OBITUARY

Prof. V. Rama Murthy
(1933 – 2012)

We have learnt with great shock and regret the passing away of Varanasi Rama Murthy, one of the brightest students and distinguished alumnus of Prof. C. Mahadevan at the Andhra University, on 12th October 2012 in San Clemente, CA, USA. He left behind foot prints of his intellectual acumen and administrative ability, wherever he worked! Once Dr. B.P. Radhakrishna remarked “Rama Murthy underwent mining training as an ISM student in our Karnataka Mines. He showed remarkable ability and grasp of the mining techniques and the geology of the area. I am not surprised he achieved such high distinction and global recognition in research today.”

Prof. V. Rama Murthy was born on 2nd July 1933 and had his early education at Vijayawada before joining the Andhra University where he stood first in the B.Sc. He later successfully completed his honors in Applied Geology from the Indian School of Mines in 1954. This was the time Prof. Alan Bateman of Yale University visited India and offered Rama Murthy a Fellowship for the Ph.D. programme on the recommendation of Prof. C. Mahadevan and Prof. N.L. Sharma.

Within a short period of three years, he earned a Ph.D. degree from Yale University and moved to Caltech and Scripps Institution in La Jolla as a post-doctoral fellow and Assistant Professor. During this period Rama Murthy had the unique distinction of working with Nobel Laureate, Urey, and began his long journey in the field of isotope geochemistry and trace element systematic to unravel the mysteries in Earth and Planetary Sciences. During 1965 to 2006, Prof. Rama Murthy achieved high distinction at the University of Minnesota in research and teaching, besides rising to Vice – President and Vice Provost. In recognition of his

pioneering contributions at a young age, he was selected as one of the investigators to study rocks from the Apollo mission in 1968.

The last leg of his journey from 2007 onwards was at the Institute of Meteoritics at the University of New Mexico. His extraordinary contributions on planetary cores, heat source in the Earth's core brought him laurels at the national and international levels. We reproduce here a few lines of obituary note from the website of University of California about Prof. Rama Murthy.

“Rama leaves a legacy of his extraordinary scientific contributions, his exceptional teaching and mentoring of young scientists in his field, his active and valuable involvement with AGU, American Association of University Professors, and many committees. Above all, Rama is remembered by his family and friends as a charming, fun loving, approachable gracious and gentle but sharp witted man whose skills as a negotiator and story teller were legendary. He was much loved and admired by the younger generations of family and friends who were quietly mentored by Rama. He leaves a great void in the lives of his loving family in USA and India, especially his grandson Valen. He will be deeply missed by friends and family alike.”

We pay homage to this great savant known world over as a ‘*Schiller*’ and a pioneer in isotope geochemistry. Above all, he is an illustrious son of India. He leaves behind his daughter Satyavani Murthy and son Anand Murthy.

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