Naranappa Anantha (1936-2006) was one of those who did the specialty training in radiotherapy, when the discipline’s independent status was not yet clearly established in India. He used to fondly narrate his humble background, and medical education from Mysore University (MBBS, 1963). He had then moved to northern India, did D.M.R.E. from Lucknow University (1967) and immediately after that pursued MD in Radiotherapy at J. K. Cancer Institute, Kanpur under the famous and erudite Professor J. K. Haldar (Founder and father figure of AROI), obtaining MD in 1969. This training was greatly influential in shaping his career. He returned back to join the Karnataka state medical service in early 1970s and was subsequently selected for the teaching cadre. Except for a few years spent under Ministry of Health, Iran, (1976-1980), Dr. Anantha spent his lifetime in his home state of Karnataka.

Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology (KMIO) was the first comprehensive cancer centre established by the Karnataka government. Dr. Anantha joined as the Professor and Head of Radiotherapy in 1980 in the formative years of this institute and it was one of the first centres to gain the status of Regional Cancer Centre (under Government of India’s National Cancer Control Programme). The department of Radiotherapy at KMIO was headed by him till his retirement in 1996. The facilities and patient care practices in this department have received wide recognitions from the medical community and public over the years. The post-graduation courses (MD and diploma in Radiotherapy) at KMIO were started in late 1980s under Bangalor University. Dr. Anantha was actively involved in patient care and teaching and the department attracted faculty and students from various parts of India. Despite the large patient burden from several states of southern India, good quality with interdisciplinary management were maintained. Dr. Anantha rose higher in administrative positions, becoming the Medical Superintendent in 1982 and subsequently was appointed Director of KMIO in 1990. He guided the institute till his retirement in 1996. He had the professional discipline to manage his time well between the administrative and professional responsibilities. He would walk into the ward for morning rounds, attend to patients in out-patient and join the department’s teaching programme routinely. It was easy to engage him in a conversation, and he would lament how ‘raagi mudda’ as a breakfast menu has vanished from Kannadiga homes!

Dr. Anantha had a productive career, visited Europe and USA on fellowships and training, authored more than 50 scientific articles, lectured widely and conducted the national conferences of AROI and Indian Society of Oncology. He was a member of several scientific bodies, including Bangalore University, Indian Institute of Science and Karnataka state Council for Science and Technology. He received several awards and honours in his career, to name just two of those laurels: Karnataka Rajyotsava award and Dr. T. B. Patel award from Gujarat Cancer Society. After his retirement, Dr. Anantha worked as Professor of Radiotherapy at M.S. Ramaiah Medical College, Bangalore from 1998 to 2003, again setting up a new department. He placed good emphasis on physical fitness, athletics and lawn tennis. He used to walk from one building to another of KMIO at a good pace, leaving behind many young residents breathless!

It was my good fortune to start the academic career as a faculty staff under Dr. Anantha, and to many like me in India and abroad, he was a mentor with a humble heart. He is survived by his wife and one son, who is an engineer settled in USA.