



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BANGALORE

The Council of the Indian Institute of Science and the Indian Institute of Science Alumni Association take pleasure in presenting the Distinguished *Alumni Award* for the year 1987 to Professor Badanaval Venkatasubba Pandit Sreekantan, INSA-Ramanujan Professor and former Director, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay.

Born on 30 June 1925 in Nanjangud, Karnataka, Sri Sreekantan obtained his B.Sc.(Hons.) in Physics (1946) and M.Sc. (Wireless) in 1947 from Mysore University and joined Indian Institute of Science to do research work in Electrical Communication Engineering. In August 1948, he moved on to the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay to work on Cosmic Rays. He was a pioneer in this field, which was just beginning in the country, and set up one of the most sophisticated cosmic ray experiments of that time to measure the life time of muons in different materials using the State of the art pulse electronics. He obtained his Ph.D. from the Bombay University in 1954 and left for USA for Post Doctoral work at MIT, to return to TIFR in 1956 to initiate two new major programmes on High Energy Physics and Extensive Air Showers. He built a large multiplate cloud chamber of size $2 \times 1.5 \times 1$ (m), which, even today, is the largest cloud chamber ever built. In the area of High Energy Physics using the Cosmic Ray Beam, Dr. Sreekantan has made some of the most innovative contributions in experimental techniques; he and his colleagues can claim several 'firsts'. He also pioneered the study of the fourth dimension of Extensive Air Showers – the time structure of hadrons. During his two year stay at MIT in USA again in 1965-67, Dr. Sreekantan was associated with one of the classic works of astronomy – the discovery of the optical counterpart of the X-ray star Sco X-1. This spurred him to initiate the balloon X-ray astronomy programme in TIFR upon his return in 1967, which has continued to grow till today. Dr. Sreekantan became the third Director of TIFR in 1975, after MGK Menon and HJ Bhabha and promoted several large scale experiments, the most significant being the experiments to detect nucleon decays in the World's deepest KGF Mines.

Dr. Sreekantan has over 140 publications in his 40 years of work, of which only 10 are based on works abroad. The last 35 years has seen enormous growth of knowledge, and it is a wonderful feeling for one to have actually been responsible for creating part of that excitement. In initiating works on Cosmic Rays, and X-ray and Gamma-ray astronomy in India, and laying firm foundations in them, Dr. Sreekantan has provided the necessary Dynamic leadership that has now created other leaders who will carry on the work in the future.

Dr. Sreekantan has received several honours and awards. He is a Fellow of the Maharashtra Academy of Sciences, The Indian Academy of Sciences and the Indian National Science Academy. He was invited to deliver the Second Blackett Memorial Lecture at the Royal Society, London in 1978; he was a national lecturer of the UGC in 1981-82; a member of the International Cosmic Ray Commission of the IUPAP in 1982; was the recipient of the CV Raman Award for Physical Sciences by the UGC in 1977, and the Homi Bhabha Medal for Physical Sciences by the Indian Physics Association in 1982. He was decorated with the Coveted Padma Bhushan award in 1988. He presently holds the INSA Ramanujan Professorship in TIFR.

Dr. Sreekantan is dedicated to Research and firmly believes in the dictum: "in research, there is no substitute for hard work. Hard work may not always yield rewards, but without hard work, there can be no rewards". He is one of the few leaders who can impress upon young minds the fascination of experimental research.

In conferring this distinguished Alumni Award on Dr. Sreekantan, the IISAA is recognising truly meritorious contributions and is only honouring itself that one of its own members has risen to be a Gem among Cosmic Ray researchers in the world today.

(C N R RAO)

Director

Indian Institute of Science

(T R SATISH CHANDRAN)

President

Alumni Association
Indian Institute of Science

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