

Brig. Gurdip Singh Passes Away: - A passionate Votary of Sikh Unity

*Dr. Harbans Lal, D. Litt**

** Professor Emeritus, Pharmacology and Neuroscience, U. North Texas Health Science Center, Email: japji@comcast.net*

Brig. (retd.) Gurdip Singh Grewal – an activist in Sikh affairs died of sudden cardiac arrest after suffering a spell of cancer at Chandigarh on April 20, 2006. The antim ardas was held on April 30 at Gurdwara Amb Sahaib in Mohalli, India.

Although many friends of the Sikhs will mourn Brigadier Gurdip Singh, his death is a personal loss to me; I often depended on his wise council on my projects and used his hospitality during my visit to Chandigarh.

Brigadier Sahib, as he was known by his colleagues, was born on December 1935, in Baghdigi, (Bihar) to Sardar Sarwan Singh Grewal, who later became the first Indian Chief Inspector of Mines. On account of the 1947 partition the family moved from Pakistan to settle in Raikot, Dist. Ludhiana.

After finishing college, young Gurdip Singh joined the Indian Military Academy in 1956. During his 32 years of distinguished service, he held several key posts all across India; his meritorious serves earned him the Vishist Seva Medal in 1982. He took early retirement following the deplorable events in June 1984.

Upon entering civilian life, Brig. Grewal dedicated himself to an in-depth study of Sikhs and Sikhism. He used his knowledge of the philosophical underpinnings of faith, and his understandings about the socio-cultural, political and religious aspects of Sikhs and Sikhism, to forge bridges between politics and religion.

A founding member of the World Sikh Council, a spirit behind Sikh Core Groups all over the world, and an active participant in the Institute of Sikh Studies in Chandigarh as well as several philanthropic activities, Brig. Grewal worked tirelessly to communicate a vision of Sikh society in the 21st century. His brilliance made mark on every organization he worked with and his prolific writings were often published in this (and other) journal.

Brigadier Sahib's counsel was important to me as it was to all those who worked with him. Once I sent him an outline of my vision of Sikhs in the twenty-first century and he spent days in writing notes on my long documents and discussing with me where I was correct where I was not. Similar depth and commitment he exhibited while debating on the formation of the International Sikh Confederation.

Brigadier Sahib's skill as an organizer and promoter of group participation earned him respect among Sikh leadership from all quarters. His influence came, most of all, through his faith in our ability to make plans work, which enabled his colleagues to have faith and confidence in the future courses taken. He blended energy and concern with his ability to keep cool among people with conflicting opinions and views. These unusual skills made him a constant inspiration to all those who worked with him. It will be difficult to find his likes easily.

Brig. Grewal has been closely associated with the Guru Nanak Public School, Sector 36, Chandigarh, since 1998 when he was elected member of the Governing Council.

I can't think of too many names whose death will mean as much of a loss of wisdom and dedication to the causes of Sikhs today. Brigadier Gurdip Singh left behind his dedicated wife, Gurdarshan Kaur Singh, one son, two daughters and six grand children.

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Our Papa: Brig. Gurdip Singh Grewal

A Noble Humanitarian

Tina Grewal

Brig. (retd.) Gurdip Singh Grewal – a global visionary with gentle dignity – was born on December 1935, in Baghdigi, Bihar to Sardar Sarwan Singh Grewal, who later went on to be the first Chief Inspector of Mines, Government of India.

Brig. Grewal's family moved from Pakistan after Partition, and settled in Raikot, Dist. Ludhiana. Brig. Grewal graduated from Government College in Ludhiana, where he played football for the College. From there, he went to the Indian Military Academy, passing out in 1956. While there, he was part of the Academy's Tennis team. An avid golfer, Brig. Grewal won numerous tournaments and received accolades for the polished refinement of his game. During his 33 years of distinguished service, he held several key posts. During the Indo-China conflict he was posted at Nathual Pass in the Eastern sector and served in Nagaland during the 1962 conflict. Brig. Grewal held numerous command posts, including Officiating Brig Adim in Western Command, DDST in Southern Command and DST in Northern Command. He was awarded the Vishist Seva Medal for meritorious service in 1982.

Upon entering civilian life, Brig. Grewal dedicated himself to the study of Sikhism. He used his in-depth knowledge of the philosophical underpinnings of religiosity, and particularly his understandings about the socio-cultural, political and religious aspects of Sikhism, to forge bridges between politics and religion, intellect and spirituality. A founding member of the World Sikh Council and an active participant in several philanthropic activities, Brig. Grewal worked tirelessly to communicate a vision of Sikh society in the 21st century. His prolific writings were often published.

Brig. Grewal was closely associated with the Guru Nanak Public School, Sector 36, Chandigarh, since 1998 when he was elected member of the Governing Council. As Convener of the Finance Committee, he ensured the financial stability of the school. His strong belief in providing high quality education to all, lead him to play a major role in introducing technology-based programs at the school and in the establishment of the computer laboratory, which provides computer access to all the school's children.

Brig. Grewal was a man of unwavering principles, mild manner, firm discipline, incisive logic and compassion. He will be remembered with loving fondness and genuine gratitude by all those who knew him.

Brig. Grewal's legacy is carried on through his wife (Gurdarshan), son (Charandeep), two daughters (Imandeep and Mandeep) and six grandchildren.

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