

Inderjit Kaur receives Kashi Humanitarian Award for U.S. Women

Bibi Inderjit Kaur Khalsa, Chief Religious Minister of Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere and wife of Yogi Harbhajan Singh, was selected for 2004 Female Kashi Humanitarian Award. The ceremony took place at Kashi Ashram in Florida on 29 May 2004.

Each year this award is given to an individual who has made an impact and a difference in the world through work in service, peace, human rights, interfaith action or education. Some of the past honorees include Dr. Howard Sulkin, president of Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies; Dr. Jean Houston, scholar and founder of The Mystery School; Rev. Marcus Braybrooke, leader in international interfaith activities; Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shaloni, founder of the Spiritual Elders Institute; Sai Laxmi Chalanda Ma, spiritual teacher and founder of Humanity in Unity and Rev. Di' Lawrence Carter, Dean of Martin Luther King Int'l Chapel at Morehouse College.

The citation reads:

“As a prominent female spiritual leader, you have been a voice for the oppressed and underserved communities of both women and children. For more than thirty years, your contribution of exemplary performance has drawn attention to the needs of these people around the world who are often forgotten and neglected.

“As an organization whose mission is dedicated to serving humanity, Kashi recognizes the many years you have dedicated to changing the spiritual fate of humanity and the world, thereby creating a planet of unconditional love and non-violence.”

[Courtesy: Harbans Lal]

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Michigan State Senate celebrates 400th Anniversary of Sri Guru Granth Sahib

On April 1, 2004, Michigan State Senator Michael Switalski introduced a Special Resolution commemorating the 400th anniversary of the first installation of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib at the Golden Temple, Amritsar. Senator Michael Switalski spoke eloquently about the principles of the Sikh faith and Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He recognized that the Guru Granth Sahib has a universal message of truth, compassion, equality and service toward all humankind. Thereafter, he introduced to the Senate the attending members of the Sikh Community. All Senators applauded the Sikh members and congratulated them on the anniversary. The text follows:

MICHIGAN SENATE RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 400TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST INSTALLATION OF THE SRI GURU GRANTH
SAHIB AT THE GOLDEN TEMPLE.

WHEREAS, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy Sikh Scripture, is a compilation of the divine revelations not only to the Sikh Gurus but also to the saints of other faiths reaffirming the fundamental unity of all religions; and

WHEREAS, Sri Guru Granth Sahib was revealed to the world through the passive agency of the Sikh Gurus; and

WHEREAS, The Holy Sikh Scripture embodies the Universal message of Truth, Compassion, Peace, Equality, and Service toward all humankind; and

WHEREAS, The fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjun Sahib, compiled and consecrated the Holy Sikh Scripture, giving self-definition to the Sikh Nation that originated in the Sikh homeland of the Punjab; and

WHEREAS, This year marks the 400th anniversary of the first installation of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib at the Darbar Sahib, commonly known as the Golden Temple, in Amritsar; and

WHEREAS, Sikhs have been a part of the state of Michigan since the early 1950s when the early pioneers settled in the region around Detroit; and

WHEREAS, Sikhs in the state of Michigan are a vibrant community and contributes significantly to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the state and its citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Senate congratulates the Sikh Nation on the 400th anniversary of the installation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution should immediately be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Sikh Society of Michigan, Madison Heights, Michigan.

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Allow Sikh women to do *kirtan seva*

The Sikh Forum and the Delhi Chapter of the Sikh Core Group members are distressed that Sikh women are not being permitted to perform kirtan and seva at Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar. This step is against the tenets of Gurmat as in Sikh religion there is total equality between men and women.

When this issue was raised earlier, the Dharmik Advisory Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee had accepted this equality and directed the step in refusing women to perform kirtan and seva. This decision of the Dharmik Advisory Committee was taken as back as 9.3.1940, and was accepted by the SGPC.

Again on 9.2.1996 on the request of the sangat, the Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib and the four other Singh Sahibans had directed the SGPC that the Sikh women be allowed to do *kirtan* and *seva* in Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar.

It is a matter of regret that in spite of these decisions, on 13.2.2003 two Amritdhari women from the United Kingdom were debarred from joining the Sukhasan Sahib Chauki (that is the routine daily closing seva) at Harmandir Sahib.

The Sikh Forum deploras this unilateral action. Such a decision concerns the whole Panth, Sikh Maryada, Gurbani and religious thought, and as such is beyond the scope of any gurdwara parbandhak committee.

[Sd.]Lt-Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora (Retd.), Justice R. S. Narula (Retd.), Dr. J. S. Neki, Dr. Maheep Singh, Anup Singh, Maj-Gen. M. S. Chadha (Retd.), Pushpinder

Singh Chopra, Col. Manohar Singh (Retd.), Wg-Cdr. R. S. Chhatwal (Retd.), New Delhi.

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Amarjit Singh Buttar honored for community service

Sardar Amarjit Singh Buttar, a Board of Education member and outspoken advocate for the Sikh community, was honored by the Connecticut Immigration and Refugee Coalition at a Connecticut Immigrant Day celebration last April. He was recognized not only for his volunteerism in Vernon, but also for his service to the Sikh community on the national level. Until January, he served as chairman of the California-based World Sikh Council American Region.

Born and raised in India, the Sardar received several academic degrees before moving to the United States to attend law school at the University of Michigan. A state Workers Compensation Commission employee, Buttar has two sons in Vernon. In 1995, he was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Board of Education and has served on the board since.

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