

Obituary

Dr Krishna Kumar Singh



You could see him in every IAPMR conference invariably dressed in a brown over coat supporting four large pockets with a belt, hanging, not tied; conferences are generally held during the beginning of the year when there is a bit of nip in the air. Many would have heard him point to the health budget of India being only 1.5 paisa per person per annum in those days and compare it with the world figures quoting WHO and the developed countries. Everyone was impressed with the figures he quoted. He would have a comment and occasionally a question from almost all the speakers on the dais. With his shiny silvery white hair well groomed wearing the heavenly 'teeka' from the visit to the temple earlier during the day, he would outshine all those around. With his slightly beetle stained full smile he would befriend anyone, young or old. His habit of meeting everyone even if for a short period attracted many towards him who did not know him and those who knew him would crowd around him to exchange a note of laughter or a serious matter, let it be the amendment of the RCI Act or the matter of the persons with disability with the ministry or the curriculum modification with the MCI, he would be head over heels to have his say in the matter through the association or with the government's machinery. He would use his resources to pool knowledge or to have it conveyed appropriately to the proper authority he would not stop. He himself was an authority and knew how to execute that. Hailing from the holy city of Patna, he had his spell all over the country, being the Honorary Surgeon to the President of India is not a small deal, Dr Krishna Kumar Singh, popularly known as 'KK' was one of the heaviest and the most emotionally charged President of our IAPMR during whose tenure we had our first international conference at AIIMS in 1991. Dr SK Varma organized the conference and the younger lot including me was one of the runners to execute the orders. Dr KK Singh's presence was felt all through the organizing two years by all of us. Seeing how people worked, he would come in and order 'tea and samosa' from our canteens and treat all. It was the first time the international conference was being held and the stakes were high with IAPMR with the proud feeling by the president and the organizers, he did not like to take the whole credit to himself. It was the first time he initiated the 'scroll of honor' awarded to the core workers in the conference organizing team, I as one of them could see the whole team was happy to the depth of one's heart due to this recognition given during the valedictory function of the conference. This was the style, manner, empathy and zeal of Dr KK Singh. Having had his innings at Patna Medical College he joined AIIMS and was here for almost eight happening years. He changed the face of the department and the style of working with his innovative methods. It was the first time the head of the department in the institute did not go to the administrator but asked him to come and meet him in the office of the head, such was his authority. The office of the department instead of having one PA all these years was teeming with activity with a full brigade of five. It was famous all over the institute that one must visit the office of the head of the department of PMR which had an entry two rooms away with a carpeted floor and two ante-rooms and a conference room before one could have the privilege of seeing the head of the department sitting pretty besides the 'water falls' in the room ready with a thermos flask full of tea specially brought from his home tightly brewed. No one could leave un-impressed. Dr KK Singh had a vision to change the face of PMR and he was all through his years inclined to work towards that. Unfortunately, his vision was not paralleled by his associates but that did not deter him to do what he wanted to including making PMR department at AIIMS to be recognized on the map of WHO. After he finished his term at AIIMS in 1998 he did not remain in the active life of the PMR or its association. It appeared that he had done what he wanted to and left youngsters to take the lead. Perhaps his health did not allow him to continue follow his dream but he did show the path to the gen-next. His journey to the heaven started on October 3, 2013 with a peaceful last moments with his son by his side asking him to give him a blanket since he was feeling cold. He just took a turn in the bed to take a bigger turn from this earth to the heavenly abode. He lived King style and ended his journey not less than an Emperor with his two good sons and a lovely daughter and a legacy for the PMR, unforgiveable. Our hearts dole out for the 'hero' of PMR.

Dr U Singh