



Union Christian College Alumni Association of North America (UCCAANA)

(A US Tax-exempted Non-profit Charitable Organization)

NEWSLETTER – Special Edition

Volume III

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Number 3

From the Editor's Desk.....



This Special Edition of the UCCAANA Newsletter is rather hastily put together. We just published Volume III, Number 2 on November 12, 2013, or 11-12-13 for those of you who are digitally inclined, but I must say the arithmetic progression was not by design, but simply a coincidence! Some of our members may not even have had time to read the Newsletter due to other important commitments, what with the holiday season being around the corner. But then, out of the blue, we heard the sad news of the passing of Dr. K. C. Chacko, a distinguished alumnus and benefactor of our beloved alma mater, but more importantly, the founding president of the Union Christian College Alumni Association of North America (UCCAANA).

Dr. K. C. Chacko, 92, had made his home in Aurora, Colorado, the eastern suburb of the beautiful and 'Mile-High' City of Denver. Though he was retired from his job for several years, Dr. Chacko never retired from his most recent and self-imposed commitment of providing a strong helping hand, both emotionally as well as financially, to his old College where he had studied for only two years. Dr. Chacko had attended many other colleges and universities both in India and the United States after his short stay at UCC, and earned an MBA and a Ph. D. In spite of his short time of only two years at UC College, and the numerous years that he spent at other educational institutions, he was magnanimous enough to have adopted the UC College as his alma mater, for which all of us are indebted to him. He has

The President's Message.....

Dr. K.C. Chacko–In Memory

-----Simon Thomas, President, UCCAANA

In one's life journey one occasionally comes across a unique individual who stands out for his professional accomplishments, ability to envision the future, being blessed with an enormously generous heart to help others and exceptional humility. Dr. K.C Chacko was that man for me.

Those of us who came to know him through the U.C. College alumni connection were all amazed by his passion for his alma mater--UCC. Remarkable it is, for one who left through those gates of UCC some 72 years ago after studying there for only two years (1939-41) and who left India in 1946 and studied in world-leading institutions. There was something unique in his psyche to be in love with UCC. He wanted UCC to stand out for its academic excellence and to reach global standards. He pushed the UCC management into 'thinking out of the box', not to be content with the *status quo*. He indeed had a longer term vision for the college. Some of his ideas might have been too radical for the prevailing thinking/environment in Kerala. He recognized it and all the same he was persevering. He was a champion for 'internationalization' of education, for UCC to be connected with other like-institutions and to share knowledge and resources. To this end he provided significant resources.

I came to know 'KC' (as he was known among those close to him) personally relatively recently, only in 2006, when I first got involved in the UCCAANA. He was the founding President of the association and the guiding spirit throughout its existence, until his passing.

I quickly developed a special bond with KC knowing how much he loved UCC and furthering the cause of education. He encouraged me to play a bigger role in UCCAANA and its mission. He even nudged me to eventually assume the role of the President of the UCCAANA. He did not mince his words nudging me, as is evident from his email to me below.

generously donated money for various projects and programs at UC College.

I must admit, I did not know KC all that well. Part of the reason was that ever since he was involved in UCCAANA activities, he was in Denver, and I in Chattanooga, two places separated by about 1,500 miles! I had participated in UCCAANA Board of Directors' teleconferences which he also attended, but that is definitely not the same as physically meeting and shaking hands with a person. Consequently, I consider it as a missed opportunity not to have been able to meet the wonderful man that KC was.

So what business do I have to write about KC, one may ask. Let me try to explain why. I had never met Mahatma Gandhi in my life. The Mahatma and I were separated by both space and time. But that did not ever stop me for a moment from admiring the man for what he was, or trying to follow in his footsteps. As much as I can glean from History, people of Gandhi's caliber are born on this Planet that we call home once in every couple of millennia. The Mahatma allowed himself to be spent for the people of India, and unbeknownst to even him, for the billions of oppressed and colonized masses of the World. I dare draw a parallel here. Dr. Chacko set a wonderful and noble example of generously helping the needy students of his old alma mater. He did it with a passion after he left the Institution almost three-quarters of a century ago. To me, it is worth applauding. 'Delighted with the ideal situation', Gandhiji wrote when he visited UC College in March, 1925, as it is reprinted on the back cover of the recent UCC publication titled "Ormakkoottu". I can say with reasonable certainty that KC, too, would have seen it that way.

George P. Kurien, Editor
November, 2013

*Participate
in the
Life of
UCCAANA!*

(President's message cont'd----

12/18/2009

Dear Simon,

*"Dr. Jim Jacob is not going to change his mind about stepping down. He told me that at the next Board meeting (or even before that), he will propose your name as the next President. **You cannot say "NO"**. So I am looking forward to working with you to make AANA a success. I agree, "business as usual" will not work. We need some good people on the Board.*

Yes, I have a lot of confidence in you.

I will be glad to talk to you on the phone, if you can be a little patient (with my hearing) - just slow down the pace a little.

Let me know what program AANA can develop for the next year.

Wish you and the family a Merry Xmas."

KC

In my role in UCCAANA, KC and I were in regular email communication (his worsening hearing issues precluded frequent phone conversations). His email exchanges were always succinctly short following the Churchillian dictum: short words are best. Very few words, but they all carried relevance and weight. No words were wasted.

In 2012 I was privileged to visit KC and his family (Mrs. Thankamma Chacko, daughter Shanti and son-in-law Graig) at his home near Denver, Colorado. We had a glorious time sharing stories of our professional journeys. Shanti filled in some details occasionally on KC's accomplishments that he was too self-effacing to list. KC was very proud of his 'hobby' of playing piano. As it turned out, he was an accomplished pianist too. He wanted to play some classical music for me and seemed to fully enjoy doing it. That surely was an honor for me.

He wanted all of us to go for lunch to his favorite restaurant—a Vietnamese restaurant, a cozy, modest place where the chef and staff seemed to know the family only too well. The chef knew the special soup and the dish that KC liked. KC even recommended a special dish for me that the chef was happy to prepare. [How appropriate that the celebration lunch after KC's funeral on November 20th was in the very same restaurant! KC must have been smiling.] After spending a few hours in the delightful company of KC & family, I said good bye.

Our email exchanges continued on a regular basis till close to his final days. These were usually on matters related to UCC, UCCAANA, e-learning, virtual University, etc. His suggestion to me to relocate from the 'desert' (Phoenix) with its 117°F summer temperatures and to move closer to one of my sons with more temperate climate still stands!!

KC, I will miss your short emails, advice and above all, your love. UCC and UCCAANA and all those who have come to know you do too. We all are blessed for knowing you.

Unrelenting Visionary

Rev. Thomas John

Member, Governing Board, UC College

In the passing away of Dr. K. C. Chacko, the Union Christian College has lost one of its beloved alumni, who epitomized all that is great and noble in its tradition. He kept his alma mater close to his heart and carried dreams about a bright future for UCC. My association with him was limited to a few phone conversations. Yet those were memorable ones. In 2003, he spoke to me about the possibility of developing an Alumni and Development Office in UCC and offered to bear a substantial part of the cost. Subsequently, he donated an amount for the said purpose, but it remained unutilized.

I believe, though Dr. Chacko is no longer with us, "through his faith he still speaks" (Heb. 11:4) and the best tribute that we can give him is to work for the realization of an International House and Development Office, which would hold much promise for his alma mater. I shared that dream with him and still keep that dream alive. Mrs. Chacko and their children can console and be proud of the fact that Dr. Chacko lived beyond his times, dreaming and working for a better world, "a city whose builder and architect is God." (Heb. 11:10)

Sharing Fond Memories.....

Dr. Rachel Reena Philip, Physics Dept, UC College

I came to know K.C. Chacko sir, who later compelled me to address him as KC (to my real embarrassment), saying I had to follow US customs while in US, was one of the greatest men I ever came in association with. I knew him mostly through mails, always brief, sharp and to the point, and had the blessing of hearing him just once over the phone. But all that was enough to reveal his spirit of charity, concern, kindness, and the truly altruistic mind in the man, KC. When he came to know that I was selected as the United Board (UB) Fellow from U. C. College (for 2012-'14), his alma mater where he studied years before I was even born, he wrote to me regarding how to prepare for my journey to Hope College, MI, USA. Ever since then, we were in constant contact through emails. KC was always inquisitive about my welfare at Hope, anxious about how I would make presentations there (whether or not it would lift UCC's image), and was encouraging me to be always positive. He commended me whenever he came to know that I had done an assignment well. He kept enquiring whether I needed more funds,

(Continued in next column.....)

Sharing Fond Memories (Continued).....

advising me to use the four months at Hope in the best way --- planning ahead to visit universities, contacting key personalities, etc. He often wrote to Dr. Simon Thomas in whom he seemed to have a lot of confidence to help me with my presentations at Hope, especially with the one about UCC and the last one to the Board of Trustees of UB. He expressed joy whenever I forwarded him a mail from someone appreciating the presentations, mostly because he was so greatly concerned about the 'Name of UCC' that was being evidenced through my actions.

He was intent on establishing collaboration between UCC and Hope College, for which he set apart funds too, with the vision of elevating UCC's position in internationalization of education. It was his wish that a visit from Hope to UCC would happen during his lifetime, reinforcing the bond between the two institutions he loved, a wish that never materialized. Before I left Hope College on May 22, 2013, KC wrote to me seeking an appointment to call me over the phone. I felt really humbled seeing his mail and wrote back to him that I would call him at his convenience. But the next day at the appointed time, the phone in my apartment rang promptly, and I heard his cheerful voice saying, "Reena, I'm KC". I was suddenly taken aback for I didn't know how to address him. I couldn't make myself say "Hello KC". Instead I said, "It is very difficult for me to address you as you compelled me to call you. So I'm saying good evening without adding any tail to it". At this, he laughed aloud to my relief and then we talked, he mainly wishing me all the best for my future plans and instructing me to continue with the efforts to strengthen the UCC-Hope bond.

We corresponded many times even after my return to India, and the last mail I received was expressing his satisfaction on hearing that Dr. Alfredo Gonzales from Hope would be visiting UCC in the near future. Next thing I heard was the news about dear KC's demise, which I received with great grief and a sense of loss on my personal behalf and on behalf of UCC. I felt as if a member of my own family had passed away, may be because through his regular interactions, he deepened in me the beautiful thought of considering UCC as an 'extended family'. He was a man who amazed me about a person's love for his alma mater, and one who expressed it not only in words but also in deeds. A great man KC was, far above what I can express through mere words!! Heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Chacko, his daughter and her family.



Dr. K. C. Chacko (1921 – 2013)

In Memory:

Dr. K.C. Chacko, an alumnus of U. C. College, Alwaye and an eminent economist, passed away, peacefully in his sleep on the 16th November 2013, in Denver, Colorado. He was 92. He was born in Arattupuzha, Chengannur, Kerala. He is survived by his wife of 70 years Mrs. Thankamma Chacko, daughter Shanti Chacko and son-in-law Graig Weisbart. After studying at U.C. College, Alwaye (1939-41), and then at Madras Christian College, Dr. Chacko came to the United States in 1946 as an undergraduate student at Haverford College, PA. He went on to garner a Masters in Economics from Haverford College, an M.B.A. from the prestigious Wharton College, Pennsylvania, and a Ph.D. in Economics from New York University.

Dr. Chacko began his career at the Indian Consulate in New York as Head of Economic Development for India. His expertise involved working with the Citi Bank of New York, Chase Manhattan Bank, First Boston Corporation and the Federal Reserve Bank to promote and develop foreign trade between the US and India. Dr. Chacko joined Philips Petroleum as Director of Operations in India and moved to Delhi in 1964 with his family. Later, during his tenure in Hong Kong, he acted as a Division Manager of Phillips' Regional Office, which extended from Pakistan to China, Japan, and Australia.

In 1982, after his retirement, he moved to Denver, Colorado and established the Rocky Mountain Institute for Foreign Trade and Finance, working as its Executive Director. In addition to numerous articles, Dr. Chacko authored four published books on the theory and practice of economics and business. His books included:

(1) The Monetary and Fiscal Policy of India (2) Economic Development of India and Japan (3) Economic Development of India and Experiences from other Major Economically Developed Countries (4) A Guide to Economic Development.

Dr. Chacko is remembered for his gentle and compassionate spirit and his eagerness to promote education for all people. Embedded in that eagerness was a deep seated impulse to share what he had accomplished. His philanthropy was always discreet and efficacious. He was a generous supporter of U.C. College, Alwaye, and individuals who aspired for higher education. He formed the UC College Alumni Association of North America (UCCAANA), and was its first president. He remained active as an Advisor to the Governing Board of UCCAANA until his passing.

KC in Our Memories.....

---Dr. Benny Cherian, Principal, UC College

The sad demise of Dr. K. C. Chacko put the UC College Community in real grief. Though I came in touch with KC closely only during my tenure as Bursar and Principal, I loved and respected him deeply through his e-mails. His mails always gave me a glimpse of his great love for his Alma Mater and for each one of us working here.

UCC community deeply grieves over his demise which is a great loss to us, as he was one of the greatest well-wishers and supporters of the college, whom the College can never forget. KC will be remembered for his principles, self-less love, concern and charity.

KC carried a lot of dreams about his UCC. Due to his inspiration and support, we could initiate new programs, projects and collaborations. He has been instrumental in signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Hope College, Holland, Michigan. He instigated us to promote e-learning modules and capacity building. Dr. K. C. Chacko Educational Endowment in UCC became a reality in 2012. KC's long cherished dream, the construction of an International House, is currently in the planning stage.

May his soul rest in peace and may his dreams come true! We pray to God to give peace and comfort to Mrs. Chacko, Shanti and Graig. Praying that God Almighty comfort you all, as you celebrate his great life.

KC in Our Memories.....

-----Dr. Raju K. John, Manager & Former Principal, UC College

Dr. K.C. Chacko came into my life through an e-mail a decade ago. He was looking at ways he could be of help to U.C. College, his alma mater. That was the time when the Mahatma Gandhi University and the Government of Kerala had started approving self-financing courses in aided Colleges. We were the first to start a Master of Computer Applications (MCA) program under this category with the approval of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), New Delhi. It was followed by a few other self-financed programs. There was resistance to this move from a section of the teachers, and K.C's e-mail came when this resistance was at its peak. He wanted the College to start an International MBA program and promised every help. In spite of my best efforts, that did not materialize. He made several other proposals and even tried to introduce me to what is happening outside in the field of Education. His mails came regularly. With all the problems that a Principal faces in running a college in a state like Kerala and my 56 Kbps dial up connection from the BSNL that will be off more often than on, my replies to him were not as regular. He was past eighty and was in a hurry. It is natural that he became impatient with me and also with the tardy progress that the college made in embracing the newer trends in education. After I left UCC to join BPC College, Piravom, our communications almost ceased. But when I came back to be a member of the Governing Board, he started writing to me again. The UCC – Hope tie up was one of his priorities for the College, so also was the international house for which he gave us the seed money. It was he who sponsored Dr. Thomas Philip's and my visits to Hope. But somehow UCC-Hope partnership didn't reach the level he and all of us hoped for.

KC studied in several colleges and Universities in India and abroad, but it was UCC where he spent just two years for his intermediate course, which found a special place in his heart. It might be worthwhile for all of us at UCC to ponder over the factors that contributed to the development of such special feelings among the students.

I always wondered about the amount of reading up he did at his age. He sent me several books to read and even took out a subscription for the Economist in my name. These helped me to broaden my outlook. He was not just an elderly alumnus giving out advice and generous contributions, but somebody whom I would love to acknowledge as my mentor. In the last mail that we exchanged, before he went into a coma, I told him about the

three new programs we started this year, M.Sc. (Zoology), B.Com and MBA. He was pleased to hear the news and wished the college well.

He leaves us with a responsibility to realize his dreams for U.C. College, - international partnerships, an International House on the campus and innovative programs for students and the community.

On behalf of U.C. College, and the community of alumni and friends, I express my heartfelt sorrow at his passing away. Our prayers are with Mrs. Chacko, Shanthi and Graig. May his soul rest in peace!!

---Dr. A. M. Chacko, Former Principal & Manager, UC College

Dr. K C Chacko's demise on November 16, 2013 was a shock to me. He was very concerned about the UCCAANA and very much wanted to help the college in all respects. His financial help to the College on different occasions was of great benefit. He wanted MBA course to be started in Union Christian College, and I am very happy to note that the course was finally started this year. I am sure the MBA Program will be a standing monument to his name and interest in the college. I offer my humble tribute to the great person.

Remembering KC, the Ardent Admirer of UCC

---By Dr. Thara K. Simon, Head of the Dept. of Botany

On November 17th early morning when I heard the sad news that KC passed away, I was speechless. It was a strong bond evolved through a decade with thousands of emails. There were no mornings and evenings without KC's emails, with shared dreams about UCC. For UCC, he was more than an alumnus. He was a mentor to me; a very capable person who lived for the mission of education.

I have never met anybody who admired his or her alma mater like KC did. Educational institutions were like places of worship for him. It was felt that nothing was more important for KC than UCC. Initially, one of his dreams was to set up an alumni office, which materialized in June 2005 on the birthday of the College. He loved UCC so much, and because of that he encouraged us to start new programs, projects and collaborations. He took the initiative to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Hope College, Holland, Michigan, through which he donated seed money to set up the DNA Lab in the Department of Botany at UCC. One of his passions was to encourage faculty to promote e-learning modules and capacity building. In 2012 he established Dr. K. C. Chacko Educational Endowment at UCC. It was KC's dream to have an International House at UCC, and he generously made financial contributions for that. We finally prepared a floor plan for it last year for which KC had specific directions.

KC had made a great and remarkable impact at UCC, and has a special place in the hearts of all those who have got a chance to be loved and mentored by him. The news of KC's passing was a great shock, and even now it is very difficult to put those feelings in words. KC will be greatly missed. We pray to God to give peace and comfort to Mrs. Chacko, Shanti and Graig.

As I walked up the college hill and entered the UCC chapel the other day with fond memories, a little dove flew away from the window sill of the altar. Yes, KC is no more. May his soul rest in peace and may his dreams come true!

'KC, We Hardly Knew Ye'

-----Thomas Mathew, Secretary UCCAANA

The late Dr. K. C. Chacko (or "KC" for his friends) will always be remembered as a person who loved UC College and had a vision and a mission which he pursued zealously. He was generous and contributed generously toward many projects at UCC. Many of us who had regular contacts with him knew his ideas, vision and sense of purpose. He always kept track of events and kept in touch with people, but very few people knew him closely. None of us in the UCCAANA Board of Directors except Dr. Simon Thomas has even seen him in person. He very rarely spoke to us about himself, but always talked about UCC, UCCAANA, his vision and plans for the college he loved very dearly but has not seen in the last 50 years or so. We knew what he stood for and his vision for UC College, but many of us hardly knew him. I state this with the utmost respect and love for Dr. K.C. Chacko who was so selfless and generous that he did not want to project his image.

My first contact with Dr. K.C. Chacko was 6 years ago when I joined UCCAANA and took over the responsibilities as Secretary. I got a phone call a few days after I became Secretary. The person on the other end had a quiet but firm voice and introduced himself to me, "I am K C Chacko; can you get me a list of Indian newspapers in the US published in Malayalam and English?" I was not prepared for such a direct question which almost sounded like an order on the very first day of our interaction. I paused and hesitated a little before I replied affirmatively. That was the beginning of our relationship, and ever since we communicated over the phone and emails frequently. Over the years I had the opportunity to see how much he loved UC College where he spent only two years of his long academic life. It was more than seventy years ago that he studied at UCC, but he never forgot that place. It was like the first love in a person's life. After UCC, he had schooling at more prestigious institutions where he got degrees in Economics, MBA and PhD, but UCC always had a special place in his heart.

There is a book titled 'Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye' (Author Kenneth P. O'Donnell) and a movie with the same title about President John F Kennedy, a charismatic leader with great vision and purpose. He was very popular and loved by many, but it is said very few people knew him as a person. There are some great people whose ideas, ideals and vision transcend and overshadow themselves. KC is one among them and will always be remembered for all he did and aspired for his very dear Alma Mater, Union Christian College. An International Center was one of his dreams yet to be realized. Let's hope and pray that his dream will be a reality in the future. UCC has been blessed with the eminent visionary and founder Mr. K.C. Chacko, and now with KC, another visionary who bears the same name, Dr. K. C. Chacko. I call it Divine Providence.

Tribute to A Great Alumnus

-----Dr. Thomas P. Mathew, Treasurer, UCCAANA

The first telephone contact I had with Dr. K. C. Chacko was in 2003. I tried to address him as "Sir," but he immediately told me to just call him KC. Since then I had regular contact with him. He was very much interested in collecting the names and addresses of UCC alumni in the US and Canada. We collected many names and addresses, and since neither KC nor I was well versed with computers, he asked the help of his son-in-law Graig to prepare an alumni directory for us. Thus, we created our first alumni directory. Soon thereafter, we decided to start an alumni association. After so many phone calls, e-mails and discussions, we were able to establish the Union Christian College Alumni Association of North America, Inc. (UCCAANA) in 2006. KC was the Founding President, and he continued to be very active with UCCAANA. If I had to name the one person who was most instrumental in establishing UCCAANA, it was KC.

KC did more for UCC and UCCAANA financially than any other alumnus anywhere. He always wanted to take UCC and UCCAANA to greater heights, and he made the largest contribution to the UCCAANA Educational Endowment. KC was always encouraging us to reach out to more alumni in the US and Canada. In September 2013, when I mentioned to KC that we were not planning to send out the 2014 UCCAANA Pocket Calendar, he asked me to order them and send them out to all the alumni, and that he would underwrite the expenses. Such was his interest in reaching out and connecting with the alumni. KC will be greatly missed.

May his soul rest in peace. May God the Almighty comfort Mrs. Chacko, Shanti and Graig.

The Piano Player

-----Mr. Harvey G. Koedyker. Regional Advancement Director, Hope College

I have only known KC for the last several years of his life, but what I learned is he wanted to be able to make a difference in the lives of others by being a catalyst of change. To stimulate the mind. The first time I met with him I asked about the grand piano in his living room thinking it must have been hard to get this into his apartment. One would think he or his wife had a long history with playing the piano to have this in his living room considering the effort it would take to get it there. He said he had it hoisted to his apartment a year ago because he simply wanted to learn how to play the piano!

UCCAANA-Selected Images



Dr. K. C. Chacko, (1921 – 2013)



Dr. K. C. Chacko with Mrs. Chacko, Shanti (daughter) & Graig Weisbart (son-in-law)



Dr. K. C. Chacko's Class Photo (1939 – 1941) – U. C. College



Dr. Simon Thomas, President of UCCAANA with Dr. K. C. Chacko and Family