



The World Zoroastrian Organisation

The World Zoroastrian Organisation

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(Globally supporting Zoroastrianism, its people and traditions)

Sammy Hormusji Bhiwandiwalla - A Blessing for those many silent lives that have benefitted through compassion from WZO



Sammy Hormusji Bhiwandiwalla

30th May 1940 - 27th December 2020

**To us you were someone special,
Someone set apart,
Your memory will live forever,
Engraved within our hearts.**

**WZO past Chairrman Sammy Bhiwandiwalla passed away on 27th
December 2020, Gosh Roj, Amardad Mah.**

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THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION LIMITED

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Incorporated 1980

WZO lost two stalwarts Shahpurji, the founder of WZO and Sammy Bhiwandiwalla who was the Chairman of WZO in a span of one month in December 2020.

Sammy Bhiwandiwalla was born to Alice and Hormusji Dorabji Bhiwandiwalla on 30th May 1940 in Bombay.



Sammy second from right as a young boy with his siblings

Sammy was the youngest of the 5 siblings, the eldest being brother Dorab, sister Lulu, brother Dosu, sister Pervize.



Ursula & Sammy



Sammy came to UK in 1960 from India and followed his wish for dancing and singing in the theatre land of London. He entertained at the then famous Windmill theatre. It was whilst taking extra dancing tuitions that he met Ursula and they were married in 1962. They have 2 lovely children, Nicola and Cyrus who have blessed them with 6 wonderful grandchildren. Soon after marriage, Sammy started working as an accountant and when the opportunity presented itself started a business in industrial chemical supplies for the engineering patternmaking and foundry industry. After 35 years they decided to call it a day and devote some time to the second generation.

Sammy's Cousin Kersey Vakharia in his tribute mentions about the fond memories he has of Sammy:

“I used to visit Sammy and his sister Pervize when they were living in Irwin Road, Camp Poona. I used to spend 2 or 3 weeks with them during my summer vacations from 1954 to 1956. Remember going around on bicycles with Sammy and Pervize, to the movies and the famous coffee house on Main Street. I went with them to see my first horror movie - House of Wax. Ever since then I was afraid to sleep alone and much to Sammy's amusement he would let me sleep with him in his room.

I was shipped off to boarding school in 1956 for the next 3 years, so did not see much of Sammy, who then graduated from St Vincent's High School around 1958.

In 1959, Sammy moved to Mumbai and was staying with his sister Lulu and her husband Naval, and enrolled at St Xaviers College. I was at St Xaviers at the same time. Sammy was staying at the Petit Building at Nana Chowk, and we used to live at Ness Baug. We could see each other from our bedroom windows, and visit each other often. Sammy was always interested in singing and dance. He had a good voice, and heard him sing many times at the family gatherings.

His main desire was to go to London where his brother Dorab used to live. His finances were a problem and he was able to talk Lulu and Dorab into helping



him get a plane ticket to London. He left Mumbai in 1960 to seek fame and fortune in show business.

I completed my BSc from St Xaviers and left for further studies to the US in 1962. On the way, I stopped in London to visit Sammy and Dorab. I remember spending 3 days with them, where Sammy was living in a basement studio flat in a building that Dorab owned on Bayswater Street in London. I met Ursula at this time, and was very impressed with Sammy's choice for a life partner.

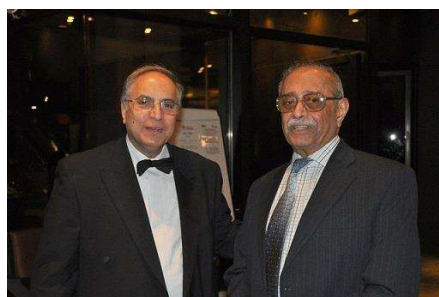
Spent 3 wonderful days, with Ursula showing me the sites in the city, when Sammy was at work. At this time Sammy was well on his way in show business. He had a major role for singing and dancing in a burlesque theater called the Windmill where Sammy was in his glory singing and dancing.

Over the next many years, I had occasion to visit Sammy and Ursula many times. He made a major career change by going into business distributing mold release chemicals manufactured by Ursula's brother in Germany. I remember visiting him at his home in Purley, and then after he moved to Tadsworth. I also happened to attend Nicola's wedding in London, and Sammy and Ursula visited us in Wilmington for Anita's wedding. He made me a life member in the WZO, and admired his dedication to the organization, where he eventually became the chairman. We kept in touch through many phone calls, and exchanging news of our families.

I will always cherish the wonderful memories of the times we had together.”

Ursula and Sammy have always taken an active interest in community matters in the UK and were greatly influenced by the actions and sincere beliefs of individuals such as Noshirwan Cowasjee, Shirinbanoo Kutar, Shahpur Captain and many others, that in a changing world it was necessary to create a more balanced and equitable community within the UK. He joined the WZO Board in 1988 and since then has served in various capacities becoming an Hon. Treasurer in 1993 a post he held for 10 years. . He later became one of the Joint

Secretaries before being elected in 2004 as the Chairman where he made a profound and lasting impression on WZO. He further served WZO as the President from 2008 to 2010 and then again from 2012 to June 2020. Following Shahpurji's illness, he became the Chairman of WZO in July 2020 till he passed away on 27th December 2020.



Sammy alongwith WZO Founder Shahpurji

WZO Social Secretary Armaity Engineer and WZO Company Secretary Mrs Benafsha Engineer – Mulla who have worked very closely with Sammy fondly remember him as follows:



Sammy with Armaity Engineer at the Inaguration of the World Zoroastrian Organisation on 10th August 2019



“To me it seems that, even now, Sammy who had genuinely portrayed smiles and politeness of a gentleman, is again available around the corner in his strive to always offer his helping hand, whilst always trying to uphold righteousness.

Alas, in reality Sammy has left us with a Heartache, especially deep within for Ursula, Nicola and Cyrus to recover from their loss of a most dearly loved one.

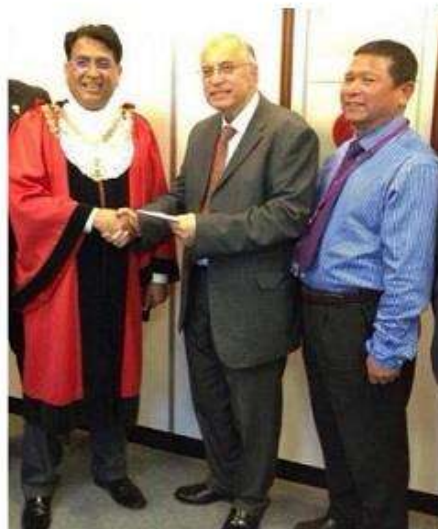
Sammy's memory, for his grandchildren, shall always be a Treasure for them that no gold medal can ennoble.

More so, Sammy has undeniably been a Blessing for those many silent lives that have benefitted through compassion from WZO and other Charities too.

The care, composure and serenity that Sammy always reflected will be missed by me and my daughter who both have always respected the Genuine Sammy.

Sammy! You have always lived with and promulgated the tenets of our Zarathushtian Religion, we beseech your soul to enter Behesht Garothman”.

Sammy alongwith Shahpur Captain and the small band of committee members and volunteers in the UK and across the world strived towards the upliftment and betterment of Zoroastrians across the world.



WZO President Mr Sammy Bhiwandiwalla handing a cheque of £ 2500 towards the Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund to the Counsellor Mr Mukesh Malhotra - Hounslow Friends of Faith Organisation.

Sammy was dedicated to the philosophy of WZO and was very keen that WZO moves forward in various directions.

Armene Modi was the winner of the prestigious Albert Schweitzer Medal for her academic excellence and extensive service in education and literacy. WZO helped Armene towards her MA studies at Tuft University USA. Armene remembers Sammy with warm affection and gratitude:

“I never met Sammy in person, but in our brief acquaintance over email, he always championed my cause of promoting empowerment and education for rural girls and women in Ashta No Kai, the NGO I had founded. Through the WZO Trust, he very generously supported my second MA in International Relations at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy when I approached him for funds. He was very happy to learn that I had received the Albert Schweitzer Medal from the World Literacy Foundation, and graciously agreed to drive down with his wife to attend the ceremony at Oxford University in April 2020 although it was a long drive I believe from his home. Sadly, due to the Covid situation, the ceremony was cancelled and I received the award online, which of course denied me the opportunity of meeting Sammy in person,



and thanking him for his generous support. As I have stated above, although I never met Sammy personally, he reached out to help a fellow Zoroastrian in every way he could, in the true Zoroastrian tradition. Rest in Peace dear Sammy, and be assured that you will be remembered with warm affection and gratitude.

Armene Modi”

Sammy has done great service to the organisation by securing funds from a range of sources to ensure that its core work of aiding Zoroastrians and making information available about the religion can continue. He was particularly interested in ensuring equality of rights and treatment for all Zoroastrians, particularly recognizing that non-Zoroastrian spouses and their offspring were an integral part of our community and to be treated as equals.

Tina Sutaria in her tribute to Sammy writes:

“Very few people in today’s world, know the true value of the arts and propagate talent that deserves impetus. Sammy Bhiwandiwalla was one of those rare gems. He will always be relevant and live in the hearts of those he helped to grow in myriad ways. A chance e mail to WZO (U.K) at midnight many moons ago, got me a positive response from him for funding for my twins to pursue ballet in the U.K as further training was not available in India. He had replied at that late hour, something that stayed with me. Over the next decade and a half of getting to know him, I would often chide him for overworking, but it was due to his diligence that young and old alike, were accorded the help they needed. His legacy is one of caring enough to be the change he wanted to see. He truly believed that Parsipanu came from your actions and deeds and not only from the lineage of two Parsi parents.

He was also very interested in the progress his wards were making in their respective fields. I recall when our daughter Pia was graduating as a ballet teacher from the Royal Academy of Dance, he wanted to watch her take a class

and so he travelled all the way from his home in Surrey, by tube, to watch her teach in central London. On another occasion he came to watch her perform at the Academy when she was performing as a student. His encouragement and praise of her dedication to her craft and hard work, kept her in good spirits through difficult training times.



Sammy first from left alongwith WZO Members and Tina Sutaria fourth from right

On my previous visit to London, he insisted I come see the new WZO headquarters which was under renovation. I could see how very exhausted he was, but his enthusiasm to see it ready in good time kept him going.

More recently when my daughter wanted to complete her dance education with a masters in musical theatre from the Royal Academy of Music and had recieved a full tuition scholarship for the same, she approached him to help her with a bursary toward the ancillary expenses of learning aids, transport costs and such. As always he went way beyond the call of duty, rallying around his trusted lieutenants at WZO to put together a presentation for Pia which was sent out to WZO members to raise additional funds. It was COVID time and everywhere funding was being directed toward COVID relief. This initiative of theirs is still bringing in funding for Pia as she is only halfway through her course yet. My father used to say, “the greatest use of life is to spend it on



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something that outlasts it”. He most certainly did that as our girls will continue to sizzle, sparkle and shine in their chosen fields, due to the constant support and belief Sammy and WZO (U.K) always put in them.

For us as a family, he came like a messiah to guide and help our young girls reach the highest standards of their professions. His will be big shoes to fill and I pray fervently that his successor takes his legacy of love for his position at WZO, forward, in the same spirit of equanimity for all human beings.”

Jessica Mistry who began her passion in flute and has performed in well-known places such as Royal Albert Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall, in her tribute to Sammy writes:

“The saying that, once in a lifetime you come across someone who will be a stranger at first but will turn into your biggest supporter, on your road ahead. Sammy was that person.

As a young upcoming artist in the music industry we often found it difficult to be acknowledged or even noticed. I was introduced to Sammy many years ago and I always remember him for his infectious smile.

He knew me as the young Parsi flute girl. Sammy provided me with various opportunities to perform and receive training from top artists. He would attend my concerts at reputable venues and recognised my talent. He was a very generous man. Sammy saw the best in me when I couldn't see it myself. He always spoke so fondly of me.

Sammy will be dearly missed and whenever I perform, he will always have a front row open seat, in memory of him, for he was my greatest supporter”.

Sammy had a very personal side which endeared him to those around him. He had strengthened relationships with Zoroastrian Associations in India, US and in Europe to the betterment of WZO.



Sammy with Mobedyar Mahshad Khosraviani at the WZO Annual Seminar which Sammy organised every year

Mobedyar Mahshad Khosraviani in her tribute to Sammy writes:



Mahshad with Sammy and Ursula when she visited them in October 2020

“Every soul we meet plays a role in our lives – be it big or small. Although brief, meeting Sammy in 2015 and again in 2020 has truly been a cherished gift – one that I will forever be grateful for.



The first thing I noticed when I first met Sammy at the Gatwick airport in 2015, where he had been patiently waiting for over an hour as my flight had been delayed, was his kind and genuine smile. Over the days that followed, I learned so much from Sammy and Ursula; more importantly of all, unconditional and abiding love. He adored his beautiful wife boundlessly and it was abundantly clear through his words and the way he would endearingly look at her while she was speaking or eating at the dinner table; truly rare and heart warming.

Sammy effortlessly embodied everything that our prophet had bestowed upon us within the Gathas; kindness, selflessness, benevolence, and living his days according to Asha. His passion for our religion and unrestricted dedication to the community was unparalleled; he inspired me to join the WZO-Canada Committee.

I consider myself extremely lucky to have seen Sammy again in autumn of 2020 when I was visiting my Fiancé in London. He and Ursula kindly invited us over for tea and dinner one evening, where again, I was late to! As we pulled into the main road near their house, I was pleasantly surprised to find Sammy patiently sitting in his car to ensure that we would find his street easily – seeing his kind smile through the car window brought me to tears; we followed his car home and had a magnificent night with him and Ursula.

As we got ready to say our goodbyes, he pulled me to the side, and kindly (much like a worried father) asked me “does He make you happy?” – I hugged him tight and said “yes, I found what you and Ursula have.”

Even after all this time, the sun never says to the Earth, "You owe me." Look what happens with a love like that, it lights the whole sky.” — Hafiz

& Undoubtedly, Sammy lit the lives of those that he met”.

Sammy had ensured that WZO gave Iranian members and their concerns more attention and focus, thereby making WZO more inclusive. Sammy and Ursula made an extremely hospitable couple. They hosted a number of WZO meetings and social gatherings at their home.



Farah Ghadiali in her tribute to Sammy writes:

“I contacted Mr. Bhiwandiwalla in 2014 as an applicant for the WZO Scholarship meant for Indian students studying the UK and I am grateful that he helped me twice with scholarships and also in my third year with a loan when I was in urgent need of funds. By then, he was just Sammy to me.

He and his dear wife, Ursula were wonderfully supportive and warm in a country where I hardly knew anyone- there was no judgement especially about my choice to move on from Business Management and a corporate career in India to studying classical music and somehow, I feel they understood my passion for art, music and culture and how it was vital in not letting it die a slow death especially in such a fast-paced materialistic world.

They were kind and made me feel at home whenever we met either at the WZO Navroze events or in their home. They were also very encouraging and would come for my concert recitals in London- I vividly remember them being there for me right in the first row at the last concert I gave as a music student at the Southwark Cathedral.

Post my return to India too Sammy and Ursula used to regularly keep in touch with greetings and inquiring about my progress. Sammy knew that I faced different challenges then and was there to egg me on to keep working towards bringing more music to India through concerts and through teaching. If I do make a small difference today in the field of music, it is because of Sammy and numerous other people who believed and supported me.

My only regret is that when Sammy sent his last Christmas greeting I didn't respond immediately, thinking I would wish him for the new year-sadly that was not possible and we lost him before that. I don't know much about Sammy, his qualification, achievements etc but what I do know and appreciate is that Sammy and the WZO helped innumerable young

Zoroastrians in different fields and that he was a kind and encouraging person who believed in the next generation, working tirelessly to make a better world. I, like many others whose life he has touched am eternally grateful and shall miss him dearly.”

Sammy was a very pleasant person, mild mannered but ferocious in defending WZO. When one was in the company of Sammy, one immediately got the feeling that here was a man of utmost honesty, trustworthiness and dedication. Various Trust Funds will confirm that their confidence in WZO increased significantly once they met Sammy as its Chairman. Not only had Sammy raised very substantial sums for WZO's charitable activities, Sammy and Ursula were extremely generous donors in their own right.



Sammy with WZO Members and Guests at the 2016 WZO Summer Barbeque

There have been several occasions when Sammy and Ursula were bidding against each other in a WZO fund raising auction.

Whilst self effacing about his own contribution to WZO, Sammy was very aware of the contribution made by others to WZO's success.



Sammy believed in charity with compassion, had the interest of the organisation and the Zoroastrian community at heart, was trustworthy and transparent and totally committed to the Zoroastrian cause. Infact he possessed the very same values and principles that guides the World Zoroastrian Organisation to carry out its duties.

To quote Sammy **“Progress comes at a price and some of us have paid for it. Let’s brake the shackles that have held us back for centuries”**

We at WZO will always remember you Sammy.