

## **IN MEMORY OF MR. JAYANT J. RUPAREL**

**(by Mrs. Seeta Shah daughter of Mr. Jayant J. Ruparel Alumnus of Duke 1962 founder Member Jamhuri Asian School Fund)**

*My father, Jayant J. Ruparel, was a passionate student and alum of Jamhuri High School.*

*He was a student at Jamhuri, then Duke of Gloucester, from 1959 to 1962 (Form I to IV). He ran the canteen contributing any cash surplus towards school initiatives. He also served as a Prefect in his final year. We have a wonderful photo of him receiving a large trophy for a Geography project that we will share with you at a later time.*

*Throughout our school years, he would encourage us to participate in school activities, with his famous rephrase J F Kennedy's quotation "Ask not what your school can do for you, but what you can do for your school."*

*In the late 1990s he got another chance to give back to Jamhuri. During a visit in 1997 he was shocked to see the crumbling nature of the once solid and graceful school structure. He joined hands with two Board of Governor members, Mrs. Shirin Esmail, and Mr. Shantibhai Shah, to form the Jamhuri High School Asian Foundation. Their operating plan was simple – to reach out to the alumni of the school. There was no formal alumni database, but from word of mouth and jogging people's memories, an extensive list began to be formed. Together, Mrs. Esmail, Mr. Shantibhai Shah raised over Kshs. 12 million that have been used to restore the school buildings, set up a new library and obtain much needed teaching materials.*

*The latest memories I had of my late father, was of him walking the hallways of the school, supervising the renovation of the classrooms. He would visit the school, and a temple he was helping to build, on a daily basis, on his commute to and from work. This daily attention kept the project going smoothly, with minimal overhead and waste. Before his untimely death he was excited to receive an invitation to serve on the Board of Governors at Jamhuri.*

*In April 2001, during a funeral service for my father, an unknown face stepped out from the crowd and asked if he could speak for a few minutes. The person was, Mr. Madaguda, the principal of Jamhuri High School during the launch of the Asian Foundation. He talked about the vision my father had for Jamhuri to reclaim its former glory. "Jayant was a generous man," he said. "But as important as his monetary donations, was his willingness to share his ideas, his time and his energy, to enable change. Most importantly, he was able to make people believe in themselves and the important role each one of us can play to make a difference." Such a speech, was unusual at funeral services which usually followed a set religious format and were attended by family and friends. The crowd was moved to tears, and I received my first lesson from my father in absentia. (I would learn so much more about him, from people he had touched).*

*I too have a soft spot for Jamhuri. After my father's passing, I was asked to step in his shoes as a member of the Foundation and serve on the Board. Through these venues, I got to know the other Board members and inadvertently met Mr. Shantibhai's son – who is now my husband! Mr. Shantibhai – my father in law - has assumed the responsibility of the Foundation and dedicatedly serves on the Board.*

*On behalf of my late father, and my father in law, I reach out to all alumni to come together and restore Jamhuri to its former glory. "Share not only your wealth, but also your ideas, time and energy."*

*-- Seeta Shah  
September 2008*