

# Dr. Eddie Phiroze Bharucha (December 28, 1916–December 14, 2017)

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Dr. Eddie Phiroze Bharucha was born on December 28, 1916 in Mumbai. He went to the Cathedral and John Cannon School, and later to the Bharda High School, Elphinstone College, and Royal Institute of Science, Mumbai. He moved to London to pursue his MBBS and MD from the University College Hospital (UCH). He was fascinated by the approach of Sir Francis Walsh (contemporary of his father Dr. Phiroze Bharucha, the renowned physician of Mumbai) to clinical neurology. Universally and affectionately, he was called Eddie by colleagues and friends.

Owing to the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Dr. Eddie had to return to Mumbai to be able to complete his MBBS and MD from the Bombay University. After a house job and registrarship in the KEM Hospital, he was appointed the Honorary Physician in Medicine in KEM Hospital and GS Medical College. Between 1949 and 1952, he was trained in neurology at the Hospital of Nervous Diseases, Queen Square and Maida Vale Hospital for Nervous Diseases, London. He then went to the United States to work under the guidance of Dr. Houston Merritt, Columbia University, and Dr. Denny Brown, Boston City Hospital.

Later in 1952, Dr. Eddie returned to Mumbai where he and Dr. Ginde established the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery in KEM Hospital with 12 beds each. The department kept flourishing with the contributions from him, his associate Dr. V. P. Mondkar, and several eminent colleagues. Together, they strived to provide competent and compassionate care to patients. At the same time, they maintained academic contributions for neurologic conditions such as bacterial and tuberculous infections, poliomyelitis, congenital abnormalities, epilepsy, nutritional disorders, and strokes. Apart from two neurology outpatient clinics a week, KEM Hospital started two dedicated outpatient epilepsy clinics a week in 1971, and even today they are the most well-attended epilepsy clinics in Mumbai. This has been the platform to develop KEM Hospital as a Comprehensive Epilepsy Care Centre offering best possible and affordable medical and surgical care to patients with epilepsy. They collaborated

enthusiastically with the Department of Psychiatry and the School for Physical Therapy at KEM Hospital. Dr. Eddie also established the Department of Neurology at Children's Orthopedic Hospital in Mumbai and regularly attended it.

Dr. Eddie married Dr. Pilo Noshawan Kohiyar, daughter of a prominent solicitor, an MD in general medicine and pediatrics from both London and Mumbai. She established the Department of Pediatrics in KEM Hospital.

Dr. Eddie was a founder member of the Neurological Society of India (NSI), formed in 1951, along with Drs. B. Ramamurthy, Jacob Chandy, Baldev Singh, and S. Narasimhan. This small group in 1971 further enrolled Dr. T. K. Ghosh from Kolkata and Dr. N. H. Wadia and Dr. Anil Desai from Mumbai to form an epilepsy subsection under NSI. Soon the Indian Epilepsy Association came into existence with Dr. K. S. Mani from Bangalore, Dr. V. Virmani from New Delhi, and Dr. G. Arjundas from Chennai; Dr. Bharucha accepted to work as the secretary-general. Spreading proper knowledge of epilepsy to physicians and patients became the prime focus through state chapters. On the social front, repealing the Indian law on equation of insanity with epilepsy was a significant achievement in 1999 in which he was helped by Drs. K. S. Mani, G. Arjundas, and Vinod Saxena. He served as the secretary-general of IEA from 1971 to 1991.

Dr. Eddie became the President of the NSI in 1959 and served as the Vice President of the World Federation of Neurology (WFN) from 1969 to 1973, and President of the World Congress of Neurology, New Delhi, in 1989 (►Fig. 1).

In 1985, Dr. Eddie conducted one of the earliest rural community-based studies for epilepsy detection and control program for the World Health Organization (WHO), using phenobarbitone with help from primary health care workers. He also supported another epidemiologic study in the Parsi community in Mumbai.

The WFN honored Dr. Eddie and Dr. Pilo Bharucha in 2006 by dedicating a lecture in perpetuity in their names, which is delivered in every meeting of WFN (►Fig. 2). Both IEA and IES honored him as the founder-member of IEA at their annual meeting in 2007 in Mumbai (►Fig. 3).

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**Fig.1** Dr. Eddie Phiroze Bharucha, Dr. Piloo Bharucha, and Dr. Saxena during WCN 1989.

He received the prestigious Dhanvantari Award in 1991. He held several positions in national and international bodies connected with neurology. With his soft-spoken and cultured demeanor, he got many official positions without seeking them. He was good tempered and radiated positivity to enlighten even serious situations. His smile and hand shake exuded affection. His sage advice was eagerly sought in many difficult situations in organizational management. His approach to the patients and their families was always encouraging and positive. He kept their welfare above all other considerations and hence always remained a busy and much sought-after physician by patients from far and wide.

He was widely respected as a soft-spoken individual with few but appropriate words. His teaching style was empathetic




# EPILEPSY INDIA

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January - March 2006

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SALUTE TO OUR MENTORS AND PIONEERS OF EPILEPSY MOVEMENT




**EDDIE BHARUCHA**

- Created the first department of neurology in India.
- President of the Neurological Society of India (1956).
- President of XIV World Congress of Neurology, Delhi, 1989.
- Founding member of the Indian Epilepsy Association.
- International Ambassador For Epilepsy 1975. First in Asia.
- Worked successfully to repeal the law in India declaring insane those who suffer from epilepsy.
- Honorary member of the American Neurological Association.

## World Federation of Neurology

HONOURS  
EDDIE &  
PILOO BHARUCHA



**PILOO BHARUCHA**

- Paediatrician, married Eddie Bharucha in 1947.
- Indefatigable supporter of Prof. Bharucha's endeavours.
- Played a pivotal role in revitalizing the Indian Academy of Paediatrics.
- The immunization of children against poliomyelitis became her crusade.

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Indian Epilepsy Association, Indian Epilepsy Society and our associates rejoice in the signal honour done by the WFN in dedicating a lecture in perpetuity in name of Eddie and Piloo Bharucha to be delivered at each meeting of the World Congress of Neurology. The lecture will be given by a distinguished neurologist who will be chosen by an award committee of the WCN.

The first lecture was awarded to the renowned authority on CNS infections, Prof Richard T. Johnson of The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore who spoke on Prion Diseases on 9 Nov 2005, during XVIII World Congress of Neurology, Sydney, Australia.

Men of courage, men of sense,  
Men of letters are frequent but,  
A true gentleman is what one seldom sees.

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**Fig.2.** World Federation of Neurology honored Dr. Eddie and Dr. Piloo Bharucha.



**Fig.3** Indian Epilepsy Association Annual Meeting, 2017.

and not just didactic. He was more of a mentor and often that role was lifelong. He was always a ray of positivity even when

work situation used to become bad as is often the case in government-run institutions.

He had an old-world charm about everything he did. He was frugal of habits and respected the value of money. He saved money for organizations from his own funds as far as possible. At the time of extreme money crunch while organizing the 18th IEC, he got a donation of Rs. 10,000 from his father's trust funds. His wife Dr. Piloo too followed such examples and they were always willing hosts to friends whenever the opportunity arose.

He is survived by his three sons Nadir, Manek, and Adil, all physicians, eight granddaughters, and three great grandchildren.

The memories of this great man Eddie are huge on the minds and hearts of the neurologic community, his students and residents, his patients and their carers, and generally anyone who came in contact with him.