Honouring the legacy of
Dr. Ida Belle Scudder

through the
7th Dr. Ida S. Scudder
Humanitarian Oration

Delivered by
Dr. Robert Horton Fish, DMD

9th August, 2018
Scudder Auditorium
Christian Medical College Vellore
Bagayam Campus

Presented by
Christian Medical College Vellore
and
Vellore Christian Medical College Foundation,
New York, USA
Programme

Centenary Song: Home of Transformation
College Choir

Prayer
Chaplain

Welcome
Dr. John Victor Peter, Director, Christian Medical College Vellore

Background to the Oration and Introduction of the Speaker
Dr. Honorine Ward, Chair, Vellore CMC Foundation, New York

Citation
Mrs. Emma Koshi, Board of Directors, Vellore CMC Foundation, NY and Chair of the Oration Committee

Dr. Ida S. Scudder Humanitarian Oration
Dr. Robert H. Fish, DMD

Book Release “One step at a Time” by Dr. Reena George
Dr. Robert H. Fish, DMD

Vote of Thanks
Dr. Anna B. Pulimood, Principal, Christian Medical College Vellore

College Song

College Song

Girded round by her strong ageless mountains
Stands the College we'll honour evermore
We thy children shall strive to reflect thee
Thou bright glowing gem of Vellore.
As your banner we wave proudly o'er us
And together we chorus your praise
In your blue we see loyalty's emblem
And truth in your silver's bright rays

Three cheers for the silver and blue
India's star in a sky clear and true,
Clouds of suffering we'd banish for ever,
Three cheers for the silver and blue!

Not for fame not for wealth our endeavour
Pride of race nor of creed be our boast,
Each for all, all for each, thus forever
United from coast unto coast.
Strong to serve, strong to save the defenceless
May thy spirit inspire us anew
Not to gain but to give be our motto
Three cheers for the silver and blue.

Three cheers for the silver and blue
India's star in a sky clear and true,
Clouds of suffering we'd banish for ever,
Three cheers for the silver and blue!
The Ida S. Scudder Humanitarian Oration was established jointly by the Vellore Christian Medical College Foundation and the Christian Medical College Vellore in 2012. The objective is to perpetuate the legacy of Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder, embodied in the College motto “not to be ministered unto, but to minister”, by honouring individuals who through their lives and contributions exemplify her courage, integrity and character, in order to inspire future generations to follow in her footsteps and emulate her dedication to the well-being of humanity.

Dr. Ida S. Scudder offered herself in loving service to the women and children of India, blind to distinctions of religion, caste and economic status. She always gave priority to the most marginalised and was known for her compassionate touch that patients would say took away their pain. Caring for the whole patient, mind and spirit as well as body, was an important aspect of her effectiveness as a doctor.

Dr. Ida S. Scudder began training women doctors through the Licentiate Medical Practitioner course in 1918. This year we celebrate the centenary of medical education at CMC Vellore. To mark this event we have chosen to honour, through the Oration, Aunt Ida’s beloved niece, Dr. Ida Belle Scudder. Affectionately known as “Ida B”, she is one of the less-sung heroes of CMC. She inherited and exhibited the same compassion for the marginalised as her aunt, while meticulously fulfilling her clinical and administrative duties with integrity and effectiveness.

Dr. Ida Belle Scudder arrived in Vellore in 1931. After various teaching and clinical assignments she was sent for higher training and then tasked with running the Department of Radiology. This later gave birth to a separate Department of Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine. She led these departments with efficiency and flair, developing them from humble beginnings to nationally recognised centres of training and excellence. However, through all this she insisted on being a regular participant in the famous “roadside clinics” that extended medical care to the surrounding countryside and villages. Compassionate care for the marginalised for the sake of Christ, was central to her life of service. After retiring from Vellore aged 67, she served in India for a further three years, fostering radiology departments at mission hospitals in Miraj and Ambilkai.

Ida B passed away in 1995, but we are privileged that her nephew and closest living relative, Dr. Robert H. Fish, has consented to deliver the Oration in her honour. We could think of no person more suitable to speak on behalf of the Scudder family who gave of themselves for CMC. Dr. Fish accompanied his aunt during his first visit to Vellore. In response to the need he saw, and in accordance with her example and wishes, he became a lifelong, devoted and generous supporter of the activities of the Low Cost Effective Care Unit and dental outreach programmes to the marginalised both here and in the Scudder Memorial Hospital, Ranipet.

Dr. Fish is a Fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry. He served as a dentist for two years in the United States Navy, and then a further forty one years in private practice in Manchester, Connecticut. He is a member of the Vellore CMC Foundation Corporation. He served on the board of the Scudder Foundation for twelve years and was their president from 2010 to 2017. He is an active member of his local Rotary Club and has tirelessly given his time and resources for numerous humanitarian projects, especially in providing free dental care to the economically deprived both in the USA and in Honduras.

Today we are proud to honour Dr. Ida Belle Scudder, in the presence of her nephew Dr. Robert Fish, for her humble, compassionate and devoted service to humanity. We remember and celebrate her example of Christ-inspired self-sacrifice for the sake of others.
Dr. Ida Belle Scudder (1900 - 1995)

Ida B. Scudder (affectionately known as “Ida B”), was the daughter of Ida S. Scudder’s brother Lewis. She was born on 15th July 1900 in Laurel, Nebraska – the same year that her illustrious aunt opened her first dispensary in Vellore. Ida B. Scudder dedicated her life to serving the people of India in the healing ministry. She willingly sacrificed her personal, family and professional goals, going where she was needed and taking up unfamiliar responsibilities, for the sake of this great mission.

She received her M.D. from Women’s College of Pennsylvania, achieving the highest marks of any student taking the National Medical Board examination in 1928. She planned to specialise in Child Health, but in 1931 she left her job as a resident in Paediatrics responding to an urgent call for her to help cover staff vacancies in Vellore. Arriving in India she taught Anatomy and ran the Eye and ENT services. In 1933 she took charge of the Department of Medicine, and a year later Obstetrics. In each clinical field she was impressed by the large numbers of cancer patients, particularly those with oral and cervical carcinomas, with only surgery available for a few operable cases.

She loved both Pediatrics and Obstetrics, but by the mid-1930s Vellore was desperate for a trained radiologist. Ida B was asked to respond to this need. “The last thing I the world I would have normally chosen was radiology,” she says in her biography, but then goes on, “I have never regretted doing so, as I really enjoyed it.”

She trained in Radiology in New York, with Dr William Meyer, who taught her to strive for the best possible results with whatever equipment was available. She studied Medical Physics and Radiotherapy, under the well known physicist, Dr Edith Quimby. Aged 38, she completed the LRCP and MRCS examinations in England, and had further training in radiotherapy in Cambridge.

Returning to Vellore in 1939, she developed diagnostic and therapeutic radiology services, starting with one x-ray machine and a radium machine for brachytherapy. She served as Registrar and Acting Medical Superintendent and played a key role in CMC’s transition to the MBBS course and co-education. Painstakingly she raised funds to acquire diagnostic, deep X-ray and telecobalt facilities and to build the Radiotherapy Ward. Alongside this she committed herself to weekly “Roadsides”, providing family medicine to the rural community.

In 1948 Ida B obtained the Diploma of The American Board of Radiology. Until 1950 she was the only doctor for radiodiagnosis and radiotherapy, treating cancer patients, reporting X-rays, checking set-ups, supervising technologists, and initiating postgraduate training in these two fields. In 1951 she handed over Diagnostie Radiology to Dr Donald Paterson, and focused primarily on the newly founded Department of Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine. She started training programmes for technologists as well as the Diploma in Medical Radiology course, and helped conduct the first MD Radiology exams of the Madras University.

During her tenure, the department at Vellore developed into a national centre for postgraduate training in radiotherapy, which in those days meant the broad field of clinical oncology. The Department had many “firsts” in India: the first telecobalt unit in the 1950s, the first nuclear medicine section, the first afterloading techniques for cervical cancer, the first iridium–192 interstitial implants for head and neck cancer, the first separate chemotherapy department, all in the 1960s and the first 45 MV Betatron in the 1970s. A long list of Vellore postgraduates went on to head departments of Radiotherapy all over India and abroad. The present well-established role of radiotherapy in cancer management in India owes a debt to Ida B. Scudder’s leadership.

In the 1960s her trainees grew into leadership roles, but Ida B continued to be a clinician and mentor, the last of the Scudders to continue to serve in India. Construction of the Scudder Auditorium in 1966, as a memorial to her aunt, was a major milestone before her retirement from Vellore in 1967. She went on to set up Radiotherapy departments in Miraj, and in Ambilikai before finally returning to live with her sister in the USA. She continued to encourage and assist CMC, serving on the Vellore Board, precursor to the Vellore CMC Foundation.

The Ida B. Scudder building, housing Radiation Oncology, and the Ida B. Scudder Isotope Laboratory, hosting Nuclear Medicine in CMC Vellore, are two concrete memorials to her service. But the more lasting legacies are the services she founded, the patients cared for, the doctors, radiologists, radiation oncologists, technologists and physicists, trained because Ida B. Scudder cheerfully and wholeheartedly chose to give her life and dreams to a cause larger than herself.

Ida B. Scudder developed Radiology in CMC and was a pioneer of Radiotherapy, bringing its benefits to tens of thousands of cancer sufferers in southern India. She had great gifts of energy, curiosity, intelligence, and wisdom. Her generosity, kindness and dedication touched many. Dr AD Singh, her successor, who had trained as a radiologist in the UK, described her as the most compassionate doctor he had ever met.

[Adapted from an obituary of Dr. Ida B. Scudder, by Carl F. von Essen, M.D., (Int. J. Radiation Oncology Biol. Phys. Vol. 34, No. 1, p 267 1996) and from an article by Dr. Reena George, sourced from the biography Legacy and Challenge by Jennifer Georgia, and CMC Archives.]
Dr. Robert Horton Fish, DMD was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1946. He is the grandson of Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder’s second eldest brother, Lewis. Lewis was also the father of Dr. Ida B. Scudder, and Rob’s parents opened their hearts and home to his aunt, Ida B, for her to use as she pleased whilst on furlough in the US. Growing up he was strongly influenced by Ida B and CMC itself, as well as by other missionaries who were also welcomed by his family. He appreciated from a young age that the greatest reward is to be found in serving others less fortunate.

After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania Dental School in 1972, Rob served as a dentist with the US Navy for two years (non-combatant), then started a dental practice in Manchester, Connecticut. He retired from his practice, Connecticut Family Dentistry, in 2015, after 41 years of dedicated service. In line with CMC’s mission statement, he placed a high emphasis on excellence in his clinical work, rectifying anything that was less than perfect without question or cost to the patient. He has carried this principle into his voluntary dental work – never compromising on quality even when people can’t pay him for it. He was awarded a Fellowship from the Academy of General Dentistry. He was elected President of the Manchester Dental Association on three separate occasions and was head of the Peer Review Committee for many years. He also served for two terms on the Connecticut Town Board of Finance.

Upon retirement, Rob and his wife Joyce relocated to Sarasota, Florida, but he remains very active, using his dentistry expertise and experience to make the world a healthier place. He is an enthusiastic member of the Sarasota Southside Rotary Club, and has received the club’s Vocational Service Leadership Award for “service above self”. He volunteers for two days a week with Turning Points, an organization that provides services to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless and offers his time there pro bono. He volunteered with a Rotary team visiting Honduras, where he drilled, filled and extracted free of charge at an eye and dental clinic in El Progreso. Moved by his experience there, he worked hard to collect and donate a shipping container full of dental equipment and supplies to be sent to the clinic. Rob has also volunteered in Connecticut for each of the past 11 years in the annual Mission of Mercy weekend. Typically these weekends treat over 2,000 patients providing more than $2 million worth of dentistry to the poor. He skis and enjoys golf and has run marathons.

This is his fourth visit to Vellore. The first was with his aunt Ida B. Seeing the hospital and witnessing the way her heart went out to those in the greatest need had a profound effect on him. She urged him to help with the financial needs of the new Low Cost Effective Care Unit, which he eagerly did. More recently he has given enormous encouragement and financial support to enable fully equipped dental clinics to be set up and resourced at the LC euth, the Shalom Clinic, and at the Scudder Memorial Hospital, Ranipet. He is the immediate past president of the Scudder Association having served 12 years on the board and as president 2010-2017, and is a member of the Vellore CMC Foundation Corporation.

Rob is married to Joyce. He has three daughters (all of whom have been to CMC and have pursued health related careers or studies), five grandchildren, two stepchildren and two step grandchildren. Along with Dr. Fish we are pleased to welcome another member of the Scudder family: his cousin Leslie Ellenbogen, on her first visit to India. We thank both Rob and Leslie for accepting our invitation, and gracing CMC with their presence. We are most grateful to Dr. Rob Fish for delivering the oration in honour of his much loved Aunt, Ida B. Scudder, and for his long friendship and generous support to the Christian Medical College Vellore.
Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder (1870 - 1960)

Dr. Ida S. Scudder was an American physician who devoted her life and career to bringing modern health care and medical education to the people of India. The daughter of Christian missionaries, she was born in Tamil Nadu but educated in the US. Memories of India were coloured by the clamouring needs she experienced as a small girl that ultimately caused her to turn away from the family's missionary tradition and plan for a life in the United States.

In 1890, with her schooling complete, Ida made a short visit to her parents in India. There, in one fateful evening, God called on her to change direction and dedicate her life to providing health care for women and children in India. In the space of just a few hours the fates of three young women, struggling in childbirth, were placed before her. Their husbands pleaded for her help, but for religious and cultural reasons, refused the help of her physician father. With no training herself, Ida was confronted with the fact that Indian women had no one to turn to in a medical crisis. She learned the next day that all three women and their babies had died, for want of trained female assistance.

Ida Scudder returned to the US with a new ambition. She studied medicine and graduated in 1899 from Cornell Medical College in New York amongst the first batch that included women. She began her life's work in 1900 from a one-bedded clinic in her parents' bungalow in Vellore. In 1902 she opened the Mary Taber Schell Memorial Hospital and soon branched out, reaching remote villages with "roadside clinics." Within a few years she began training nurses and compounders and in 1918 launched the Licensed Medical Practitioner (LMP) course for women medical doctors. So 2018 is the centenary of medical education in Vellore.

In the 1940's the Christian Medical College became co-educational in order to acquire resources to meet rising standards of medical education. The LMP course was also upgraded to a full MBBS degree. Dr. Scudder led the institution through this difficult transition and laid the foundation for the next sixty years of medical and nursing education in an independent India.

Ida Scudder continued to provide inspiration and moral support for those who assumed leadership of the College and hospital after her retirement in 1945. She encouraged the emergence of a cadre of Indian professionals who were committed to the highest standards of medical practice and education. Her funeral in 1960 in Vellore was an all-community event with thousands of people of many faiths lining the streets. The Government of India issued a commemorative stamp on 12th August 2000 in her honour.

Dr. Ida S. Scudder's legacy is embodied in the Christian Medical College and its hospitals at Vellore, Tamil Nadu, an institution with 1,800 physicians and 2,850 nurses, providing health care for over two million people a year. CMC has maintained through the decades a well-earned reputation for quality and honesty in diagnosis and care. CMC is the top-ranked private medical college and hospital in India and a worldwide example of excellence in Community Health.
Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder passed away in 1960 but she lives on through the Christian Medical College, Vellore (CMC), which has evolved into a large multi-specialty teaching hospital. CMC now has more than 2,850 beds across five campuses, and on an average day caters to over 9,250 out patients coming from all over India and neighbouring countries. The hospital is equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic and therapeutic facilities. The continuing mission is to serve the nation through education, clinical service, research and outreach work.

In addition to MBBS and Nursing degrees and Diploma courses, CMC runs over 120 post-graduate medical courses, 40 Allied Health Science courses, 18 further Nursing programmes and MS/PhD programmes in various disciplines. In 2017 CMC was voted “2nd best Medical College in India” in the annual India Today survey and is consistently listed amongst the top colleges for MBBS. The Distance Education Department offers several training courses that enable health care workers, many from the public sector, to upgrade their skills, and also equips lay leaders to provide basic community health services in places where medical facilities are limited or non-existent. All the programmes aim to blend together knowledge, professional skills and competency, social relevance and evidence-based ethical practice. The clinical training in the large, busy multi-specialty hospital is complemented by placements in villages, mission hospitals and secondary care settings. Sophisticated learning resources are integrated with the teaching of ethics and communication skills. The aim is to nurture and mentor the students, encouraging in them holistic growth, an awareness of the needs of the marginalised, and a commitment to serve in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Research is integral to CMC, particularly where it has direct relevance to the unique health needs of India. Over the past century, CMC has contributed significantly in generating and advancing knowledge which has impacted curative and preventive medical services throughout India and the world. CMC is involved in basic, clinical and translational research in many areas, including diabetes, hepatitis, gastro-intestinal diseases, malnutrition, stem cells, early detection and treatment of cancer, and more.

Extensive community-based health services are supported by CMC’s secondary level hospitals: CHAD and RUHSA. Additional programs, including the Low Cost Effective Care Unit and the College of Nursing’s Community Health Service, provide localised care to people living in the urban slum areas of Vellore. All of these initiatives have contributed to major improvements in critical health indicators in the region.

The institution is poised for major expansion in two locations to cope with the pressures of acute over-crowding and outdated facilities. The first is a 130-bedded hospital that recently opened in Chittoor District of neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. Its accident and emergency service, wards and outpatient services are backed up by state-of-the-art operating theatres and a modern diagnostic facility. The space available in this huge campus makes it ideal for the development of many services and new initiatives. Secondly, plans have been drawn up for a new multi-speciality hospital and state-of-the-art trauma centre at Kannigapuram, about 12 km from the main hospital on the Chennai highway.

CMC is accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals, and many of the laboratories are accredited under the National Accreditation Board for Laboratories. This recognises and also energises the continuing efforts to achieve ever-higher levels of quality and patient satisfaction.

CMC Vellore’s roots as a Christian organization draw on the example of Jesus Christ, and seek to model the values, priorities and activities of His healing ministry. Patients of all faiths are welcomed and treated without regard to their beliefs, caste or other status. Staff members also represent a variety of faiths.
Since 1948 the Vellore Christian Medical College Foundation, based in New York, USA, has had a unique and close partnership with CMC, celebrating Dr. Ida S. Scudder's work, providing funding and support for CMC senior training fellowships, and raising funds for capital projects and educational, clinical and research programs.

The Foundation works closely with the Directorate to shape goals that reflect CMC's priorities. In 2015 the Foundation Board created an ex officio seat for a CMC Associate Director to deepen the connection between the Foundation's activities and CMC's work. The Foundation tries to coordinate with the Friends of Vellore worldwide to further its impact.

In 2012 the Foundation partnered with CMC to inaugurate the Dr. Ida S. Scudder Humanitarian Oration to celebrate individuals who embody the values of compassion, empathy and selflessness that brought Dr. Ida to Vellore so many years ago.

We thank all who have given to CMC through the Foundation and welcome your call or visit any time!

www.vellorecmc.org  
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Vellore Christian Medical College Foundation, Inc.

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