

Prof Dr K V Chaubal- A Requiem

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"An Institution Is The Lengthened Shadow of One Man"
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Prof Dr K V Chaubal, "KVC", cast a very long, and indeed broad, shadow over the world he lived in.

He was an institution in himself.

Over many decades of a busy practice he brought succour to an untold number of patients.

He also contributed to the development and growth of his many students, as also the orthopaedic fraternity of which he was a leader.

KVC was born into a traditional family, where great emphasis was laid on personal discipline, probity and education.

After his Intermediate Science from the Elphinstone College, he gained entry into the prestigious Seth G S Medical College in 1945.

He gained his MS in general surgery and then left for England, and found himself in a country which was in its post war decade of austerity.

He trained with giant figures in the fields of surgery and orthopaedics, and impressed his teachers with his intelligence and diligence. Mr Harold Bolton and Sir Lloyd Griffiths were but two of them, the latter provided him with a glowing testimonial when KVC moved to Liverpool for his MCh Orth.

He remembered and was ever grateful to his teachers.

His training culminated with his gaining the FRCS(Eng) and the MCh Orth. (L'pool).

On his return to India he was appointed Asst Hon Surgeon to the St George's Hospital, an event he described as a windfall, for there he learned much about what is now called "networking" and dealing with persons in high office.

He was selected for a J&J fellowship which enabled him to travel across India and he decided to become a "generalist" practitioner of his craft.

Shortly thereafter he was appointed to the staff of Nair Hospital, where he soon became Chief and set about developing the department in his now trademark meticulous way.

Laurels ensued, and he wore his honours lightly.

With each accomplishment, his fame spread.

He was soon regarded as an authority in his subject, especially the treatment of spinal ailments.

He was a spartan, austere figure, always immaculately turned out and speaking always to the point, softly but always firmly.

He suffered fools not at all, and to many he appeared aloof, even distant.

Indeed, such was his focus that unless you were participating productively you rapidly felt like a piece of furniture in the room. Yet a colleague, even a rank junior, who approached him with a problem of any magnitude or nature was assured of a sympathetic hearing and invariably got a solution to the predicament posed.

KVC had well settled ideas on all subjects.

And the views he held were considered over years of wide reading, personal experience and a vast understanding of human nature.

He rose to the front rank of the profession, an authority, a visionary and an opinion maker.

His dedication to personal probity and integrity led him to evolve as the final arbiter on all issues related to professional and personal ethics.

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He practised what he preached, a rare phenomenon.

He was fully comprehending of the follies and foibles of others, but he never lost his compassion for them. He was something of a paradox, in that he was at the same time inflexible yet remarkably open to new thought. He considered everything before altering his stand, and if he did he stood committed to it.

Yes, he was a paragon, a man of many parts, and yet the sum of these was not greater than the whole.

An ethical man, a brilliant teacher an erudite academic and a skilful surgeon. we will not see the like of him again.



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