

## Legends of Indian Orthopedics

### Dr. Verghese Chacko

Dr. Verghese Chacko was born in 1929 to an aristocratic family in Central Travancore. His grandfather, Dewan Bahadur Dr. V. Verghese, the Chief Physician to the Maharaja of Travancore, was the source of inspiration for young Verghese Chacko to pursue a career in medicine.

After his early schooling in Trivandrum, Verghese Chacko joined the MBBS course at Madras Medical College and went on to complete his M.S. in Orthopaedics from Lucknow Medical College. After his Orthopedic training in India, he spent 8 years in the UK working in various hospitals.

On his return to India, Dr. Chacko established the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery (until then under the Department of Surgery) at Kasturba Medical College (KMC), Manipal, Karnataka, in 1967. Over the next two and a half decades, the Orthopaedic Department at Manipal (a small town in coastal Karnataka) flourished under his tutelage to become a nationally and internationally recognized the Centre of Excellence. The Orthopedic post-graduate program was started within 3-4 years and has trained numerous well-known orthopaedic surgeons since then.

Prof. Chacko's lasting legacy is the creation of the first subspecialty-based Orthopedic Department in the country. At the time of his retirement, the Orthopaedic Department at KMC, Manipal, was functioning as four highly acclaimed subspecialty units (Hand Surgery, Pediatric Orthopaedics, Spine Surgery, and Arthroscopy/Arthroplasty), each headed by one of his students. In addition, Prof. Chacko initiated the early research into Perthes disease which is common in the southwest coast of India and published numerous papers on the subject. Another achievement was the establishment of the first Artificial Limb Centre (Orthotic and Prosthetic Department) in the region.

Prof. Chacko served as the President of the Karnataka Orthopaedic Association in 1981 and the Indian Orthopaedic Association in 1987 and was the founder President of the Paediatric Orthopaedic Society of India in 1994. The Karnataka Orthopaedic Association has instituted an annual oration in his honor. After his retirement from KMC, Manipal, he continued to practice at Pushpagiri Medical College in Thiruvalla, Kerala.

Prof. Verghese Chacko will be remembered as a visionary, an excellent teacher and surgeon, and an able administrator.



Dr. Verghese Chacko

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There are no conflicts of interest.

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