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‘After 40 years’ — written by Loyolites

There is an engaging story behind how members of the 1976 Economics batch of Loyola College met again. D. MADHAVAN reports



GRAND reunion: The alumni at the college. Photo: B. Jothi Ramalingam

former top policeman launched a rigorous search — not for any accused, but for his former classmates. Former Chennai City Police Commissioner T. Rajendran must have drawn upon his experience in policing, spread across three decades, for he and a few of his classmates from the 1976 batch of Economics at Loyola College were able to trace all the other classmates, except for one, in impressive time.

The ‘elusive’ batchmate was one Shankar. To find this Shankar, they managed to dredge up information about 24,000 ‘Shankars’.

The challenge before them was to find the one Shankar they wanted from this mountain heap of common names. Rajendran and his team reportedly orchestrated a door-to-door search for this Shankar. It was a hard case to crack and two months later, the search took them to Mumbai, where their classmate Shankar had settled long ago.

At the end of the day, they were glad they took the effort. For the members of the 1976 batch of the Department of Economics from Loyola College had a memorable reunion on the college campus on October 9, and all of them were meeting together for the first time after they leaving the college 40 years ago.

Nine of the 76 classmates (which includes 10 from post-graduation) had died and they were remembered on the occasion. Of the 67 classmates, 54 of them had settled abroad and they came to the city to participate in the three-day reunion, which included a stroll around the college campus, having food at the college canteen from the menu that was being followed during their college days in the 1970s.

“I am thrilled to meet my classmates after many years. I am here to soak in the environment that was a part of my college days,” said Bengaluru-based retired bureaucrat R.G. Nadadur.

The reunion of the 1976 batch was the initiative of a group of classmates, including Gerald Arputhasamy, a businessman from Chennai, T. Rajendran, former City Police Commissioner, Dilip Vellodi, founder and CEO, Sutherland Global Services and Ramesh Prabhakar, managing partner of Rivoli Group. Allan John and Antony Xavier were among other classmates who played a significant role in organising the reunion.

The planning is said to have stretched across two years. The reunion was made special by the participation of the Loyola College management including college principal and father A. M. Jayapathy Francis.

During their reunion, classmates shared memories of their classroom, which is now part of a three-storey building known as Frontier Block.

The occasion also witnessed the release of a souvenir, which had been prepared by two batchmates Vijay Marur and Binu Nair, who work in media houses now.

At the end of the reunion, batchmates took a pledge to meet every year on October 2 on the college campus bringing all 67 classmates to the venue.

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