

NEWS

Homage to Houston's Hindu icon Raj Syal

Condolence messages and eulogy in honor of Raj Syal continue to pour in and here are the excerpts:

Krishna Syal, Grandson of Raj and Krishna Syal

Raj Syal was a lot of things to the Houston community—a leader, role model and a mentor....but to me, he was just Baba. Baba was a caring grandfather, my biggest supporter, and the center of our family. We will miss him dearly but will relish in continuing to hear of the impact that he has made in those around him.

Daniel Kumar Syal, Grandson of Raj and Krishna Syal

"Baba never allowed his education or fierce intelligence to corrupt his natural humbleness. He forged a vibrant community in a strange country through the strength of his character and his commitment to preserving his heritage. He was a rare man and should serve as an example for future immigrants who wish to become Americans while also preserving their distinct traditions."

Radha Dixit, Former Secretary, Hindus of Greater Houston

I will always remember Syal Uncle as the pillar of the community from my childhood... Whether it was helping build Hindu Worship Society back in the 70s or bringing movies to University of Houston through ISA and ICC in the early years. There was no one better to envision the unity he had in my mind for all of us...he was a worker, a volunteer and a true community leader. An extremely rare and true human being who always put service first. My condolences to his family. May Bhagavan give Syalji's Jivanta eternal Shanti.

Gaurang Nanaavaty- Acharya Chinmaya Mission, Houston, and past member, HGH Board of Advisors

I am saddened by the news of Syal ji's passing. He will be remembered as a visionary and founding member of the HGH. Syal ji served and strengthened our community with humility and simplicity. May God give his family strength and comfort during this difficult time and bless his soul to rest in eternal peace.

Gitesh Desai- President, Sewa International Houston

Syal ji was a simple and a straightforward person with a great heart. He will be missed greatly. May the departed soul rest in peace!

Ramesh Bhatnagar, National Vice President, Hindu Swayam Sewak HGH Board of Advisor

Raj Syal Ji was indeed one of the great Pioneers of Indian Community in Houston. He will be missed tremendously. May his soul Rest In Peace.

Dr. Randeep Suneja, MD

We are saddened by the news. Pray for his family and his soul to attain moksha. Houston community is grateful to him and his family where he played a great role.

Sam Kannappan - Advisory Board of Sri Meenakshi Temple

A beloved friend. He has done so much for Houston community. Raj Syal served as MTS Board member 2002-2003. Very sad day for us. I worked with Raj Syal from 1970 first in India Family circle, Clear Lake city (we used to meet in people's home for Bhajans), then in the Hindu Worship Society and then in Sri Meenakshi Temple. He coordinated the laying of north concrete driveway and parking lot in front of Ganesh temple without using contractors. We used to finish twenty feet length every weekend till we completed 600 feet to reach Ganesh temple. He is a true and selfless friend. May his soul rest in Peace.

Ramesh Shah, Chairman, EKAL USA

Raj Syal ji was a Torch Bearer for our community from 60's. HWS, ICC, HGH, India House and supporting all charities including Ekal. He was very quietly doing Lots of work without any photo op. We will always have his inspiration from his work for the community. We pray for ultimate peace of the departed soul with Shri Ram. Om Shanti Shanti Shantini.

Shekhar Agarwal, President, Patanjali Yogpeeth USA

I am sorry to know the demise of a great man. He was a simple and a straightforward person with a great heart. He will be missed greatly. May the departed soul rest in peace!

Thara Narasimhan and Kanti Patel, Secretary and President, Voice of Sanstas Hinduism radio

We share our Sharadkunjali to Raj Syal ji. Sanstas Hindu Center was involved with him very closely and connected through our founder late Shri Padmakant Khamkhatri. He is a simple, humble and noble person and has contributed to Unify all Hindus in the Greater Houston Area.



Raj Syal receives the Lifetime Achievement Award from Hindus of Greater Houston in 2014. Then Consul General of India in Houston, Harish Parvatheni, left, Raj Syal, Saurabh Raj Jain, who played Lord Krishna in the TV Series Mahabharat and Dr. Sen Pathak, Distinguished Research Professor at U.T., M.D Anderson Cancer Center, and Hindu community leader. (File picture)

Partha Krishnaarwamy, Former President of HGH

Raj Syal ji was a well-respected visionary and a very encouraging personality. He would often say "Partha Ji Aap Jannashatami karro - praise tho aa jayenge". He would always be at the GRB early and gather a few children and place all the mats on the floor for people to sit in front of the stage". Will miss him a lot. Om Shanti.

Girish Naik, Former President-HGH

It was such a special honor to be guided by him for so many years. He was a pillar of the society and wanted to make sure that Hindu festivals are celebrated in large scale together. His belief was to make sure all temples have a chance to showcase their cultural values and temple programs. We will miss him very dearly.

Sharad Amin, Former President, HGH

He was great inspiration to so many of us for planning and executing Jannashatami Utsav from beginning to end. Great loss to Houston community. We pray for Sadgati to Syalji's departed soul and strength to family at this tough time of loss. Om Shanti.

Dr. Venugopal Menon, Advisory Board Member, HGH

Perhaps the most respectable and genuine human being of our

community. It is a great honor to have known and be friends with Syal sahib.

Swapan Dhairawan, Past President of ICC and IACCGH

Raj Syal, always presented a pleasant smile, warm, approachable and easy to relate with everyone he met. He is integral part and unsung Hero of the Greater Houston Community especially Hindus of Greater Houston where many have met and interacted with him.

Durga Agarwal

The Houston Community consider him as the Father of the Indian community in Houston and one can refer him as Mahatma Gandhi for Indians in Houston. He was a lionhearted leader for us! I think, nobody else in Houston has done what Mr Syal has done for our community. He was a very intelligent, wise, Cheerful, always full of laughter brought happiness and smile! One of the greatest pleasures I have had has been working as a volunteer with Raj Kumar Syal for nearly forty years. He always put others first and did what he felt was best for the Indian-American and Hindu/American communities.

Beth Kulkarni, Hindu-American Volunteer

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put others first and did what he felt was best for the Indian-American and Hindu/American communities.

Col. Vipin Kumar, Executive Director, India House Inc.

We have lost a great community leader, pioneer of so many community service organizations. On behalf of India House trustees and Board we want to send our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved one.

Prabhat Sharma

Hindu Worship Society has known Raj Syal for over 50 years. Syal ji's vision for celebration of Jannashatami festival ended with 8000 people attending for free the very first year in 1990. He was the first to champion Diwali and Dusshera Mela in Downtown Houston with fireworks, where he arranged Ram, Lakshman and Sita arriving in a Helicopter. Ram Navami celebration was also started by him in a 24hrs. nonstop chanting of Ramayan in all the Temples simultaneously. He was an exceptional Leader, always Cool, Calm and Collective in discussions and has never raised his voice ever!!! He did not aspire any position and always a Sevak to serve others. Most of the meetings were held at Hindu Worship Society, where the beginnings of our Hindu Community started working together.

Sharadkunjali- Sri Raj Syalji: Time: Oct 11, 2020 03:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8907836087?pwd=MVE0aXh0cGZkZkR0bnhmZkZMcjQzZj09>

Meeting ID: 890 7836 0887; Passcode: 435078