

Obituary

Dr. M. Ashraf Darzi: A Tribute (1951–2018)



Dr. M. Ashraf Darzi (1951–2018)

This is the story of Dr. M. Ashraf Darzi. He was a wonderful man that was loved, is missed and will always be cherished by his family, friends and everyone he was able to meet and reach out to during his lifetime. A fountainhead of knowledge and always a source of inspiration has left behind a rich harvest of memories to cherish, honour and emulate.

The story begins on 13th December 1951 in the Malaratta area of Srinagar city. Being a meritorious student from the beginning, he graduated from Government Medical College, Srinagar in 1974 with many medals and honours to his name for his outstanding performance in various subjects. He completed his post-graduation from the same college in 1979. Later, he went to pursue MCh course in Plastic Surgery in PGIMER, Chandigarh. He had the distinction of working under the able guidance of the stalwarts of Plastic Surgery - Prof. C. Balakrishnan and Prof. C. P. Sawhney. Returning back, he started working as a plastic surgeon in SKIMS, Srinagar. In 1983, he started the department with just two beds. Working day and night tirelessly, gradually, he got a full-fledged well-equipped department (with an additional Burn Unit also) and became the founder head of the department.

He was not, however, contented with this only. Being a great academician with vision, he started MCh training programme in the department in the year 2002, and it is going on till date. He served as Chairman of Surgery and allied specialties for a long period and rose to become the Dean Medical Faculty of SKIMS Deemed University.

He was a devoted teacher, a problem solver and always welcoming newer and recent advancements with open

arms. The first successful re-implantation of amputated hand in a 15-year-old girl was performed under his leadership in April 2004. Many of his publications had got selected under the 'Top 100' papers in Indian surgical literature. He had been an active member of many national and international bodies/associations such as ASI, APSI, NABI, NZAPSI and International College of Surgeons, New York Academy of Sciences. He had bagged many best paper awards and academic recognition for presenting papers in various conferences and scientific meetings. He was conferred with the AWARD OF EXCELLENCE by Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, former union health minister in April 2007.

He truly lived the life to the fullest through simple pleasures. He had an uncanny ability to reach people in a deep and positive way. He was a fun loving personality, always prompting others for social gatherings, avid music lover and an artistic storyteller. He was such a master storyteller that I was always envious of his sharp memory (how he could recollect even the minutest details of the past events, that too in an avid style going on in unison like a smoothly flowing song of life). He superannuated in December 2013 leaving behind one of the largest plastic surgery departments to carry on his holy mission. Surrounded by family, lying peacefully in bed, he flew to meet the Lord on the fateful morning of 22nd November. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

This marks an end of an era. Many lives are touched by his death, especially his family, friends and students, and will be deeply missed by them all. The values he set in will always remain with us, and his legacy will live on through his sons and students.

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Access this article online	
Quick Response Code: 	Website: www.ijps.org
	DOI: 10.4103/ijps.IJPS_244_18

How to cite this article: Farooq Baba PU. Dr. M. Ashraf Darzi: A Tribute (1951–2018). Indian J Plast Surg 2018;51:346-7.