Professor Lalit Prakash Agarwal

Professor Lalit Prakash Agarwal was born on 23 January 1922 at Lucknow. He not only shared date of birth but also many qualities with the great Indian patriot Subhash Chandra Bose. Like Bose he was a very proud Indian and passionate about development of India. He was firmly of the view that as our freedom fighters have got us independence through their sacrifices it was the sacred duty of his generation to respond to Nehru’s call to make India self reliant.

After finishing his MBBS from prestigious King George Medical College in 1946, he went to UK for higher education in the field of ophthalmology. He completed DOMS from Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons London and DO from Oxford in 1947 and returned to India to his alma mater to complete his MS in 1949. He joined the PMS I and served in Bijnore as Civil Surgeon. Teaching and research was his first love and he joined S N Medical College, Agra as lecturer in 1954 and moved to G S V Medical College Kanpur and soon became the Head of Department of ophthalmology. Because of the name he had earned as a teacher and researcher that he was selected to become the founder professor of the department of ophthalmology of All India Institute of Medical Sciences in 1959 at the young age of 37. Leaving Kanpur meant both he and his wife Dr Savitri Agarwal had to give up their lucrative practice. He became a FAMS in 1961 and was one of the youngest doctors to be elected a fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences in 1962. He was a life member of International Academy of Ophthalmology.

He built the department of ophthalmology from scratch and soon made it the most prestigious department in the country. As a proud Indian he was distressed to see so many Indians go abroad for treatment. He was determined to make India self reliant in the field of ophthalmology. It was with this vision that he conceptualized and established Dr Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences. A hard task master he expected nothing but the best from his students. He was available to his students at all times. Ethics was an important part of his training to his students. The prestige enjoyed by RP Centre all over the world as the premier centre of ophthalmology is the best tribute to this visionary.

Dr LP Agarwal was deeply conscious of the fact that paramedics had a very important role in the field of Health care. He attached great importance to their training and established the facilities for training of optometrists in R P Centre. As a young doctor in the districts of U.P. he learnt the importance of community medicine and hygiene and sanitation. He took personal interest in ensuring highest standards of cleanliness in the centre.

Recognizing his abilities as one of the most accomplished medical administrators, he was appointed Director of AIIMS in 1979. A prolific author he wrote several books and hundreds of research papers. He served on the editorial boards of the most prestigious journals of ophthalmology including Ophthalmologica and VISION dedicated to International Ophthalmology and prevention of Blindness.
Prevention of Blindness was the cause to which he was passionately committed all his life. He became the first ophthalmic advisor in the ministry of health and drafted the first National Programme for the Prevention of Blindness in 1976. In view of his pioneering work in this field the WHO also sought his expertise for preparing the plan for prevention of blindness in Afro-Asian region. He was Vice President of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness and later became its President. He tirelessly worked to promote the donation of cornea and set up the National Eye Bank in Rajendra Prasad Centre. As there was acute shortage of cornea in India he actively collaborated with Sri Lanka for donation of corneas to India.

He was associated in the setting up of and upgradation of a number of institutions round the country. He was the recipient of several national and international honors in the field of Ophthalmology. He remained active even after his retirement and established FOREC in order to ensure skill development among science students after school and enable them to become optometrists and paramedical assistants to ophthalmologists. He spent the last day of his life working to organize a conference on the 9th of October at the India Habitat Centre which he completed half an hour before his passing away. During the last couple of years of his life he was working on a multi volume book on ophthalmology but that alas was not to be completed. However his vision and his work live on not only in R.P. Centre but also through his students who are in senior positions all over the world.

The best tribute to this visionary would be to not only pledge our own Eyes but to motivate all our family members, relatives and friends to donate their eyes to give vision to those are deprived the experience of appreciating the beauty of nature.

Dr. Savitri Agarwal

Dr. Savitri Agarwal was an epitome of courage and determination. Born in Hamirpur a very small town of Bundelkhand (U.P.) in December 1923 she overcame all odds a girl had to face to finish Intermediate with Science in an era when there were hardly any girls’ schools and society was not very approving for a career for girls. Determined to be a doctor she joined S.N. Medical College and finished her MBBS in 1945 with Gold Medal in Gynecology. She became the first woman Intermediate in Science and the first woman Doctor from Bundelkhand. She did not seek any special favours as a woman and having joined the Provincial Medical Service, accepted assignments in small towns of U.P.

Married to Dr L.P. Agarwal in 1949 she had to adjust her career for his success. She finished her MS in Obstetrics & Gynecology in 1954 from SN Medical College. Determined to scale greater heights, Dr Savitri Agarwal went to London in 1966 to do her MRCOG even though she had no personal financial means or scholarship. This meant that she had to do sundry jobs to pay for her education and live a difficult life on a shoe string budget. A superb clinician and Surgeon par excellence she was at her best in operation theatre. As someone who did not tolerate mediocrity she did not hesitate to call a spade a spade. She served on the faculty of Christian Medical College Vellore and University Medical College, Delhi. An accomplished
singer she attained a diploma in classical music. A strong advocate of women’s self reliance she ensured that her only child Kavita acquired all the qualifications and knowledge to be known in her own right.

**MR J C SHARMA**
FORMER SECRETARY (POLICY PLANNING, CONSULAR & DIAPOORA) MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

A truly multi-faced personality, Mr. J C Sharma has outstanding achievements as a soldier, diplomat and scholar. He began his professional career as a Commissioned Officer in the Indian Army (1967-72) and was awarded the “Sena Medal” for Gallantry in 1971 Indo-Pak war.

Mr Sharma joined the elite Indian Foreign Service in 1972 and has served as First Secretary (Consular & Political) and First Secretary (Commercial) in the Indian Embassies in Tokyo and Jakarta respectively. He gave a new direction to India’s commercial relations with Indonesia. Most of the Indian joint ventures in Indonesia were established during his tenure. Indian promoters greatly appreciated valuable advice and support extended by him as First Secretary (Commercial). He also organised Indee 79, the biggest ever exhibition of Indian engineering products in Asia.

A brilliant organizer, Mr Sharma was Director (Protocol) for the 7th Non-Aligned Summit and the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Delhi in 1983. He belongs to a breed of diplomats who enjoy challenges. He volunteered to be India’s Head of Mission in Phnom Penh during the most difficult period of 1982-84. He served as India’s Consul General in Vancouver (1984-88) when it was the nerve center of activities in support of terrorist movement in Punjab. He was also one of the most successful Ambassadors of India in Vietnam (1989-92).

On his return to Headquarters in August 1992, Mr. Sharma served as a Joint Secretary for the Gulf region and OIC Affairs till October 1993. He acquired expertise in the issues concerning three million strong Indian Diaspora in the Gulf region.

Recognizing his flair for developing commercial relations, he was deputed to the newly created post of Joint Secretary (Defense Exports) in the Department of Defense Production. He prepared the first blue print for Defense Exports from India. He also prepared the plans for the first Aero India in Bangalore, which has now emerged as one of the premier Air Shows of Asia. During this period he also served on the Board of Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), a large public sector undertaking manufacturing defense and earth moving equipment and railway coaches. He gave a major push to BEML’s export efforts and helped open several new markets for its products.

Mr. Sharma had a highly successful tenure as Consul General of India in Chicago (1996-2000) where he succeeded in substantially raising the profile of Mid-West region in Indo-US relations. He paid special attention to development of commercial relations with the mid-west region.
Recognizing his expertise on Indian Diaspora, Mr. Sharma was appointed the Member Secretary of the High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora. The 600-pages Report of this Committee authored by him now provides the blue print for India’s engagement with its 20 million strong Diaspora. Mr. Sharma was also the Member Secretary of the Organizing Committee for the 1st and 2nd Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Indian Diaspora Day) celebrations. His networking skills, excellent public relations and brilliant organizational abilities were the important factors for the success of these mega events.

As Secretary in charge of Consular Passport and Visa division he introduced bold reforms to simplify the procedures and decentralize the process making it possible to file applications in District H Q and Speed Post Centers. Thanks to his vision entire 10 years data of passports is computerized and available to all Indian Missions and Passport Offices.

An erudite scholar, Mr. J C Sharma is an acknowledged authority on India’s cultural relations with South East Asia. He has authored two highly acclaimed books titled “Temples of Champa in Vietnam” and “Hindu Temples in Vietnam” on this subject. These are the first two books ever to be written in the English language on the temples of the ancient kingdom of Champa. He has also been invited in his capacity as Art Historian by world’s leading institutions like Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, Asia Society, New York, World Association of Vedic Studies, to speak on various aspects of India’s cultural relations with South East Asia.

He was conferred with Life Time achievement Award by the Global Organization for People of Indian Origin for service to the Indian Overseas Community.

After his retirement Sharma was advisor in the PHD Chamber of Commerce during its centenary year Jan 2005 to 31st Jan 2006. He is a Member of Board of Directors of Universal Cables Ltd since November, 2006. He is a Member of the prestigious Dr. L M Singhvi Foundation and the Advisory Board for Centre for Diasporic studies, North Gujarat University, Patan.

He has also been a member of the Selection Board of the UPSC for Civil Services in 2006.

He has maintained close association with NGOs and has taken several initiatives to facilitate their activities in India.

Mr. Sharma has taken active interest in social and cultural life of Delhi. He is a member of the India International Centre, Indian National Trust for Arts & Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Delhi, United Service Institution of India, Delhi, India Habitat Centre (Spouse member), Delhi Gymkhana Club, Roshanara Club and Noida Golf Club.

Mr. Sharma has a flair for learning foreign languages and has learnt Japanese, Bhasa Indonesia and Vietnamese.

His wife, Dr (Mrs) Kavita Sharma, is the Director of the prestigious India
International Centre. As the Principal, Hindu College she has the unique privilege of being the 1st women to head a co-ed institution in Delhi University. Mrs. Sharma is also a renowned scholar and an acknowledged authority on *Mahabharata* and India’s aesthetic traditions.

### Parijat Sharma

Parijat was born in Tokyo on 30th August 1975. Being the son of a diplomat he has had wide international exposure from his childhood and spent time in Japan, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam and Canada. He did his BA from Hindu College, Delhi University and joined University of Illinois at Chicago. After working for two years he joined prestigious Kellogg Business School, North Western University. He has worked for Huron Consulting and Oliver Wyman in Chicago. Presently he is Vice President for Midwest region with Campbell Alliance a firm specializing in Pharmaceutical and Healthcare consulting.

Parijat is married to Archana and has a daughter Trayi and son Viraat. Archana is General Manager, HR with Wrigley. Parijat is a good swimmer and an avid Squash Player.

### Molshree Sharma

Molshree was born on 27 August 1978. She has also had wide international exposure like her brother. After finishing her schooling she joined University of Illinois at Chicago. Being a good debater and orator she aspired to be good lawyer. She joined Kent Law School, IIT Chicago and after finishing Law she joined Public Defenders office in Illinois. Molshree specialized in Family Law and joined the firm of Mandel, Lipton and Roseborough. She soon emerged as one of the most promising young lawyers and became partner of her firm which is now named as Mandel, Lipton, Roseborough and Sharma Ltd. A very public spirited person she volunteers for Indo American Centre together with several other social causes and has received awards for her pro bono work. She has also recently been nominated for an award as one of the most promising young litigation Lawyers in the under 40 years of age category. Molshree has learnt Indian Classical music for four years and is a good singer.

Molshree is married to James Hegberg who is in advertising. She has a daughter Maya who is a bright student and a good athlete.