

Obituary

Padmashree Dr. Vikram Marwah, FRCS - A Tribute

Dr. Harshawardhan Mardikar

On Wednesday 6th November 2013, Nagpur sadly lost one of its brightest doctor; Dr. Vikram Marwah, a well-known Orthopedic Surgeon, died of a brief illness at the age of 89 years. Dr. Marwah was a very special individual, brilliant and gifted surgeon, an educationalist, social worker, Hindu nationalist and above all proud Nagpurian.

He was born on 4th Jun 1925. His father was Shri. Hargobindrai from Seoni Madhya Pradesh. As there was no medical college in the central India, he entered medical college, Calcutta University. It was time of freedom struggle in India, especially in Calcutta. In 1946 great riots broke in Calcutta killing 4000 people leaving lacs of people injured. Dr. Marwah as young intern was actively involved in relief work and a member of relief welfare ambulance corps. Lifting, treating, driving, transporting, casualties during curfew and marshal law times, which were then endless. Dr. Marwah worked relentlessly for more than 16 hours a day, treating wounded people. This was his first introduction to general surgery which led him to further training in UK, obtaining coveted F.R.C.S. in 1957.

I first encountered Dr. Marwah in 1981 as a 12th standard student, not understanding whether to pursue Medicine or Engineering. On that day of May 16, he successfully operated very unusual case of my younger sister who had traumatic liver injury and was in shock. Treating doctors thought she won't survive. Dr. Marwah along with Dr. Natarajan Iyer went on to treat complex liver tear from backside in a surgery which lasted two and a half hours. I still remember that incidence when Dr. Iyer said, surgery would not have been successful had it not been for Dr. Marwah who held the liver skillfully and guided me how to suture it. This was the beginning of my thought process of becoming a doctor. When I recollected this incidence with Dr. Marwah some 15 -16 years later, he told me, he had treated many such liver injuries in Calcutta riots, when



people were stabbed in the back on right side and the organ to suffer deadly injury was liver.

After finishing his F.R.C.S. in surgery, love for his country brought him back to India and he joined medical college as lecturer in general surgery. During his F.R.C.S. training he had special training in Orthopedics particularly in long term orthopedic problems in children at famous Robert Johns Agnus Hunt orthopedic Hospital UK. This training was the foundation stone of his further interest in orthopedics and special interest in orthopedic deformities in children. At a very young age of 42 he was a professor of Gen. Surgery at Aurangabad & was appointed as head of the Dept. of Gen. Surgery at GMC, Nagpur. Under his leadership the dept. progressed with a specialized unit of Orthopedic Surgery. It used to be said that Orthopedic Surgery was not an independent specialty & colleagues in

academics questioned the need of it. Dr. Marwah with his perseverance established independent Dept. of Orthopedics in GMC, Nagpur. He had unique opportunity to head Dept. of Gen. Surgery and Orthopedics simultaneously.

During his tenure in medical college he developed special interest in one neglected disease of the time Poliomyelitis which affected many young children leaving them disabled. He went on to develop special surgical techniques to treat the polio limb.

He devised simple and low cost appliances for these patients. These techniques are now described after his name in textbooks of Orthopedic surgery.

His commitment to teach & to do research was legendary. During his academic career he published extensively, contributed to many chapters in text books and delivered prestigious orations in and outside India. His contribution as a teacher and researcher was aptly rewarded by Medical Council of India by honoring him the BC Roy eminent teacher award. Association of surgeons of India recognized his contribution to Gen. Surgery by awarding KINI Memorial Oration for his special work in portal hypertension & burger's disease.

During this tenure he trained many brilliant Gen. Surgeons & Orthopedic surgeons who are spread all across Vidarbha

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and central India. Subsequently he was appointed as Dean of the GMC Nagpur and took voluntary retirement in 1980.

To treat handicapped, poor and needy patients was his lifetime commitment. Post retirement he continued his pioneering work in management of Poliomyelitis and developed a center for orthopedically handicapped children at Matru seva sangh as a total charitable venture & ran it for 25 years.

He was awarded Arthur Brook Eyer award by World Orthopedic Concern (WOC) of UK which is involved in promoting orthopedic education and care in developing countries. He was the first Indian orthopedic surgeon to receive this award in recognition for his contribution to orthopedic care and education especially for handicaps in India. The award carried a gold medal and special citation. His continuing excellence and dedication in orthopedics was recognized by his colleagues when they elected him as president of Indian Orthopedic Association. He is the first doctor from Nagpur to head a national organization of specialists in medical fraternity. In recognition of his research work on external fixation SICOT (Societe Internationale de Chirurgie Orthopedique et de Traumatologie, France) world famous organization of Orthopedic surgeons awarded him with SICOT diploma a rare honor for Indian Orthopedic Surgeon.

Dr. Marwah was warm & humorous man who had great interest in literature and education. He wrote actively in Hindi and has given many lectures across the country. He believed that he owed a lot to society beyond medicine. His great interest in education led him to establish Bharti Krishna vidya Vihar School which has now become a well-known school in Nagpur. He was a founder member of Bharti Krishna vidya Vihar School which has a special emphasis on rashtra, culture, Behavior and national consciousness. This school is now CBSE recognized and has more than 1000 CBSE students.

In recognition of his multifaceted contribution in Medicine and social work it was natural for Govt. of India to honor him with Padmashree in 2002.

Dr. Marwah will be greatly missed by his wife Mohini, son Sanjay a specialist in Arthroscopic surgery, Radika daughter in law anesthetist, son in law K. K. Vaid Orthopedic surgeon & daughter Pragati Anesthetist both practicing in Indore & 5 grandchildren. He will be missed by his colleagues in medical and social field. Finally his presence will be felt by unnamed thousands of handicapped patients who are active because his innovative and cost effective surgeries.