Editorial

S Mahadevan, Chief Editor

It is with a deep sense of sadness that Resonance announces the demise of Prof. M K Chandrashekaran, former chief editor of the journal. MKC, as he was fondly referred to by his students and friends, passed away on July 2 after fighting ill-health for nearly a year. He was among his friends and colleagues at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bangalore, when he lost consciousness for the last time.

Starting his career as a zoologist, MKC obtained his PhD in 1964 from Madras University under the guidance of the renowned zoologist Prof. C P Gnanamuthu. His doctoral research was on tidal and circadian rhythm in crabs. MKC went on to do post-doctoral research in Germany in the laboratory of the great chronobiologist, Erwin Bünning, supported by a fellowship from the Humboldt Foundation. After a two year stint at Berkeley and another visit to Germany, MKC accepted a faculty position at the newly founded School of Biological Sciences at the Madurai Kamaraj University and established one of the finest chronobiology research labs in the world. Today when several universities are closing down departments of zoology and botany due to lack of student interest, MKC’s lab in Madurai is a demonstration of what originality and creativity can do even in disciplines abandoned as too old-fashioned. What was remarkable about MKC’s career is the fact that after two decades of first rate research at Madurai, he could reproduce the same success at the JNCASR in Bangalore when he took over the leadership of the Evolutionary and Organismal Biology Unit in 1996. My own association with MKC is more than three decades old; first as a teacher and mentor and subsequently as colleague and friend. His warmth, affection, wit, and erudition will be greatly missed.

This issue of Resonance honours another Indian pioneer, Prof. T Ramakrishnan, who established an outstanding research group working on the biology of Mycobacterium tuberculosis at the Indian Institute of Science. In addition to path-breaking work on this organism, Prof. TR was also the first to establish research in the fields of molecular biology and virology in IISc. With his passing away last year, the world lost not only a great microbiologist, but also an outstanding teacher and mentor. In this issue, two generations of his students share their memories about this extraordinary scientist and human being.