

Sundaram Finance Spirit of Mylapore Award for late S. Rajam



CHENNAI, February 22: The 2nd Sundaram Finance Spirit of Mylapore award was presented posthumously to renowned artiste and musician S. Rajam for his legendary contribution to the fields of music and art. Late Rajam's second son R. Gurumurthy received the award from the Managing Director of Sundaram Finance, Mr. T. T. Srinivasaraghavan, at the ancestral Nadu Street home of Rajam in Mylapore, where the latter had been residing since the age of six.

The Spirit of Mylapore award was to be presented during the Sundaram Finance Mylapore Festival held last month. But it could not be done as he was hospitalised. Subsequently, he passed into the pages of history.

Mr. Srinivasaraghavan said the idea behind the Spirit of Mylapore award was to recognise a long time resident of Mylapore who had embodied the spirit and soul of this historic section of Madras.

Rajam was as true a Mylaporean as one could get. It was from this very house in Nadu Street that he began his illustrious journey in music and art, one that made him an iconic figure and a living legend not only in Mylapore but across the world of music and art. "We honour this legend. The vibrant colour and the brilliant harmony of his pieces shall ever remain his legacy to Mylapore and the world of art and music," he added.

Last year, R. K. Azhvaar, the 80-year-old owner of the popular road side book store on Luz Church Road was the recipient of the first Sundaram Finance Spirit of Mylapore Award.

Born on February 10, 1919, Rajam began presenting carnatic music performances at the age of 13. He had his training in music from maestros of music such as Ambi Dikshitar, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Papanasam Sivan and Madurai Mani Iyer. By 15, he had developed special interest in drawing that would later turn him into a legend.

It was during his stint at All-India Radio as a music supervisor that Rajam popularised South Indian music. During his tenure, he recorded rare songs of Vaggeyakars, produced many operas and musical plays and generated interest among the listeners for Thirukkural by singing them. Rajam was instrumental in bringing out 72 Melakarta Kirthanas of Koteeswara Iyer.

Rajam's artistic abilities won him the Sangeet Natak Academy award, Sangita Kala Acharya Award and the Isai Kalai Chemmal Award.