



New Zealand SPUR

New Zealand Society for Peace, Unity and Human Rights in Sri Lanka Incorporated (SPUR) New Zealand

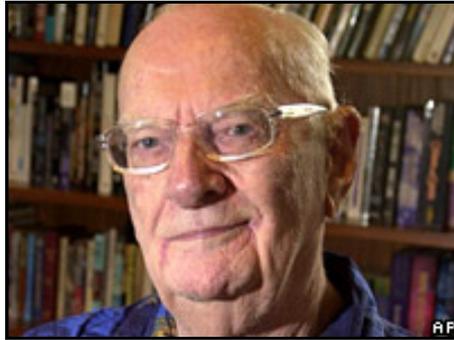
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Sri Lanka Mourns the death of a Truly Great Friend – Sir Arthur C Clarke



The news of the death of world acclaimed science fiction writer and futurologist spread around the island of Sri Lanka this morning creating a sombre mood from coastal villages to the central hills.

People of all walks of life knew him as a truly great friend of the people of Sri Lanka who lived among them for more than 50 years and talked about Sri Lanka with an unparalleled zest and love.

At a time when Sri Lankan expatriates born and bred; and nurtured to reach professional heights through Sri Lanka's free education and free healthcare do not display even the slightest hesitation to bad mouth Sri Lanka, Sir Arthur C Clarke showed the way how to love his country of choice.

Debilitated by post-polio syndrome since 1960s he had to use the wheel chair for mobility. Yet in a web cast to his friends around the world on the occasion of his Ninetieth Birthday last December he was very clear in his choice of his last three wishes. The first was his utmost desire to see an end to the raging civil war in Sri Lanka. As an avowed environmentalist his second wish was to see the world embrace cleaner sources of energy. True to his credentials as a science fiction writer and a futurologist his third wish was his desire to see evidence of extraterrestrial beings to be discovered.

Clarke who was born in Western England in 1917 started his career as a clerk in Her Majesty's Exchequer. Through his readings of scientific fiction he developed an uncanny ability to visualise the future. In 1945 he advanced the concept of satellite communication. It is reported that the publication called Wireless World almost rejected to publish it as too far-fetched.

When satellite communication was subsequently developed Sir Arthur C Clarke was honoured by naming the geosynchronous orbits which help satellites to be in a fixed position relative to the ground as Clarke Orbits.

While living in Sri Lanka he helped the establishment of Arthur C Clarke Institute of Modern Technology and served as the Vice-Chancellor of Moratuwa University from 1979 to 2002.

In recognition of his contributions to Science and Technology and his commitment to his adopted country, Sri Lanka conferred on him the highest National Honour of *Sri Lankabhimanya (The Pride of Sri Lanka)* in November 2005.

New Zealand Society for Peace, Unity and Human Rights in Sri Lanka (NZ SPUR) salutes Sri Lankabhimanya Sir Arthur C Clarke - The Truly Great Friend of Sri Lanka.