

## Emotional farewell for former graduates at close of reunion



Former NTC colleagues, Annukar Mishra (left), Mod Singh and Sashi Mishra meeting up after 40 years at the alumni reunion at FNU Nasinu Campus.

Emotions ran high with tears flowing freely, hugs and well-wishes around – that’s how the first ever Nasinu Teachers College (NTC) reunion for 70s graduates concluded at the Fiji National University’s (FNU) Nasinu Campus earlier this week.

After spending three days together, many of the participants who reunited after almost 40 years reluctantly farewelled each other with the hope of returning to the University in the near future for a similar function.

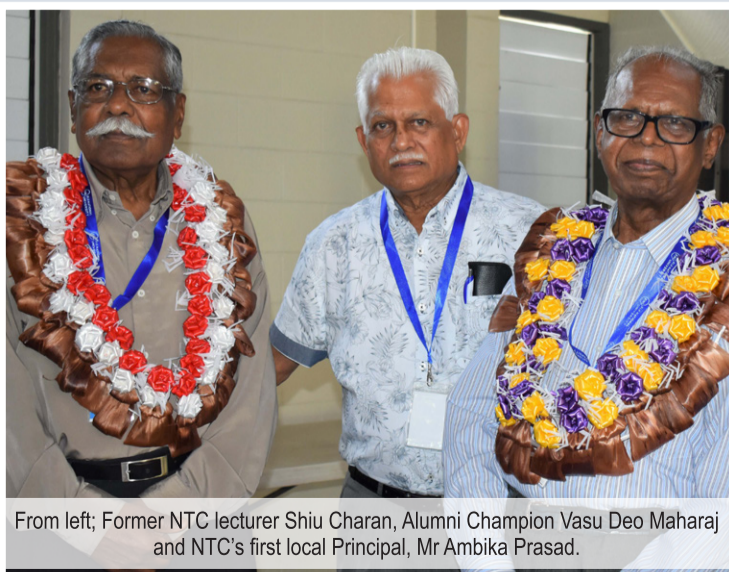
NTC’s first local principal, Mr Ambika Prasad expressed his joy at seeing most of his students and hearing of their experiences since graduating as teachers.

“I am so proud of you all and even those who have gone before us or were not able to make it here today. I have been with you all not as your Principal, but as your senior colleague and companion during these last few days,” Prasad said.

“This has been a fulfilling and enriching reunion and I am glad we have reconnected as graduates and former staff of NTC and I want us all to continue discussions and decide on what kind of legacy we will leave behind as the NTC 70s graduates.”

“No matter how far we’ve gone in life geographically, Fiji will always be home and NTC will always be ours so we must remain connected.” Prasad also acknowledged the support of FNU in hosting the event on campus and meeting the accommodation and catering needs of the alumni.

“Although NTC has transformed into FNU, I am deeply impressed and grateful to the FNU Vice-Chancellor and his team for welcoming us back with warm hearts and we are proud to see where the University is heading towards as the national institution of Fiji,”



From left; Former NTC lecturer Shiu Charan, Alumni Champion Vasu Deo Maharaj and NTC’s first local Principal, Mr Ambika Prasad.

FNU Alumni Relations Manager Artila Devi added that the University was proud to have hosted such a distinguished group of alumni.

“The idea of holding our alumni close to us at the University is really to keep us connected and build on the history of the university. Various divisions and departments of FNU went out of their way to ensure that this reunion was a success and enjoyed by all,” Devi said.

“We do want you all to stay connected and give back to the institution and this could be in the form of mentoring, speaking at public lectures, providing advice to the University staff as well as guidance to our future teachers as you have an experience that will help them go a long way.” “The University will always be open to our alumni and their positive contributions and we are confident that you are all great ambassadors of NTC as well as FNU.”

Alumni Sashi Mishra said the journey to Nasinu from Brisbane, Australia was filled with the excitement of meeting former colleagues and lecturers who became lifelong mentors.

“My husband Annukar Mishra and I are both alumni of NTC and he was also a lecturer here when it was renamed the Fiji College of Advanced Education (FCAE) so we were very happy to be here and it has been quite an emotional event,” Mishra said.

“The reunion was truly an event that needed to happen and now we look forward to staying connected and giving back to the institution.” “Walking through the campus brought back a lot of memories and I am pleased to note there has been a lot of positive development happening on campus.”

“There are quite a few of us that reside in Brisbane so we will definitely keep our alumni chapter going by meeting regularly when we go back because it has been quite hard saying goodbye to each other today.” Former graduate Mod Singh said he was pleased with his decision to travel from Savusavu for the reunion to meet his former lecturers.

“I am probably one of the youngest alumni here because I was in NTC in the late 70s. It has been humbling being here amongst my senior counterparts and meeting my lecturers and principals and conveying my appreciation to them for their teaching and impact in my personal and professional life.”

More than 100 alumni were part of the three-day reunion that was officially opened on Sunday evening by the Education Minister, Honorable Rosy Akbar. Many travelled from as far as New Zealand, Australia and Hawaii to join their local counterparts at the event, after leaving the College four decades ago.

The alumni gathered in the Main Hall and after singing Isa Lei to each other at the conclusion of the reunion, they departed with the same four words uttered 40 years ago during their last NTC assembly – Ni sa moce, Nasinu.