

BILL 98

*An Act to proclaim
May as South Asian Heritage Month
and May 5th as
South Asian Arrival Day*

Preamble

South Asian immigrants began arriving in Ontario in the latter part of the 20th century. Working primarily in the sawmill industry, South Asian immigrants settled in various parts of the province. For South Asians, the month of May has been a time of celebration and commemoration of their arrival from the Indian subcontinent of the Americas beginning on May 5, 1838.

*South Asian
Lawyers' Association*

While most South Asians came to this country from India, many others came to Ontario from such places as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, Malaysia, Fiji, the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana. Today, South Asians make up significant proportion of Ontario's population and are proud to draw upon their heritage and traditions, contributing to many aspects of culture, commerce and public service across this province.

to recognize and pay tribute to the contributions
and continue to make to the development



Greetings from The Law Society of Upper Canada

The Government of Ontario passed a Private Member's Bill proclaiming the month of May as South Asian Heritage Month, and May 5th as South Asian Arrival Day. The legislation officially recognizes and pays tribute to the contributions that South Asians have made, and continue to make, to the various facets of the business, legal, literary, sports, educational, and cultural communities of Ontario.

The Law Society of Upper Canada is pleased to provide assistance in promoting this milestone for the South Asian community, one of the largest and fastest growing communities in Ontario, and to help raise awareness of the achievements made by South Asians in law and the legal profession. This brochure – *Firsts* – outlines some of these groundbreaking steps.

On a more personal level, I am extremely proud and honoured to be one of the 'firsts' noted in this brochure amongst so many wonderful and talented members of the South Asian community who have achieved these great accomplishments and laid the groundwork for continued achievement by the next generation.

Participating in events such as tonight's celebration, which has been organized by the South Asian Heritage Foundation, enables us to facilitate further dialogue about the opportunities that exist in and with the legal profession for continued growth and partnership. As well, Law Society initiatives such as our Equity and Diversity Mentorship Program help us promote law as a career to high school students from diverse communities. Such outreach is important in building on the successes to date and ensuring that we have cause to celebrate many more achievements and accomplishments within all the diverse communities that make up Ontario's population.

The Law Society is pleased to join the South Asian Lawyers' Association, the Government of Ontario and members of the community and the legal profession tonight in celebration. We offer our sincerest congratulations to the South Asian community on the inaugural proclamation of South Asian Heritage Month, and our best wishes to continued strides in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Vern Krishna, Q.C., FCGA
Treasurer, The Law Society of Upper Canada



The Law Society of
Upper Canada

Barreau
du Haut-Canada

SOUTH ASIAN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION

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April 22, 2002

South Asian Heritage Act, 2001 is recognition by the Ontario Legislature of the contributions that South Asian immigrants have made and continue to make to the development and general welfare of Ontario.

It is now up to the corporate and individual citizens and Government of Ontario to give spirit to this legislation.

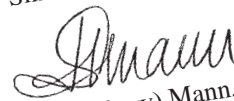
The Law Society has pioneered in this regard by providing its support to the South Asian Lawyers' Association to produce a compilation of first and other notable accomplishments by South Asians in law related fields. The success of the individuals mentioned in this compilation flows from their hard work and commitment. They were undeterred by the challenges and pursued the promise. It is indeed a vocation well pursued.

Education about the South Asian heritage and culture, recording the history and learning from the past while focusing on the future is the goal of the South Asian Heritage Foundation. The South Asian Lawyers' Association believes that this publication is a step in that direction.

There was a lot of time, effort and resources devoted to the research and production of this book and we received tremendous support from several individuals and organization. I thank them all. A special mention of the support from the Law Society of Upper Canada is in order. I also thank and acknowledge the assistance of members of the South Asian Lawyers' Association and especially Sutapa Karmakar.

I want to congratulate the entire South Asian community and hope that the inaugural celebration of South Asian Heritage Month this May and every year thereafter will bring more awareness about this rich and vibrant heritage.

Sincerely,



H.S. (Harry) Mann, President
South Asian Lawyers' Association

THE HONOURABLE R. ROY McMURTRY
CHIEF JUSTICE OF ONTARIO



L'HONORABLE R. ROY McMURTRY
JUGE EN CHEF DE L'ONTARIO

OSGOODE HALL
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5H 2N5
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SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

April, 2002

I would like to extend my warmest best wishes for a very successful South Asian Heritage Month for May, 2002.

It is an important opportunity for all Canadians to celebrate the contribution of South Asian Canadians to the dynamic pluralism of Ontario and Canada.

When I was the Attorney General for Ontario, I had the opportunity of visiting South Asia on two separate occasions as a guest of both the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan. The visits were a wonderful educational experience as I was able to personally experience that very rich and diverse cultural history which is represented by persons of South Asian origin.

In recent years, I have witnessed the South Asian Community grow into a major Canadian Community which contributes tremendously to the economic, legal, cultural and political life of our country.

I am therefore very pleased that the South Asian Lawyers' Association and the Law Society of Upper Canada have printed this booklet regarding the accomplishment of South Asians in areas related to law.

I am also very pleased to have the opportunity of wishing everyone in the South Asian Community every continued success, happiness and fulfilment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Roy McMURTRY".



INTRODUCTION

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We present to you an historical compilation of South Asians who are to be commended for more than their outstanding accomplishments within the legal community.

We chronicle for you men and women whose advocacy and volunteerism have resulted in the advancement of human rights and assisted with the integration of the South Asian community into the province of Ontario.

While each person is unique in their individual contributions to the legal and South Asian communities, they have collectively imparted the gift of being a resounding voice on issues of equity, fairness and access to justice.

Today we celebrate these leaders who together symbolize a Spirit of determination, integrity, passion and loyalty to the South Asian community and to the pursuit of justice.

May this Spirit that is celebrated today inspire our lawyers of tomorrow.

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FIRSTS BY SOUTH ASIANS IN ONTARIO

First male South Asian lawyer called to the Bar ~ 1962

MR. SYED MUMTAZ ALI completed his LL.B. from Osmania University, Hyderabad, India in 1948, practiced in Karachi, Pakistan for 5 years (1949-1955) and then commenced his LL.M. studies in England. Midway through his LL.M. studies, Mr. Ali immigrated to Canada. After his arrival in Ontario in 1960, Mr. Ali formally entered into articles of clerkship with Mr. E.H. Silk, Esq. Q.C., Assistant Deputy Attorney-General. Following his call to the Bar on April 12, 1962, Mr. Ali joined the Office of the Attorney-General where he worked as litigation counsel up to his retirement in 1990.

Barristers' Rolls and Minutes of Convocation

First female South Asian lawyer called to the Bar ~ 1979

MS. IVA SAREEN was called to the Bar in 1979 after completing her LL.B. at Osgoode Hall Law School.

Barristers' Rolls

*First Bencher of the
Law Society of Upper Canada ~ 1991*

*First Treasurer of the
Law Society of Upper Canada ~2001*

PROFESSOR VERN KRISHNA, Q.C., FCGA, is the Treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada. He is the head of Convocation which is the governing body of The Law Society of Upper Canada. Before being elected as Treasurer in June of 2001, Professor Krishna served as a bencher of the Law Society for ten years. As a bencher of the Law Society he has held high profile positions such as Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, a member of the Strategic Planning Committee, as well as being appointed to the Board of the Lawyer's Professional Indemnity Company. Professor of Law at the

University of Ottawa, he is a member of the Ontario, Alberta, and Nova Scotia Bars. He received his Bachelor of Commerce in the United Kingdom and his M.B.A and LL.B. in Alberta. He also received his LL.M. from Harvard University and his D.C.L. from Cambridge. He is a published author. Professor Krishna has written extensively on tax and financial issues and served as Executive Director of the CGA Tax Research Centre at the University of Ottawa. He is the author of several leading works in taxation including the *Fundamentals of Canadian Income Tax (6th Edition)* and *Canadian International Taxation*. He is the editor of *Canada's Tax Treaties* and managing editor of *Canadian Current Tax*, a monthly publication on tax matters. Professor Krishna is Counsel for Koskie Minsky in Toronto acting on a wide range of taxation matters that include planning, representation and negotiations with Revenue Canada, litigation, international tax planning and offshore trusts. He acts as counsel to law and accounting firms on matters of taxation and appears before tax tribunals at all levels.

*First Judicial Appointment to the
Ontario Court of Justice ~ 1984*

THE HONOURABLE MR. AYRES VICTOR COUTO, Q.C., obtained his LL.B. from University of Bombay 1952. After passing the Bar Council Examination in England in 1953, he practiced as Legal Adviser to E.M.B. Society, Central Railway, Government of India. In 1955 he was enrolled as an Advocate of the Bombay High Court. Justice Couto was called to the Bar of Ontario on March 25, 1966 and has also received his federal appointment as Queen's Counsel. He practiced civil litigation up to his appointment to the Ontario Court of Justice on November 1, 1984. He is a former member of the India-Canada Association.

Barristers' Rolls, Toronto Star October 16, 1984



FIRSTS BY SOUTH ASIANS IN ONTARIO

First female Judicial Appointment ~ 1992

Born in Kaduna, Nigeria, the **HONOURABLE MADAM JUSTICE SHEILA RAY** immigrated to Canada at age 10. She obtained her LL.B. from Dalhousie Law School in 1980 and was called to the Nova Scotia Bar in 1981. During her years as a lawyer with the Department of Justice in Ottawa, Justice Ray was a part of the team committed to the Justice and Legal Affairs Parliamentary Committee, when it vetted Bill C-53, which ultimately replaced the former crimes of rape, indecent assault, and gross indecency with the present three-tiered sexual assault and related Criminal Code provisions. Among her many accomplishments, Justice Ray also represented federal government employers in litigation before the Public Service Staff Relations Board and the Federal Court of Canada in both official languages and in every Canadian province and territory. In April of 1992, Justice Ray was appointed as Provincial Court Judge in the criminal courts of Toronto. She has participated as a committee member on the Professional Development Committee of the Canadian Association of Provincial Court Judges and has organized judicial education. She is a frequent public legal education speaker and has received numerous awards in recognition of her community service.

First Federal Judicial Appointment to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ~ 1998

The **HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE RUSSELL JURIANZS**, born in Poona, India, immigrated to Canada in 1955. After his call to the Bar in 1974, Justice Juriansz practised general litigation. He then joined the Metro Toronto Task Force on Human Relations with the Pitman Commission on Racism and Violence in 1977. Subsequently, from 1978 to 1987, Justice Juriansz acted as Legal Counsel, General Counsel and Director of Legal Services with the Canadian Human Rights

Commission. Justice Juriansz also taught Human Rights Law and Constitutional Law at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law. From 1987 to 1994, Justice Juriansz had a practice at Blake, Cassels & Graydon, where he was partner, which focused on human rights, constitutional and employment law matters. He continued his practice at his private firm from 1994 up to 1998, when he was appointed to the Ontario Superior of Justice (formerly the Ontario Court (General Division)).

First Law Professors ~ 1970

DR. SURYA PRAKASH SINHA was a Professor at the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Law from 1970-1975 and was called to the bar in 1973. He came to Western after teaching law in the U.S., where he is the first Indian to be a law professor. He returned to the U.S. and taught, most recently, at Pace University School of Law, New York. He is the author of six books in international law and jurisprudence, one of which has been translated in Russian. His works have been responsible for a new movement in jurisprudential thought known as Legal Polycentricity. Dr. Sinha's biographical listings are included in "Who's Who in the East", "Who's Who in America", "Who's Who in American Education", "Who's Who in American Law" and the "Dictionary of International Biography". He published his first book at the age of 15, while in his second year of college, whose authorship was pirated by an older and wiser classmate. He now enjoys writing fiction and is awaiting the publishing of his latest manuscript that has received three awards. He plays classical Indian music on the Sitar and has played tanpura with his teacher for various recordings and at venues that include Carnegie Recital Hall and the Felt Forum of Madison Square Garden.



FIRSTS BY SOUTH ASIANS IN ONTARIO

DR. LAKSHMAN MARASINGHE, born in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), obtained his LL.B. and LL.M. from University College, London, and his Ph.D from The School of Oriental and African Studies. Both these institutions are colleges of the University of London. Additionally, Professor Marasinghe was called to the English Bar as a Barrister-at-Law, from the Inner Temple and to the Sri Lankan Bar as an Attorney-at-Law of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. He commenced his law teaching career at University College, but spent most of the period between 1964 and 1970 as a law professor, visiting a number of Law Faculties on The African Continent lecturing at the Universities of Khartoum (Sudan), Nairobi (Kenya) and Ahamadu Bello University (Nigeria). Professor Marasinghe took up an appointment at The University of Windsor as an Associate Professor of Law in 1970. In 1973 he was appointed a Full Professor and in 1992 he was appointed a University Professor in the Faculty of Law. Since joining the University of Windsor he has been a Visiting Academic at the Universities of Malaya, Beijing, Colombo, and Western Australia, and served as a Research Fellow at The Max Planck Institute (Hamburg). He has held these appointments on more than one occasion. In 1999 he retired from the University of Windsor in which year he was invited as a Visiting Academic by The University of New South Wales in Sydney. His principal interests are: Law and Development (which he presently teaches at the University of Windsor), Conflict of Laws, Comparative Constitutional Law and International Trade Law, in which areas he continues to publish. He is the author of sixty articles and several books and is presently working on a book on Third World Constitutional Structures. He was recently conferred with a LL.D. (Honoris Causa) by the University of Colombo. To date he is the longest tenured South Asian Law Professor in Canada.

First female Law Professor ~ 1980

DR. EMILY CARASCO attended Makerere University where she obtained her LL.B. in 1971. She subsequently obtained both her LL.M. (1974) and S.J.D. (1979) from Harvard Law School. After joining the Faculty of Law at the University of Windsor in 1980 as an Assistant Professor, she was called to the Bar in 1984 and became a full Professor in 1999. Concurrent to her role as Professor, Dr. Carasco has held numerous positions some of which include National Co-ordinator of the Jessup International Competition, Academic Co-ordinator of the Faculty of Law and President of the Faculty Association. Her commitment to human rights and equity matters is exemplified through her previous role as Commissioner of Human Rights of the University of Windsor, and also her involvement in committees at the University of Windsor including the Status of Women Committee, Search Committee for an Employment Equity Co-ordinator, President's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues, Planning Committee on Race Relations, Employment and Educational Equity Advisory Committee and the Presidential Committee on Prejudice and Discrimination. She is a former Editor of the *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* and the *Review of International Business Law*, a former Commissioner of Hearings on Apartheid For Lawyers Against Apartheid, and former Chair of Ontario's Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee. In addition to her publications on matters of international law and access to justice, Dr. Carasco is a frequent lecturer on issues of equity, equality and human rights.



FIRSTS BY SOUTH ASIANS IN ONTARIO

First Human Rights Commissioner Ontario Human Rights Commission ~ 1979

DR. BHAUSAHEB UBALÉ was born in Satara Maharashtra, India, and was active in public life in Bombay, India as well as in London, England. Since his arrival in Ontario, he has been regarded as a preeminent activist in human rights and race relations. Dr. Ubale gained prominence after authoring and submitting a report entitled *Equal Opportunity and Public Policy: The Role of South Asian Community in Canadian Mosaic* (also known as “The Ubale Report”) to the Province of Ontario. Dr. Ubale was appointed as Human Rights Commissioner in 1979 and was subsequently appointed as the first Chief Race Relations Commissioner for the Province of Ontario. Dr. Ubale’s contributions to improving race relations in Ontario were recognized by the province when he was given the Order of Ontario in December 2001.

First Chief Commissioner Ontario Human Rights Commission ~ 1988

Since his call to the Bar in 1980, MR. RAJ ANAND has become widely recognized for his expertise in and contributions to human rights law. His previous accomplishments include positions such as Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, panel member on the Board of Inquiry under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and *Police Services Act* Task Force on Trespass to Publicly-used Property as it affects Youth and Minorities. Mr. Anand is also Chair of the Minority Advocacy and Rights Council. In addition to his practice, Mr. Anand, who is currently a partner at Weir Foulds LLP, has been a speaker and media commentator on issues of labour law and human rights and has an extensive list of publications.

Mr. Anand is the first recipient of the Advocates’ Society Award of Justice which honours those advocates who best combine the highest standards of advocacy with the long tradition of the legal profession in representing the disadvantaged or unpopular.

First Order of Canada ~ 2002

MR. T. SHER SINGH, C.M., LL.B., LL.D., immigrated to Canada from Patna, India in 1971. He obtained his LL.B. from the University of Western Ontario where he was the President of The Legal Society and was awarded the Ivan Rand Award for “meritorious academic standing and outstanding contribution” during law school. Since his articles at McCarthy & McCarthy and his subsequent call to the Bar, he has been practicing in the area of litigation. He served on the Ontario Police Commission from 1990 to 1993 and was also awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws by Lakehead University. Mr. Singh lectures regularly on a wide range of issues (ranging from law to Canadian identity) across North America and abroad. He is a widely read newspaper columnist on current affairs, writes as a weekly travel writer and is a frequent commentator and host on TV and radio. He currently sits on a wide range of boards and committees including Roger’s CFMT Network and the Sikh Foundation based in California. Mr. Singh was made a member of the Order of Canada in 2002.



FIRSTS BY SOUTH ASIANS IN ONTARIO

First Justice of the Peace ~ 1979

HIS WORSHIP JUSTICE OF THE PEACE IDERPAUL SINGH CHANDHOKE was born in Ludhiana Punjab, India. He obtained his LL.B. from Meerut University, India in 1974. After his arrival in Canada in 1974, he worked as a law clerk until his appointment as a Justice of the Peace in the Ontario Court of Justice on July 9, 1979. From 1994 to 1996, he was appointed as a Senior Justice of the Peace and Administrative Secretary to the Justice of the Peace Review Council. His Worship re-qualified in Ontario and was called to the Bar on May 24, 1996. Over the past 22 years, Mr. Chandhoke has presided over judicial interim release hearings under the *Criminal Code of Canada*, the *Young Offenders Act* and the *Provincial Offences Act*. He has also conducted trials under *Provincial Offences Act* including complex matters under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the *Environmental Protection Act*. He is currently presiding at the Metro East courthouse in Toronto.

First female Justice of the Peace ~ 1986

A French honours graduate, HER WORSHIP JUSTICE OF THE PEACE MEENA NADKARNI immigrated to Canada with her husband in 1965. Her early careers prior to being in the legal profession included scriptwriter for television in England, journalist, advertising copywriter, and fifteen years as Head of Acquisitions at the Osgoode Hall Law School Library at York University. The first South Asian Citizenship Court Judge in Canada and the first female Justice of the Peace of South Asian origin, Her Worship was appointed to the position in 1986. In 1998, she was also appointed to the Justice of the Peace Review Council, the provincial body that is responsible for the approval of new appointments as well as the disciplining of

Justices of the Peace. Based primarily at the Brampton court, she also conducts English and French trials throughout the Central West region.

First Legislators

GURBAX SINGH MALHI

Member of Parliament and

Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour

Mr. Malhi was first elected to the House of Commons in 1993 and was re-elected in 1997 and in November 2000. He is the first turbaned Member of Parliament in the Western world. On September 17, 2001, the Honourable Prime Minister Jean Chretien appointed Mr. Malhi as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Malhi has served on many parliamentary committees some of which include Chairman to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, on the Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee and the Industry Committee, House of Commons Standing Committee for Government Operations, Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, the Special Committee on Code of Conduct for MPs and Senators, the Subcommittee on the Business of Supply, and the Pearson Airport Subcommittee. Mr. Malhi currently serves as a member of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development. He is the founder of the Canada-South Asia Parliamentary Friendship Group.

MURAD VELSHI

Member of Provincial Parliament

Mr. Murad Velshi was born in Pretoria, South Africa, into a family with a long history of political activism. He entered the family baking business while still in his teens and in 1961,



FIRSTS BY SOUTH ASIANS IN ONTARIO

while in his mid-twenties, led his young family out of South Africa to start a new life in Kenya. There he started other businesses, and lived for the next decade. After his arrival in Canada in 1971, he and his wife established what was to become a successful chain of travel agency franchises in Toronto and Vancouver. His experiences in Africa prepared him well to deal with the Uganda Refugee Crisis, which occurred within a year of his arrival in Canada. Mr. Velshi played a lead role in welcoming and settling those refugees, and it strengthened his resolve to ensure he played his part in strengthening democracy in Canada, the country that had welcomed him and his family. Having come from un-democratic countries, he set about to find the best fit in a political party. Mr. Velshi settled on the Liberal Party, to which he has remained loyal for more than thirty years. Mr. Velshi is the first Canadian of South Asian origin to have been elected to the Ontario legislature. Mr. Velshi was elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1987, as the Member for the Toronto-area riding of Don Mills. During his tenure, he served as Deputy Whip of the Liberal Caucus, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, and Chairman of the Standing Committee on the Ombudsman. He has traveled widely representing the Ontario government across Canada and abroad. Mr. Velshi's pioneering career in politics was the culmination of nearly two decades of political activity since his arrival with his family in Canada. He has always played a leading role in social organizations and in South Asian community activities and has developed a reputation as a frontline advocate and strategist for practical humanitarian causes. Mr. Velshi was called upon to assist the Ismaili community and the Canadian governments in a resettlement effort for Afghan Ismaili's persecuted by the Taliban regime, as a result of which, thousands of refugees were resettled in different parts of Canada, trained in English or French, and are currently enjoying lives as new Canadians.

RAMINDER GILL

Member of Provincial Parliament

Mr. Gill was elected to the Ontario Legislature on June 3, 1999. He was appointed Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on March 5, 2001, after serving a year and a half as Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Gill is Co-Chair of the Auto Caucus, a Commissioner of the Red Tape Commission, and sits on the Legislative Standing Committees for the Public Accounts and for Regulations and Private Bills. A resident of Peel since 1970, Mr. Gill founded the Malton Cougars Soccer Club, and is a charter member of the Erin Mills Lions Club. He has also raised funds for such causes as Credit Valley Hospital, the United Way, the Hospital for Sick Children, and the Toronto Eye Foundation. Mr. Gill introduced a Private Member's Bill, *Bill 98 An Act to proclaim the Month of May as South Asian Heritage Month and May 5 as South Asian Arrival Day*, which received Royal Assent on December 14, 2001. Mr. Gill's family was the first South Asian family to settle in Ontario in 1930. ♦



NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN OF THE BAR

In alphabetical order

P.A. NEENA GUPTA

Ms. Gupta is a partner of the law firm Goodman and Carr LLP, where she focuses her practice on employment and labour law. She was called to the Ontario Bar in 1989 and the Saskatchewan Bar in 1988. Ms. Gupta has taught as an Adjunct Professor at the Faculties of Law of both the University of Toronto and Queen's University, Kingston. She has taught subjects relating to human rights and discrimination. She also is a popular guest lecturer at Seneca College, North York. She is a member of the board of directors of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) and Chair's the CBA's Standing Committee of Equality. She has been active with the OBA (formerly CBAO). She was co-founder of the Visible Minority Women's group of the CBAO, assisted in the drafting of Ontario's response to the Wilson Taskforce on Gender Equality and is currently on the board of directors of the Ontario Bar Assistance Plan. In 1992 to 1993, she took a leave of absence from Goodman and Carr LLP to study matters relating to discrimination and administrative law.

KAMALJIT KAUR MUNDI

Ms. Mundi attended law school at the University of Windsor and graduated in 1993 as one of the top students in her class. After her call to the Bar in 1995, she returned to join the law firm of Torys as an associate in the corporate department until 1999. Since 2000, she has been Counsel to TLC Laser Eye Centres Inc.. Ms. Mundi has been actively involved in the community at all levels. Her keen interest in assisting young children is reflected in her involvement with coaching boys' and girls' baseball teams in the Erindale Baseball League and organizing career fairs for India Rainbow Community Services. As former Vice President of India Rainbow Community

Services, Ms. Mundi was instrumental in developing their programs for the youth of the South Asian community. She was also one of the founding members of the South Asian Professionals' Networking Association, an organization which provides a forum for sharing ideas and networking among young South Asians, and is a former Secretary to the South Asian Lawyers' Association.

SOMA RAY-ELLIS

Soma Ray-Ellis is the first woman of South Asian origin to clerk for the Superior Court of Ontario. She is currently a partner and head of the Employment and Labour Group at Paterson, MacDougall. Since her call to the Bar in 1992, Ms. Ray-Ellis has practiced in the areas of human rights and employment law. In addition to private practice, Ms. Ray-Ellis' experience includes an appointment as Adjudicator to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (part-time), Prosecutor for the Ministry of Labour and Counsel to the Human Rights Board of Inquiry and Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal. She co-drafted the *Rules of Practice* for the Ontario Board of Inquiry (Human Rights) in 1996. She has published extensively and, has been a source for the national media on issues of human rights and employment law. Ms. Ray-Ellis is a board member (ad hoc) of Women Entrepreneurs of Canada and has been inducted into the "Canadian Who's Who 2002" and "Who's Who of Canadian Business 2002". She has spoken nationally and internationally on human rights issues and co-represented Canada at a world conference of Business Women in Mexico in January 2002. She has been involved with equity issues for over a decade including speaking at various forums including AWIC, making submissions before parliamentary committees, and participating on Law Society and external South Asian community groups. She is currently writing a book on Federal Equity Laws to be published by Carswell in the summer of 2002. ♦



NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY SOUTH ASIAN MEN OF THE BAR

In alphabetical order

CHRISTOPHER AJITH AMERASINGHE, Q.C.

Mr. Amerasinghe, born in Sri Lanka, obtained his LL.B. from the University of Ceylon in 1963, was called to the Bar of Sri Lanka in 1964 and practiced as a Barrister in Sri Lanka for 10 years until his emigration to Canada in 1974. He was called to the Bar of Ontario in 1976 and was Counsel to the Ontario Securities Commission until he joined the Department of Justice Canada, Ontario Regional Office in 1977. Mr. Amerasinghe has appeared as counsel for Attorney General of Canada in several high profile criminal and war crimes cases, and was one of the persons responsible for establishing the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Section in the Department of Justice. He was appointed as Federal Queen's Counsel in 1986. Since 1989, Mr. Amerasinghe has been Senior General Counsel at the Department of Justice and is currently specializing in class action litigation, criminal law and international criminal law.

KHALID BAKSH

Mr. Baksh is a partner of the law firm of Blakeney Henneberry Baksh & Murphy. Since his call to the Bar in 1990, Mr. Baksh has practiced primarily in areas including insurance defence, employment and commercial litigation. Mr. Baksh has been a mentor to many Muslim and South Asian law students through his lectures at various law schools in Ontario. In addition to being a media contact for Muslim-Canadian issues, he has been an advocate of civil rights for the Muslim and South Asian community. Mr. Baksh was co-counsel for the Coalition of Muslim Organizations and appeared before the House of Commons Committee on Justice and Human Rights and the Special Senate Committee on The Subject Matter of *Bill C-36*.

HONOURABLE JUSTICE MINOO KHOORSHED

After obtaining his LL.B. from Bombay University in 1960 and being called to Bar in India in 1961, the **Honourable Mr. Justice Minoo Koorshed** practiced in Bombay up to his emigration to Ontario in 1963. He attended Osgoode Hall Law School from 1965-1968 and was called to the Bar of Ontario in 1968. Subsequent to his two years of private practice, first in Timmins and then in London, Justice Koorshed joined the Ministry of the Environment in 1971 and conducted prosecutions of environmental pollution throughout the province of Ontario. Justice Koorshed continued as Senior Prosecutor until his judicial appointment on June 1, 1992. Justice Koorshed speaks additional languages including urdu, hindi, gujrati and telegu. He is one of four South Asian judges to have been appointed in Ontario.

DHAMAN PERSAUD KISSOON

After completing his B.A. Econs. from York University, **Mr. Kisson** obtained a B.A. Law from the University of Kent, England. He then attended Queen's University where he obtained his LL.B. in 1989 and was called to the Bar in 1991. Mr. Kisson has been a sessional lecturer at the Faculty of Law of Queen's University since 1990 teaching the course *Racism and Canadian Legal Culture*. He was the Chair of the South Asian Consultative Committee with Metro Toronto Police (now the Toronto Police Service) from 1990-1999. Mr. Kisson is currently on the Youth Drug Court Program (51 Division) which is a program intended to set up a specialized court to deal with young offenders with drug-related charges



NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY SOUTH ASIAN MEN OF THE BAR

outside the normal court process. Mr. Kissoon has been the legal advisor for a number of charitable organizations and has been active in raising funds for several Hindu temples including the Pickering Devi Temple, the Pranav Hindu Temple, Shiv Mandir and the Toronto Hindu Satsangh. Mr. Kissoon is an avid cricketer and the former Captain of the Ontario Cricket Team, and has been a sports columnist for the Indo-Caribbean Newspaper.

STINDAR K. LAL, Q.C.

Mr. Lal has been called to the Bars of England (1965), India (1969), Nova Scotia (1977), Northwest Territories (1977), Ontario (1991) and Nunavut (1999). He was appointed a Queen's Counsel (Canada) in 1983 and has practised law in various jurisdictions in the fields of constitutional, administrative and corporate commercial law. He has held a number of portfolios at the Deputy Minister level under successive Governments in the Northwest Territories and in Ontario. As General Counsel to the Canadian Human Rights Commission (1987-1988), he dealt with issues of human rights affecting the citizens of Canada. During his 10 years in the Northwest Territories as Deputy Minister of Justice and as the chief legal advisor to the Government, he played a key role in the administration of justice, the constitutional evolution of the Territories, the entrenchment of aboriginal rights in the Constitution of Canada and the settlement of comprehensive land claims. He continues to hold the position of the Chair of an Arbitration Tribunal under a major land claims agreement in the western Arctic. He represented the Government of Canada at the Judicial Inquiry looking into the circumstances

surrounding the crash of the Air India flight into the North Atlantic. In Ontario, he has held the position of Deputy Minister in the Ministries of the Environment, Consumer & Commercial Relations, Municipal Affairs, Citizenship, the Solicitor General and the Management Board of Cabinet. As Deputy Solicitor General, he played a significant role in the development of the new *Police Services Act* and the establishment of the Race Relations and Policing Commission. At the Ministry of Citizenship, he was instrumental in fostering a closer relationship between racial minorities and the Government, and in streamlining the operation of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. During his tenure at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, land use and planning reforms were introduced and at the Ministry of Consumer & Commercial Relations, the corporations registration and personal property security systems were modernized. As Deputy Minister of the Environment, he had significant involvement in dealing with important issues for the citizens of Ontario such as climate change and the Kyoto Protocol, the Clean Air Agenda, the introduction of new and tougher Drinking Water Regulations and the inspection of water treatment plants. He continues to work in these and other related fields in Canada and overseas.



NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY SOUTH ASIAN MEN OF THE BAR

JEGAN MOHAN

Mr. Jegan N. Mohan, born in Sri Lanka, was called to the Bar as an advocate of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka in 1974. Following his arrival to Canada in 1975, he worked as a Community Legal Worker since 1977 at Riverdale Socio-Legal Services. After completion of accreditation and his call to the Bar in 1984, Mr. Mohan returned as a staff lawyer to the East Toronto Community Legal Services (formerly Riverdale Socio-Legal Services) until opening his private practice in 1985. He is regarded as a pioneer in the Sri Lankan Tamil community for his contributions which include being the founder Secretary and Legal Advisor to the Tamil Eelam Society of Canada, co-founder and lawyer for the Canadian Foundation for Tamil Refugees and Rehabilitation and as Trustee of the Hindu Temple Society of Canada. In addition to being a partner at Mohan & Mohan, Mr. Mohan currently serves on the Legal Aid Ontario Scarborough Area Committee. In 2001, Mr. Mohan was recognized by the House of Commons of Canada for his leadership, vision, and continuous services in legal, social and religious affairs in the Tamil community.

MARK M. PERSAUD

Mr. Mark M. Persaud, LL.B., LL.M., born in Guyana founded the first comprehensive organization, Toronto United Church Emergency Refugee Relief, for assisting refugee claimants in Toronto in the early 1980's. In 1986, he was nominated and shortlisted for Toronto Man of the Year for outstanding contribution to the community. In addition to having obtained an LL.M. from Osgoode Hall Law School, he attended Harvard University to study urban community development. Since his call to the Bar in 1993, Mr. Persaud has held a broad range of positions within the Department of Justice as a Prosecutor, Counsel to the RCMP (Integrated Proceeds of Crime Unit) and Civil Litigation Counsel. Mr. Persaud has contributed to community development work within Ontario as well as internationally. In addition to founding and volunteering with several community-based organizations assisting refugees, the homeless and youth at risk, he has worked extensively with groups committed to addressing issues of equity and discrimination. Mr. Persaud is the Founder and Chairman of the Canadian International Peace Project, an initiative based on a novel and holistic approach to international peace and development, that has brought together people of various faiths in Ontario to promote greater racial, ethnic and inter-faith understanding in Canada. The project is intended to assist the rebuilding of a damaged place of worship and an international peace and development centre in Afghanistan that will provide humanitarian, educational, health, social and cultural assistance primarily to women and children. Mr. Persaud is also the Secretary of the South Asian Lawyers Association and Co-Secretary of the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers. ◆



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The South Asian Lawyers' Association would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their guidance and assistance in providing information for this publication:

Mr. Syed Mumtaz Ali
Mr. Christopher Ajith Amerasinghe, Q.C.
Ms. Rosanna Carreon, Faculty of Law Student Services,
Equity & Placement, University of Ottawa
Mr. Jayant Chauhan
His Worship Justice of the Peace Inderpaul Singh Chandhoke
Dean Ronald J. Daniels, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto
Dean Bruce Feldthusen, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
Ms. Ramandeep Grewal
Mr. Satwinder (Sat) Gosal
Dean Peter W. Hogg, Q.C., Faculty of Law, Osgoode Hall
Law School
Mr. Sudarshan K. Jain, Q.C.
Mr. Jagmohan S. Gill
Mr. Shatru Ghan
Mr. Raminder Gill, Member of Provincial Parliament
Ms. P.A. Neena Gupta
Dean Ian Holloway, Faculty of Law, University of Western
Ontario
Mr. Stindar K. Lal, Q.C.
The Honourable Chief Justice R. Roy McMurtry
Mr. Hari Pandey
The Honourable Mr. Justice Russell Juriansz
The Honourable Chief Justice Brian Lennox
The Honourable Chief Justice Patrick LeSage
Mr. Mark M. Persaud

The Honourable Madam Justice Sheila Ray
Ms. Soma Ray-Ellis
Mr. Peter Singh
Mr. Shantichandra B. Shah
Mr. Shil K. Sanwalka, Q.C.
Mr. Alfred R. Sawh, Q.C.
Mr. T. Sher Singh, C.M.
Dr. Bhausahab Ubale
Professor N. Wagle, University of Toronto
Dean Alison Harvison Young, Faculty of Law,
Queen's University
The Honourable David Young, Attorney General of Ontario
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Note:
The information contained in this publication is based on current
available research. We regret any errors and/or omissions.

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W *We can look upon a road from two different points of view.
One regards it as dividing us from the object of desire;
in that case we count every step
of our journey over it as something attained
by force in the face of obstruction.
The other sees it as the road which leads us to our destination;
and as such is part of our goal.
It is already the beginning of our attainment,
and by journeying over it we can
only gain that which in itself it offers to us.*

~ RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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Rabindranath Tagore: Poet, Philosopher, Musician, Writer, Educator, 1913 Nobel Laureate
(1861-1941)



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*This brochure was produced with the assistance
of the Law Society of Upper Canada.*