Dr Mahesh Nagarajan
Doctor of Business Administration *honoris causa*

Citation

Dr Mahesh Nagarajan was born into a modest family in Madras (now Chennai) in India. His father, an accountant, and his mother, a writer, made sacrifices and difficult choices so that he and his brother would have the best life possible. This foundation, combined with his "love" for mathematics, has enabled Dr Nagarajan to become one of the top scientists in the world in the field of operations management and operations research, which uses mathematics to "improve the world around us".

Even in childhood, Dr Nagarajan knew he wanted to study science or mathematics. However, unaware of his squeamishness to the sight of blood, his first day in a biology lab ended abruptly when he "fainted at the sight of a dissected rat". The experience led him to the study of computer science.

Dr Nagarajan obtained his undergraduate degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay in 1995. He obtained his MA in Applied Mathematics and a PhD in Operations Management from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, US in 2003. These years of study were replete with memorable achievements, which include winning a place as a finalist in the math Olympiad, which shaped his graduate studies and career as an applied mathematician.

After completing his PhD, he joined the Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia, Canada, in the same year. He holds the alumni chair of Stochastic Optimization and is the Senior Associate Dean for Research at the Sauder School of Business. He has been a Distinguished Scholar of the Faculty of Business at Lingnan University since 2019 and is currently a Research Fellow at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

His research interests include applications of optimisation, mathematical modelling in cooperative game theory, stochastic inventory theory, healthcare operations, cooperative game theory, and queueing and approximation algorithms. His research has produced several academic and practical outputs. He has published over 35 peer-reviewed articles in top-ranking journals such as *Management Science, Mathematics of Operations Research, and Production and Operations Management,* among others.

His sterling career has earned him several recognitions in the form of reputable awards. Dr Nagarajan was awarded The Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS) Optimization Society Young Researcher Prize in 2008. He also received the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada's Past President Research Award in 2008. In 2009, he was nominated for the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's Discovery Accelerator Supplement. The same year, he received a Skinner Early Career Research Award from the Production and Operations Management Society. In 2020, he won the Daniel H. Wagner Prize for Excellence in the Practice of Advanced Analytics and Operations Research by INFORMS. He has received awards for research excellence in both senior and junior categories from the University of British Columbia.

Dr Nagarajan's service to the academic community also deserves mention. He is currently the Department Editor of *Manufacturing and Service Operations Management and Operations Research Letters*. He also serves as Senior Editor for *Management Science, Operations Research, Production and Operations Management,* and *Naval Research Logistics.* In 2021, he was a judging committee member for the Manufacturing Services and Operations Management Special Interest Group Best Paper Award in INFORMS. Since 2023, he has served on the search committee for the Editor-in-Chief of *Operations Research*. Despite his numerous teaching commitments, he has also been teaching for the University of British Columbia In-ternational MBA programme at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

His contribution to science and a safer world was probably most "meaningful" during the COVID-19 pandemic, where he "worked closely with parts of public health and hospitals in crafting a response using models". He supported the Canadian Government in developing a responsive supply chain for COVID-19 vaccines, making decisions on re-opening cities, "when to close hospitals", "forecasting and managing loads in acute settings in hospitals", and how to help people dealing with addiction. Indeed, he was recognised as one of the world's most active researchers in the control of the COVID-19 pandemic. These achievements have not only been noted in academic and government circles; they have been acknowledged by the public at large. His contribution earned him popularity among sections of the Canadian public who recognise him as the "man from the television… (who) used math to help us with COVID-19…". He attributes his success to the sacrifices of his parents and the support of his family, who taught him the value of prioritising.

Despite his numerous outstanding achievements, Dr Nagarajan does not rest on his laurels. He plans to continue to support societal development by applying his research to other social needs. In his view, some major crises that emanate from climate change will loom large and persist. To prepare for these crises, "we need global models for better and sustainable health that can be delivered cheaply", Dr Nagarajan contends. The solution to these issues keeps Dr Nagarajan up at night. Hence, he wants to continue providing mentorship where he can, advise young scholars, and find ways to disseminate some of his most useful applied work, especially in health service settings, to improve human life. His motivation to do more for society stems from principles such as "respect for people, psychological honesty and openness" and the need "to realise what one values most and then craft your life trying to do the things you value".

Mr Chairman, in recognition of his outstanding professional achievements and distinguished public service, it is my honour to present Dr Mahesh Nagarajan for conferment of Doctor of Business Administration *honoris causa.*

Citation written and delivered by Professor Padmore Adusei Amoah