

Obituary



Dr. Anant D. Puranik
1932-2006

In the death of Dr. Anant Puranik we have lost a dedicated Plastic Surgeon and a noble human being who was humble to a fault. His character, dedication and humility are vividly brought out by his welcome words, when Prof. Dr. Udyan H. Vyas joined him as a first year resident in 1968. Welcoming him he said, "Put your degree and medal in your pocket and start working with rolled up sleeves".

His plastic surgery career spanned what in those days was the Bombay Presidency. He was born in the Haveri district, now in the state of Karnataka and had a distinguished pre-medical career. He graduated in medicine in 1955 from the Bombay University with distinction in forensic and preventive medicine. He had his Masters degree in surgery in 1961. With the opening of the Department of Plastic Surgery at the K.E.M. Hospital he became its first senior resident and was inducted into the art and science of plastic surgery - it was the pre-M.Ch. era. We were a wonderful team and he played an important role, in building up the academic and the organizational set-up of the department.

After Mumbai it was the turn of Ahmedabad. He joined as an assistant professor of plastic surgery in the B. J. Medical College, Ahmedabad in 1964, and the dept. then headed by Prof. Dr. J. R. Jaju. He again contributed handsomely and unassumingly to the establishment and growth of that department. In 1970 he became the head of that department and his

contributions are still remembered by all who worked with him. Dr. Udyan Vyas, the then assistant professor fondly recalls the qualities of head and heart that Anant possessed in abundant measure. His relationship with the patients was characterized by empathy, which as Dr. Vyas recalls, was enriched by his fluency in Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi and Kannada.

After his stint at Ahmedabad, his center of activity shifted to Miraj and its surrounding areas. Apart from private practice, he continued to be associated in academic activity and service of the deprived sections of the community. He was a professor at the Sanjeevani Medical Foundation ENT, Post-graduate Institute, Miraj and Prof. of surgery at D. Y. Patil Medical College, Kolhapur. He served the Shri Siddhi Vinayak Ganpati Cancer Hospital, Miraj both as a plastic surgeon and member of its managing committee and governing council. He donated all his income from this institute to help the poor. One Sunday every month, he would visit the Chaitanya Upasana Trust Hospital, Gundavale, to treat the poor from the surrounding areas free of charge and would pay back to the trust even the transport allowance. Dr. J. J. Kashalikar, a close associate during this phase of his life was deeply touched by his concern for the poor.

He served as a member of the executive committee of the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India. It was in recognition of his contribution to plastic surgery, that he was persuaded to accept the President-ship of the Maharashtra chapter of the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India in 2001.

He is survived by his wife Usha, three lovely daughters Suman, Rama and Swati. His fond memories will continue to linger in the minds of those, whose lives were touched by his gentle hand.

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