesion, and compassion for others. It reflects the core values of humility and altruism that are cornerstones of our Sri Lankan culture. Each year, Hanthana Night serves as a reminder to our community that no child should be left behind. It strives to ensure that every child, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to pursue their dreams through education.

Thank you, UPAAWA, for your ongoing efforts to inspire the West Australian community to uphold the values of Sri Lankan culture as we work together to address the social and economic challenges within our communities.

I am truly honoured to be associated with such a noble cause and offer my wholehearted support to the University of Peradeniya Alumni Association. I wish this event great success and hope it continues to inspire positive change in the lives of those who need it most.

Dr. Rosh Jalagge  
Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka in Western Australia



## Editor's Note



As the editor of the University of Peradeniya Alumni Association, Western Australia Chapter, I am proud to present this year's souvenir for the Annual Dinner Dance. This publication reflects the dedication and collaborative spirit of our alumni.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all who contributed articles and reflections, adding immense value by capturing our shared experiences and the impact of our alma mater. Your efforts in preserving our traditions are deeply appreciated.

A special thank you goes to those who supported us through advertisements. Your contributions not only provide financial assistance but also show your commitment to our community, enabling us to continue organizing meaningful events and initiatives.

I would also like to recognize the organizing committee, whose tireless work and attention to detail have made this event and souvenir possible. Their dedication has been crucial to our success.

Lastly, my gratitude goes to the University of Peradeniya Alumni Association for fostering this strong network, helping us reconnect, and supporting our personal and professional growth.

To all our guests, I hope you enjoy this souvenir, cherish the memories it brings, and celebrate the future of our alumni community. Thank you again to everyone who made this possible.

Wishing you a wonderful evening filled with joy and reunion.

Thank you.

Maduranga Alahakoon

Editor, UPAWA 2023-24



# Western Australia Chapter Funded Projects and Donations

2002	\$ 500	Faculty of Medicine
2003	\$ 420	Books to various faculties
2007	\$ 1200	Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Engineering
2008	\$ 4000	Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Animal Science and Faculty of Science
2010	\$ 4500	Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Dental Surgery, Department of Geology, Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Engineering
2011	\$ 4500	Faculty of Arts, Special Needs Resource Centre
2012	\$ 3000	University Medical Centre and the Faculty of Engineering
2013	\$ 3000	55 scholarships for students from eight Faculties (Agriculture, Arts, Allied Health Science, Dental Science, Veterinary & Animal Science, Engineering, Medicine, Science and Management) Swimming Training aids and Notation Lights for Fine Arts Faculty
2014	\$ 2000	Computer donated to the University Main Reference Library
2014	\$ 3000	Scholarships for needy students
2015	\$ 4000	Ramanathan Hall, plate washing facility installation project.
2016	\$ 3000	Funds allocated, awaiting projects from Parent Alumni body (UPAA)
2018	\$ 4055	University Clock Project through CEFAA and equipment donated to the Health Centre through UPAA
2020	\$ 1098	Studentships for 1 year
2021	\$ 7000	Seven Studentships – stipends will be paid during the entire study period
2022	\$ 7000	Six Studentships – stipends will be paid during the entire study period
2023	\$ 35531	Invested in a long-term fixed deposit under UPAA WA Chapter name and only the interest will be used for studentships



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'විජේවර්ධනේ' සේනව ප්‍රකාශයෙන්	නැමි
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සාර පුරා විසිරි ගිය මැයි මල් බිම	වැව්
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ඉටුර අයිතන කුරු කොටුවක ගීයක්	ගයමිනේ
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# PERADENIYA MEDICAL SCHOOL

## REFLECTIONS OF A PIONEER STUDENT [1982-87]



By Dr. Siri Galhenage

In the mid-twentieth century, as a schoolboy who aspired to become a doctor, my image of a medical school was formed by the august institution situated at the heart of Colombo, adjacent to the premier health facility of the nation, and bathed in the odour of pharmaceuticals. Housed in colonial architecture with a clock tower that chimed hourly, the Colombo Medical Faculty of the University of Ceylon, was reminiscent of our colonial past, symbolizing an image and a tradition that was British.

With that image enshrined in my mind, it was with some degree of ambivalence that started my training at the so called 'second medical school' at Peradeniya, after being selected to its inaugural batch of students.

The newly built faculty, to begin with, sat uncomfortably at the entrance to our premier seat of tertiary education, the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya, which reflected our rich cultural heritage. It slowly but surely dawned in me that there was no better setting, both in environmental splendour and social mix, to be nurtured during my formative years as a medical professional. It was hard not to wax poetic.

*Wrapped in a thin veil of mist,  
And cuddled by the arm of a mighty river  
that turns around,  
Cradled in a valley with blossoms abound,  
And secured by rolling hills that surround,  
A seat of learning with an influence so  
profound!*

There were 103 of us who were fortunate enough to be selected to form the pioneer group of medical students at Peradeniya—those of us who received the highest grades in the biology stream at the University Entrance Examination in 1961 but having to endure a tardy start due to a delay in construction of the faculty. We were drawn from all corners of the island – from all social strata and from all ethnic groups and religious persuasions, urban as well as rural, in contrast to the privileged few who had access to medical education in the days of yore. But by a cruel hand of destiny, three out of the 103 were nipped in the bud during the first few years of our training— fate in pursuit of a round figure of 100.

We gained strength through a set of teachers who were both creative in their outlook and inspirational in their attitude in guiding us through uncharted terrain. They took pride in creating a distinctive 'Peradeniya brand' of doctors. I dedicate this humble essay to them all.

Peradeniya campus provided the ideal social milieu for the medical students in developing a broader perspective to life, an essential requirement in their We were placed in halls of residence along

with students of Arts, Science, Engineering, Law, Economics, Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Dentistry etc., and the exposure to them and the relationships developed were invaluable; a process of learning outside the formal, through interpersonal contact. I was allocated to Arunachalam Hall, of which I had the privilege of being elected President during 1963-64. We were unaware that at meal times we sat alongside future law makers, members of the judiciary, diplomats, scientists, educationists, chairmen of corporations, business executives, Heads of departments and even a future Vice-Chancellor. On occasions we had distinguished guests at the high table who inspired us with their after-dinner orations.

The amorous of our lot ventured into female abodes in search of a future partner, together exploring the bush at the foothills to sow the seeds of a lifelong bond.

We were young men eagerly pursuing a vocation in life, while at times resorting to mischief to break the tedium. On convocation day, the graduates from other disciplines, many of whom already in employment, returned to their former abode after the ceremony to celebrate their academic achievement.

They came in with their certificates, which they proudly displayed, but also with an ample supply of amber liquid with the expectation that everyone in the hall got inebriated. And they did, turning our hall into a tavern with joyous splendour! The 'hall hooch', as it was called, culminated at midnight with the high achievers being thrown into the pond in front of the hall! The exercise, which gained notoriety, was called 'ponding'.

Notwithstanding the indecorum we were culturally enriched by our regular visits to the 'wala' [open air theatre] which was later appropriately named 'The Ediriweera Sarachchandra Open Air Theatre' in honour of the doyen of Sinhala drama. As medical students, despite being peripheral to the literary activities of the time, many of us were greatly inspired by the celebrated dramatist and his work - mainly *Sinhahahu* and *Maname* - many of their lyrical pieces often being echoed in our halls of residence! It is only later that I have come to realise that *Sinhahahu*, the mythical tale of the origin of the Sinhala race, carried an archetypal narrative shared by all humanity - the tale of a young man breaking through family bonds to develop his own identity. And, in *Maname*, like many, I came out of the

theatre asking: 'why did that woman behave in that manner on that momentous day', not realising at the time that the primordial tale could be seen from another viewpoint: that it symbolised female empowerment.

The Peradeniya Medical School has produced her own brand of medical graduates nurtured by its resplendent environment, rich social and cultural milieu and a dedicated set of teachers. Many have reached excellence in all spheres of medicine, and were recognised both at home and globally, including the World Health Organisation.

Well into my ninth decade in life and having lived over half a century away from my homeland, I still carry the spirit of Peradeniya in my heart, with pleasant memories that refuse to fade away.

**Dr. Siri Galbenageis** a retired Consultant Psychiatrist, living in Perth, Western Australia



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Memories













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## OUR AWARDS





# AN ANTI-RAGGER'S VIEWPOINT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA FROM 2017 TO 2020

By Dnithi Dasanayake

Long skirts were the norm, yet we wore denims. Eerie eyes like daggers raised goosebumps of quite a few from the lot. I knew this was meant to happen at the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, but why? Because we made the decision to defy the "Raggers," a group of seniors who feel that by using violence and humiliation, especially against new undergraduates, they can maintain an egalitarian culture. We were the "Alayas", or the anti-raggers who were against violence and looked posh in the eyes of the beholder, but we knew who we were back then.

Entering a public university in Sri Lanka is an uphill climb. Rather, surviving was the hardest for me because of the ingrained culture of the "Raggers". However, I had my fair share at the university. I spent three memorable years at the university especially because of the enchanting layout of the university. The magnificent stone pillars under the Senate and the undeniable natural

beauty within the university premises were treasured by many.

In addition to studying English, Greek and Roman History and Psychology, I had the opportunity to be involved in a theatre production called "Hecuba", which was based on a Greek myth. Moreover, my skills were further honed through my volunteering experience with AIESEC (originally a French Acronym for Association Internationale des étudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales and in English - International Association of Students in Economics and Business) at the University of Peradeniya, where I taught English in Poland. I enjoyed attending late-night musical performances on campus, and believe me, a ticket was only about Rs 50. The Rs 30 packet of rice and curry at the WUS canteen was scrumptious enough to appease hungry youths.

Looking back, I realize that my time at the university was not only about achieving-

-commendable grades; it was also about growing as a person and figuring out my passion in life. My career ambitions now have a sturdy base thanks to the experiences and abilities I have gained, which also still influence the way I approach problems in both my personal and professional lives.



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