

Josephine Lily Pereira
(Demised - 23rd August 2008)



My Lord, 48 years in the scheme of things is indeed a short time. But that was all my dear friend Josephine Lily Pereira had on this Earth. Born on 18th June 1960 she departed on 23rd August, 2008 after a painful and merciless battle with cancer.

It has been said the greatest mystery of life is that man who is mortal goes through life thinking he is immortal. Josephine like all of us did not for one moment think that she would be robbed of life so soon when there was so much left to be done as wife, mother, lawyer and citizen of the world. Left she did and we are now gathered here today to make some kind of sense of the hours Josephine spent with us.

Josephine graduated from the University of Malaya with a degree in law in 1984. It is a little more than 2 decades ago that I remember Josephine joining the firm of the then Messrs Rashid and Lee as a chambering student brimming with optimism and enthusiasm. It was while working in M/s Rashid and Lee that I became acquainted with Josephine.

Josephine is indeed one of a rare breed of people who quietly and unassumingly got the work done and indeed done well. She did not court, or want or need fame or material success. Instead what is synonymous with Josephine is her kindness, honesty, diligence, and high octane commitment to doing whatever she had to do, well. With courage Josephine defended strongly what she believed in regardless of the personal cost to her. Her personal preference was to work in the background quietly and with precision as a solicitor. Josephine will always be remembered as a solicitor par excellence. Her work spoke for itself as it was always of a standard anyone would be proud of.

Josephine ventured out from practice and joined the commercial world, working in MBF Finance and Kwong Yik Bank before moving on to the then Arab Malaysian Merchant Bank, where she met her husband Arunachalam Muthusamy. Our departed colleague put her career on the back burner while concentrating on raising a family.

Josephine came back into practice after having 2 children and joined the firm of M/s Murali B Pillai and Associates before finally breaking off and setting up a practice of her own Messrs J Pereira where she continued practicing as a solicitor right up until the day she succumbed to her illness.

Life was not just her career and her family. Josephine always felt a need to give back to society and in the last few months Josephine together with my son and I set up a soup kitchen in Desa Mentari to feed the urban poor and teach the children in the area. This we did once a week. One of the things that brought her great joy in her last few months was participating in this project and she would in fact cook the food herself although she was by then in considerable pain. That was the Josephine I knew, strong, determined and giving right to the very end.

To the family of our learned colleague I do hope you will continue to share the ideals Josephine believed in and keep her in your memory. To Arjoon and Devighna remember your mother always as having given her best to the world sometimes at her own expense and she would surely hope as you continue to grow to remember to give your very best always and live life to the fullest.

Viva enim mortuorum in memoria vivorum est posita

The life of the dead is retained in the memory of the living. (Cicero)

Juliana Solomon