



SHANTA ACHARYA

'Death is not the end; it returns us to a universe at home.'

Albert Einstein

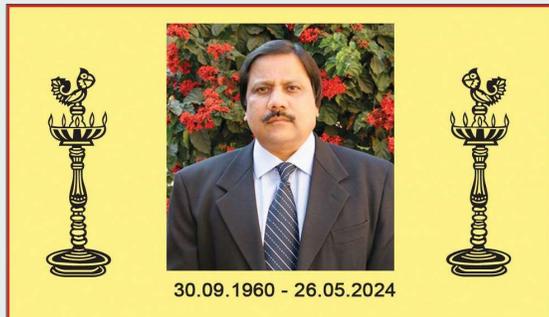
SUSANTA Acharya was an admirable embodiment of myriad talents. What set him apart as a rare human being was his humanity, integrity, decency, humility among other such uncommon qualities that are not found together. In school and college, he excelled in his studies, proved himself an outstanding sportsman, distinguished himself as an allrounder. Among life's achievers, he went on to become a successful corporate leader. What made him 'special', however, were his many personal qualities such as compassion, thoughtfulness, courage, and concern for others. For a man of action, Susanta possessed the emotional intelligence and imagination to configure the complexities of any situation and find an appropriate solution. His innate spirit of generosity, selflessness, and responsibility shaped his view of the world. Trustworthy, down-to-earth, he was gifted with a supreme sense of service. Affectionately known as Muna by all his family and close friends, he was the sort of person you want in your corner, especially in your hour of need.

To cite an example: Muna was selected for the Ranji trophy season in 1980, but did not participate due to father's major illness at the time. In 1979, his two older siblings went to study abroad. Within a year, father retired, and the family moved from the home of many years in Ravenshaw College campus to the current family home in BJB Nagar, Bhubaneswar. Within a short period, the family endured four of the most stressful things in life. Trying to protect us, my older brother and me were not informed of father's illness. Muna, still studying for his post-graduate degree at Vani Vihar, as the older of the two younger siblings at home became by default the head of the family, looking after father. Nobody asked him to do what he did. He simply thought it was the right thing to do. Muna thought about everything and everyone, never placed himself first. Though essential to the wellbeing of our world, perhaps even the survival of the human race, such an approach to life is rare. Yet, it is seldom appreciated, acknowledged, let alone rewarded. In a world governed by self-interest, such a way of life is not taught in Ivy League institutions.

Muna's family, friends, and well-wishers cherish his many acts of thoughtfulness and love. In celebrating his life, his unique qualities, we feel immensely blessed to have had our lives enriched by him. Among life's blessings, he was a giver and protector; a karma yogi, for his life

Susanta Acharya

A family tribute in remembrance...



was service. He will be remembered for the wonderful inclusiveness of his spirit - not just his compassion and generosity, but also his wit and sense of humour, his love and zest for life. Muna showed me that a life lived for others is the only life worth living. A symbol of hope and humanity, justice and light, he holds a very special place in our hearts and minds. A versatile talent, he was gone too soon. Muna had so much more to give, so much more to live for.

Born to an illustrious family in Odisha, Susanta was the grandson of Shri Paramananda Acharya who was honoured by the Government of India in 1964 with the award of Padma Shri for his work on temples and archaeological discoveries in Odisha. The equally esteemed Shri Ratnakar Sarangi, well known for his impeccable credentials and contributions to the administrative services of Odisha, was Susanta's maternal grandfather.

Susanta was the second son of Srimati Rashmi Rekha and Shri Brundaban Chandra Acharya, who served as an academic, establishing the department of Geography at Ravenshaw College. Shri Satyananda Acharya, youngest brother of Shri Brundaban Acharya, after an illustrious career in academia, served as Vice Chancellor of Utkal University before his retirement. Shri Jitendriya Sarangi, son of Ratnakar Sarangi, was professor and head of the department of Statistics at Utkal University.

Susanta was the younger brother of Mr Bikash Acharya, an orthopaedic surgeon who ran his private practice in Harley Street, London. Shanta Acharya DPhil (Oxon), a poet and writer who worked as an investment banker in London, is Susanta's older sister. Dr Sanjay Acharya, recently retired as professor and head of the department of P.G. Ancient Indian History, Culture, and Archaeology, Utkal University, is Susanta's younger brother.

Susanta is survived by his wife, Madhumita, who works at Indian Oil Corporation; son, Ashish, who works in cyber security in Canada; and daughter, Aditi, who is pursuing higher studies in Economics on a full

scholarship at the University of California, San Diego, USA, along with his mother, three siblings, and their families.

Educated at Stewart School, Cuttack, Susanta was awarded the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education Examination in 1974 in a wide range of subjects that included English, Oriya, Indian History and Culture, Geography, Mathematics, and Science. He completed his Intermediate Examination in 1978 and graduated with a first class B.A. (Hons) in 1981 securing First Class Honours in Political Science from Ravenshaw College. Susanta was awarded the Gold Medal from Utkal University for securing the first position and a first class Master's degree in Personnel Management and Labour Welfare from Vani Vihar in 1983.

An outstanding sportsman, Susanta was well known and well regarded for his many extracurricular activities for which he was awarded the All-Round Cup in Ravenshaw in 1979-80. Representing his school and college in athletics, he participated in the State High Schools' Winter Games in 1974-75. He also represented the State of Orissa in the XXV National Games of India in Hyderabad (1979) held under the auspices of the Indian Olympic Association. He had many feathers in his cap, including the State record in Javelin for several years. Susanta was widely recognised as one of Orissa's top sports personalities.

An excellent cricketer, Susanta represented Ravenshaw College and Utkal University in Inter-Collegiate and Inter-University competitions in cricket from 1977 till 1983. He represented the East Zone Universities for the Vizzy Trophy in Bombay (1982-83). He also represented the State of Orissa on several occasions, including the State Team in the C.K. Nayudu Trophy in 1976-77 (Calcutta), 1977-78 (Gouhati), 1979-80 (Cuttack), 1980-81 (Calcutta). He was a member of the East Zone C.K. Nayudu Team at Pune in 1979-80, Captain of the Orissa State Team in 1980-81, and Captain of the Utkal University Team in 1982-83 when they became the East-Zone finalists.

Selected for the Ranji trophy season in 1980, he was unable to participate due to his father's illness at the time.

In November 1985, Susanta joined the Government of Orissa as an Assistant Labour Officer. Within his short tenure there, he helped transform the lives of many small traders. They still remember him. When he saw a genuine need, he helped. Muna's compassionate approach to the realities of life was manifested even earlier when he was a student at Ravenshaw. Without ever expecting anything in return, for example, he helped hapless students fresh from the villages who were lost in the maze of the admissions process.

In 1986, Susanta joined Indian Oil Corporation as a management trainee. In June 1995, he joined IOC's Haldia Refinery as Deputy Manager. Five years later, in May 2000, he was appointed Manager at the Paradip Refinery. In April 2006, he joined IOC's Barauni Refinery. In April 2010, he joined IOC's Mathura Refinery as Chief Manager and became Deputy General Manager in May 2017. He retired from IOC as General Manager in September 2020.

Many will remember Muna's integrity, his selflessness, and willingness to help others. He was one of life's trouble-shooters. For someone who spent his whole life in the service of others, there are many who miss his unwavering generosity and support. A force for good, the connections he forged were sustained and got stronger over the years. A beacon of light and love, may he fare well, far forward.

We are devastated that cancer snatched away our dearest and most precious Muna so unexpectedly. The medical management of his cancer raises questions that remain unanswered. Knowing how immensely blessed we are to have known Muna, the manner of his death is a profound loss we struggle to bear and will do so for the rest of our lives. There is no measure to describe how much he is missed along with his great and small acts of kindness, not to mention his excellent wit and sense of humour. There are moments when hearing his favourite Hindi film songs that he so loved to sing, in private and sometimes with family and friends, reduces us to tears. He was not just a wonderful son, brother, husband, father, but a rare human being - his courage, patience, generosity, and compassion were exemplary. He was not perfect, nobody is. Those who had a full measure of him know what a genuinely special person he was.

His life is celebrated and his untimely death is mourned by his mother, his siblings and their families, his wife, son, daughter, family and friends. On the first anniversary of the death of Susanta Acharya, one of Odisha's eminent sons, he is very greatly missed and will never be forgotten.

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