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**U1.5 UNICEF 1996****Rhode, Jon E. - Shanker, Uma - UNICEF NEW DELHI INDIA****New Delhi : UNICEF:1996****134 p.****This anthology of articles and anecdotes on James P. Grant, contributed by those who loved, admired and respected him, has been compiled by Jon E. Rohde and Uma Shanker on behalf of UNICEF.****UNICEF - JAMES P. GRANT - SOUTH ASIA**

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# The Jim that I knew

*Daniel J. O'Dell*

Jim was a visionary, statesman and a leader; and probably in the same order. As a visionary, he led UNICEF for the last 15 years, carrying us from Child Survival Revolution to Child Survival Development to GOBI-FFE, to the Summit and the Decade Goals for Children. This also included the almost universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child—probably one of the most incredible personalised efforts that one human being could undertake. As a statesman, he was to some people's mind, unduly friendly and casual with Heads of State, Kings and Queens. But I believe it was this style that endeared him to everyone, including those same Kings and Queens. He was as comfortable with them as he was with a District Collector in India. His language never changed, for it was his love for children and therefore for UNICEF that drove him to such high levels of inspiration. As a leader, he took UNICEF through a very difficult period of time and like all leaders, he had his own weaknesses. However, it was his leadership that has brought us to the point today of undertaking management reform, achieving the Mid-Decade Goals and reforming UNICEF to meet the challenges of the 21st century—something no other agency can claim they are doing.

Jim was also a husband and a father from whom everyone can draw inspiration. I shared a very poignant moment with him when Ethel died in India, and I also saw his life recover from this great loss after that tragedy, when he married Ellan. His children are warm and sincere; you would think that they were one of the things he did not have time for, given his hectic life and lifestyle, but this was far from the truth. On any field trip together, family was his major topic of discussion.

Jim was also a man of compassion and understanding. Over the years, I have shared a couple of very intimate experiences with him; one of them being in Sloan Kettering Cancer Hospital when he undertook his first surgery and I was undertaking my third chemotherapy. I still remember how weak he was, and yet we both walked the corridor; I pushing my chemo IV and he pushing his IV. In our pajamas we looked like two tottering old men, but the discussion that we were holding was one of the most significant for me in the last 10 years. I will never forget when I was medically evacuated from Mozambique to Capetown, it was he and the President of Mozambique who each called me, before anyone else, to find out how I was and wish me well. For me, Jim was much more than just a leader and a boss. He was more like a father figure. That was true for many of us youngsters in the organization who joined about the same time that he did. He has been my only role model in the agency for the past 16 years, and in some regards I feel very spoiled.

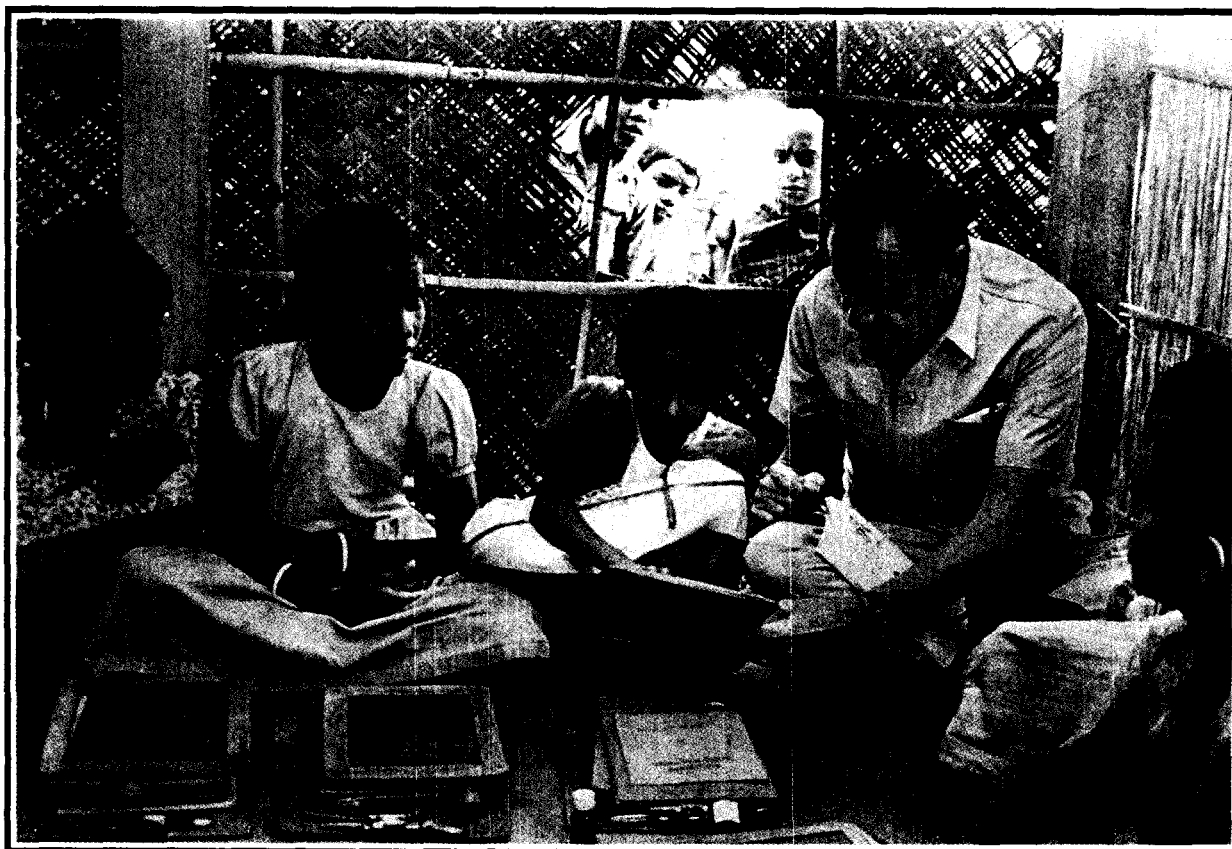
I remember my first meeting with Jim was in UNICEF New Delhi. When he came around to our Education Section, I thought I would impress him by showing him our support programme for satellite broadcast

communication for children both visually and verbally. He listened and nodded and in the end, of course, he asked a question most people were afraid to ask “But what is it doing for kids?” Never hesitant to criticize, but yet always there to praise.

There is not more I can say than that he was a warm, gentle and sincere human being.



*Daniel J. O'Dell is the Representative of UNICEF in Nepal, and former chief of the Education Section in UNICEF India Country Office.*



*"The right of every child to receive education has come centre-stage. The nine high population countries who have the largest number of 'out-of-school' children, have pledged to put children on top of their agenda. This comes after a long struggle."*

*James P. Grant at the  
Education For All (EFA) Summit  
New Delhi, 1993*

# Remembering Jim

*Jim Mayrides*

It was my honour and privilege to work with James P. Grant for 15 years. He taught me to believe in difficult causes, to believe in my own capabilities and to confront these causes. He had a way of gently encouraging one to dig into the deep inner spirit, to find the strength and courage to put the self aside, to focus on the “other.”

JPG was a leader who worked tirelessly, not asking you to do what he would not. His example was the epitome of his leadership. The encouragement was always positive, especially in the face of adversity, particularly so when the going was very tough. And, when it became ever more difficult, he was able to inspire us to select the solution, without compromising the ideal. He may have had a few negative bones in his body, but I never saw their evidence, only the positive.

Jim was—is a person of the light. I believe this. I felt this light waning in this plane of existence, even wrote of it to a mutual friend. The light beings on the spiritual plane were preparing in mid-January to celebrate his joining them. There was a huge shift in the light forces as this process neared its transition. Jim’s spirit did not leave us,

rather his existence moved to a much wider plane of influence. Thus, I celebrate his life and feel humble that I was afforded the privilege to live a small portion of it with him.

He was a friend, he was a boss, he was a leader, he was a visionary. The results of his vision will live on within me. I hope to be here long enough to contribute more, and perhaps on a personal basis, to experience the good harvest of what Jim Grant was able to sow.

We had fun together on those all too few times that we were able to touch our soul aspects. On a mountaintop in the Andes, hugging humble campesinos, rejoicing in their joy at seeing clean water gushing from a spigot in the middle of nowhere. Twenty hours by car from the end of the world, reachable by helicopter in minutes. Jim's child-like delight in finding iodized salt in a small village lost in the same Andes. So delighted that we almost missed the fossilized footprints of dinosaurs a few meters distant. Yet, Jim's imprint on the world with IDD elimination will outlast the petroglyphs sighted from the helicopter, and, when weighed within the context of human progress, will be more beautiful to behold. He showed that one person can make a difference.

Or discussing the Mid-Decade Goals with heads of state, meeting in the mud with villagers, giving hope and encouragement to both. Dancing under the stars with the project teams, singing songs in languages neither of us really understood. Sitting with members of presidential cabinets, parliaments, labour leaders, schoolteachers, dialoguing with a rural doctor on monitoring primary health care actions. Returning to hotels at midnight, expecting to get a few hours



rest before the next grueling day, but brainstorming first over a cold beer as to how we could handle a recalcitrant minister of state early the same morning.

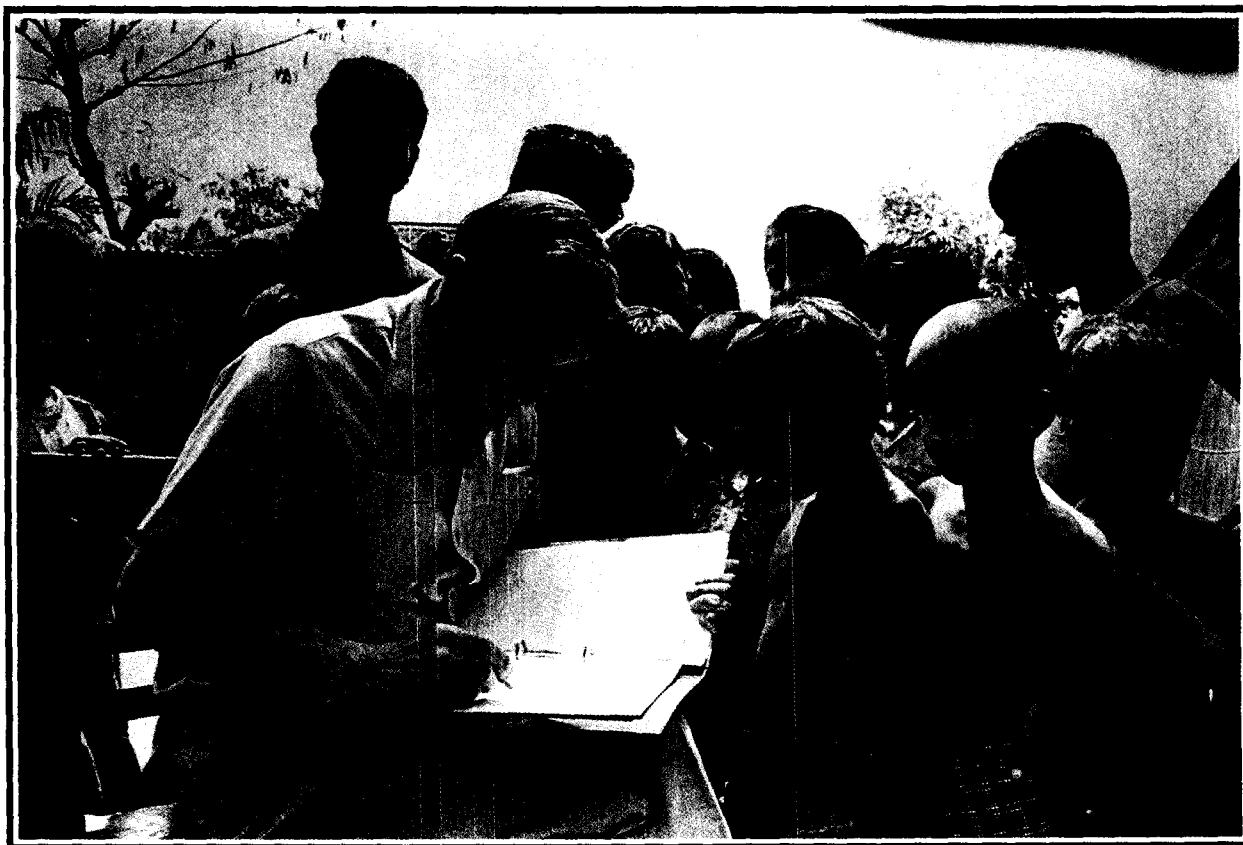
Jim will remain in my memories. He put the rights of the child, the needs of the world's children on the map. He left them on the political, economic and social agendas of our planet. This is his legacy, our inheritance. I hope that we have the strength and courage to use it wisely. Thanks Jim, travel well on your new journey. Help us with the challenges which remain.



*Jim Mayrides was the Representative of UNICEF in Pakistan,  
1993 to 1996*

*"If democracies are to be sustained, if the conduct of human affairs is not to lapse into widespread social disintegration and political upheaval, then this gap (between reality and possibility) must rapidly be closed: reality must keep step with possibility, morality with capacity."*

*The State of the World's Children Report 1995*



SHEHZAD NOORANI/UNICEF

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PROMISES KEPT

# A rare visionary

*Senator Sartaj Aziz*

James P. Grant, or Jim, as we all called him, was a rare visionary, because he combined his vision for a better world with a very strong sense of realism. This combination gave him a remarkable opportunity to translate his vision into concrete programmes, and to mobilize unprecedented support from statesmen, policy-makers and the public for these programmes. He was also indefatigable in the pursuit of his mission. Having achieved one goal or landmark, he was always impatient to pursue the next goal on his imaginative agenda without even recovering his breath.

I first met Jim in February 1970 at the Columbia Conference on International Development, which Barbara Ward had convened to discuss the follow up of the 1969 Report of the Pearson Commission on development cooperation. That Conference was, in many ways, a threshold in development thinking because it initiated the transition from the narrow view of 'economic growth' to the broader concept of socio-economic development. Jim played a major role in shaping the Columbia Declaration on International Development adopted at that conference. I still vividly remember his animated

discussions in a small group in which he tried to emphasize forcefully that development was not a matter of statistical numbers only but how it affected common people.

Our interaction increased greatly three years later when in 1973, a major world food crisis began to overtake the world. I was at that time Director of Commodities and Trade Division at FAO, Rome. Jim called me when he read about a press conference I had given on the world food situation and asked me to send him more information during my next visit to Washington. I met him and his colleagues at the Overseas Development Council, which he had formed in 1969 as a lobby group to persuade the US policy-makers to do more for development. Food was an issue in which USA was most concerned, so he decided to devote his next annual report called, "Agenda for Action," to the world's impending food crisis. He also prepared a memorandum addressed to the President of the United States. He persuaded Senator Humphrey and several other senators and congressmen to sign this memorandum, calling upon the US Government to take notice of the food crisis and do something to prevent it.

Three months later, Senator Humphrey wrote another memorandum to Henry Kissinger, who had just taken over as Secretary of State, to include in his first address to the General Assembly a proposal to call for a World Food Conference, to tackle the food problems in all its dimensions. That statement was delivered on 24 September 1973, and a major food conference was held in Rome in November 1974 under the auspices of the United Nations. I was the Deputy Secretary General in charge of documentation for the Conference. Jim came to Rome four times during 1974 to work on proposals which we were preparing for the

Conference. I was very impressed by his deep commitment which was not confined to writing about issues; he wanted to play an active part. He also persuaded Henry Kissinger, Senator Humphrey and several Congressmen to come to the Conference. In his own words, the World Food Conference will go down as a major international conference which tried to create an agreed international framework for tackling a major global issue in a coordinated manner. "When the United Nations was created," he would recall, "there was a great euphoria in the world that there will be global management of its resources and policies. But in practice, only a few agreements were reached, mainly on international radio frequencies and health regulations in 1949. This process virtually halted as the UN Conference on Trade and Employment at Havana was totally deadlocked. Twenty-five years later, for the first time, there was this Food Conference which created a global framework for food." Jim himself had made a valuable contribution in evolving this framework.

A year later, we had another opportunity to work together on restructuring the Society for International Development. He had watched it grow in Washington. It consisted mainly of development experts who had served in developing countries and wanted to stay in touch. But SID had very little presence in the developing world. So, we worked together to restructure SID, shift its headquarters from Washington to Rome, had two-thirds of the membership of the governing council from the third world, and made it an active organization. In 1976, Jim persuaded me to become the President of SID. He himself became the Vice-President, and along with several colleagues like Maurice Strong and Richard Jolly, he played an active role in SID's main initiatives, such as the North

South Round Table and Alternative Development Strategies Programme.

His election as Executive Director of UNICEF in 1980 was itself a major achievement, a testimony to his deep commitment to development and to a fair deal for the South. His achievements in UNICEF are well documented. These clearly show that without a very strong commitment and a clear conceptual vision of what one wants to achieve, practical proposals cannot emerge. He started in UNICEF with relatively simple programmes, like oral rehydration therapy and immunization, and went to scores of countries to mobilize more resources for UNICEF. Having introduced UNICEF to world leaders, he began to broaden its programmes and to link these programmes for children to the overall concept of development. While these programmes were introduced in all parts of the world, they were particularly successful in South Asia.

In the second phase which started in the mid eighties, he had successfully evolved a set of integrated goals for children, but he soon realized that without strong political support these ambitious goals could not be achieved. That is when he came up with the boldest of his initiatives—a summit of world leaders devoted exclusively to children. He worked tirelessly for 18 months to organize this summit, which was eventually held in September 1990. It unanimously adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Action for the decade, 1991-2000. This successful experiment paved the way for further summits on other subjects: Environment in Rio in 1992, Population in Cairo in 1994, Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995 and Women and Development in Beijing in September 1995. But, in my view, in terms of actual and effective follow up, the Summit on Children of

September 1990 was both the first as well as the most successful of conferences of its kind.

While the success which Jim achieved, in expanding UNICEF's programmes in all parts of the world, and in mobilizing additional resources for these programmes, remains unmatched in the history of the United Nations, he was equally successful in influencing development policy as a whole.

One of his most successful initiatives was, "Adjustment with a Human Face." As the World Bank and IMF launched their Structural Adjustment Programmes in the early eighties, UNICEF was the first UN agency to point out the adverse impact of these programmes on poor people, and to create greater awareness of the social and human cost of structural adjustment. The initial reaction of these powerful agencies was negative, but gradually, they accepted the need for greater attention to social aspect of development in their policies. Now, these are regularly monitored in every adjustment programme, and often accommodated in other complementary "safety-net" programmes.

Jim Grant also came up with many other ideas and initiatives which influenced international discussion of global issues. One of these was the concept of 20:20, in which each country should spend at least 20 percent of government budget on social programmes, and the donor community should also devote 20 percent of official development assistance to these programmes. This concept was accepted in principle at the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development. Just before he said "good bye" to this world, he began to extend the concept of 20:20 to

2050. In his last 1995 State of the World's Children report, he presented his vision towards the year 2050:

*"....by becoming involved in this struggle, in whatever way and on whatever front, it may be that an answer will also be found to the problems which today beset so many of those, in all nations of the world, who are principal beneficiaries of the progress that has been achieved in this century. For it may be that the being involved in a cause larger than oneself is a deep human need from which we have been diverted."*

The best tribute which the international community can pay to one of its most illustrious members in this century would be to honour him by fulfilling his vision for the next millennium.



*Senator Sartaj Aziz is Secretary-General of Pakistan Muslim League (N), Islamabad and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Pakistan. He is the former Minister of Finance, Pakistan.*



# James P. Grant:

tower of strength to Pakistan's  
Accelerated Health Programme

*M. I. Burney*

In 1980, when Mr. James Grant took over as Executive Director of UNICEF, the developing countries were facing economic recession. The brunt was being borne by children and women, amongst them the most affected were the poor.

“The State of the World’s Children Report” was started by him to enable the world to know the real situation from health indices. He believed, information is the backbone of proper planning. He would visit countries to gather firsthand information, and would always visit our National Institute of Health. NIH, where I was the Executive Director, was the focal point for child health programmes in Pakistan. He realized that political, economic, social and cultural remedies would take decades to get any beneficial results, and during these years, children would continue dying and becoming maimed. More mothers would be lost delivering their babies, leaving behind orphans. Urgent measures had to be taken. Priorities had to be set. Vaccine- preventable diseases, diarrhoeal disease, poor nutrition were identified as major problems. The technology and knowledge to solve these problems was available at a cost which most nations and

most families could afford, especially with international support. What was further needed was motivation of communities, families and health workers, who were to be convinced that they could protect lives of millions of children. Jim understood all these factors.

Pakistan having an IMR of 120/1000 live births started Extended Programme of Immunization (EPI) in 1978, but no headway could be made until 1982 when the Accelerated Health Programme (AHP) was started with an input of Rs.600 million. Its components were EPI, control of diarrhoeal disease (CDD), TBAs training under an umbrella of mass media, and IEC. Just after one year, remarkable progress was made. James Grant was very appreciative of our AHP strategy and offered all out support. For the first time, a system of “reimbursable” funding concept was put into operation, converting UNICEF local currency expenditure to foreign exchange, to be used for the procurement of high quality vaccines and cold-chain equipment. This system has now become a routine in UNICEF’s support for EPI in many countries.

I remember Jim watching our slide presentation with keen interest, putting questions and giving advice to the programme manager. In 3 years, coverage shot up to 65 percent from a meagre 5 percent. A hundred-thousand lives were saved and 3 million illnesses were prevented. Disease reduction was noted to be 83 percent in measles, and 65 percent in polio. ORS utilization rose up to 71 percent from 17 percent and ultimately UCI of 80 percent EPI coverage of under one year was achieved by 1990. Half of all developing countries achieved UCI. Globally, 12 million young lives were saved and 1.5 million children were spared of being crippled due to polio. Grant quoted Pakistan’s EPI as an exemplary programme.

Prince Talal's contribution of \$1.5 million on behalf of UNICEF for the establishment of Measles Vaccine Production Laboratory at NIH Islamabad opened up a new vista in UNICEF activities. It was Jim's personal interest that UNICEF's administration got moving and international tenders were opened at WHO HQ in Geneva. Connaught Laboratories of Canada was entrusted with the job. This was the first laboratory in the developing world to go into production of a highly sophisticated viral vaccine. The venture contributed five years later to the global Vaccine Independence Initiative in 1991.

The Children's Vaccine Initiative (CVI), sponsored by UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank and the Rockefeller Foundation, where UNICEF plays the role of catalyst in basic research and development of new vaccines, is an example of James Grant's belief in mutual collaboration and cooperation. He was very enthusiastic about "Supervaccine" and a "single dose time-release microcapsule." He was a man of vision and wished to use technology in its practical application.

During the Advisory Group Meeting, held in New York in 1987 on Child Survival and Development, in which issues of child health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, CDD, ARI, research and monitoring of programmes were discussed, I remember how beautifully and eloquently he would wind up heated discussions. At Tallories in France, the Bellagio III conference for Child Survival, sponsored by UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank and Rockefeller Foundation, closed with the famous Tallories Declaration enunciating the targets to be achieved in mid-nineties and 2000, I had the privilege and honour to chair the closing session addressed by the two giants of WHO and

UNICEF—Mahler and Grant. Jim Grant's contribution in formulation of the final recommendation is memorable. His policy was to get a subject discussed thoroughly at regional level in varying geographical, social and cultural settings, and come up with relevant goals to be attained.

James Grant was a statesman of very high standing. He was convinced that whatever may be the merit of the programmes, they must have practical plans of operation, and accept the necessity of meeting the set targets and goals. Execution would not be possible without the political commitment at the highest level, the Head of State or Government. Only he could succeed in arranging participation of 71 Presidents and Prime Ministers for the historic first World Summit for Children in 1990. He came to Pakistan and personally invited by our Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto to be one of the six sponsoring Heads of State.

Jim was a very brave person, knowing in 1993 the nature of his health problem, he continued his relentless travelling the next year, meeting with 40 world leaders to seek their active support for the cause of children. I pay homage to the champion of world's children—James P. Grant. May God bless his soul.



*Maj. General (R) M.I. Burney is a Member, Federal Advisory Group on EPI, Government of Pakistan; WHO Consultant and former Executive Director of the National Institute of Health, Islamabad.*

# James Grant

## A tribute

*K. Zaki Hasan*

If there is one outstanding lesson from the last three decades, it is that social and economic development can never fully succeed unless human beings are recognized as both the object and the instrument of development. This significant lesson symbolises all that James Grant stood for.

Born in China, James Grant had extensive experience in aid programmes at various levels of involvement. He was convinced that elements of modern technology, both simple and inexpensive, could be applied to reduce the horrendous child deaths. In 1992, GOBI (Growth monitoring, Oral rehydration, Breastfeeding, Immunization) was born. Family spacing, along with female education was the other component of Child Survival and Development Revolution. He had strong feelings for Pakistan and became a great personal friend. He travelled extensively and frequently visited Pakistan. His special *forte* was influencing heads of government into being seen to be participants, actively engaging themselves in one or the other elements of GOBI. His sense of justice moved him to speak up against the invidious land tenure system, the exploitation of the South by the North,

consequent net transfer of resources against the unconscionable increase in the cost of pharmaceuticals and escalating costs of medical treatment; in short, every conceivable injustice was anathema to him.

In his death, not only has UNICEF lost a great leader, but his many friends, a devoted and loyal person, and the world, a caring humanist. The children of world will cherish his memory.



*Prof. K. Zaki Hasan is the Vice Chancellor, Baqai University, Karachi and is the former Chairman, UNICEF Executive Board.*

# Godfather Grant

*Javed Jabbar*

James Grant became the Godfather of the world's children. He was a Santa Claus who did not need Christmas to spread the message of good cheer. In an age when cynicism came easy, he exuded love and compassion. Though tenderness often becomes ineffectiveness, James had the rare gift of being able to transform the concern that he felt into concrete and tangible actions that made a palpable, visible difference in the lives of millions of children. To be able to work within the complex UN system, to gently and firmly guide divergent views towards a consensus, to be able to stand amongst the capable and distinguished roster of individuals who head the different UN agencies, and while doing so retain a passionate, wide-eyed enthusiasm, required a very special person—which he certainly was.

I first heard about James Grant in the late seventies when I became a member of the Karachi Chapter of the Society for International Development. He played a major role in making SID into a unique, multidisciplinary forum that brings together development specialists and practitioners from over 80 countries around the world. In subsequent years, we met regularly at the triennial meetings of SID in Rome, New Delhi, Amsterdam and Mexico City.

Soon after he took over as the Executive Director of UNICEF, he visited Pakistan in 1983. At that time, in collaboration with Dr. Ghaffar Billoo, who had initiated a health service for rural Karachi, I was organizing the development communications dimension for the project, and it was fortuitous for us that James Grant decided to visit one of the villages where we were working.

His charm came through immediately. His eyes always smiled. He established an instant rapport with the people of the village, especially the children. He made some astute comments and suggestions of the health education material that was designed and displayed on this occasion. An affinity was apparent as we discussed other projects in which there was an association with UNICEF, such as the Baldia town project in Karachi.

When we commenced organizing mobile workshops into different parts of the rural Sindh in 1984, the meeting with Jim in Karachi perhaps encouraged UNICEF to make available to us a used Land Rover vehicle, which also took us on our first journey to the Tharparkar arid region in February 1985.

In 1985, I was elected to the Senate of Pakistan, and few months later I heard from James Grant, who was anxious to ensure that one's new position in the Federal Parliament be used for the causes most dear to his heart. Soon enough, at conferences on health and development in New Delhi and in Colombo in 1986 and 1987, respectively, where parliamentarians from South Asia were assembled at his initiative, to learn about children's issues, I met with him again as well as with another remarkable personality associated with UNICEF, the late Tarzie Vittachi. As our



collaborative work developed, I became a member of the first Cabinet of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in December 1988. Shortly thereafter, Jim telephoned from New York to felicitate me, but more importantly to stress to me what could be done for children as a Cabinet member, irrespective of the portfolio one held (initially Information and Broadcasting and subsequently Science & Technology). Within a few weeks, James Grant revived contact to obtain my participation in further developing the concept of a World Summit for Children. In a year of revolutionary global change, as was the year 1989, marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall and winds of change across other parts of the planet as well, the idea of a World Summit devoted exclusively to children's issues had the curiously dual dimension of being both an inescapable imperative, as well as a postponable priority when other emergencies were competing for the attention of Heads of State and Governments.

It was the single-minded determination of James Grant, his unshakable belief that it was possible to organize such an event at a time of ferment and competing priorities, which ultimately ensured what was the largest-ever assembly of Presidents, Prime Ministers and Kings to take place in August 1990. So resolute was Jim in his commitment to the Summit that, even the crisis caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August, 1990, just about four weeks before the Summit, neither diverted him from his purpose nor prevented the holding of the Summit.

As the Personal Representative of the Prime Minister of Pakistan amongst the group of six such individuals who represented the initiators of the Summit, it was a rare privilege to work closely with Jim on steering the

preparatory process through the labyrinth of swiftly changing circumstances, varying perceptions of governments and the logistical complexity of planning a meeting. When the abrupt ouster of the Benazir Bhutto government on 6 August, 1990 prevented the Prime Minister serving as Co-chair of the Summit, Jim expressed his disappointment as well as his appreciation for Pakistan's support to his efforts in most moving terms.

James Grant correctly viewed the Summit as being more than a mere ceremony. He saw it as a crucial catalyst, as a tangible and purposeful event to advance children's rights and children's interests. The best proof of the value of the Summit was the fact that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, soon after the Summit, became the most widely ratified UN Convention in the history of the world—ratified by over 80 countries within a span of two years—a fitting testimony to the man of global vision for all world's children.



*Javed Jabbar is Chairman of MNJ Communication Ltd. , Karachi and former Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting, Pakistan.*

# My friend and source of inspiration

*Hakim Mohammed Said*

Friendship alone does not sufficiently describe my happy and memorable association with the late lamented James Grant. We shared many of the cherished values of humanity—especially, a genuine and immanent affection for children—the flowers of God. He was a dedicated soldier fighting a successful battle for children at the world level at UNICEF, and I have been fighting my battle for the little ones in Pakistan. It was through him that an effective collaboration between UNICEF and the Hamdard Foundation did fructify.

At UNICEF, he marched triumphantly towards his goal—his historical Magna Carta for Children. In Pakistan, I was busy fighting my battle on two fronts—creating an awareness about children's welfare at the national level, and creating an awakening among children themselves for their rights and privileges. My own goal was the establishment of Madinat al-Hikmah, an entire city of education, science and culture with a Hamdard Public School where today's children could be groomed to become responsible citizens of tomorrow.

About the time James died, Madinat al-Hikmah stood as a reality. I had to go it all alone, but I greatly valued the inspiration I often got from Jim's gallant, tireless and unwavering commitment to the cause of children, upon whom depended the future of our planet, and the prospects of a tangible, lasting peace.

No tribute to the memory of Jim P. Grant is enough without mentioning the CSDR—the Child Survival and Development Revolution—which saved millions of children all over the world, and which really mobilized world opinion about children's welfare. This was the time Hamdard Foundation, Pakistan launched Children's Forum—the Hamdard Bazm-e-Naunehal—which provided children with a platform of their own to air their views about matters which concerned them directly. This forum has today developed into Children's Assemblies. If Jim were alive, he would have been overjoyed to see children speaking their mind at conferences which Hamdard especially organized for them.

“Very few men or women ever have the opportunity to do as much good in the world as James Grant, and very few have ever grasped that opportunity with such complete and dedicated commitment,” said the UN Secretary General, Mr. Boutros-Boutros Ghali. Everyone feels he or she loves little children, but very few, indeed, are committed to them. Such were the ingredients of Jim's character.

“End” is perhaps not the word that describes the passing of James Grant. The mission he started has no end. It must go on and on, and on. Children, I insist, are the flowers of God and these flowers have to be nurtured with dedication, such as of James Grant.

Right now, there is evidence everywhere that the mission Jim started has a long way to go. Poverty, forced labour, disease and illiteracy still haunt many a child all the world over. How could Jim's soul be at peace with such painful sights still to be seen here and there?

Yet, the fact remains that the battle that James Grant began must go on. The flowers of God must not wilt away. The finest tribute to the memory of Jim Grant is, for all of us who claim the fortune to have known him in life, will be to carry on the mission which he left unfinished.



*Hakim Mohammed Said is Vice Chancellor, Hamdard University and Chairman of the Hamdard foundation, Karachi. He is former Governor of Sindh, Pakistan.*



*"A child has only one chance to develop normally; and the protection of that one chance therefore demands the kind of commitment that will not be superseded by other priorities. There will always be something more immediate; there will never be anything more important."*

*The State of the World's Children, 1995*

# *Hats off to yesterday*

*Naseem-ur-Rehman*

Named today,  
Struggling with life,  
hundreds of thousands,  
up in the mountains,  
far away in the deserts,  
in the crowded streets  
on the reckless roads,  
in the plains and valleys,  
working long hours,  
in the dark alleys,  
do children know?  
*Grant is no more*

Often nameless,  
poor and homeless,  
weak and faceless,  
those he loved the most,  
whose cause he chased,  
in peace and war,  
near and afar,  
always on the run,  
going for the impossible,  
braving the gun,  
calling the summit,  
telling the world,  
children children children first  
do children know?  
*Grant is no more*

Fighting for their cause,  
 in rain and sun shine,  
 in hot and cold,  
 in health and sickness,  
 for ever bold.  
 Followed like a mission,  
 like an unwritten constitution,  
 like a soulmate,  
 like a homing pigeon,  
 like a chosen fate.  
 Those who are most affected,  
 behind the rest,  
 in an affluent world,  
 but high and dry,  
 will they smile or cry,  
 if children know,  
*Grant is no more*

When the wind stop blowing,  
 and the rain stop falling,  
 and the night falls,  
 and the stars come up,  
 will children know,  
*Grant is no more*

Sure they do—  
 sure they will—  
 when the truth is known,  
 when the rights come through,  
 when the killing stops,  
 and the dreams come true,  
 children will know—  
*Grant is no more*



When yesterday blends,  
into today and tomorrow,  
when sanity prevails,  
with the taming of the wild,  
pulling together,  
better future for every child.  
When the message gets across,  
they will draw a picture,  
sing a song,  
bring a flower,  
when children know—  
*Grant is no more,  
Like a folklore,  
Forever more!*



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JOHN ISACUNICEF

PROMISES KEPT

# Remembering a universal human being

*A. T. Ariyaratne*

I first meet Dr. James P. Grant in the late fifties when he initiated the USAID Programme in Sri Lanka. I was one among several young people whom he met. I never thought a decade or so later that we would be close and life-long friends, sharing similar visions and ideals, though working at different levels, to serve the poor and the powerless in the world. When he formed the Overseas Development Council, where with colleagues like Lester Brown, John Sewell, Denis Goulet and others, he developed the PQLI measure and highlighted the Basic Human Need Approach, I was regularly invited by him to Washington to participate in the deliberations with my village level experience.

He kindly took me to his home on several occasions sharing a meal with his wife, Ethel, and their children. One day at his Washington residence he took me out into the garden and said, "Ari, I am going to break some news to you. Give me your honest opinion whether I am making the right decision." His serious facial expression momentarily turned into that disarming smile with his lips rounded up like a fresh lotus. With wrinkles spreading all around his face, he whispered into my ear. "President

Carter wants me to be the Executive Director of UNICEF. What do you think?" My immediate response was, "You have made the right decision. Congratulations and we in the voluntary sector will give you all the backing."

From that day unto his last, Jim was our dear friend, guide and spokesman for the cause of children, women, the poor and the powerless in the highest decision-making echelons. His loss is a loss to human civilization. All of us are poorer without him. In his ODC days, I remember how thorough he was in directing his colleagues when he developed the Physical Quality of Life Index as a measure of development. Thoroughness backed by unquestionable analysis of all relevant data and clear communication were his forte. He was a genius who not only had the capacity to get around him very competent and committed people but also had the knowledge and wisdom to direct them.

He studied the problems of children thoroughly. He conceived the Child Survival Revolution, and was undoubtedly the livewire of the international effort supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank and WHO. He put his message across in such a way that even the bitterest opponent of his views had to meet his strategies with respect. That is how James Grant's name began to resonate across the seas and lands, carrying the message of love, care and concern to the most deserving sections of human beings: children and mothers. Although he is no more with us, children of his day would carry with them to the future the endless benefits that they received at his hands due to the appropriate decisions he made in selecting his priorities, and tirelessly working towards achieving the targets.

The difference he made to the way governments and the general public looked at the problems of children and mothers was the turning point in world development. Starting from very simple government officials and grassroots workers, he laid a solid foundation to build public opinion which reached up to the highest bureaucracies of governments and private sector. He judiciously carried the message to ministers and heads of states. He was a genius in obtaining the services of popular artists, religious heads and other community leaders on bringing home his message of Child Survival and Development. Celebrities like Liv Ullman were sent out as UNICEF goodwill ambassadors by him to all corners of the world. He always had Agendas for Action, such as UNICEF State of the World Children's Reports and the publication, 'Facts For Life.' Global Ministerial Conference on Education for All followed by the World Summit for Children with heads of state are some of his brilliant ideas put into action with his dedicated and able colleagues.

My friend, Jim Grant, is most frequently, lovingly and reverently remembered by me when I myself participate in making plans for the well-being of children here in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. It is very rarely that we are blessed with human beings who are path-makers and trail-blazers. Jim Grant fell into this rare category and people who knew him closely knew the type of heart he possessed. Planning for children of the world of different colour, race, religion, culture and habits to suit their particular situation was not an easy task, one that he miraculously performed. A considerable volume of purity must be present in an individual who tries to touch the hearts of the innocent. This, Grant did with splendid clarity and accuracy.

When one has to decide the best form of action plan to be implemented with other people's resources, the burden of such office weighs heavily, and very careful consideration should be given to the justifiable distribution of resources. Here, Jim Grant was completely at ease, and knowing him as I did, he enjoyed his work in helping the children of the world. On so many occasions, when I had the opportunity to be associated with him closely, I had observed that his benevolent heart spoke and he obeyed the command. He suffered from a terminal illness, and yet, rather than paying attention to his health, he spent all his time providing health facilities to children and others.

A blend of management skills, farsightedness in gauging the repercussions of decisions, and the ability to take appropriate decisions are the major requisites of the position Jim Grant held in UNICEF. Judging by the results, there is hardly any adverse comment to make about the way he fulfilled the duties of this distinguished position. Deciding on the basis of statistics alone does not suffice, as a very wide and perceptive understanding of the problems peculiar to different nations have to be weighed and considered well, prior to acting. In this respect, Jim rarely erred.

Unless someone who is dedicated and genuinely feels for the children is entrusted with planning and executing the plans, very little purpose is served in having an organization to serve children. UNICEF undertakes a part of this formidable responsibility. Jim Grant fully understood the varied complexities of the tremendous task he had before him, and today, we pay homage to this wonderful human being. In this instance, the good done is not interred with the bones, but perpetually remembered with a stamp of continuity for the future generations by forming this foundation in his memory. It is a fitting tribute to a man who lived and made way for others to live too.

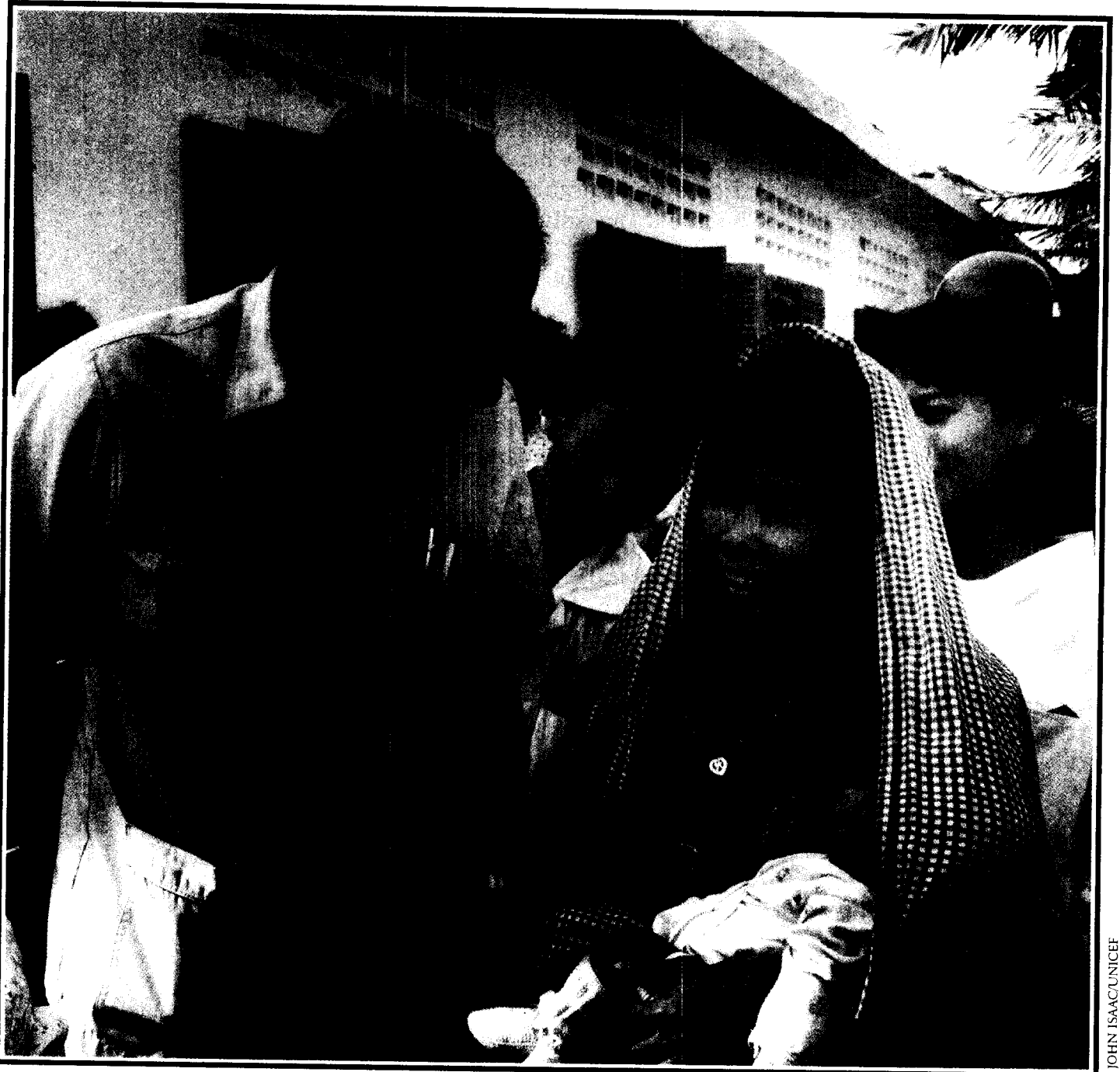
Once he casually mentioned to me that on a particular day he would be in Sri Lanka and would like to visit Sarvodaya to see how, what he named GOBI-FF Programme, was implemented by Sarvodaya. I told him that it was a promise, and that I will have 20,000 young women to greet their leader when he visited us. As agreed, he came and gave an inspiring talk to the volunteers in our Early Childhood Development Programme.

Another time, when I got into serious difficulties in Jakarta, which I visited at his invitation to deliver the keynote address on “Reaching the Unreached,” and lost everything I had, he personally looked into my problem despite his extremely busy schedule. When I was mercilessly persecuted by an unfriendly head of state in Sri Lanka, he had the courtesy and courage to privately tell the head of state that what he was doing was not right. When a person is dedicated to a selfless cause and strongly believes in non-violence, he is a fearless man even amidst inhumanity and violence. When Jim visited troubled spots in Africa, Middle East and the Eastern Europe amidst violence, he displayed the side of his compassionate but fearless character in pursuit of saving lives of children who have become unfortunate victims of wars.

While enjoying the status of a powerful world figure, Jim was humble enough to be a true friend of all those who shared his vision and commitment. As a Buddhist, I can only pray, “May this noble human being be blessed with eternal bliss of Nibbana.”



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JOHN ISAAC/NICEE

PROMISES KEPT



# The super salesman

*Ranjit Atapattu*

At the time when the international community is looking at the UN system with somewhat mixed feelings, it is worthwhile reflecting on the life of one who used the system with all its imperfections for the greater good of mankind. The late James P. Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF did not await the perfect scenario to act. To him all imperfections were hurdles to be overcome, and setbacks only challenges to do better.

Jim's critics—and he had more than many realize—would say that his pursuit of targets in selected fields (such as immunization) was myopic, “vertical” and did not take account of the entire socio-economic and political environment in which they were set. Jim never denied that he selected “doable” projects, for he justifiably felt that children could not wait for their respective governments to get their act together. As an example, when the elected government of an African country was toppled by the military, the whole international community reacted in anger and cut off all connections with that country. Jim called a meeting of his senior staff,

and after discussion said, “the children over there need UNICEF,” and forthwith visited the country to push his programme.

All this may leave some to believe that JPG was not interested or aware of the holistic picture. Let me take you back to 1957 and quote from a speech given by him, then head of US Operations Mission in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon). In explaining US motives in helping Ceylon he said, “the basic and primary reason is so simple that many failed to recognize it.” He went on to say that “cooperation programmes are primarily directed towards helping to solve central issues of our times—how can we make freedom and prosperity real in the present world?”—an issue as relevant today as it was in 1957.

Jim loved his country, the US, and had a soft spot in his heart for New York. (Once, late in the evening, while returning from a lecture at Brown University, the driver of his car lost his way. Finally, when the Empire State Building appeared in the distance, he said, “now I feel at home!”) However, he said that the US could not survive as an island of prosperity while a large part of the developing world wallowed in poverty. These convictions led him to push himself to physical extremes in his efforts to alleviate the condition of children around the globe.

This was his life’s mission. In pursuing this aim he spared no pains and used every diplomatic skill he had acquired during his multifaceted career. When he visited Sri Lanka, pushing oral rehydration therapy, I had the occasion to describe him as a super salesman. At that time, we were in the midst of an infective dysentery epidemic where oral rehydration was only of secondary importance to us. But

Jim was able to convince us that watery diarrhoea, which was a more mundane occurrence, also required our immediate attention, and this led to the installation of a plant to manufacture oral rehydration salts in Sri Lanka. Needless to say, it was UNICEF that gave us the badly needed antibiotics to tackle the ongoing epidemic.

Jim did not hesitate in involving other organizations in helping UNICEF's programmes. In the seventies, the parliamentarians of the world started regional groupings to take an effective message to the UN Population Conference to be held in Mexico in 1984. Jim saw the success of this movement and made use of the Asian Parliamentarians for Population and Development to push child survival in Asia, with two highly successful meetings in Delhi and Jakarta. He firmly believed that any country launching on a population programme must primarily look after the survival of its children.

The involvement of Rotary in polio immunization, and several NGOs at national and international level, with UNICEF's programmes was due to Jim's realization that allies were essential for success. The 1992 SAARC meeting hosted in Sri Lanka to push the global goals for children for the year 2000 was an outstanding event.

The most significant feature of Jim's outlook, when dealing with individuals or countries, was that he always looked for the positive aspects. He never went after the shortcomings that were always there to pick at, but looked for the plus points. In the darkest hour of a country, he would raise the spirits of the people by referring to their more noble achievements. Thereby, he won many friends for UNICEF, both amongst individuals and nations. When

the need arose, they were there to rally round Jim Grant. Through his deeds and words, he endeared himself to the large mass of the people.

I recall a humorous incident that occurred in Sri Lanka in the eighties. We were hosting the WHO Interregional Health Ministers Conference in Colombo. One feature was the visit of the ministers to a village to see for themselves the health activities at the grassroots level. The motorcade with the VIPs drew up at the entrance to the village. Dr. Halfdan Mahler, the Director General of WHO, Jim's friend and colleague, got down from his vehicle, and the first thing that caught his eye was a huge banner strung across the road which said in bold letters, "WELCOME UNICEF!" Dr. Mahler turned to the health officials behind him and jokingly said, "you have sold your soul to the devil!" For the people of that village anything to do with health meant UNICEF!

Jim Grant always had a good word for Sri Lanka, for he felt that successive governments in the country had worked towards improving the quality of life of its people. In 1957, Jim, in the same speech I quoted earlier, said that the economic challenge to Ceylon in the next 25 years, he believed, had been almost staggering. The people of Ceylon would probably have to double their productivity, and thereby their standard of living. He said, "this task is made more difficult by the fact that the population is growing at twice the rate of India, and will double during this period." Jim was a happy man to see Sri Lanka take his warning seriously. Today, with a population growth rate of one percent, we are doing better in this field than our neighbours.

However, he had foreboding about the future. In the eighties he said that ethnic tensions would grow globally

due to deterioration of economies. Today, when the people in Sri Lanka are groping for a solution to ethnic strife, it may be useful to ponder on Jim's philosophy. He said in 1957, "politically the majority of Ceylonese want a democratic system of government. They want to be able to express their views without fear of being jailed. Every man is minority of one sort or another— economic, racial or religious—and he wants his basic rights as a member of that minority to be recognized. That ideal form of government, democratic self-government, is never achieved with perfection or even near perfection overnight." He went on to say that Ceylon had made great strides in achieving universal franchise in 1931, but the greatest challenge to the continued development of democratic government in Ceylon still remains to be fully met." How true for 1996 in Sri Lanka

Jim saw it all. He saw the problems and even foresaw some of them. However, this knowledge did not deter him from pursuing his goal of improving the lot of children around the world. Civil wars and flying bullets did not dampen his enthusiasm. With visionary zeal he pursued his goals literally to the end. Lying gravely ill, surrounded by his family, he received a letter from President Clinton in which the President paid a tribute to Jim's life's work. Jim dictated a reply in which he thanked the President for his kind thoughts, and requested him in gentle persuasive terms to ensure that the United States sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child!

The Super Salesman to the to the last!



*Dr. Ranjit Atapattu is former Minister of Health, Sri Lanka and former Senior Adviser on Health and Population, UNICEF, New York.*



Ethel was Jim's life-long partner, his best friend,  
his most trusted adviser.

PROMISES KEPT

# Sri Lanka's friend

*Alfreda de Silva*

This is a celebration of James P. Grant, the distinguished American diplomat, civil servant and friend of Sri Lanka, who died in January, 1995 after 15 years of dedicated service to the United Nations Children's Fund, of which he was the Executive Director. His colleagues in many spheres of work record in this book his spectacular achievements in high offices he held in various agencies, including his contribution to the development of South Asia, where the largest number of the world's poor live. Development was the common denominator of his service to humanity, spotlighting the poverty-stricken, especially children and women, on a global scale. My husband and I had the privilege of getting to know Jim Grant in 1956, when he came to this country, then known as Ceylon, to set up the first U.S. aid mission here.

This essay takes a look at the man, whose humanity was a rare combination of integrity, high ideals, a vast capacity for work, a wide vision, an engaging humility and sparkling sense of humor, that gave him a special understanding of people's ways and mores in the developing world. His friends in Sri Lanka came from the widest possible spectrum of people. His concern for

people regardless of their class, caste or creed made him the right person in the right place at the time he was here.

One gets a clearer picture of the man he was when one realizes the legacy of service to people he inherited from his grandfather and father. The former was a medical missionary, and the latter one of the world's respected public health leaders in international health activities for the Rockefeller Foundation. Each of them had a record of 40 years of service in China. Jim was born in 1922 in China. It is obvious that his childhood was spent in happy, caring, concerned family surroundings that influenced his whole life.

He was further moulded by his studies in America. He had a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, and was a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Harvard University. It seemed natural, and in the ordained scheme of things, that he should have been closely involved with United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation in China at the start of his career at the age of 24.

Jim, his wife Ethel, a medical social worker, and their three young sons, John, Bill and Jamie lived at No.5 Race Course Avenue, Colombo-7, a place known for warm hospitality, informality and fun. There were wonderful evenings where music and after-dinner charades were enjoyed by everyone. There were also the times when people walked in for serious conversation and the exchanging of confidences.

One memorable evening, eager to share their unbeatable Chinese food experience with a small group of friends, Jim and Ethel invited us to the Modern Chinese Cafe, the most



popular of the few Chinese places on the island at the time. Here, in a special private room, the amiable and portly Mr. Chou and his charming wife, who had cooked the gourmet dishes, served a meal to remember. It was in typical Chinese style, a succession of courses, one at a time, from which we sampled delicious tidbits of Peking duck, Mandarin fish, prawns and steamed lobster and a variety of other dishes that no everyday diners at that hotel had ever had before, balancing the food gingerly on chopsticks. The meal was spiced with tiny cups of rice-wine, which the loser in a numbers game had to drink at a gulp. It ended with rice and soup. It was an evening of camaraderie and an exchange of humorous tales. There were eight of us round the table—Jim and Ethel, Cecil and Chloe de Soysa, Lance and Irene Fernando and my husband and I.

Jim's funny story was from real life. Shortly after they had arrived in this country, they had been invited to a cocktail party at which the dress stipulated was 'Red Sea Rig.' This, of course, was a very British 'institution' - an adaptation of formal evening suit of black pants, white dress shirt, black cummerbund and black bow-tie without the jacket, so adapted by naval officers for the hot Red Sea crossing. Jim and Ethel thought it meant fancy dress. Ethel made sure that Jim was 'rigged' up adequately in an Arab dress in two white sheets for a robe, and one for headgear, tied with a colorful scarf. She then outdid herself—harem pants, silk jacket and net veil complete with *yashmak* over which her eyes peered provocatively. When they got to the gate of the garden where the party was being held, they realized that they had made a dreadful mistake. A dash back home, a change of clothes and they were back to join the guests on the lawn. We came out of

the Modern still laughing. It was a crisp, December evening, a special one. There was carol singing at the Policy Park across the road.

We associate Jim with positive, creative and wholesome, low-cost changes for the betterment of the developing world. Disaster did not stay away from Sri Lanka when he was here. He was actively involved in relief efforts following massive floods that covered much of the island in 1957. This was only one small part of the role he played here, ranging from national school lunch programmes to river basin development.

There was a deeply committed serious and spiritual side to Jim. He served as a Commissioner of the World Council for Churches and the Commission on the Participation of Churches in Development. He had the strongest belief in the potential of the poor to raise themselves from the morass of despair in which circumstances had placed them. He showed that they needed help to help themselves in order to achieve self respect and self-sufficiency. He conceived manageable cost-reachable goals for them. His imaginative ideas moved from dreams to reality.

Jim had a thirst for finding out at first hand about the cultures, religions and rituals of this land. Ethel and he travelled throughout the country seeing things for themselves. A couple of desperate mutual friends once went to the Grant home to talk about a personal problem. They thought their house was haunted. There were strange sounds emanating from the kitchen. Every member of the household, including the servants, had been rushed to hospital within the year. They were going to bring in a well-known clairvoyant called Maggie Nona to find out what was happening and exorcise

whatever evil there was. Jim and Ethel and my husband and I gathered at our friend's home that evening.

Maggie Nona came riding in our friends car. One of her eyes was permanently closed. She picked a forked twig from the hedge-row, walked straight into the house, asked to sit at a table and demanded a white saucer. She placed a dark paste on it and stared into it by candle light. Then she stood up, held the stick in front of her, and went to the back garden, where the kitchen light fell on a clump of banana trees. "Get a *mammoty*," she said. When it was brought, she pointed to a spot under the banana trees and said "Dig here." To our surprise, Jim took the *mammoty* and went on digging. After about ten minutes he had dug quite a deep hole. The hard-baked earth had thrown up roots and stones and nothing else. We looked at each other. More digging. Then Jim stopped and said he had struck something. He pulled out a copper coloured scroll buried deep in the earth. It was covered with hard soil and straggling roots.

Maggie Nona unwound it and found two figures inscribed inside—a man and a women with arrows pointing to their hearts. "This has been buried a long time ago. It must have been for the former tenants but is still effective," she said. You must throw this in running water. Jim seemed bewildered. "I have an open mind. There are mysteries in this world we know nothing about," he mused. A doctor in the neighbourhood brought the final surprise to our friends. "The last time I was called in here, a woman died of a heart attack in the kitchen of this house," he said.

Jim Grant visited Sri Lanka with Ethel, again and again, for various assignments and conferences, and they never failed to see their old friends. Ethel accompanied him until she predeceased him some years later. On these occasions I had the opportunity of interviewing him for the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, when he spoke of Sri Lanka's magnificent record of progress in the drop of infant mortality. This was due to UNICEF-inspired island-wide child immunization against common and preventable diseases like polio and tuberculosis. He was particularly pleased with the way in which people here had accepted the breakthrough in the cure of infantile diarrhoea—the low-cost oral rehydration therapy (ORT) to save several thousands of infants from death. These efforts were engineered by Jim's vision and foresight, but characteristically he did not stress that fact.

Many of his employees at USAID from 1956 to 1958 have either emigrated or passed on. However, I had the good fortune of talking with some of them: Walter Dias, who now lives in America, worked with USAID from its inception. He referred to Jim's sense of fair play and justice: "He treated us all alike and made no distinction whatsoever between the high ranking ones and the others." Anandi Peiris spoke of his dynamism and charisma which spurred them to effort, and Adeline Nathanielsz, said "he showed concern for the health and welfare of his employees. I remember him as a remarkable employer."

On one of our several visits to America, my husband and I were invited by the Grants to stay in their lovely home in Washington D.C. Jim was with Overseas Development Council then. Well-chosen mementoes from the many lands in which they had lived filled the living room, including

beautiful batiks by Ena de Silva from Sri Lanka, which we had given them. On a long blue silk banner were the signatures of a long line of Sri Lankans who had been their guests. We were happy and proud to add ours to the list.

Among the many awards that Jim, the great friend and benefactor of Sri Lanka received was this country's most prestigious one—the Desha Manya Award—presented to him by the State. In 1994 he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the highest civilian honour conferred by the President of the United States for his work on global scale.

Jim Grant, the man who had “Spread the word” had not stopped there, but had made the impossible a possibility, by translating ‘the word’ into historic deeds.



*Alfreda de Silva is a senior journalist in Sri Lanka.*

*"Why is it that a country like Bhutan, with an average per capita income of \$180 a year, manages to immunize 82 percent of its children against measles, when countries with incomes ranging from \$13,000 to \$27,000 have coverage rates ranging from just 42 percent to 77 percent?.....The answers reside within the commitment of this nation to an ideal: a commitment to give the very best it can to its children; a commitment to extract the maximum social miles per gallon from their available resources."*

*UNICEF Annual Report 1994*



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