

The quest to locate Our Classmate Suresh Khanna

When I started searching for all our classmates, some two years ago, having had a great time at a small gathering at Dr. Karia's house in Calgary, Canada with another schoolmate, Vijay Ghai and Varendra Seth a product of both Eastleigh Secondary School and Duke of Gloucester school, recollections of our beloved Teacher Mr. D.N.Khanna and his two boys who were both at the Duke with me came gushing to my mind. I had fondest memories of all three, the reverence and esteem I had for our beloved Teacher; the very subtle and yet forceful way he instilled ideas and values by making us role play subjects, that were the seeds that later in life, as I see now, have grown into making me who I am.

Suresh was the quiet fellow yet very observant, somber in a way yet a very dear friend. Among all the frolic and mischief I would make he had the art to bring me down to the reality of being a student first. His younger brother Naresh was a year behind us but we were together in the drama club and we staged a play that became the darling of the student body, boy it was great, we really and truly put our all into that play, my Uncle B.S.Mohindra, OBE who was himself a teacher of the older days of Government Indian High School attended the play and was really moved by it. So with all these memories I started the search to locate my friend whom I had not been in touch with since he left school and went his merry way to join Sandhurst in the British Army which was the last I knew of where Suresh had gone. It was some 50 years ago.

I started spending an inordinate amount of time on the web looking for my friend and after a few months of searching I came across an article where a Mr. Khanna was mentioned as a volunteer in SSAFA-Forces Help Kent and researching this further I came across his photo in another article on the same subject. Is it our beloved friend? or could it be someone else? So I sought the help of our other classmate in England, Jagjeet Riyat. I asked him to research for me what this SSAF organization was and if he could reach them and ask about Mr. Khanna.

It took Jagjeet a few weeks, and my constant nagging, to get hold of an address where he sent an e-mail to dear Suresh and boy we scored a hit. Here is what Suresh wrote to me at the time:

----- Original Message -----

From: [Suresh Khanna](#)

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2006 6:40 AM

Subject: RE: Hello Stranger and thanks to Juggy for making the effort to trace you down at my request.

Dear Suniti,

I am overwhelmed! All our friends appeared to have gone their own ways and now here you are bursting out like a warming sun from behind thick cloud. How wonderful.

At present I am rather immobile as I wait for two knee replacements. If all goes well a reunion would be a pleasure.

Yes, sadly my father died eight years ago. He was 85, which was about average for his family.

With my best wishes.

Suresh Khanna

-----Original Message-----

From: Mohindra & Associates [mailto:mohindra@gis.net]

Sent: 25 September 2006 02:49

To: suresh.khanna@ntlworld.com

Cc: juggy riyat

Subject: Hello Stranger and thanks to Juggy for making the effort to trace you down at my request.

My dear Suresh:

How have you been all these years every since we parted company at Duke you to UK and I from Africa via UK and Middle East to USA.

I was in Calgary with Narendra Karia and Vijay Ghai and we thought it would be fun to have a reunion for our class of 57 and also to include guys from 58&59 the form 5 & 6 fellows. I hope I can count on you to join in the effort.

First of all please accept my heartiest congratulations on your receiving the CBE award, you remember Kamvi Panesar he was awarded OBE last year, he is a surgeon, just retired but still on the Board of the FRCS examiners etc.. I will catch up with you and call you , please let me know what is a good time for you.

I learnt that dear Masterji your Dad passed on I was hoping to have him at the reunion, well the good Lord knows what is best but his loving memories are always there for us.

With kind regards and lots of love from your classmate,
Suniti Mohindra

Profile:

Mr Suresh K Khanna CBE DL , Duke of Gloucester School Class of 1957.

After the Duke of Gloucester School, Nairobi, commissioned into the King's African Rifles from Sandhurst in 1960. Transferred to the Royal Engineers (UK) in 1964; later joined Department of Trade & Industry (UK) , serving 1978-2000, retiring as Director Middle East and Africa. Made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2000. Currently a volunteer Director of Public Affairs for SSAFA-Forces Help Kent; Member of the Rochester Diocesan Synod; former Chairman of Bredhurst Parish Council; and Member of the international committee of the Thames Gateway (Kent) Chamber of Commerce. Member of the Rochester Diocesan. Advisory committee on the Care of Churches. Appointed Deputy Lieutenant of Kent (DL) in 2005.