

**Biography of H.E. Mr. Somasundaram Skandakumar**

**High Commissioner for Sri Lanka to the Australia,  
and concurrently accredited to Fiji, New Zealand, Solomon Islands**



<b>Name</b>	Somasundaram Skandakumar.
<b>Address</b>	High Commission of Sri Lanka 61, Hampton Circuit, Yarralumla ACT 2600 AUSTRALIA
<b>Civil Status</b>	Single
<b>Nationality</b>	Sri Lankan
<b>School Education</b>	Royal Primary School- 1953-1958 -School Prefect in 1958 Royal College Colombo -1959- 1966. -School Prefect in 1966.  Winner of the Best Performance Award at the Royal Thomian Cricket Match in 1966.
<b>University Education .</b>	University of Ceylon Colombo 1967-1970  Bachelor of Science Degree in 1970 (Subjects – Double Mathematics and Chemistry)  Winner of the Award for the “Most Outstanding Sportsman” of the University in 1970.

## Professional Career

**Executive - Whittalls Estates and Agencies-1971-1974**

**Executive - George Steuart & Co Ltd 1974- 1984.**

**Director - George Steuart & Co Ltd- 1984 -1997.**

**Managing Director - George Steuart & Co Ltd 1997 to 2000.**

In this period I was responsible for overseeing the Rehabilitation of the Company's Head Office "Steuart House" at Janadipathi Mawatha that was devastated by the bomb that destroyed the Central Bank on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1996. It was a traumatic and challenging transition which the Group overcame thanks to the courage and resilience of our loyal and dedicated employees.

**Group Chairman – George Steuarts Group, 2000-2008**

The Coffee Table book compiled in 2010 to commemorate the Company's 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in a sub heading referred to this tenure in the Chair from 2000 to 2008 as follows.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the first eight year period of the new Millenium was one of the most successful in the history of the Company and the Group."

## Extra Curricular Activities

**Hony Asst Secretary, Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka 1982 to 1988. (BCCSL)**

**Hony Secretary, BCCSL 1989 - 1992.**

**Vice Chairman, Hony Secretary FIRST Interim Committee of BCCSL 1999-2000.**

The appointment of the first ever Interim Committee was necessitated by the corruption and violence that surrounded the elected administrative body. In his memoirs, the Chairman of that Committee banker Rienzie Wijetilleke had this to say :-

"Skandakumar in his significant role as Ambassador of goodwill was able to establish a great deal in restoring the credibility and image of the BCCSL in the eyes of the ICC at the Executive Board Meeting held at Lords in London on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1999. "

**President - Tamil Union Cricket and Athletic Club- 1998- 2000 ( Centenary year)**

Initiated the re-development of the "Oval" and P Sara Stadium.

Captained the Club at Cricket 1982 - 1985, and also represented the club at Tennis.

Radio and TV commentator on Cricket.

## **Special Assignment**

**Chaired a Commission of Inquiry into the alarming deterioration of the Nation's cricketing standards in 1994.**

The report titled "Skandakumar Report " is filed with Sri Lanka Cricket.

The impact of that report is reflected in the fact that two years later Sri Lanka emerged Champions in the ICC Cricket World Cup in March 1996.

## **Toasts Proposed and Speeches made at Landmark events**

125th Anniversary of Royal Thomian cricketing Ties- Black Tie Dinner-2004.

175th Anniversary of Royal College- Black Tie Dinner - March 2010.

Jubilee celebrations of Her Majesty the Queen- as Guest of Honor of the SL- UK Business Council- Black Tie Dinner June 2012.

## **POST RETIREMENT - APRIL 2008 TO AUGUST 2015**

Since retiring from commercial life in 2008, I was engaged mainly in social and charity work out of my second and modest home in Haputale.

Among them I Chair the Sri Lankan Branch (authorised by the Ministry of Justice ) of a UK approved Trust Oru Paanai , that provides a midday meal to 45,000 children in over 400 schools spread over the North and East that come within the purview of the World Food Programme. The Trust provides the utensils and supplements the rice and dhal offered through the WFP, to ensure a nutritious meal. The Trust has extended its focus to support Education for the under privileged at Pre School level and to assist those with hearing impairments with hearing aids.

I also co sponsor a Day Care Centre in Bandarawela for the poorest of 5 year olds who are provided with school uniforms, a nutritious breakfast and lunch, and are educated for one year in all 3 languages. At year end they are given a grant to move to Government schools and a fresh batch taken on. We have on average 30 such children annually year and the only qualification for admission is poverty.

I have also set up a Foundation in my Parent's name to help children in Haputale from the poorer homes with their school needs such as Bags, Shoes, and Books, as I firmly believe in the dignity of the school going child and have tried to impress upon them the value of an Education.

This Foundation also provides monthly stipends to University students from the plantation sector in Haputale and financial assistance to the poor when faced with critical illnesses.

Finally I serve as a Trustee of the Hill Country Development Centre in Hatton which provides education facilities at Nursery level and classes in English and Information Technology by professional teachers for more mature students.

**Present Position** : High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Australia since August 2015 and  
**From August 2015** concurrently accredited to Fiji, New Zealand and Solomon Islands.