



Soundaram Ramaswami



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I feel my family has received a lot more than we have given to CMANA, the most important of which is the wide circle of friends and well-wishers both here in the USA and among the artists in India. In addition, our children could soak in Carnatic music and Indian culture to the fullest and also get considerable leadership training volunteering as Junior Members. Initially, I was content to be a side-kick of Mrs. Vasantha Rajagopalan helping her with cooking for all concert and program attendees (yes, we used to serve free food then to attract an audience) and help my husband Ram doing some of the off line chores and serving as host to many visiting artists.

The only direct involvement I had in those early days was organizing a Great Composers Day program in the early Eighties at The Hindu Temple, New York, which was the first to turn it into one with significant attendance and, even more importantly, one featuring mainly children. Many aspects of the GCD were made formal by me at that time, more out of my fear of failing at what then appeared to be a huge responsibility thrust on me. Later I was inducted as a trustee and subsequently also as President for two years. Among my contributions to CMANA as an official is a successful fundraiser program, which featured many memorable events - a dance program by the Dhananjayans and a concert of Smt. Lakshmi Shankar, in addition to a soulful program of Smt. (Bombay) Jayashree Ramnath. During the Silver Jubilee, I was given the task of resurrecting the history of CMANA including the list of former trustees from boxes of paper correspondence and files. Later, a major responsibility of streamlining the CMANA accounts was taken up by my team, and a person I must mention as having done a superb job in that regard is Mrs. Mangalam Chidambaram who served as Treasurer in my board. Being from the founding family of Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai, I could also get considerable help for CMANA from NGS and help to build a strong alliance with that organization. As a family, we shall remain grateful to CMANA and its members for all they have given to us, and it has been an honor and privilege to serve the Association, which is unique even among the finest of Indian cultural organizations in the USA. We thank you all for that.