By Dr. Dhanpaul Narine

**PROFILE of The Week**

**Julius Benjamin Nathoo:**

**A Principal for the Ages!**

It was a sunny Thursday in June 1963. The day before, I was playing at Philadelphia Scots School pelting awara fruit from a tall tree and jumping rope with my friends. It was a blissful world, with no thought of the future.

My father appeared at the school, saw me hopping and skipping and put an end to it. “Tomorrow, you will be going to Saraswat High School,” he said. “I have spoken to Mr. Nathoo and he will take you.”

On Thursday, my cousin Latchman Sookraj and I journeyed to Saraswat. The school building stood by the road, at Dekinderen, and the dust from the mud cast a peculiar sheen on the wood. A noticeboard on the front of the building told us the name of the school and said proudly that its Principal, Mr. Julius Benjamin Nathoo, was an ‘inter BA and inter BSc.’ I was eleven years old and could be forgiven for not knowing what they meant.

Mr. Nathoo was on hand to greet us. He was from Port Mourant and had traveled far to Dekinderen to found Saraswat. This was done on the advice of his uncle Richard Benjamin and his mentor Rudra Nath. Mr. Nathoo was neatly dressed with a grey mohair pants with pleats, a white shirt and black tie. He was friendly and proudly showed us around. There was one young man with thick wavy hair that sat by himself and Mr. Nathoo explained that the student was studying for his ‘O’ Levels exam.

Latchman took quickly to books, my mind was on the ball field that reminded me of Scots School. I sat next to Bridgemohan Boodhoo whose parents owned a store at Parika. Our class had 84 students and it became noisy after lunch. I found students that wanted to play and we ran around, ate Aunty Sattie’s boiled channa, and drank mauby.

I tried to find my way but I was a small fish in a big ocean. We only had a few days to prepare for the end of June exams. I found to my dismay that I was in no way ready for academia. The exam results told the story: Latchman took second to books, my mind was on the ball field that reminded me of Scots School. I sat next to Bridgemohan Boodhoo whose parents owned a store at Parika. Our class had 84 students and it became noisy after lunch. I found students that wanted to play and we ran around, ate Aunty Sattie’s boiled channa, and drank mauby.

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