

## Citation on President SR Nathan for Admission to Honorary Fellowship at the 2003 Annual Ceremony of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore

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Mr Master,

When the Council of the Academy appointed me to read a citation on President SR Nathan on the occasion of the conferment of an Honorary Fellowship upon him, I readily accepted it with a great sense of honour.

SR Nathan was born in Singapore on 3 July 1924. He received his early education in several schools – Anglo-Chinese Primary and Middle School, Rangoon Road Afternoon School and Victoria School.

The young Mr Nathan started working before completing his studies. After the war, whilst still working, he completed his secondary education through self-study and entered the University of Malaya (then in Singapore) where he graduated in 1954 with distinction in Social Studies.

Mr Nathan then began his career in the Singapore Civil Service as a medical social worker in 1955. He was appointed Seamen's Welfare Officer the following year. In 1962, he was seconded to the Labour Research Unit of the Labour Movement, first as Assistant Director and later Director of the Labour Research Unit until January 1966. He continued as a Member of its Board of Trustees until April 1988.

In February 1966, he was transferred to the Foreign Ministry. He served as its Assistant Secretary and rose to the rank of Deputy Secretary before being appointed Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs in January 1971.

In August of the same year, Mr Nathan moved to the Ministry of Defence where he became Permanent Secretary.

In February 1979, he returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and became its First Permanent Secretary until February 1982 when he left to become the Executive Chairman of the Straits Times Press (1975) Ltd. At various times from 1982 to 1988, Mr Nathan also held directorships of many companies, including the Singapore Mint Pte Ltd, The Straits Times Press (London) Ltd, Singapore Press Holdings Ltd and Marshall Cavendish Ltd. He held a directorship in the Singapore International Media Pte Ltd between September 1996 and August 1999. He was Chairman of Mitsubishi Singapore Heavy Industries – a ship-repairing and engineering joint-venture with the Mitsubishi Group of Japan, from 1973 to 1986.

From 1983 to April 1988, Mr Nathan was Chairman of the Hindu Endowment Board. He was a founding member of

SINDA – the Singapore Indian Development Association – and its Term Trustee until August 1999.

For his numerous contributions to the Nation, Mr Nathan was conferred the Public Service Star in 1964, the Public Administration Medal (Silver) in 1967, and the Meritorious Service Medal in 1974.

In April 1988, Mr Nathan was appointed Singapore's High Commissioner to Malaysia and in July 1990, became Ambassador to the United States of America where he served until June 1996.

On his return, Mr Nathan was made Ambassador-at-Large and was concurrently Director of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies at the Nanyang Technological University.

He resigned as Ambassador-at-Large and Director of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies on 17 August 1999 and was elected President of the Republic of Singapore on 18 August 1999. Mr Nathan began his six-year term as the sixth President of the Republic and the second Elected President on 1 September 1999.

Mr Nathan, a Hindu, is married to Urmila (Umi) Nandey and has a daughter, a son and three grandchildren.

As President of Singapore, he is also Patron of our Academy of Medicine. On 3 October 2001, President SR Nathan officially opened the Runme Shaw Building at No. 142 Neil Road, which is currently the home of our Academy's head office.

He kindly penned the following message to commemorate that very special occasion, and I quote :

*“After almost 50 years, the Academy has found its own home – though modest by other standards. In officially opening the Academy's Headquarters, it is my hope it will flourish in its esteem in the eyes of the profession as well as others who appreciate its contribution to professionalism and scholarship.”*

Ladies and gentlemen, this evening, we honour a man who has risen through the ranks of government service to reach the highest office of the land.

Master, I now present to you SR Nathan, President of Singapore and Patron of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore, who is a most worthy recipient of the Honorary Fellowship of our Academy.

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