

FIS Interviews Sockalingam Sam Kannappan and wife, Meenakshi

Sockalingam Sam Kannappan and his wife Meenakshi Kannappan were interviewed by Govindan Somaskanthan for the Foundation for India studies' Indo-American Oral History Project on December 17th 2014.

Kannappan was born in Natarasankottai village in Chettinad area in Tamil Nadu state in 1943. Chettinad occupies a pride in the history of Tamil Nadu since the people from Chettinad are noted worldwide for their selfless service and spirituality.

Kannappan came to America for further studies and joined graduate studies in Mechanical Engineering at University of Texas at Austin on September 9, 1968.

Kannappan formed Patients Hospitality Committee under India Student Association, University of Houston in 1972 to help heart surgery patients. When about seven patients died without next of kin in Houston, Kannappan performed last rites with the assistance of Mr. P.H.Desai, First Secretary, Embassy of India, Washington DC.

Kannappan served as Editor of Jothi of the Hindu Worship Society of Houston from 1973. He is the Co-Founder of Bharathi



Govindan Somaskanthan interviewing the Kannappans.

thi Kalai Manram in Houston in 1974. He is the Founder Secretary of Sri Meenakshi Temple Society (MTS) in October 1977 and was instrumental to purchase first five acre land in May 1978. Recently, Kannappan was elected the Honorary President of MTS which has evolved into a multi-million dollar organization. For his role in building the Sri Meenakshi Temple, the Mayor of Pearland Tom Reid commented "I am after all the Mayor of Pearland, but Sam is the Mayor of Sri Meenakshi Temple".

Whether it is a fundraiser for the widow of a Texan firefighter or for the victims of the Gujarat earthquake, he has swung into action immediately. Kannappan is always available whenever someone needs help.

On January 9th 2003, Kannappan spoke at NRI conference in New Delhi and offered assistance from Texas for linking Indian rivers.

He developed Tamil Fonts with voice synthesizer to assist M.G.R, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1984. He was the Co-Chairman for the India's Millennium festival on January 27, 2001. As Chairman of India's Disaster Relief Committee, he oversaw the reconstruction of 200 homes in Krishna Nagar, Kutch after Gujarat earthquake from funds collected in Houston. He started GOPIO Houston Chapter.

His leadership in helping victims of Hurricane Katrina and Ike was very much appreciated by Americans. He was given title of Sevai Thilakam (Service Star) in Chennai on June 7th 2005. He is listed as one of 20 leading Business leaders from Tamil Nadu by India Today on July 8th 2009. Editor made special mention of Kannappan's integrity and Honesty in business dealings.

Kannappan is the author of textbook "Introduction to Pipe Stress Analysis" and Piping analysis software EZFLEX.

Not only Kannappan organizes meetings or events, but you can see him washing the temple floor or Temple restroom demonstrating a humility and total lack of ego. In a country where wealth and opulence go hand in hand, Kannappan leads a very austere life and his needs are limited.

Kannappan could not have done all this had it not been for the support from his wife, Meenakshi who is a modest woman and who understands her husband's mind and helps him in his service to the society.

For more information about Kannappan and his accomplishments, please visit: http://engineers.texas.gov/board_bios/kannappan.html and <http://www.samkannappan.com/aboutme.php>