

K. Ramakrishnan
(Demised - 23rd October 2008)



Born on 29th September 1941 in Sungkai to a Rubber Plantation Supervisor and his housewife, Ramakrishnan was the youngest child of 5 children. He lost his father at the age of 4 years and this prompted his mother, Madam Janaki to work as a rubber tapper to support her family. Madam Janaki always gave Mr. Ramakrishnan the best even if the family could not afford luxurious food at the material time.

Ramakrishnan completed his primary and secondary education at Methodist English School in Tanjung Malim. Subsequent to that he worked as a Temporary Teacher at the same school from 1962 – 1967. Ramakrishnan joined Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) as a Broadcaster in 1967. He was also a renowned Sports commentator and was well known for his deep voice. He married Madam Sabidha Devi in 1970.

In 1974, whilst still a Broadcaster, he took just 3 months no-pay leave to study for the Higher School Certificate which he passed in that year on his first attempt. This paved way for him to pursue a Degree in Law. He was admitted into the Honourable Society of the Lincoln's Inn on 21st November 1975 and went on to read Law and was called to the British Bar on 27th November 1979. He was in fact the only Malaysian who passed the first year Law Examination held in 1976.

His determination to become a Lawyer knew no bounds as he basically read his first two years of Law whilst working at RTM without proper tutoring. Upon being called to the British Bar, Mr. Ramakrishnan returned to Malaysia to complete his chambering and was called to the Malaysian Bar in 1980. He was a Partner in the Firm Messrs. Ibrahim Moideen, Rama and Partners where he stamped his name as a good Litigator with a flair for the Law. Mr. Ramakrishnan was invited to the Industrial Relations Bench in November 1993 which he duly accepted. In April 1994, he was transferred to the Industrial Court in Penang where he was made in charge of Penang, Alor Setar (Perlis), Perak and also sat in Johor, Terengganu, Kelantan and Sarawak.

Many people envied his energy and passion when it came to delivering his tasks as the Chairman of the Industrial Court. His position as the Chairman of the Industrial Court required him to leave his wife and three (3) children behind in Kuala Lumpur, as he had travel non stop to the respective Courts to hear cases. He would drive down to Kuala Lumpur on Saturday afternoons after work to be with his family and drove back to Penang on the Sunday afternoon. He never employed a driver to drive him around as he loved driving his own car.

Mr. Ramakrishnan presided over cases without fear or favour. He kept reminding Lawyers and Union Representatives who appeared before him that one should not fail his client and that justice must be upheld. He was a very thorough Chairman, never leaving any stones unturned. He was a very strict Chairman who insisted that Lawyers and Union Representatives appearing before him are well prepared for the Trial. He himself would read all the pleadings and the supporting Documents well before presiding over any matter. Despite all the stress, fatigue and pressure which came with the job and the traveling, he never once complained. He was always full of ideas on how to better the Industrial Relations procedures, processes and the Law. When handing down Awards or Decisions, he always ensured that no one party who deserved justice was deprived of the same.

Mr. Ramakrishnan also sat as the Chairman of the SOCSO Appellate Board from 1994 – 2000. As the Chairman of the Appellate Board, his decisions were always based on fairness, equity and common sense. He always ensured that deserving employees received protection and assistance from SOCSO.

Mr. Ramakrishnan's colourful career at the Industrial Court came to an end when he refused a further extension to his contract in January 2005, having served the Industrial Relations Bench for over 11 years. In February 2005, a day after his last day of work as the Chairman of the Industrial Court, he joined his son, Mr. Mohan Ramakrishnan in their firm, Messrs Ramakrishnan & Associates in Petaling Jaya. As the Partner of Messrs Ramakrishnan & Associates, he remained the fountain of knowledge, refusing

to charge any professional fees to clients and others who met him for legal advise and opinion.

He was an active speaker at various Seminars and Conventions after his retirement. He simply wanted to share his knowledge with others. He was a sports enthusiast, especially football and cricket. His favourite teams were Arsenal and Perak on the local front.

He passed away peacefully in the morning of 23rd October 2008 at the University Hospital, Petaling Jaya where he underwent surgery for cervical spondylosis. He leaves behind his wife Madam Sabidha Devi, children Ms. Hemalatha (Astro), Mr. Mohan (Ramakrishnan & Associates) and Ms. Nishalini (Malaysian Trade and Industry Organisation).

A prominent Industrial Relations practitioner Mr. V.K. Raj describes Mr. Ramakrishnan:-

"He was a Judicious minded Chairman. He went to great length to mete out justice to both employees and employers."

A note arrived at the residence of Mr. K. Ramakrishnan on his funeral from Mr. K.K. Siritharan, the General Secretary of National Union of Employees in Companies Manufacturing Rubber Products Executive Council which reads :-

"Mr. Ramakrishnan was respected amongst the worker and has conducted himself without fear or favour and acted professionally when handing down Court Award. However he had a soft heart towards the welfare of the workers. His death is a great loss to the working class and to the country. His services and dedication would not be forgotten and shall be cherished by the workers forever."

Mr Ramakrishnan may have passed off but his wisdom remains alive in the legal fraternity.

Mohan Ramakrishnan