



Obituary for Professor Murali Sundaram, MD, MBBS, SFCR, FACR

Daniel I. Rosenthal¹ · the editors of Skeletal Radiology · Thomas M. Link² · William E. Palmer¹ · Ali Guermazi³

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Dr. Murali Sundaram MD, MBBS, SFCR, FACR died Friday July 21, 2023, at the age of 79. He was a beloved member of the International Skeletal Society since 1978 and was well known as a researcher, teacher, coach, mentor, and friend to pathologists, surgeons, and especially radiologists throughout the world.

Murali was born in the city of Colombo, the capital and largest city of Sri Lanka (previously Ceylon). His early education was in Colombo, at a time of intense political and religious turmoil, and therefore, his parents send him to school in Chennai (Madras) in southwest India. He proceeded to medical school in Guntur India from which he graduated in 1967, and from there went to the UK for Radiology training. He did a fellowship at St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO, and then stayed to join the attending staff, rising to the rank of professor in only 8 years. He then moved to the Mayo Clinic, and eventually the Cleveland Clinic where he remained for the rest of his career.

His life was a triumph of talent, tenacity, and hard work. He was the author of 4 books, 25 textbook chapters, 105 exhibits and meeting presentations, as well as more than 300 scientific articles. As impressive as these numbers are, they barely scratch the surface of his efforts in the service of Radiology. Murali was extremely generous with his time and seemingly never turned down a request, whether it be for an article, a talk, a chapter, or the somewhat thankless task of serving as a reviewer. In the latter capacity, he diligently served both the American Journal of Roentgenology and Skeletal Radiology. Many young scholars and seasoned researchers benefitted tremendously from his perceptive

comments on their work, and he went out of his way to be encouraging to authors, especially those who were at the beginning of their careers.

He was a constant presence at meetings of the ISS, always contributing to the meeting through a case presentation or a lecture at the refresher course. Everyone who met him felt as though he was a friend, because of the genuine way in which he showed interest in them, their families, and their work. Although his primary interest was in neoplasia, he was also recognized for his expertise in many other areas, especially metabolic bone disorders. He also supported the society by participation in its outreach programs.

His greatest contribution to the International Skeletal Society was his long tenure as editor of Skeletal Radiology. He served the society in this capacity from 1997 to 2012. During this time, the journal grew in size, scope, and circulation, increasing from 8 issues a year to 12, and in issue size from 62 pages to 140. As the journal grew, so did the editor's work, since this growth was accomplished with no additional editorial staff.

His scientific and educational work was crowned with awards and recognition. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Board of Radiology. The International Skeletal Society recognized him with two gold medals. He received the Medal of the International Skeletal Society in 2000, which is awarded to persons who have provided outstanding support to the endeavors of the International Skeletal Society. He also received the Founders Medal in 2013, awarded to one individual annually who has been distinguished by outstanding dedication to the International Skeletal Society and by excellence in their field of science.

In addition to his love of Radiology and the ISS, Murali loved sports. As a youth, he was an expert table tennis player, achieving renown as the no. 1 junior champion of Sri Lanka and the no. 3 junior champion of India. He retired from the sport after the Chinese players changed the nature of the game by introducing the two-finger grip. During most of his adult life, he was an enthusiastic and disciplined swimmer at all times of the year. True to form, he not only participated, but studied the sport, reading lengthy volumes on the

✉ Daniel I. Rosenthal
DIROSENTHAL@mgh.harvard.edu

¹ Department of Radiology, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA

² Department of Radiology and Biomedical Imaging, University of California, San Francisco, CA, USA

³ Department of Radiology, VA Boston Healthcare System, Boston University School of Medicine, Boston, MA, USA



Professor Murali Sundaram with his family

history of swimming! As a spectator, he loved tennis and cricket, but cricket most of all. He spoke about it frequently, often in rhapsodic terms. However, despite his well-deserved reputation as a teacher, he was never able to explain to his colleagues in America why the sport was interesting!

Murali also had a deeply spiritual side. He loved to discuss philosophy and religion, and clearly had deep convictions derived from his Hindu upbringing, although he did not participate in the practices and rituals of organized religion. Murali said that meditation and the philosophy of Vedanta, which teaches the oneness of existence, the divinity of the soul, and the harmony of all religions, are what guided and sustained him. He would strike up a conversation with anyone and loved to discuss these ideas. Discussions of these delicate topics were always marked by earnest curiosity and respect for the beliefs of others.

Family was central to his life. He was devoted to his two daughters, their husbands, and his grandchildren. Their help and support were a source of great comfort to him during his long illness.

He was a great man, a gentle man, and he was a good man. May his memory be a blessing.

For those wishing to learn more or to share a memory, his family has created this website: www.msundaram.com

Declarations

Informed consent Written consent to publish this obituary was obtained from Professor Sundaram's daughters Aparna and Priya Sundaram.

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