

OBITUARY

PROF (DR) K C KANDHARI

On 28th July 1995, a chapter on Indian dermatology came to a close. Professor K C Kandhari left for his heavenly abode, leaving behind his innumerable students, grateful patients and admirers, and of course indelible marks on the history of dermatology.

Born on May 15, 1910 at Srinagar (Kashmir), he shifted to Lahore (now Pakistan) to obtain his BSc degree and subsequently MBBS from the King Edward Medical College in 1934. After that, he came to Amritsar and spent the next 4 years in private practice. In 1938, he joined the Army Medical Corps and served at a number of places during world war II and rose to the rank of a Major. After the war was over, he proceeded to take his Diploma in Tropical Medicine (DTM) from the Calcutta University and in 1947 joined the Punjab Civil Medical Service. He was posted as a Deputy Chief Medical Officer at Kurukshetra to look-after the refugees lodged in the camp after the tragic Indian partition.

In 1949, he decided to go to England and obtained MRCP from Edinburgh in 1951. Although, his special subject for MRCP was Venereology, he had developed an immense interest in Dermatology which at that time was considered to be a low-grade speciality, and not even recognised as a separate speciality in India. In 1951 he returned to Amritsar and set up the first department of Skin Diseases and Venereology at the Medical College Amritsar. He was elevated to the post of a Professor and



Head of the department in 1959. I first came to know Professor Kandhari when I was a MBBS student at the Medical College Amritsar. His devotion to the speciality, meticulous teaching and patient care and above all his unassuming nature impressed me so much that I decided to take up dermatology for postgraduation after my MBBS. In 1960 however, Dr Kandhari had moved to the AIIMS, New Delhi on deputation from the Punjab Government, to set up the Department of Dermatology and Venereology. I also followed him to the AIIMS along with several other of his students from Amritsar, and continued to grow under his guidance and protection.

At the AIIMS, he set up the first department for MD Dermatology and Venereology and students from all over India and even abroad and some of them who were senior teachers in their own Institutions joined this course. Within a span of 10 years his students occupied senior posts in dermatology and venereology all over the country and started teaching the speciality to their own students. Thus, a teacher became a grand-teacher and then a great-grand teacher and so on with every new generation of the students joining the course and Dr K C Kandhari attained the status of a father-figure and a legend. A head held high but feet still on the ground, he inculcated the spirit of dedication and sincerity and love for his work. In 1967, he took the additional charge of Medical Superintendent of the AIIMS, and retired in

1970. He was an administrator par excellence. He knew the capabilities and limitations of each of his workers and assigned duties accordingly. He had made several innovative formulations for alleviating various skin diseases and while at the AIIMS he encouraged research and contributed several papers to the national as well as international journals. He also contributed chapters to several books.

His other exploits included Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians (FRCP) of Edinburgh (1963), Sectional Chairmanship of Dermatology in the Association for the Advancement of medical Education, WHO Fellowship for a lecture tour to Japan, Europe and USA (1966), Honorary Membership of the British Association of Dermatology, Vice-Presidentship of the International Society of

Tropical Dermatology and the coveted Castellani-Reiss Medal by the International Society of Dermatology, Tropical, Geographic and Ecological Studies in 1994.

He was also a deeply religious man, an ardent Arya Samaji, he had equal respect for other religions as well. He also composed poems of his own and often narrated some of his compositions during the social parties that he arranged at his house. He commanded great respect from his family and a very extensive network of relatives used to visit him for advice and help. He is survived by his wife, two sons and two daughters, the younger son emulating him as a dermatologist.

J S Pasricha

President-elect, IADVL

INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF DERMATOLOGISTS, VENEREOLOGISTS AND LEPROLOGISTS

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