

Obituary

Raja or Ranjha: A Humble Person to Remember**Prof. Tariq Waseem**

Prof. Shahbaz Munir Raja who left us for his heavenly abode last month was distinct among his contemporaries. He graduated from Nishter Medical College Multan and served in periphery for some time. When he asked for his mother's permission to proceed to UK to be a "Bara Doctor", her reply was, "Who will take care of me? and I pray that you become Bara Doctor staying in Pakistan". While most of his class fellows went abroad, he stayed back and completed his postgraduation in tuberculosis and chest diseases. He joined Quaid e Azam Medical college and Bahawal Victoria Hospital Bahawalpur in early 70's soon to be elevated as Professor of TB & Chest diseases and moved to KEMC in 1984 and finally retired as Professor of Chest Medicine at King Edward Medical College in 1996.

He had a simple, easy to go and friendly personality. Popular among his students and colleagues who enjoyed jokes, sports, and music. He was an automatic choice for the chief Warden Hostels both at Quaid e Azam Medical College Bahawalpur and King Edward Medical College Lahore. Those were the days when no students even dared to pass by the Professors Lane in staff colony at QAMC campus. But his doors were open for students 24/7. He would often take a round of hostels and chat and play board games in common rooms with students.

Raja Sahib was a family man. He motivated, encouraged as well as supported his wife to start and complete her MBBS when he was already a professor and they had two school going children to raise. He proudly shared the stories from his early life with his students. He would be handed over any portfolio from administration to academics and organizing cultural, social and sports activities and he would do it with utmost ease as it was his speciality. He filled in for any deficient faculty for any subject. He not only taught us respiratory medicine but delivered lectures in Forensic Medicine and Community Medicine.

Raja sahib was at his best during annual sports and cultural week of the college. He not only encouraged student participation but lead by example. He would be there to Kick off the football, bully off the hockey game and open the innings in a cricket match. But he will be best remembered for his masterly rendition of folk tale "Heer Ranjha" like a professional singer. His recitation of Heer would mesmerise the crowd. And



that's many would call him Ranjha rather than Raja.

I had the opportunity of talking to his son Dr. Yasir Raja according to him; he played all the roles of life with perfection whether it is of a son, doctor, father, teacher, friend or sibling. He was very humble but knew when to stand up for the right thing. I remember once he told me that he was busy doing round at TB chest ward and one of the protocols of then Governor had to wait. He was called at governor house for an explanation. That time governor asked him why you refused to check my patient, he answered that my primary duty is to serve my patients first. It seems a small thing but shows his commitment to the profession. The governor was impressed and made him his personal physician.

His real assets are his students who are spread all over the country. His goal was to produce as much trained specialists with DTCD and MCPS during his tenure as a professor of KEMC. He was loved by all because he knew the art of coming to the level of the other person and making everyone feel comfortable.

As a father he taught us how to live a good life and be a good human being not how to make big names and money. I never saw him tense in his life and even at the time of his death he was at peace. Peace is what he reflected all his life.

He will be missed by his family, colleagues, students, and patients alike. He must have been welcomed in heavens introduced as "Ranjha".