

Royal College Old Boys in the USA honor Royal College Scout Master

(By Senaka Senaviratne)

The Scout Master of Royal College, Colombo for over three decades, Mr. Rohan Wirasekara was recently honored at the Annual General Meeting of the Royal College Old Boys' East Coast Association, USA (RCOBECA) held on Friday, June 18, 2009 at a Restaurant, Edison, New Jersey, USA.

Mr. Wirasekara was invited to the United States by a group of ex Boy Scouts of Royal College in the USA. During his short stay in the USA, Royal College Old Boys' East Coast Association had invited him to be a special Guest of Honor at their Annual General Meeting on June 18, 2010 where his service to Royal College was recognized and presented with a special Plaque of Honor.

The thought of felicitating the Royal College Scout Master became a reality when a few ex Boy Scouts of Royal College from the USA, Canada and Australia got together to sponsor the tour. Mr. Rohan Wirasekara arrived in New York on Tuesday June 15th, 2010 and during his short stay of one week, he visited Boy Scout Troops and Cub Scout Packs in New York and New Jersey, A Public School, A University campus, A Buddhist Temple, New York Time Square, Staten Island, Brooklyn, A United States Coast Guard Base, Hisotoric Fort Wadsworth overlooking Verrazano Narrows Bridge, A Sri Lankan Restaurant owned and operated in New York by a disabled war veteran of the Sri Lanka Army, A night sky viewing session with telescopes organized by the Amateur Astronomers Association of NY, The White House and NASA Air & Space Museum in Washington D.C., A Boy Scout campsite in New York, The world famous Staten Island Ferry and the United Nations Headquarters in New York.



The Award of Honor is being presented to Mr. Rohan Wirasekara by Mr. Chandana Mutucumarana, the President elect of the Royal College Old Boys' East Coast Association (RCOBECA) at the Annual General Meeting



A section of the attendees at the AGM of Royal College Old Boys' East Coast Association (RCOBECA)

Appreciation of the Scout Master

Mr. President elect, the distinguished past Presidents, and fellow Royalists.

It is indeed an honor for me to introduce a fine Royalist of this caliber who is here with us today. Having entered the Royal College Primary in 1960, he is celebrating 50 years of active engagement with Royal this year. In my humble opinion, this record may only be second to the one set by much beloved Mr. Wiji Weerasinghe, whom we remember with much love and gratitude.

As you may perhaps know, being a Scout Master in Sri Lanka is a voluntary position, which does not entitle one to a salary either from the school or from the Scout Association, yet this true Royalist has been the Scout Master at Royal College for more than three decades and is still going strong as ever before.

Under his leadership and guidance, the scouts at Royal not only learned to camp, swim, climb mountains, build temporary bridges to cross bodies of water, use knots for different situations, Navigation at night using constellations, build gadgets and gateways at dozens of camporees and jamborees, survival in the outdoors for extended periods of time, providing First-Aid for various type of victims, scouts learned to become useful citizens and fine gentlemen. Equipped with the training and skills acquired at scouting, Royal scouts conquered Piduruthalagal mountain and the Sinharaja forest with courage and fun. While the teachers at Royal College provided a world class education that prepared students to excel in standardized tests, this dedicated Royalist was busy molding them into men and inspiring them to become useful citizens. The comradeships

strengthened at Scouting did not allow one to leave a fallen comrade. I know for sure that he had a big hand in who I am today and I'm sure this is the case for thousands of other Royal scouts who are now scattered around the world. During the Courts of Honor that were held each night during camps, to discuss the day's progress, the patrol leaders analyzed what went wrong that day, for what reasons and how not to repeat them the next day. A quarter century later, this is what I still do at weekly staff meetings at my work! As the scout motto says, he made the scouts to BE PREPARED for any situation with equal courage and dedication, while helping them both within and outside of the Scout Troop.

With this great scout leader, scouts weren't just taking notes, but were always busy DOING and Practicing the new skills learned. With him, scouting was not just another subject, but rather a way of life. Patrol leaders were empowered to make decisions in consultation with their subordinates – Much like in the late knowledge binding in the Corporate world today. Scouting was not about wining at all costs, or being champions all the time, but also how to accept defeat and standing up when fallen. He truly taught us to learn of books and men and learn to play the game as gentlemen and let the better side win. In his thirty years of voluntary service to Royal College, he certainly has repaid the debt to our alma mater.

Fellow Royalists, in recognition of his endless service to scouting at Royal, may I now call upon Mr. Rohan Wirasekara to accept the Award of Honor presented to him by the Royal College Old Boys' East Coast Association of the United States of America (RCOBECA).