



Wesley College Old Boys' Union  
Colombo 09, Sri Lanka

NEWSLETTER

2019 / 2020

**PATRON:** Avanka Fernando - Principal

**PRESIDENT:** Wilhelm Van Dort

**GENERAL SECRETARY:** Fowzil Nawaz

**TREASURER:** V. Kamalashwaran



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE OBU COLOMBO

As I come to the end of my tenure as President of the OBU Colombo, I thank Almighty God for the many manifold blessings he has bestowed on me during this period to carry on my tasks. I take this opportunity to share some sentiments with you about our beloved Alma Mater Wesley College that we all love so much. So greetings to everyone, even those who can't physically be with us this weekend. During the last three years I was deeply touched and impressed by the passion many Wesleyites in Sri Lanka and overseas responded to the sound of Wesley's Call. The intense pride many of you feel as Wesleyites, and your commitment to assuring a strong future for College.

We are what we are because many of you have partnered with the OBU Colombo to "make it happen" Some of you "kept coming back to College" by supporting our projects for College from thousands of miles across the globe. It is a sign of your attachment to this great Institution you studied in. It is also a sign of your ongoing commitment to the values and ideals you imbibed during your years in college. You have placed Wesley as a high priority in your investments, and I can tell you without any hesitation - Do not underestimate the impact you have on today's Boys of Wesley's - you are their inspiration!!!

By God's grace, we celebrate the 146th year of College and we prepare to celebrate the 150th year of the foundation of our Alma Mater. We are indebted to Rev. Daniel Henry Pereira who had the vision that led to the creation, leadership and vision of the school back in 1874. None of the education for which the school has become known, would have happened without the foresight of the original Founder of the school, who set out with the express intention of developing a school which provided an excellent education for boys. We owe him a debt of gratitude - because without him this great school simply would not exist, therefore we should never take Founders' Day for granted.

Founder's Week is an opportunity for us not only to celebrate our past but also to look toward the future. For the last three years, I have been honored to serve as the President of the Old Boys Union of Wesley. It has afforded me a vantage point to see the promise and potential future of our great College. I am optimistic and believe we have an incredible future. I must say that during the last three years all the OBU Branches from overseas worked in very close collaboration with the Mother Branch in Colombo, by whole heartedly supporting the projects we undertook for College, namely the Desk and Chair Project and now the Smart board Project. I must mention here that it was the Former President Jeremy Brohier who took the initial steps for the Classroom project, by donating money from the Walk for the first Classroom.

As many Old Boys were quite critical about College and also the lack of proper infrastructure, we the OBU Colombo decided with the Principal to continue with these projects for the betterment of the students. We can now see the dividends of this as the A Level results have improved by 25% this year. However, the future will not be incredible because we talk or dream about it. It will only happen if we plan and prepare for it. As I complete my tenure of three years as OBU President and hand over the Presidency to my successor, I would like to urge my fellow Wesleyites to make the following priorities and commitments as we move toward the 150th Jubilee of College.

Wesley College is a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation for those who have been through it, those who are going through it and those who are still to come. The founders of Wesley had a vision for the college that both you and I continue with today and which we have the honour of sharing. We need to appreciate the legacy that the founders of the College left us, namely the motto, Ora Et Labora - to Pray and Labor On.

It was through hard work that this College was built. It was a community project that involved prayer and work. It was to blend in with the environment and enhance the area in which it was situated rather than detract from it. We now have the honor of benefiting from that hard work and our responsibility is to be good stewards of what was left for us, and what belongs to God so that we too can pass it on to the next generation. In fact we should leave Wesley College better than we found it and our legacies should be positive rather than negative. The Old Boys Union provides a great bridge between the Double Blue Fraternity worldwide and the College - connecting both. The OBU Colombo together with the Principal and the Overseas OBU branches will be working together in preparation for the 150th Anniversary of College over the next 5 years.

Our Double Blue spirit and traditions have taught us many things about life beyond the College Portals. And we hope that wherever we may be, we keep aflame our love for our Alma Mater. After all, Wesley College lies not in the City of Colombo, but it rests and flourishes right in the heart of every loyal Double Blue.

Today - our Founder's Day is a special day, to reflect upon our own individual contributions to our College. As I mentioned earlier, being a member of this illustrious school has its privileges as well as its responsibilities, therefore let us consider our goals for the future. While we celebrate our legacies we must also envision them as steppingstones to the future; looking beyond. It is essential that we leverage the ideas and strengths of our fellow Wesleyites across the globe to encourage and support our School to look beyond to the future. Let us pledge ourselves and make a commitment to do the right thing, to be honourable and to carry out the intentions of our Founders, namely to respond to their goals for a real education, for the stretching of the individual, and for learning and preparation for a successful life. We do it as a school - a great school which has stood the test of time and which has a great history.

The OBU Provides an opportunity for bonding: It appears that most OBU'S are doing this well, enabling Old Boys to renew school friendships and relive the beautiful memories of student days. When they recall the 'good old days', alumni are put in touch once more with the values imbibed at that time. They also recall the inspirational role played by certain teachers and are motivated in some way to be a source of inspiration to others.

As you glance through this Bulletin, you will see the contribution that many Old Boys have made through the OBU Colombo towards the progress and development of College during the last three years of my tenure, for which I deeply appreciate. I would like to thank Fowzil Nawaz our General Secretary and the Treasurer Kamalash for all their support given to me in these last three years, which made my tasks lighter. I thank my Committee who stood by and helped me in all the projects to make the OBU vibrant and alive. Let me also thank the OWSC President Maithree and his Committee for working closely with the OBU, and supporting us in all our endeavours. I thank our Principal Mr. Avanka Fernando for all the support given to me and the OBU, and being approachable to us, where we pulled in the same direction to make these projects a reality.

Last but not least a big thank you to all the members of the Double Blue Fraternity for having faith and trust in me. There is no doubt that you will be great ambassadors of our Alma Mater and a blessing to College wherever you go from here.

May the almighty God grant you His blessings in abundance!

**Ora Et Labora**

**Wilhelm VanDort**

President OBU - Colombo

## Principal's Message



I count it a privilege to address all of you who are proud to acknowledge Wesley College as your alma mater. Everyone of you have been faithful to your alma – mater by having stood beside the College, and extended your utmost support towards its development. I wish to thank all of you for respectfully carrying the responsibility of being the custodians of the values and traditions of Wesley.

I wish to also express my heartfelt gratitude to Mr Wilhelm Van Dort for the exceptional support he rendered throughout his Presidency. My gratitude goes out to the members of the OBU who have voluntarily supported the College, in many ways – especially for being a part of the Security committee during the past year. It was an example and encouragement to see the active participation of the Old boys to ensure the safety of our students.

The contribution of the Old Boys Union is countless, yet I would like to highlight a few. We are grateful to them for supporting the Smart board project at all three branches of Wesley and also for the wooden furniture project, which is still in the process. It was only a suggestion to invite a school from Matugama for a tour around Colombo, but the Old boys went an extra mile and donated a brand new computer to the School. I must also mention their participation in renovating the Sick room & the Chemistry lab which is of great use for our students. The pedagogy training for the teachers which was initiated by the Old boys was so timely and relevant. The contribution of Old boys is not merely restricted to funds, but they have always ensured their presence at significant events of the College which is valued and appreciated by the management.

While thanking the OBU for their tremendous support, I call upon each one of them to continue their faithful partnership with their Alma – mater.

**Ora et Labora**

**Avanka Fernando**

PRINCIPAL

## The Wesley College OBU Colombo - Committee for the Year 2019/20



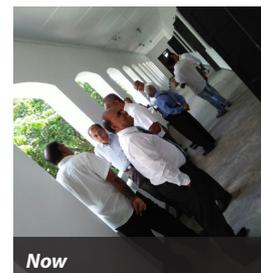
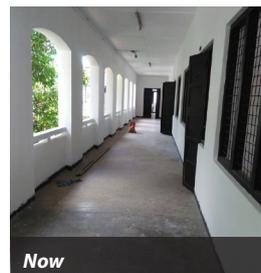
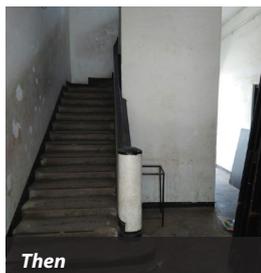
**Seated:** Rohan Amerasinghe, C.T. Rodrigo, Kadir Ishak, Richie Sappideen, P.B. Herath, Sri Shanmugalingam, V. Kamaleshwaran (Treasurer), Wilhelm Van Dort (President), Avanka Fernando (Principal), Fowzil Nawaz (Secretary), B.M. Jurangpathy, Jeremy Brohier, Shimal Thaha, Mithral Perera, Lakshman Uduwera. **1st Row Standing:** Razeen Samoon, Rasheed Muthaliph, Samad Booso, R. Athiththan, N. Sivaruban, D. Ratnadurai, R. Thirukkumar, Iresh Siriwardane, H.M. Siddeek, Fazal Yehiya, Bishri Ameen, Nawaal Qasim, Asif Ansar, Reza Azoor, Farman Cassim, M. Nizam, Oliver Rajadurai. **2nd Row Standing:** Afzal Abdullah, Zaidh Naushard, Rousten Fernando, Shaheem Mahir, Edward Vanden driesen, Shehan Arooz, Samuel Aleem, Flavio De Zilwa. **ABSENT:** Ivor Maharooof, Raja Sinnathuray, L.R. Goonathillake, S. Renganathan, Navin De Silva, M. Vithanage, Chryshan Rodrigo, Peter Peiris, K. Dayaparan, Ranjeeva Senanayake, Senaka Amarathunga, Asith Siriwardane, Ranil Thilakarathne, Benzy Fernando, Ahmed Reza, Chitral De Silva, Raashid Riza, S. Ganegoda, B.T. Balan, Pasindu Ranasinghe, Saliman Buckman, Jason F Gregory.

## OBU Projects from 2017 -2020

### Renovation of the Highfield Block 2018

The OBU Colombo undertook the project of Renovating the Highfield Block at a cost of Rs. 750,000/=

Work was completed and the building was handed over to the Principal in time for the 2nd School term in 2018 April.



### Project - Gift Vouchers for the entire Support Staff of the three Campuses

The Support Staff working in the three Campuses of Borella, Havelock Town and Tampola were presented with Gift Vouchers from the OBU Colombo. This was an initiative taken by Edward Vandendriesen, and these workers were very grateful and happy that the OBU recognized their Silent but important Service to College. This project for the Support Staff during this Christmas Season, which definitely gladdened their hearts, and will motivate them to serve College better.



### Notable Batch Projects

The Batch of 87' conducted a "My Health, My Wealth" campaign for Past and Present teachers at the college on the 14th December 2018. Over 50 batch mates participated including 14 residing overseas.

Over 250 teachers and other staff attended the event and following health checks were done.



### Sick Room Project 2019

A long felt need of Wesley College Colombo was realized when The College Sick Room project was initiated by the OBU Colombo and supported by Mr. Bill Deutrom who sponsored two Ultra Modern Beds from Australia' while the rest of the furnishing and equipping of the Sick room was generously funded by the Batch of 2006 led by Afzal Abdulla and friends on the 5th of April 2019. They have ensured that every minute detail has been looked into, In addition the School Administration has also employed the services of a qualified nurse who ins in charge of the sick room and its maintenance. Today we can proudly say that Wesley College Colombo has one of the Best Sick Rooms among the schools, which every Wesleyite can truly be Proud of. .



### Refurbishment and Opening of the Chemistry Lab on 3rd January 2019

**Rs. 833,000.00/=** Initiated by the OBU Colombo and the Cost of renovation was Donated by an Old Boy Nalin Karunatileke in memory of his Late Father Mr. B.J. Karunatileka who was a distinguished Old Boy of Wesley.

All senior science students stand to benefit from this timely move to renovate and upgrade the equipment and fittings of the lab. The project was mooted by the OBU President, Wilhelm VanDort, and Nalin was glad to take ownership for the project and was behind it from the blue print to the time it was dedicated to the school.



### Water Purifiers For Borella and Havelock Town 2019

22 Water Purifiers were Donated to Wesley - Borella and Havelock Town in 2019 by Old Boy Silmy Faizal from Uni Lever.



### The Smart Board Project

The OBU Colombo Donated 8 Smart boards to the Resource Centre - Total Cost of -Rs. 2,200,000/= (Each Smart Board at the cost of Rs. 275,000/=)

#### Donors -

- OBU donated 6 Smart boards
- Richie Sappideen, Fowzil Nazwaz and Class of '78 / '80 donated 1 Smart Board
- Jeremy Brohier Donated Rs. 150,000/=



### Upgrading the Cartman Library 2019

Mr. Afgar Mohideen - sponsored the upgrading of the Cartman library through the OBU Colombo.

Two computers with software enabling access to Windows, including one Large table with six chairs, for mind games like Chess was donated by Mr. Afgar Mohideen. This gesture is a great boost for the Boys, and will certainly help them in their research and quest for knowledge.

The College Library is now well equipped with a curated collection of 9000 books covering many subjects and many boys are now making use of the facilities in the library. The Cartman Library is very well maintained by the School and is a source of great pride to Wesley.



### The 143 KMPH 2017

The 143 KMPH Motor Rally Event which was the FIRST of its kind was organized by the OBU Colombo with Richie Sappideen as the Chairman organizing Committee, on the 14th of October 2017. Profits from the 143 KMPH project were also donated towards the furniture project in the main campus.



## Batch of '93 - Educational Development Program in 2018

The Class of '93' Led by Asith Siriwardane and Shameen Ganegoda initiated a programme to develop the present education standard of Wesley. A series of seminars covering the entire teaching staff of all 3 campuses were organized. **An eminent panel of lectures delivered lectures covering topics on Child psychology, Ethics in Education, Effective Communication, Child Assessment, Teaching Methods and Development.** The seminar was conducted by renowned Child Psychologist Dr. Chaminda Weerasiriwardena.

## Classroom Desk and Chair Project from 2017 to February 2020

**Number of Desks and Chairs Already Completed: Total of 38 Classrooms with 1300 Desks and Chairs Cost- to the Value of Rs. 7,410,000/= The Entire AL Science, Commerce and the Highfield Block have been completely furnished with new Desks and Chairs. Some of these donors have sponsored 2-5 classrooms. Four more Classrooms need to be done to complete the Labrooy block.**

### Donors of Project:

- Wilhelm Van Dort President OBU Colombo -
- Mr. Divakaran and Classmates
- Mr. Bill Deutrom (In Memory of his Beloved Mother)
- Mr. Sideek, Mr. Farman Cassim and Batch of '91
- The Batch of 2006
- Mr. Buckman and batch of 2003
- Mr. Haleem Hussain
- Pasan Karunaratne ( A college student - His Total Schoolboy Savings 11,000/=)
- Mr. Christopher Swan ( OBU Sydney )
- Mr. Sharman Mouffer and OBU UAE Branch
- Mr. Carlyle Wells-Peris
- Rizwan Shahabdeen
- OWSC 2 Classes – Profits from the DBB
- Mr. Lakshman Uduwara, Mr. Shanthilal Mendis, and Mr. Oscar Dissanayake and the Batch of 73'
- Mr. Mahesh Nanayakkara, Mr. Dilip Bandaratilleke, Mr. Shiraz Jaldin and the Batch of 87'
- Capt. Navin De Silva ( in Memory of Two Classmates)
- OBU Australia - Melbourne Branch
- OBU Australia – Sydney Branch
- Group of Old Boys from Brisbane Australia
- Mr. and Mrs. Upali Ratnayake (donation)
- Mr. Siva Subramaniam (in Memory of his Mother a former Teacher at Wesley and three older brothers)
- Richie Sappideen, Fowzil Nazwaz and Class of 78/80



## OBU Projects from 2017 -2020...

- Donations and Books for Havelock Town Library.
- Computer Donated by Sri Shanmugalingam on behalf of OBU to a Rural School in Matugama.
- Eastern and Western Music Room - Furniture, Instruments to the value of 480,000/= (Buckman and Batch)
- Partly Funding the College Wall.
- Security Arrangements for Colombo, Tampola and Havelock Town after 21/4. The OBU thanks General Mahes Samaraweera for coordinating the security with the Army, Air Force and Police and for keeping the three Campuses and the Boys safe.
- Sponsoring Sportsmen with equipment (Cricketers) and Donations towards the Rugby development fund.
- Starting a fund to financially support students who are sick.
- Sponsoring needy students for their School Fees...
- Memorial Services for departed Old Boys – Tyrone Jansz, Garrick O' Neil and Mr. Shelton Peiris
- OBU Hosting Old Boys from Overseas ....
- Lighting up of the Christmas tree and the OWSC/ OBU Christmas party
- Organizing the Double Blue Ball together with the OWSC
- Donation of School books and Shoes to needy students by an Old Boy who wishes to remain anonymous.
- OBU helping Old Boys who are sick and in need of financial assistance.
- OBU initiated a fund for a College student Jenon Sinula who had Cancer and supported his medical treatment until he passed away.
- The Batch of 2008 donated Rs. 100,000/= through the OBU to the Principal towards the development of Football.
- Old Boy Charith Karunaratne donated Rs. 146,000/= worth Cricket Kits and equipment through the OBU to the First Eleven Team.
- Donation of Books and Shoes to needy students of the Methodist Boys Home
- Affinity Credit Card Commercial Bank

## The Double Blue Chorale

by Peter de Silva | Chryshan Rodrigo | Meashed Liyanage | Rumesh Perera | Rashindra Wijeratne

Music... a mixture of accidentals, key signatures, transposes, majors and minors, parts of bass, tenor, alto and soprano... All of these, synchronized together to form a bar of music... a bar that can capture the mind, soul and emotions of one and transport them to a mystical world where a story unfolds... These stories have a way of speaking to our hearts and minds amidst the chaos that disrupts the peace and stillness that man longs for. Music, a universal language that brings together cultures, races, creeds and beliefs.... A language that has united hearts and ignited passion to see the impossible happen. A language that transcends age, beauty, wise and the not so... Such has been the story of the Double Blue Chorale.

A formation of voices of 5 past Wesley Choristers who came together after 19 years to perform for the glory of God under the band of double blue. Our voices were trained under the great mentoring of a well renowned Choral Director Ms. Priyanthi Seneviratne Van Dort. A mother, a friend, and a counselor she was to us students during the years 1998-2000. To her it was not just about enhancing the talents of students and showcasing them... but about being the best one can be in character and talent. It was this bond of unity and understanding that brought us together again after 19 years to perform at the Double Blue Classics Show organized by the OBU Colombo in August 2019 at the Bishop's College Auditorium to raise funds for the ongoing Smart Board Project of College. .

Now in our 30's and 40's, many of us are married and become parents, we have gone on to be men of grit and industry; and we owe a great part of our success and fruitfulness to our Alma Mater. "To give back to College for what she had given us is a privilege and honour" were the exact same sentiments that all of us old boys had when asked what they felt as we came together and performed. It was indeed an overwhelming experience of mixed emotions, gratitude and unity.

To us it was not about a performance but about standing up to give glory to God and offer our best to honour the sacred establishment of a school that set the foundation for life that has caused us as young men to live blessed lives. It was an evening of sheer joy and pleasure... and once again, the OBU of Wesley College had left behind a great mark in the hearts of those who came to celebrate "Wesley." Ora Et Labora!

Also the Double Blue Chorale was collaborating and instrumental in organizing the first OBU Prayer Day on the theme "Ora Et Labora" We participated in the singing together with Pastor Renen Devadason who led the Worship. The OBU which was well represented on this occasion included several past principals of college.

*Past and present kindly meet  
Each the other proudly greet  
Hearts ne'er cool that once have beat  
Neath the double blue  
And when Wesley's call shall sound  
Ready aye shall all be found  
In duty and in honour bound  
Wesley to the fore.*

**Ora Et Labora**



## Memories of Wesley College

by **Bill Deutrom**



I entered Wesley in 1949 in the nursery class. At that time, we had a Kindergarten section headed up by Mrs. Joyce Leembruggen. Bryan Wijeyekoon's mother, Sheila Driberg (unmarried at the time) was a teacher along with my mother. I finished my schooling at Wesley after the cricket season in 1965, when my sister and I migrated to Australia, to be followed shortly by my parents.

My stay at Wesley was an experience that set me up for my life in Australia. As an only son, I looked forward to my days at Wesley full of fun, camaraderie and sport. Like all young boys it was my hope that I would one day represent my school, like my heroes, who we looked up to. Cricket was the main game at Wesley in the 50's and 60's and a Wesley cricketer was held in high regard.

During my early days at Wesley the Claessen brothers, the Adihetty brothers, the Rajasingham twins, Samsudeen and brother Mihlar and a host of others were the Wesleyites we wanted to emulate. L.R.Gunatileke was a legend and others like L.C.R.Wijesinghe my first captain and one of the best, Darrel Maye, school boy cricketer of the year, Milroy Muthuvaloe, and the Hamer Brothers were my contemporaries who were outstanding sportsmen. Current MIC Clifford Rodrigo was a prominent sportsman, a cricketer and an outstanding hockey player. Upali Perera captained a very successful hockey team

that produced many players chosen for Public schools and I was one of those fortunate players along with Upali and CT.

Wesley did not have the funds to invest in sport unlike the funds now committed to the various sports we are involved in. Our results were based on the efforts of exceptionally talented sportsmen. During my cricketing career the coach that stood out was Mr. Bahar who had great success with the teams he coached. There was no emphasis on fitness, one jog around Campbell park sufficed and fielding practice did not have the drills that are now in vogue. However individually we were pretty fit and the results ensured that we were constantly in the top echelon of cricketing schools. The most interesting aspect of playing cricket for Wesley was the support we had from the Wesley staff and students. The cheer squad was loud and constant. No calamity silenced them. The spectators were packed in and this was common to all schools. Crowds were comparable to the supporters at current rugby matches.

Our trips away to Trinity, Richmond and Kingswood were always enjoyable. Once you survived the compulsory 'RAG' the trips were looked forward to. The visit to Richmond in 1963 was unforgettable for more reasons than the cricket. I was the youngest member and also very mischievous and created a bit of havoc! I rang the Richmond warning bell which was definitely not permitted. We walked to the railway lines and the Ruhunu Kumari was approaching. In a moment of madness I ran across the tracks and would have been very close to being wiped out. The seniors, including my good friend Sarath Wickremaratne, one of the most talented sportsmen Wesley has produced, met and decided to send me home. However they took pity and gave me a strong warning which kept me under control thereafter!! Incidentally we won the match by an innings!! Our team was led by Milroy Muthuvaloe and had Darrel Maye, Schoorman, Mervyn Hamer, Sarath Wickremaratne, Clifford Rodrigo etc. An excellent team that was the Champion Schoolboy team that year.

I was privileged to represent Wesley at Cricket, Rugby, hockey and Tennis and I was always at College either at the grounds or attending classes. At the time it was accepted that the Burghers were going to Australia due to the compulsory Sinhalese policy that was brought in by the Government. As a result, the Sinhalese classes were not taken seriously and the teachers generally asked the burghers to go to the back of the class!!! However, I did get through Sinhalese at the 'O' levels much to the amazement of my friends and I did pretty well at the overall examination. This was mainly due to the encouragement and guidance I received from my close friend Razeen Sappideen who insisted we came to College on weekends to study. He joined the University of Western Sydney as the Foundation Professor of Law. He also became the Dean of law and has a doctorate to boot, leaving me a long way behind academically.

One of our fellow students who made a lifelong impact on all of us who knew him was Robin Perera the Senior Prefect in 1964. Robin and I joined Wesley together and he was a natural leader at a very young age. Unfortunately, at the age of eight he contracted Polio which affected him badly to the degree that he had a problem walking. However, he overcame this set back with his indomitable spirit and left College in 1964 to join Radio Ceylon. He passed away a few years later at a young age. He had a brilliant mind and did not have the time to achieve his true potential. He still sadly missed.

Wesley had many great teachers who made a lasting impression on all who were fortunate to have been taught by them. Committed and always available to assist. They were professionals with a calling. We were fortunate to have Mr. David Joseph. Mr. Haig Karunaratne and Mr. Ivan Ondaatje in our later years and they have left a lasting impression. I will be always grateful for their contribution to my life. The Old Boys in Australia funded a trip for Mr. Haig Karunaratne and Dr. and Mrs. Shanti McLelland to Australia in recognition of their services to Wesley. This was a wonderful occasion and an emotional one for both teachers and past pupils living in Australia.

In my opinion Wesley has had the services of three great Principals, Highfield, Cartman and McLelland. Both Highfield and Cartman were before my time but their legacy stands. I was closely involved with Dr. Shanti McLelland and watched his total commitment to Wesley in so much that he ultimately fell ill, by not taking care of his health. He was not easy to work with as he was driven to achieve an outcome for Wesley and did not accept any negative input. Dr. McLelland stood out with his management skills and his uncompromising attitude to ensure that Wesley would recover and progress. He came to College with a purpose and achieved it. When he joined Wesley, we owed the Church around 40 Million rupees. When he left Wesley had close to Rs 300 million and had two new campuses and a swimming pool. Our academic results had improved as well as our sporting results. Unfortunately, his efforts were not totally recognised and he had to leave when his visa terminated. This was a period of growth and consolidation. Wesley now under the stewardship of Mr. Avanka Fernando has the opportunity to return Wesley to the top echelon of schools in Sri Lanka with the support of a vibrant Old Boys Association which has been a revelation under the dynamic leadership of Wilhelm Vandort.

I am sure that every batch of Wesleyites will have their own heroes and stories to relate. It is an interesting exercise thinking back on your school days and trying to condense these thoughts into a short essay. I am grateful for the opportunity and even more grateful that I had the privilege to attend this great school.

## OBU Prayer Day -17th August 2019

The OBU Colombo had a Special Day of Prayer on the 17th of August 2019 at the College Chapel, on the Theme "Ora Et Labora" Pray and Labour On.. The service was well attended by Old Boys and their families.

Our Principal Mr. Avanka Fernando, and past Principal Dr. Shanti McLelland, Mr. Upali Ratnayake and Mr. M.A.P. Fernando also participated in the service. The Message was delivered by Old Boy Prashan De. Visser, and the singing was led by members of the Double Blue Chorale led by Peter De Silva and Rumesh Perera. The Worship was led by Old Boy Pastor Rene Devadason.



## Wesley's journey in Shakespeare drama

by Dilshan Boange

Twenty two years ago, in 1998, literally in the last century, Wesley saw resurgence in Shakespeare drama under the leadership of past principal the late Dr. N.A.B. Fernando. Wesley College Colombo was reputed for fostering a vibrant English drama culture in the 1970s and 1980s when maestros such as Haig Karunaratne paved the way for many a production that showcased Wesley's thespian talents.

Wesley's annual participation in the prestigious All Island Interschool Shakespeare Drama Competition had been a highlight in the college drama activity calendar. However towards the late 80s, a lapse occurred in Wesley's participation at this competition, and the resurgence was to come during the tenure of the late Dr. Fernando who as Principal willed Wesley to once more showcase her talents at the most prestigious of English drama competitions in the country.

The production that marked Wesley's re-entry into the prestigious interschool Shakespeare competition, in 1998, was a performance of extracts of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. The Principal himself was to steer forward the project as the overall executive director. The late Mrs. Nirmalie R. Fernando who sadly passed away last year in January, was deputised by the Principal as the Teacher-In-Charge of the Shakespeare drama project. She bore the mantle dutifully with utmost conscientiousness, and applied herself untiringly. The supervisory body that guided the production that year was composed of the Principal, his wife Mrs. Ira Fernando who had a wealth of knowledge on Shakespeare drama, and 'Nirmalie teacher'.

The eponymous title role of the Danish prince was played by Andrew Ponnambalam, the roles of the King and Queen were played by Munir Hassan, and Yohan Ferreira respectively, Brandon Ingram portrayed Ophelia, while yours truly acted the role of her brother Laertes, together with a host of many others. There was quite a buzz in college during the weeks leading up to the competition's first round. The cast members were privileged to be excused from lessons after the interval as the Principal approved rehearsals to be held during school time. And so for those of us who were part of that highly 'prized project' we had only half a day in class!

Although our Hamlet production couldn't go beyond the preliminary round in the competition that year, the production was soon staged in college for students, organised as a fundraiser by the Prefects' Guild. Admission was priced at Rs.10/- if memory serves me correctly, and show times were during school hours. With additional cast members, and as a somewhat enhanced production, we did two performances to packed houses. Hamlet became a hit! It became a very well received production among our fellow schoolmates. The path was thus paved for Wesley to make Shakespeare drama a part of the annual activity calendar.

To the best of my powers in recollection, I shall name here the students who performed in the more enhanced production staged in College in 1998. The cast consisted of Andrew Ponnambalam, Munir Hassan, Yohan Ferreira, Brandon Ingram, myself Dilshan Boange, Isuru Kottachchi, Rifard Faizal, Praveen Edema, Prashan De Visser, Ramzi Zainudeen, Eksath Perera, Shemal Stembo, Rushan Hewawasam, Shanaka Jayathileke, Dale Kanagasabey, Heshan Fernando, and Prabath Devendra. My sincere and humble apologies in case I have missed out any names that ought to be mentioned as part of the above named troupe.

A notable fact related to the 1998 cast of Hamlet, is that four students from that troupe would gradually rise to the mantle of Senior Prefect (Head Boy). Those four former Senior Prefects being, Isuru Kottachchi (2001), myself Dilshan Boange (2002), Praveen Edema (2003) and Rushan Hewawasam (2004).

In 1999, we staged an extract of The Merchant of Venice. Wesley bagged her first ever award in the competition that year when Brandon Ingram won the highly coveted Best Actor Award for his portrayal of Portia! The following year, in 2000, Wesley put on a production of an extract of Julius Caesar. That year also marked Nirmalie teacher's finale as Teacher-In-Charge of Shakespeare drama. Her plans for retirement and some health concerns made her 'take a bow' and 'call it a day' from Shakespeare drama.

The resurgence that happened in 1998 put Wesley back on a path to annually participate at the Shakespeare drama competition. Remarkable success was achieved recently when Wesley came into the finals of the competition in 2016 performing extracts from Julius Caesar winning 2nd Runner-Up (3rd Place) while also clinching that year's Best Actor Award for Taariq Juranpathy's portrayal of Brutus, and becoming co-winners (with St. Peter's College) of the award for Best Stagecraft.

The notable stride in 2016 was followed with another significant development when Wesley entered the finals again the following year in 2017, with a performance of extracts of Othello, The Moor of Venice. Wesley emerged 1st Runner Up (2nd Place) for the first time in the College's history.

Last year in 2019 Wesley was yet again selected into the Finals of the Shakespeare competition with a captivating production of 'Twelfth Night'. The production saw what is possibly, 'history being made' in the competition, as three actors from Wesley were jointly honoured with the Best Supporting Actor award!

One hopes that Wesley's robust fraternity of old boys will offer their support to the College this year as Wesley puts her efforts to showcase the talents of the boys in double blue at the all island inter school Shakespeare competition 2020.

Ora Et Labora!

## Farewell Grano.....Rest In God's Eternal Peace

Granville Hamer Former Vice Captain / Wicket Keeper of the Wesley Cricket Team 1973 passed away on the 29th of February 2020. He was also the Curator and Junior Coach of Wesley. Granville was the brother of Russel and Late Mervyn Hamer. The OBU Colombo extends our Condolences to his Wife and two Sons. May He Rest In Peace...



## The Double Blue Classics 2019

Presented by the Old Boys Union Of Wesley College. In Aid of The Wesley College Smart Classroom Project

The Double Blue Classics Show was a fund raiser organized by the OBU Colombo on the 9th of August 2019, at the Bishop's College Auditorium to support the Smart Board project of Wesley.

Asith Siriwardane was the Chairman of the Project and Organizing Committee who worked hard to bring the event to a successful completion. Diva and Kamalesh sacrificed their time towards this project by handling the financial matters meticulously. Fowzil was committed at all times but especially coordinating the tickets and printing. Ranil Tillekeratne coordinated with the bands and the artistes, handled the stage and backstage arrangements ensuring a smooth flow of the show, along with the lighting and special effects, Sri, Afzal, Edward, Thiru, Balan, Peter Peiris, Nawal, Shamin Ganegoda, Iresh Siriwardane, Sivaruban, Balan, Rohan Amerasinghe, Mr. Jansz from the OWSC were all involved and participated to make this show a grand success.



The Programme Featured - Annesley Malawana and the Super Chimes and the Guest Artistes were: Corrine Almeida, Ishan Bahar, Dharmaratne Brothers, Anil Bhareti, Paul Fernando, The Double Blue Chorale. The Compere was - Diamond Deen

Old Boys Union of Wesley College Website | <http://www.wesleyobu.lk>

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