

MARKETING

ISSUE #399 MARCH 2024

WEEKENDERTM



THERE IS A VACUUM IN OUR INDUSTRY

GERALD MIRANDA
FEB 1952 - MARCH 2024

COVER STORY

A General and a Gentleman

Industry icon leaves indelible mark on industry.

08

EDITOR'S NOTE

06

4
too
many

gigple



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“Don’t confuse education with intelligence, you can have a PhD and still be an idiot.”

Richard Feynman, famous theoretical physicist.



“Within every brand is a product, but not every product is a brand.”

David Ogilvy



“I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and reflection. We gathered 950 delegates with 400+ international delegates, 70+ speakers, sponsors, partners and supporters plus 3 days of incredible content and memorable entertainment.”

John D Chacko, Organising Chairman, IAA World Congress 2024 (IAAWC) in Penang.

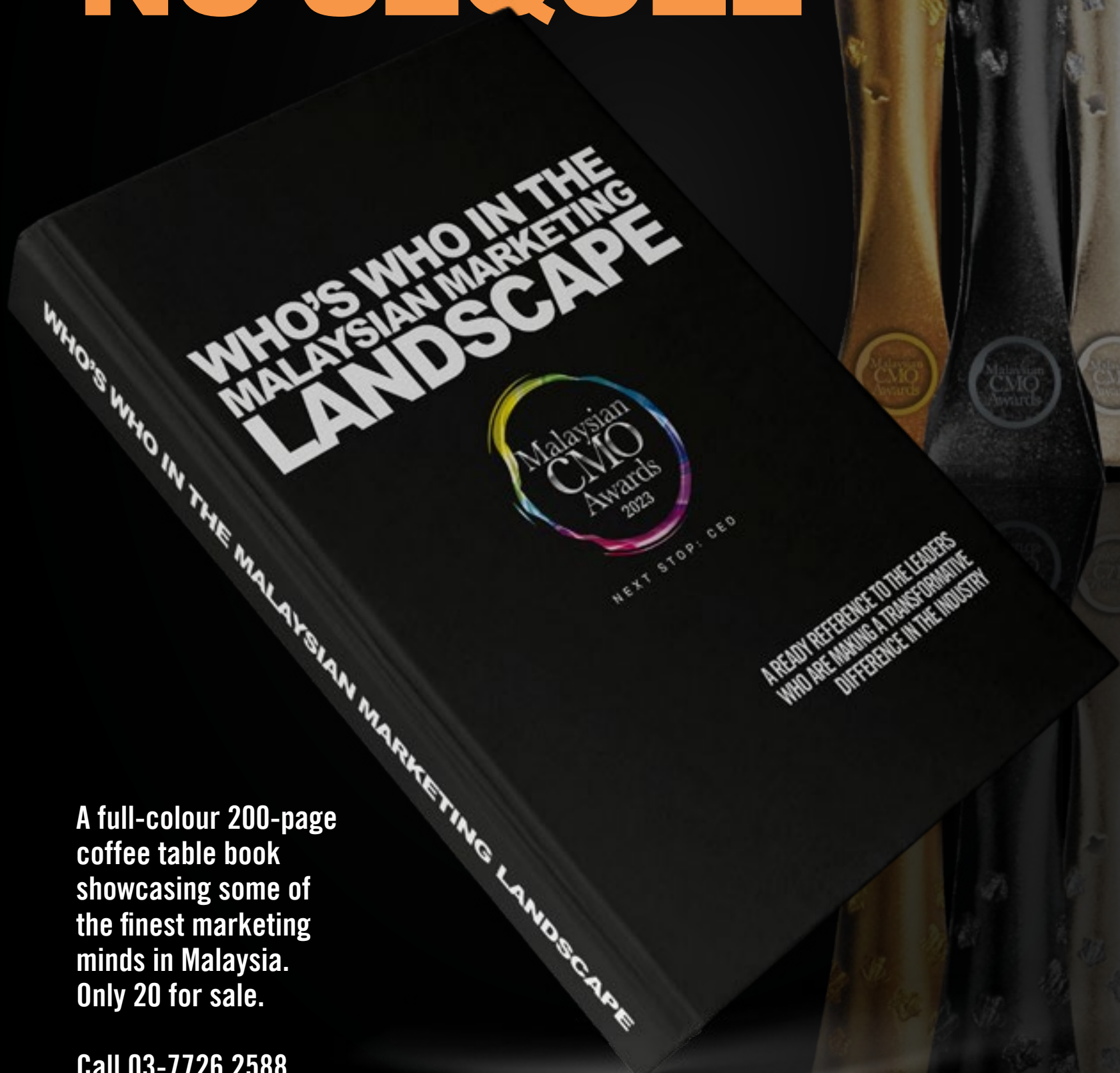
“The IAA World Congress in Penang was like a world tour for the mind, with each session offering a new stamp in the passport of progressive brand innovation.”

Abdul Sani Abdul Murad
Group Chief Marketing Officer
RHB Bank Berhad





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EDITOR'S NOTE

4 too many



Very recently, I lost four friends.

First, Surina Shukri (ex MDEC) passed away after a long battle with cancer.

We wrote about her in our issue last Friday.

Then the talented Pradeep Pillai, a friend of mine for over 30 years, passed away. Pradeep was a sound engineer at Betarecs Studios and helped produce hundreds, or maybe thousands, of advertising jingles and soundtracks. He later started and

managed the sound studios of AMP Radio, now Astro Radio.

Advertising entrepreneur Nantha Kumar Vaithilingam passed away on Saturday morning. Nantha was an ad man who founded ad agency Earth, Wind & Fire. He served on the committee of the 4As for some years and was also a Governor for SMK La Salle PJ. His fellow governor wrote, "Nantha is a shining role model of a true LaSallian, always thinking of his Alma Mater, not only its bricks and mortar but also its traditions, its ethos and of course its students and teachers. I feel humbled yet proud to have served LSPJ together with him."

Saturday also witnessed the passing of Gerald Robin Miranda, a giant in the Malaysian advertising and media industry.

Gerald was a path breaker and led the industry in many innovative ways. In this issue, we cover the making of his legacy and his amazing accomplishments.

To all my friends, rest in peace.

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BY JOE NAJIB
(AHMAD NAFIZUL MAF'UZ
BIN AHMAD NAJIB)



21 March 2024
8.30am – 5.30pm

Eastin Hotel
Pusat Dagang, 13, Jalan 16/11,
Seksyen 16, 46350 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan



Gerald Miranda with his grandson Sebastian, picture courtesy of Joel Miranda



A General and a Gentleman

Industry icon leaves indelible mark on industry.

I have known Gerald Miranda for a long, long time.

His death recently sent shock waves though the industry bringing back a flood of memories to many. He was an

entrepreneur, boss, colleague, innovator and sometimes provocateur.

He has graced the pages of this magazine and even our covers in 1999 and 2006.

COVER STORY

His passing at the age of 72 came too soon.

Gerald was a shy and soft spoken man, but he was a true force of nature.

I once invited him to my inaugural Malaysian Creative Circle (MC2) Awards show.

I looked out for him all night, and later noticed he was quietly standing near the exit door to congratulate me.

Never one for the spotlight, he however put many in the limelight.

First in Asia

When the concept of media specialists was only a germ of an idea, Gerald made a brave move which became his hallmark style.

Many years ago, media management was an in-house function of ad agencies and a cottage industry. The picture radically changed when Zenith Media opened its office in London, an amalgamation of the media departments of five major agencies in London. Nothing in the advertising industry would ever be the same again.

The initial plan of Zenith Worldwide was to first consolidate its position in the UK, then roll out in Europe and USA and finally to Asia.

However, Gerald felt that Malaysia should seize the opportunity and strike out on its own.

So he met with John Perriss (Zenith Worldwide CEO) in London to get sanction

to start Zenith in Malaysia earlier than scheduled.

Sanction was obtained and Zenith Malaysia became the first Zenith office in Asia, before even Hong Kong or Tokyo or Singapore.

On July 1, 1995 Zenith Media Malaysia was launched, the first



As the Zen-like somnolence of the
 Zithers wove its spell of allure,
 a Zillion Zebras, mesmerized,
 ZigZagged across the ZanZibarian
 Zodiac as the Zealots Zoomed in
 with their telescopic extrusions.
 "Zeus be damned!" they fumed.
 "The Zenith is where it all begins!"

THERE'S ONLY ONE.

Zenithmedia
 gerald@zenithmedia-msia.com

international media specialist,
 not just in Malaysia but in Asia!

When his Creative Director
 and business partner Dato Shafri

asked what would happen to the
 ad agency business once Zenith
 is launched, he replied, "We'll
 worry about that later."

Forecast Growth

ADSPEND SURGES 14% BUT FACES HEADWINDS IN '09

The structure of the advertising industry in Malaysia has seen the emergence of a range of new boutique creative and/or strategic agencies that are getting tough in their negotiations to achieve optimal and appropriate share of voice for their clients.



Gerald Miranda, CEO, Zenith Media, Malaysia

Advertising expenditure in Malaysia is forecast to reach a record RM6.45 billion in 2008, 14% more than the RM5.66 billion the industry spent last year. The strong performance can be attributed to major events like the General Elections, EURO 2008 and the Beijing Olympics that boosted spending, according to media specialist Zenith Media Malaysia.

Expenditure during January-November this year was already up 14% compared to the corresponding period last year and festive season spending will see this level maintained till year end. Spending on TV grew by 22%, radio by 20%, point of sale advertising by 30%, newspapers by 9% and cinema by 3% while outdoor and magazines dropped 12% and 5% respectively.

The top five sectors in spending were transport, health, food, entertainment and education.

of the world are being affected.

Malaysia, with its open economy and financial and economic linkages with the rest of the world, has also been affected by these external developments. The significant slowdown in global growth is expected to affect the export sector while the continued volatility across financial markets may dampen business outlook.

According to the World Bank the global economy will grow by only 1% next year and developing country growth is expected to fall to 4.5% from 6.5% in 2007. Malaysia is expected to grow by 5.5% in 2008.

media profession beyond the wildest dreams of the industry's founding fathers."

That year, Media magazine in Hong Kong held its annual Asian Agency of the Year awards, for the first time it included an award for Asia's Media Agency of the Year, signalling media's coming of age. The winner was Zenith Media.

Zenith Media successfully moved the marketplace in Malaysia. Gerald became the inspiration and architect of Zenith Malaysia, and as its CEO single mindedly nurtured its growth to the forefront of

Khoo Kar Khoon, ex-Nestlé and colleague-in-arms, fondly recalls how he started his media career with Gerald, "He was my mentor and told me - don't waste your talent and time on 20% of the ad budget when you can go for the 80% (media)."

Campaign magazine described Zenith's creation as "the flame that fired a revolution, establishing media's role in the advertising process and driving recognition of the



Malaysian media specialisation. This paved the way for Zenith's entry into Asia.

He shared then, "It is always good business to try and see where things are heading and get there first; we did that with Zenith in Malaysia."

Gerald Miranda was CEO of Zenith Media Malaysia and later remodelled the agency into Invictus Blue through a strategic partnership with Havas Global.

He subsequently passed on the leadership baton to his son Keith Miranda who serves as Group MD of [Invictus Blue](#) together with a superbly experienced team. Made up of some amazingly talented people who will carry on Gerald's legacy.

For the many parts Gerald played during his career, and the courage, vision and enterprise with which he faced and overcame the challenges, he is truly advertising's 'man for all seasons.'

Joel Miranda, his nephew, shares, "Gerald was a strong and meticulous person. He loved his family very much. He was the pillar for his brothers and sisters, and he educated most of his nephews and nieces. He would gather the family at his favourite place in Port Dickson, where we'd fired up the barbecue, jump into the sea and ride jet skis, while he enjoyed games of poker with his brothers."

"Although he started as an articled clerk in Peat Marwick

COVER STORY

Mitchell (reconstituted as KPMG in 1987), he found his vocation in advertising and marketing later as chief operating officer of Bates where he left his mark as the top performer in an Advanced Management Programme conducted by Bates Worldwide in France.”

Side stories

One Saturday morning, I was at my barber and had just got my beard dyed, and while was waiting for it to dry I got a call from Gerald. He gave me a well-meaning earful about something I had written, but shortly after we ended giggling hysterically about nothing for all of 20 minutes. When I stepped back into the saloon, barber Ravi said I had waited too long for my beard to dry. So thanks to Gerald, I sported a jet black-finished beard for more than four months!

A typical conversation with Gerald goes like this.....

After the quick hellos, he'd ask you a question and start looking around with his eyes darting everywhere but at you. One could never tell if he was actually listening because he is

“He was the pillar for his brothers and sisters, and he educated most of his nephews and nieces. He would gather the family at his favourite place in Port Dickson, where we'd fired up the barbecue, jump into the sea and ride jet skis...”

almost never standing still. His mind was always racing and he never fails to break into a smile at the hint of something witty. So the moment you said something interesting, you got back onto his radar. His impatience is probably because he spent half his life listening to Shafri, who can actually explain how to build a clock if you asked the time, that talking to someone else was his commercial break. The best part was, after the conversation, everyone would be the better for it.

Shafri reminisces, “That was the time when music was music, the beer truly chilled (in a frosted mug if at the Lodge hotel), and happy hours really happy.”



Let's Go

Permit me to share something I have never mentioned to anyone... about Gerald's subtle and selfless generosity...

On 16 August 2018, severe floods hit the south Indian state of Kerala and MERCY Malaysia (where I was serving as ExCo) needed funds to send a medical team. I spoke to my first boss Joe D'Silva who gave me a crash course in Malayalilogy in 10 mins. So I approached the All Malaysia Malayalee Association (AMMA) for possible funds.

Long story short, they told me the last thing Kerala needed was more doctors. There are more than 4 million doctors in Kerala.

Not to be outknowledgeed by

them, I sent a message to Gerald Miranda. He replied in less than 30 seconds and send his payment immediately. One hour later, we sent a MERCY Malaysia officer to his office with an official receipt for RM15,000.

Thank you Gerald Robin Miranda....

For believing in my dream and the dreams of many.

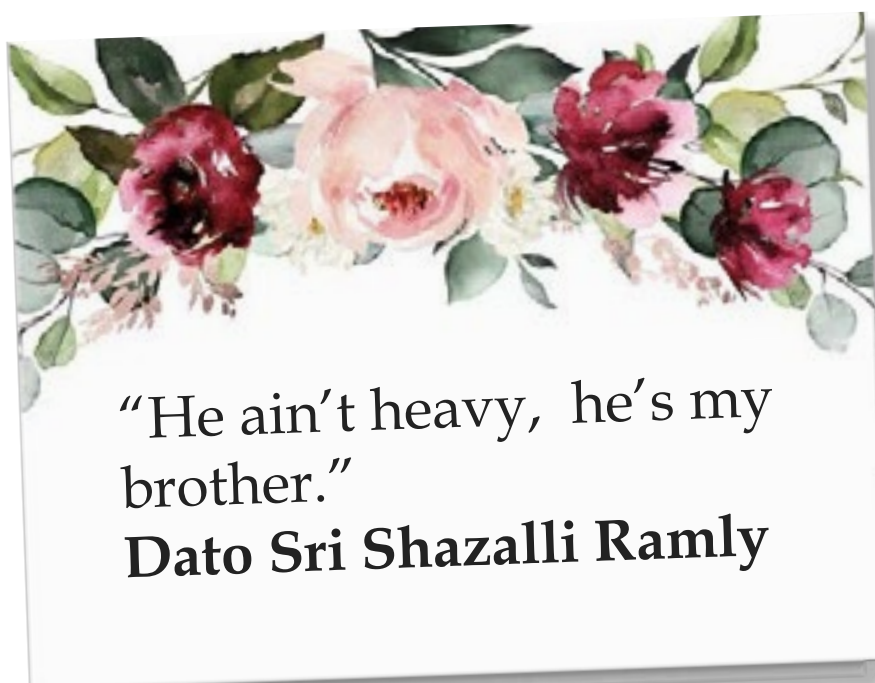
For placing an ad on the back cover since the day my magazine was born.

For your silent grace.

For being you.



Tributes from friends, colleagues, clients, and ex staffers....



“He ain’t heavy, he’s my brother.”

Dato Sri Shazalli Ramly



“There was only one Gerald Miranda - he was absolutely unique, incredibly entrepreneurial, amazingly creative and wonderful to his family. He will be sorely missed.”

Greg Paull



“Gerald Miranda was a giant in the Ad world and was pinnacle in helping shape many of the marketing leaders we have today. He will be sadly missed.”

Mohd Adam Wee

COVER STORY



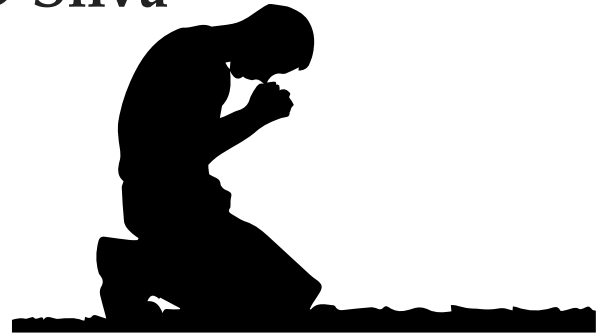
There are many individuals, unknown to many, that have contributed immensely to our industry. The current leaders were given their first break, mentored, and inspired by these individuals who preferred to stay out of the limelight. This is a testament of their genuineness to ensure there would be a constant pool of talent to help our industry prosper well into the future. Gerald Miranda was certainly one of these individuals and he has helped produce a countless number of stars. Unfortunately, we have the tendency to forget those who have helped us and if it weren't for them, we would not be what we are today. Let us take a moment to pay tribute to the unknown soldiers of our industry, and to applaud them in welcoming a General into their midst.

Dato' Shafri Mohamad



"In the early days, only one person was quoted in the annual analysis of ADEX in the business pages - Gerald Miranda!"

Joe D'Silva



"I was deeply saddened as I am sure many were. He was a good friend, colleague and mentor. He loved life, adored his family and always had time for everyone. He was one of the good guys whom I will dearly miss."

Leslie Jeyam



"He was indeed a very people-oriented person who has been gifted with a natural passion and fantastic vision for our everchanging business. It has been a glorious lifetime experience and privilege to have worked with Gerald at Bates. We will miss him a lot. God Bless his soul."

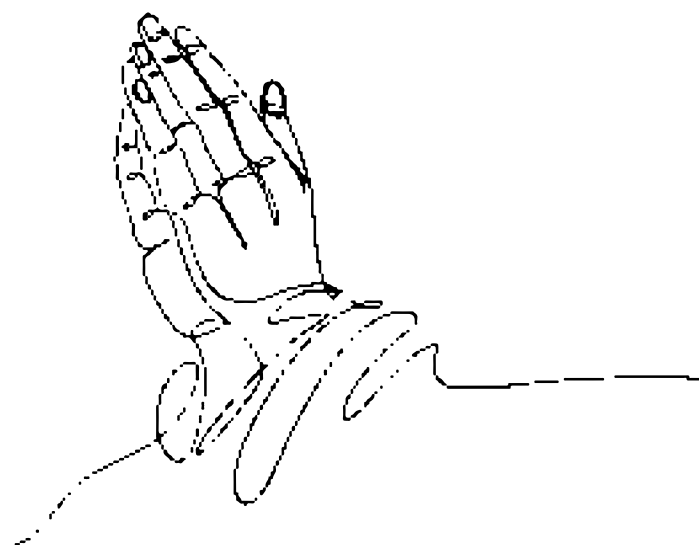
Charles Chew

COVER STORY



"Gerald was a good friend and great colleague. He was forward thinking, smart and had good business acumen. For me, he was very kind and compassionate. When I left the company and became a competitor, I lost my car and Gerald graciously lent me his car till I bought one. I have many good and fun memories with Gerald and will miss his presence."

Margaret Lim



"Gerald was a man of big ideas and big dreams. The few occasions we met, he talked about where the media industry should be. True to his beliefs, he built a vast empire few men can attain. May he rest in peace and deepest condolences to his family."

Tan Sri Vincent Lee



"In business, an implacable advocate and professional. In life, an unimpeachable individual. Above all, irreplaceable and a peerless media influential, bar none."

Dato Rishya Joseph

COVER STORY



“What a legend. Gerald was a pioneer, an entrepreneur, a deal maker, a rainmaker, a storyteller. But, most of all, he was a steadfast, funny, loyal and caring friend. I miss him already. Rest in peace, great man.”

Chris Jaques



A day with Gerald Miranda...

Gerald was in charge of the 4As finances in the early 2000s.

Matthews, you come to my house (bungalow on Federal Hill) this Saturday at 8.30am with the 4As financial reports. I want to review them. My Sri Lankan maid will make appam and mutton stew for breakfast.”

At breakfast I noticed a large green board on the wall with some heavy writings, numbers, etc.

“Gerald, what is that on the board?”

“Oh, G Gnanalingam (MTC/ GTeam) was here last night and we were discussing strategies for BN for the next GE. Gnana had undertaken to produce all the publicity materials for BN.”

After reviewing the 4As Financials, he said. “LET’S GO for a sumptuous banana leaf lunch in a shop I found in Sentul.”

After lunch he said, “I want to go and buy a Range Rover.”

We drove along Raja Muda, got into a car dealership and he got his first Range Rover.

J Matthews



“Gerald was a consummate media person and I have personally benefited from the insights he shared with me. He will be missed.”

Ho Kay Tat



This is Gerald Miranda...

Of course, he was hard on people.

He didn't take "cannot lah boss" for an answer because he only wanted the best.

This is Gerald Miranda...

Of course, he has told you stories from his Bates days like when they flew a banner with an aeroplane to impress a client.

This is Gerald Miranda....

Of course, he insists on having Weekly Seniors Meetings at ungodly hours (8:00 AM was ungodly by advertising standards) on Monday mornings

at the agency. He made us present industry news and findings because he wanted us to learn to be comfortable presenting to clients.

This is Gerald Miranda...

Of course, he made sure everyone had a good time at a party.

He wanted us to know that when you work hard for Gerald Miranda, you party harder with Gerald Miranda.

This is Gerald Miranda...

Of course, he calls you buddy. He wants you to know that you are important to him and this is where I break down.

COVER STORY

“Gerald used to call me Johnson. He said it was my advertising name. Why? Because Uncle G said so.”

Today, the advertising world lost Gerald Miranda. His legacy in the Malaysian advertising industry is a class above. His contributions have shaped the trajectory of Invictus Blue and inspired a generation of advertising professionals.

Gerald may be a titan in the advertising industry, but he was also Uncle G to me. You may have work husbands and wives, but he was my work uncle.

He was the grumpy uncle that everyone was afraid of, but I had a different kind of relationship with him. A relationship of mutual respect and friendship extended beyond my tenure with the agency.

Gerald used to call me Johnson. He said it was my advertising name. Why? Because Uncle G said so.

I remember conversing with him in his room, where he would ask how I was doing and offer me advice and motivation. He took a chance to hire me,

someone who had no media background and he showed me the wonderful world of advertising and I fell in love with storytelling.

He said, “People want to have their minds blown. They want us to sell them their dreams: their dream cars, their dream homes, their dream vacations, their perfect life. Media is how we convey those stories to them. That is what we do, buddy.”

Gerald would then regale me with stories from his pre-Zenith days. He truly loved what he did, and he left behind an incredible legacy.

It was well-known that Gerald would brood and not talk to you when you left the agency. After becoming a business owner, I finally understood why he felt that way. You feel a kinship with your employees, and when they leave the nest, it stings a little.

I shared my feelings with him about it, and he replied: “You are special Shuks and I believe you will fly even higher and I know you will mentor others along the way. Here’s wishing the best for you and your family always.”

He was always kind and generous, and he encouraged me with his words.

COVER STORY

The day I told him I was leaving the agency there was a bittersweet experience; truthfully, he contributed to the sweet part because he gave me a parting gift. On my last day, he took me out for lunch and gave me a book titled 'The Art of Videography' (because I was producing videos for the agency then). It showed me that he knew what I was doing for the agency, cared, and took an interest in what I did.

Inside the book, he left a handwritten note. It said:

"All the best, Shuks, and I know you will be great. Your friend, Gerald."

And he stapled his business card to it, too. Hahaha!

Rest In Peace, Uncle G.
Shukri Jamal



There was a little bit of Mad Men in Gerald. The kind of derring-do andchutzpah of admen from that era I will miss. Ted Bates in the 90's. Afternoons in his office, listening

to his take of the industry, brand campaigns, and his favourite topic: music. The bean-counter who would rather have been a rock star. I am reminded of "The Dash," a poem by Linda Ellis.

The date of your birth and departure matters little.

What matters is the dash between the dates and how you lived it.

Thank you, Mr Gerald Miranda, for being a friend, for letting me be a part of your dash. In God's hand I trust you are.

SP LEE



As Gerald frequently puts it, "Sandeep was minding his business in India when I found him, and I am responsible for bringing him to Malaysia."

COVER STORY

After I arrived to run XM, a digital company he owned, Gerald, worried that I knew no one, took me with him religiously every day for one month to the Long Bar of the Royal Selangor Club. I have never drank so much in my life. The week I arrived, he got me tickets to a concert by Sting, and sent someone to accompany me to Putra Stadium, Bukit Jalil. He was always that thoughtful and generous.

I learned Malaysia through his eyes, and that wisdom has stood me in good stead. He taught me several key management lessons, including the value of relationships versus pure expertise. He believed immensely in me, and we were fond of each other: thus even after I left XM, with fiery words exchanged, he hired me to Zenith to work with him.

He was a caring father figure, a razor-sharp warrior in a pitch scenario, a fellow sufferer in supporting United, a music aficionado who named his meeting rooms after Hendrix and Clapton, the man who introduced me to late night bak ku teh and also invited me to watch James Brown alongside

his closest friends and family. I worked with him for 12 years, and his company was a massive part of his life. I remember asking him, why he still worked, into his 70s, and he said he wouldn't know what to do with his time if he didn't. Perhaps that's one reason why he never sold his company, though he spoke about it across all the years I knew him. He loved it too much. He was obsessive and paranoid about the Zenith/Invictus Blue brand. I used to wonder why he would repeatedly tweak his email drafts and the annual calendar he sent to clients: now when I run my own company I know exactly why. And to me that commitment is the true hallmark of an entrepreneur.

I remember his calls asking "where are you?" and so too do many media industry bosses and top brass who went through the halls of Gerald's companies, learned from him and today are at the summit of their careers.

So many good folks have gone through Bates, Zenith and Invictus that his wake was an industry reunion with at least 4 or 5 generations of ad folks.

Gerald would not say he was bullish about anything: he would

COVER STORY

describe things he was positive about as being “cautiously optimistic” about them.

I am cautiously optimistic he is looking at us with twinkling eyes, a faint smile playing on his lips and a joke about to be shared.

Sandeep Joseph



“I spent 15 years working for GM. He was a tough boss! I truly understood the lessons he was trying to impart only after I went into a management role. Understood much better why he did some of the things he did and how important those things were. Ever grateful for the guidance and lessons and hope to continue making him proud.”

Bala Pomaleh



Gerald I were enigmas to one another, something that we both acknowledged with time. We also had phenomenal affection for each other which fortunately stayed between the two of us. I first spoke to Gerald when I was leaving Malaysia after 5 wonderful years and it was because of him that I returned for another 5 lovely years. I am grateful to the universe that I knew him. Rest in peace Gerald.

Rajiv Lal



Video tribute by Shahril Tan Sri Hamzah



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