



CLASS OF
1950

Dr Ankim Veera Swamy

Nasinu Teachers College / Suva Craft Centre

Qualification

- Teachers Certificate - Nasinu Teachers College, 1950
- Industrial Art Certificate - Suva Craft Centre, 1954
- Advanced Certificate in Industrial Art - Seddon Memorial Technical College and Auckland Teachers, New Zealand, 1956
- Ordinary National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering - Aston University, UK, 1962
- Higher National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering - Hackney University, UK, 1964
- Higher National Certificate in Production Engineering - Hackney University, UK, 1965
- Diploma in Mechanical Engineering - Hendon College of Technology, UK, 1966
- Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering - University of Aston, UK, 1970
- Ph.D. on Specializing in Effect of Noise and Vibration on Aircraft Structures - University of Aston, UK, 1973
- Elected member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (UK) with professional status, C.Eng. M.I.Mech.E., UK, 1974

Walking barefoot 15 kilometers to and fro school in rain or sun

was the only option to achieve the desired - a good education and career. The dusty road riddled with puddles, pot holes and volcanic rocks protruding from the hard dirt track from Wavu Wavu to Wainikoro Government School was the youngster's daily journey.

"I could walk this track blind folded as I knew where every pot hole was or rock on the track. There were many scars from the daily journey but it was all worth it as it made me stronger in person and in life. I know the hardships and have learnt to appreciate what life offers," said Professor Ankim Veera Swamy, now 86 but as energetic as a 40 year old.

"I was born, a British Subject, Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies in the Colony of Fiji'," Professor Swamy points out quickly. He was born in 1930 in Wavu Wavu village in Labasa and was one of nine siblings. Professor Swamy's parents were already certain from the beginning that farming life would not be the future for their children.

Ironically Professor Swamy started attending school at the age of eight, because his parents thought he would be too young to walk all alone for 30 kilometres each day at the age of six.

"The journey was tough at the beginning. As a young boy obviously you will be scared, but with time I was able to adopt. I departed home at 5am each day and reached school at around 8.30am and each afternoon reached home at 5pm. It was fun. I sang songs or reversed what I was taught in school while walking to and fro school. My parents would wait for me when I returned each day and I was always so happy to see my family," said Professor Swamy.

FROM DUSTY ROADS TO BRITISH CONCORDE

Professor Swamy completed classes 1-6 in Wainikoro Government School and then moved to All Saints School in Labasa where he completed classes 7 and 8 and passed the qualifying examination. Life wasn't yet satisfied with the challenges he faced as in 1943, when Professor Swamy was in class 6, his mother passed away.

Professor Swamy decided to travel to Viti Levu in pursuit of higher education and employment. He attempted to enrol at Nasinu Teachers College but wasn't successful. Professor Swamy found himself working as a mechanic assistant at Suva Motors. He worked for 8 months before there was an opening at the Nasinu Teachers College. As Og mandino states "Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough," Professor Swamy pounced on this opportunity.

Upon completion of his studies, he took employment in Vanua Levu as teacher. Professor Swamy was recognised by his hard work and was nominated to take up Industrial Arts Training at Suva Craft Centre² under R. A. Derrick.

This was a big break for Professor Swamy and his desire for further training grew. He then pursued advanced training in Industrial Arts in New Zealand and upon his return was employed at Labasa College.

Professor Swamy's belief of achieving more in life pushed him

to proceed to the United Kingdom to pursue a course in Mechanical Engineering.

He completed Ordinary National

“**His journey was certainly not an easy one, which began from Labasa to Suva then to Nadi and to Sydney by plane. From Sydney he travelled by ship to Genoa in Italy and in train to Calais and then to London crossing the Channel by Ship. The journey half way around the world took six weeks, weary but Professor Swamy's determination was intact.**”

Certificate and Higher National Certificate in Engineering with a Diploma in Engineering which granted him full exemption from academic requirement by Institution of Engineers.

He completed his Master of Science in Engineering and Ph.D. on 'Effect of noise and vibration on aircraft structure including sonic boom' on a project assigned by Aviation industry responsible for developing Concorde.

In 1973, the Government of Fiji invited him to return and take a position to develop technical education and training in Fiji. He was appointed Deputy Secretary

Technical and then the first local Director of Derrick Technical Institute which later underwent a name change to Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) in view of development. After providing his service to FIT, he was offered a position at the University of the South Pacific as Director of Centre for Applied Studies in Development and provided service to the Pacific region.

He then left USP to set his own consultancy firm as Ankim V. Swamy and Associates and helped establish the Air Terminal Services (Fiji) Limited in which workers have 49 percent share as first Public Private Partnership model in Fiji.

The political instability in Fiji in the 1980's had him move to Australia. Professor Swamy however continued to support education in Fiji as he maintained his link with FIT, then Fiji National University as well as the TISI which established the Sangam Nursing School. Professor Swamy states the secret to his success is linked strong to his philosophy of life as well as family support "My belief is that all human are born equal and with hard work and determination one can achieve the most."

Footnote:

¹Ankim's life stories

²Suva Craft Centre was established in 1939. It was renamed as Derrick Technical Institute in 1964, then again as Fiji Institute of Technology in 1977.