

INTERNATIONAL EYE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

Loss of a Leading Figure in Eye Care



Dr. G. Venkataswamy, founder of Aravind Eye Hospital in India, died today after a long illness. We were informed that our dear Dr. V passed away peacefully on Friday, July 7th at Aravind with his immediate and extended family around him. While this is a sad day, we remember and celebrate a shining human being who dedicated his life to service by restoring sight to anyone and everyone who needed his help. He was a moving force in bringing the plight of the blind to the attention of his government in India and indeed to the attention of governments around the world. Dr. V founded the Aravind Eye Hospital 30 years ago in an 8-bed unit which has grown today to five major eye hospitals throughout southern India. Dr. V brought together the world's eye care organizations and other donors showing us the way to provide quality eye care for everyone, especially the poor, in a sustainable way. IEF has not only supported various projects at Aravind, but partners with the Lions Aravind Institute for Community Ophthalmology to introduce organizational and financial sustainability to eye hospitals throughout the rest of the world. Dr. V has been a global leader, colleague, mentor, and faithful friend. Our community has lost a dear and great light, but he leaves behind many disciples and certainly left the world a brighter place than when he entered it through his spiritual light, his guiding light, and the light he brought to others by restoring their sight. He was loved by us all and will be dearly missed.

Victoria M. Sheffield, IEF Executive Director

Photo (IEF archives): Victoria Sheffield, Dr. Venkataswamy of Aravind, and Dr. Suzanne Gilbert of SEVA during an early visit by Dr. V to IEF.