

REMEMBERING C. PARAMALINGAM

SUCCESS DEMANDS SACRIFICES

My first encounter with C Paramalingam was in the mid seventies, with barely five years of sports writing under my belt.

He had no inkling of my journalistic abilities, so naturally when I called him over the phone to get a story, he was having none of that.

If you want a story, my comment on something, you come to Klang where I am at, and I'll talk to you, he said.

That was one of the first lessons I was taught in journalism by a man who refused to speak to a voice, who trusted only on his assessment of a person, face-to-face.

I made my trip to the Klang Town Council where he worked, nervous and a little afraid of meeting the man who had admonished me for resorting to shortcuts.

There were no shortcuts for him, and he didn't advocate that to his charges. One had to work hard, and

be prepared to make the sacrifices that success demanded.

Facing Param, I felt a little easier because he had appreciated the effort I made in making the trip to Klang, on public transport.

We talked about nothing but hockey, he wasn't into frivolous conversations and topics that didn't inspire him. He was outspoken, not caring if he had stepped on important toes.

I came away, tutored on hockey, a game at that time I knew very little of, and had virtually no passion for. Heck, I couldn't even stop a ball with the stick, in PE sessions at St John's Institution.

But Param was a good teacher, he opened horizons in hockey for me, that I didn't even know existed. He not only helped me understand the game, but also got me to start liking it then.

And he also showed me how one's perspective could change, and new ones be developed, when you were seated opposite a man who had

seen and done it all, in hockey.

Years after that, I was able to call him over the phone to get a comment or two, because I had already earned his respect and trust. He was a gem of a man, easy to be with.

And that was another lesson learnt, that there were no shortcuts to even earning the trust of a legendary player and coach.

And it saddened me to know that a man, who had helped shape my sportswriting career, struggled to recognize me when we last met at the Sports Flame event this year.

It was even more heartbreak to see him confined to a wheelchair, when he once stood firm on his feet, taking on his opponents, the flawed system, and hockey administrators pretending to be leaders.

Farewell my friend, and hockey tutor, thank you for the invaluable lessons that had augured well in my journalistic journey.

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(SPORTSWRITER)

