

# He inspired trust, confidence and reverence

## M.G.I. Fernandez

M.G.I. Fernandez, the well known St. Joseph's College master made his quiet exit from this earthly scene on April 27. On that Friday morning in his sleep he may have certainly heard the beckoning whisper from his creator above "Son it's enough, come home."

It has been repeatedly reported that schools like St. Joseph's, Royal, S. Thomas' and Trinity had been throughout the years very fortunate in their choice of teachers.



The very first teachers of these few leading institutions in the island whether from here or abroad had been handpicked. They not only set high standards and traditions in their professions but they also left as their successors, men of sterling character, equally equipped to hold and pass on to generations of students the torch of "knowledge and virtue" of which they were exemplary models.

Ferdi's 46 years of sustained, unbroken partnership with St. Joseph's is a truly commendable achievement that bespeaks of deep commitment and loyalty.

After obtaining his Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of Ceylon he was enrolled as a teacher to the Arts and Classics Section of St. Joseph's College by that great Rector Fr. Peter A. Pillai in 1957. In 1962 Ferdi was appointed Master in Charge of College Rugby which he continued as till 1997.

During this era St. Joseph was able to produce some outstanding players who equally excelled for their alma mater, for their respective clubs and some of them represented the country with distinction. Anton Benedict (former Havelocks, Police and Sri Lanka Captain), Janaka Perera (Retired Chief of Staff of the Sri Lanka Army and former Ambassador to Australia), Dr. Gamini Goonetilleke, Hiranjan Perera, late Rohan Jayatilleke (Former Solicitor General), Priyasad Dep (Solicitor General), Brian Obeysekere, Shiraz Fernando, Graham Ludowyke, Patrick Ranasinghe, Lalith Perera and Nishantha Boppearachchi were some of the few who excelled in the game during Ferdi's stewardship in Rugby football at St. Joseph's. Though he was an old boy of Holy Cross Kalutara, Ferdi was indeed a die-hard Josephian.

Being a strict disciplinarian, Ferdi's presence inspired trust, confidence and reverence. Most of the students who were up to mischief melted under his guidance and advice.

By Supun Perera