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End of an Era: FIA Bids Farewell to
it's Dynamic Chairman Ramesh
Patel



HH Mahant Swami Maharaj
Offers Prayers on the Passing of
Community Leader Ramesh Patel

End of an Era: FIA Bids Farewell to it's Dynamic Chairman Ramesh Patel



May Your Soul Rest in Eternal Peace

SHREE RAMESH J PATEL

FIA Chairman

APRIL 20th, 1942 - JUNE 6th, 2020



Voluntary Content Compilation
FIA NY-NJ-CT and
Community Volunteers

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FIA hosted then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in NY during his US visit. From left: Vajpayee, Lal Motwani, Navin Mehta, HR Shah, Ramesh Patel, Sudhir Parikh.



Ramesh Patel – Chairman FIA, receiving the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2013.



Left to right Maya Roy wife of ambassador Ray, Sucheta Patel, Ramesh Patel, Amb. Siddhartha S Ray, Sipra Roy



Ramesh Patel, chairman of Federation of Indian Associations of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut (FIA-tri-state), passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on June 6 due to complications from Covid-19. He was 78. He is survived by his wife Sucheta, two daughters Manisha and Kunjal, and son Dr. Suhas, a cardiologist along with his extended family and his very large FIA family and friends circle.



Fondly known as “kaka” within the FIA, Patel was a force to reckon with. A veteran community leader in the U.S. for over 50 years, Patel served the Indian diaspora selflessly and wholeheartedly through FIA, one of the largest umbrella organizations in the Indian community, as well as through the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA), and other regional and cultural organizations, by serving at various positions during the past five decades.



Under his uncanny wisdom, statesmanship, and intelligence as an outstanding, bold and honest community leader; Patel elevated FIA to unprecedented heights of success and global recognition.



During his 50 years association with FIA, Patel has held various challenging positions in FIA since 1984, including president in 1988-1990. He is instrumental in establishing a number of events that promote the culture and heritage of India, including



FIA's flagship event - the India Day Parade. The parade, held for the past 40 years, is the largest India Day parade celebration outside India.

Patel played a key role in other FIA flagship activities, including as well as cultural activities such as 'Dance Pe Chance,' the annual dance competition held to coincide with India's Republic Day. Held for over three decades, the competition has seen participation from several dance schools in the tri-state area, as well as from thousands of children from the community.

Patel's uncanny leadership, political wisdom, razor-sharp memory, ferocious approach against injustices to community, displaying remarkable patriotism, mobilizing diversified resources to swell funds for charity and other community beneficial projects have made him a true gallant, bold, community leader.

Under his dynamic leadership, he successfully waged war against Dot-Busters, became part of a delegation to retain family reunification privileges under Simson-Mazzoli Immigration Bill, demonstrations at Capitol Hill, against giving Hawks Fighter F-15 planes to Pakistan, encouraging brilliant student by awarding due student recognition certificates, contributing substantial funds to the victims of nation and international calamities.



Highlights of Patel’s numerous community serving contributions include:

- Community assistance for consular services through visa assistance camps that served over 8000 community members in six states, from 2014 through 2019
- S-744 Immigration Reform Bill Appeal in Washington, D.C., in 2013
- Organizing committee members during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s address at Madison Square Garden in New York in 2014
- Assisting victims of a fire in Kearny, New Jersey, in 2017
- Providing Red Cross Interpretation Services during Hurricane Sandy in 2012
- Retaining the Family Reunification Bill in 1984
- Waging a successful fight against Dot-Busters in 1988
- Organizing a successful and huge rally in Washington, D.C. to stop Pakistan from getting advanced military equipment.



Patel also became chairman of NFIA (1996-98) and made it a truly globally recognized national organization of Indian Americans.

Patel was part of the several delegations and committees and has worked towards prospering Indo-U.S. relationship, helping President Bill Clinton and Prime Ministers of India in creating a beautiful borderless world.

Besides FIA and NFIA, Patel was the chairman of the Gujarati Associations of North America (GANA) and the National Organization of Indian American Associations (NOIAA).

He also was instrumental in forming the Indian American National Foundation (IANF), comprising major national organizations such as NFIA, Association of Indians in America (AIA), American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), and the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA), among others. He served as the secretary of IANF. The purpose was to mobilize resources to foster friendships and charities between the people of India and the United States and also build an enduring partnership between the two countries.

Patel, a politically shrewd and farsighted leader helped Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.D.) in this successful bid to pass Larry Lee Pressler amendment in the U.S. Congress in 1990.

Patel was known for his constant communications with elected officials at all levels, as well as his strong representation at the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., and the Consulate General of India in New York, in helping the community at large and expanding the activities under FIA to focus more on the wellbeing of the community.



These endeavors have won Patel laurels from many corners of the society.

He is the proud receiving of many national awards in his 45 years of illustrious public service which include a N.J. State Senate recognition and awards from Association of Indians in America, Gujarati Samaj of New York, NFIA, as well as the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

Patel was born in Gamdi, near Anand in Gujarat in 1942. He came to the U.S. nearly 53 years ago to study. It was 1966. Patel was enrolled at the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey, to study polymer science and chemical engineering.

Along with his community service and involvement, Patel worked in the forensic investigation division of the NYPD. He was honored with the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor 2013.

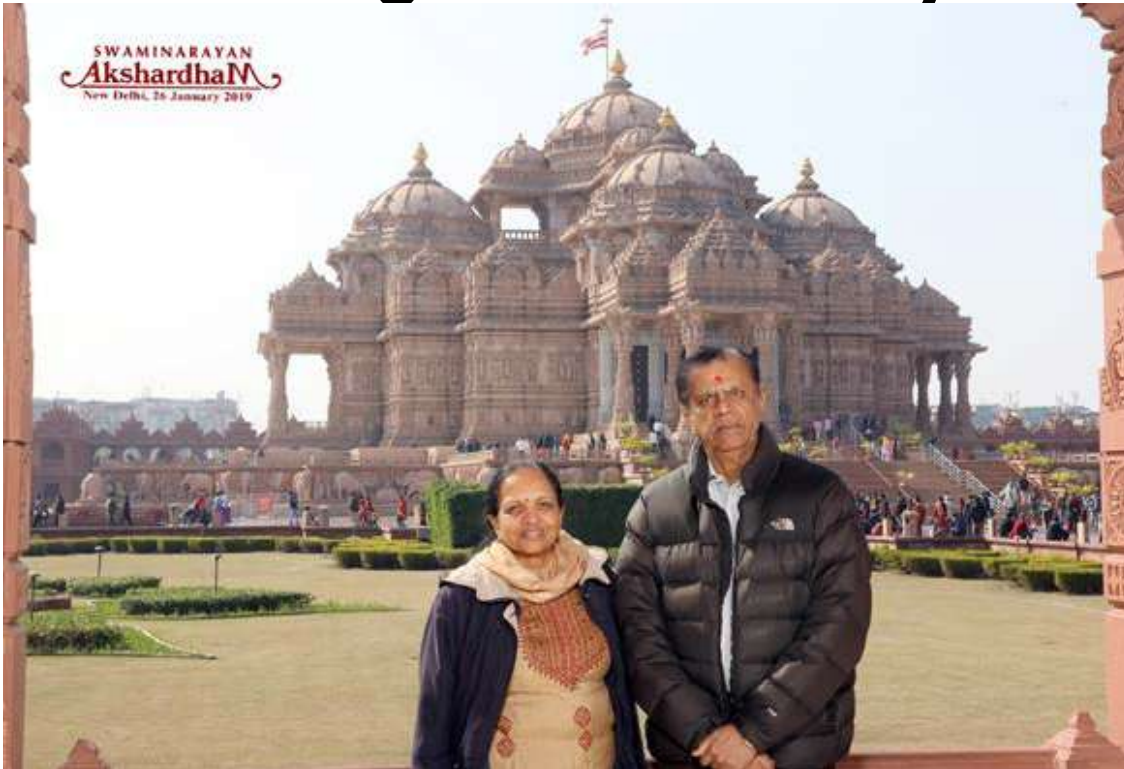
During his schooling at Stevens, Patel, a man with visionary dynamic leadership and missionary zeal, incredible resources and political wisdom, soon became the founding leader of Indian Students Association. He successfully undertook the project of screening Indian movies at Hoboken which drew a large Indian audience and raised over \$10,000 for charity. This was instrumental in laying down the Indo-American Community Organization to help prosper Indo-U.S. relationship and also to galvanize Indian Americans to voice their opinions on various national and international issues.

We at FIA convey our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Patel's family. FIA also expresses heartfelt gratitude to all of the FIA family, supporters, media, and community leaders for their trust and continued support to Rameshbhai and FIA.

We also extend our gratitude to the Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Consul General of India in New York Sandeep Chakravorty, and all other Indian Foreign Service officers, as well as to all local, and international government officials. We are also thankful for the condolence messages from distinguished community leaders, performers, and actors, who have been associated with the nonprofit organization during Patel's tenure.

As Ramesh Patel would say, we conclude with the same, Shankar dada ki Jai!

HH Mahant Swami Maharaj Offers Prayers on the Passing of Community Leader Ramesh Patel



HH Mahant Swami Maharaj, spiritual leader of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, has offered prayers after learning of the passing of FIA chairman and community leader Ramesh Patel.

Rameshbhai was a symbol of pride for Indian Americans, working diligently to connect celebrities, media members, community leaders and political figures from the U.S. as well as India. He was a visionary community leader, who organized many conferences, seminars, exhibitions and parades to promote Indian culture.

Rameshbhai was a close friend and supporter of HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj and BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha. His deep respect and reverence for Pramukh Swami Maharaj was well-known, and he was very outspoken about his affinity to Swamishri and the work done by BAPS.

Swami Maharaj and BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha. His deep respect and reverence for Pramukh Swami Maharaj was well-known, and he was very outspoken about his affinity to Swamishri and the work done by BAPS.

In his first meeting with Pramukh Swami Maharaj, Swamishri asked him about his native village in India. When Rameshbhai mentioned 'Gaamdi' and his uncle's name 'Jivabhai', Pramukh Swami Maharaj immediately connected his whole family lineage and added that his uncle was a police officer in Gaamdi. Overwhelmed with Swamishri's sharp memory, Rameshbhai was immediately attracted to Swamishri and felt a deep connection to him. From then on, Pramukh Swami Maharaj lovingly referred to him as 'Ramesh Gaamdi'.

Pramukh Swami Maharaj's care for Rameshbhai was so deep that once, when Swamishri learned of the passing of Rameshbhai's mother, Swamishri immediately called him to offer condolences, blessings and prayers. It was Rameshbhai's sincere dedication and devotion that helped strengthen his connection with BAPS. During the initial days of the India Day Parade, BAPS offered volunteers to help implement the event successfully. In 1994, Rameshbhai was also instrumental in organizing an FIA seminar in Edison, New Jersey. He also received blessings from Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

Rameshbhai was a genuine humanitarian and philanthropist. In 1993, when an earthquake struck Latur in Maharashtra, Rameshbhai immediately mobilized the Indian American community to help the victims. He worked diligently to garner support for BAPS Charities relief work in the Latur area. He was so concerned that he visited Latur personally to see how he could help further.

Rameshbhai's passing is a tremendous loss for the Indian American community, but his legacy will continue to live on. He will be remembered for his vision, dedication and commitment to the Indian American diaspora. HH Mahant Swami Maharaj, the current spiritual leader of BAPS, has offered deepest condolences and prayers for his family.





Taranjit Singh Sandhu

Ambassador of India to the U.S.

Very sad to learn about the passing away of Ramesh Patel, the Founder Member and Chairperson of Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) after 2 month long fight against Covid 19. A highly respected Indian American Community leader, we will miss him very much. RIP!



Sandeep Chakravorty

Consul General of India in New York

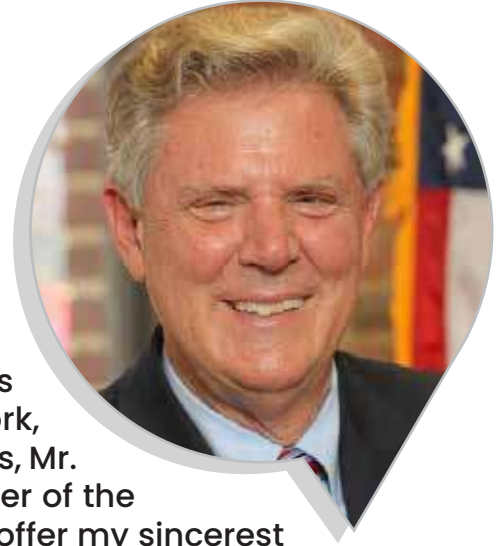
Rameshbhai Patel was a towering personality in every sense of the word. Tall and imposing, he never minced his words in conveying his point of view. He was a straight talker - direct and no nonsense. I vividly remember when I first met Rameshbhai. It was at the India Day Parade of August 2017. I had just arrived in New York and the parade was my first big event. Rameshbhai came up to me and after the initial introductions told me, "CG (he always called me CG), if you are with the community, I will be with you, if not, then I will be the first person go on dharna against you." I was surprised by the bluntness of the remark, but understood the importance of the message and the character of the person. Since then, we have had several occasions to meet. I hope that I did not let him down. He was always supportive of the consulate and me personally, and whenever we needed his help, he was there. A true patriot with great community consciousness, Rameshbhai was a pioneer in the true sense of the word. He was one of the early arrivals in the East Coast, in the late 60s/early 70s, when the Indian population here was small and there were many existential issues ranging from discrimination to missing Indian culture. Rameshbhai filled that void by mobilizing the community and becoming an active participant in community activities, whether it was establishing the National Federation of Indian Associations (NFIA) or the Federation of Indian Association of the Tristate area (FIA) or being a staunch supporter of the India Day Parade in New York or showing Indian films in college campuses. Undoubtedly India Day Parade was his passion and I feel happy that the consulate's involvement in the parade increased during the last three years, with us participating with floats. He had great plans for celebrating 50 years of FIA and 40 years of the parade this year in 2020. Sadly this won't be, but whenever the India Parade takes place, it will bring back his memories. It brings me happiness that we were able to recognize the contributions of Rameshbhai and FIA during the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas celebrations at the consulate in January 2019. His legacy is building young leadership within FIA and making the India Day Parade as the biggest India Day Parade outside India.



Frank Pallone

New Jersey Congressman

I was sad to hear of the recent passing of Mr. Ramesh Patel, whom I knew well through his many years of public service. Mr. Patel was a strong voice and a respected leader in the Indian American community, and I know he will be sorely missed by his family, friends, and by the many organizations he served through his work as chairman of the Federation of Indian Associations of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut (FIA-tri-state). Beyond his civic actions, Mr. Patel was a leader through his service as a well-recognized member of the forensic investigation division of the New York Police Department. I offer my sincerest condolences to all who were blessed to have met him.



Vin Gopal

New Jersey State Senator

My heart goes out to the family and friends of Ramesh Patel, the founder and former chairman of the Federation of Indian Associations of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut and a lifelong public servant, who passed away from complications related to COVID-19 this past weekend. A former member of law enforcement who served his nation and community faithfully, Ramesh was also a dedicated advocate for immigration reform, international humanitarian aid, and the betterment of America's Indian community. Our state's culture, community, and history have been deeply touched by his compassion and bold leadership. He will be sorely missed.



Anand Kumar

Founder, Super 30

Shocking. FIA NY NJ CT founder Ramesh Patel, who kept the flag of Indian pride afloat for 40 years as organizer of India Day Parade in New York, is no more due to Covid-19. Can't forget sir, how you motivated and honored me. RIP.





Dr. Vijay Jolly

Senior BJP leader

Condolences. India lost a true son of the soil in the U.S. He was a karma yogi. An adopted American. But he was fully embedded in Indian and Hindu philosophy. Tributes to him. Pray to the almighty for peace to his soul. Om Shanti Om.



Chandrakant Patel

Former President, OFBJP

As a founding president of FIA of Tampa Bay, and former president of OFBJP USA, I offer my prayers to Late Shree Rameshbhai Patel. May God bless his soul in peace. I knew him personally and we worked together since 2006. As a chairman of FIA Tri-state, his work and service done to our Indian diaspora cannot be forgotten. He kept us all united. He was tough from outside, but kind, loving and caring from inside. Words seem inadequate to express the sorrow felt by the loss. He will be missed and remembered forever. Our deepest sympathy to his family.



Dilip Chauhan

Director of Southeast/Asian Affairs
Office of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams

Big loss to the entire South Asian Community. I'm really going to miss his dynamic leadership, dynamic speech. Please accept my deepest condolences.





Nitin Vyas

**Vice President of
Indo-American Culture Association**

"It's hard to forget someone who gave you so much to remember." I am deeply saddened by the loss of a great community leader Shri Ramesh Patel. To reminisce over fond memories with him in past events, I came across this most memorable picture from our very recent meeting at The Indian Consulate of NY, where I received the Pravasi Award earlier this year. It was as usual great to see him, not realizing that it will be our last photo together. My journey getting to know him personally began when I started working in FIA along with Rameshbhai from 1992 - 2002. I still remember during those years, he would always come to my restaurant Madras Mahal after the India Day Parade. There are people who are known for what they are, and there are people for what they have done. Rameshbhai will be remembered for both. Om Shanti



Prem Bhandari

**Chairman,
Jaipur Foot USA**

We are extremely shocked to hear the sad demise of Shri Rameshji. May his soul rest in peace. We all pray to almighty God to give strength to the whole family for such a huge loss and we stand with you at this sorrow time with you. Please accept our sincere condolences and know that our prayers are always with you.



Hemant Bhatt

Founder and Chairman, SARC

I and the South Asian Republican Coalition (SARC) are extremely saddened and shocked with this heartbreaking and unfortunate demise of Rameshbhai Patel. The FIA and the Indian American community has lost a real leader and lion who led us and was involved in community services all these years. I interacted with him several times at many community events and he always encouraged me. He was very honest in his speeches, speaking his mind without fear or favor and brought his views very emphatically to the audiences.

I and SARC express heartfelt condolences to the family members. We all pray for eternal peace to the departed soul and to give sufficient strength to the family members of Rameshbhai to withstand this irreparable loss. God bless.





Ravi Batra

Attorney

Ranju Batra joins me in our heartfelt condolences to the family of dear Ramesh Patel. Sadly, Coronavirus has felled a giant. The loss is huge. He was a dear friend and a great supporter. We enjoyed celebrating him and nicknamed him the 'Ironman' in the U.S., as Sardar Patel was in India.



Shree Saini

**Miss India USA,
Miss India Worldwide**

Rest in Peace our legend Rameshji. No one can ever take your place. My heart is broken and completely shattered. Thank you for inspiring me and millions of people to come together and celebrate our Indian heritage. You gave business and performance opportunities to thousands of people. You made dreams come true. Your love for our motherland India brought our Indian community in America together, for over 50+ years. You changed the face of Indian culture in the U.S. You are an icon. Your legacy will forever be alive.



Anil Bansal

FIA President

Ramesh Bhai's passing leaves behind many of us with whom he had been spending so much time with him. He had been grooming us for the leadership role in carrying out the duties of the FIA. He was kind, supportive and strong, and was always staying on top of what needed to be done. The void is too big to be filled. Our most sincere condolences to the family and prayers for peace. Rameshbhai was so excited about FIA's golden jubilee this year.

The parade we were planning was going to have many additions, of course finishing with a grand gala. But due to Covid-19, we have had to postpone it to next year. We at the executive team promise to hold the golden jubilee mega celebrations next year, including paying Shradhanjali to Rameshbhai.





Padma Shri Dr. Sudhir Parikh

**Member,
FIA Board of Trustees**

My very good friend Ramesh Patel is not with us anymore. I saw him on Facetime few hours before this sad news came. He was friend of the whole Indian American community, chairman for life of the Federation of Indian Association NY/NJ/CT, passionate and patriotic. He was born on 20th April 1942. His birth year coincides with 'Quit India Movement'. His love and dedication for Bharat guided him to unite the Indian American community under the banner of FIA. It is a personal loss, as well as a great loss for the community. The legendary father figure is not with us any more, but his spirit will continue to guide us. We are together with the Patel family during this challenging time. We pray for strength to Patel family and our prayers for the liberation of Ramesh Bhai. Ramesh Bhai, you will be deeply missed, Deepest condolences to all friends and family members from me Dr Sudhir Parikh, Parikh family, ITVGOLD and Parikh World Wide Media. On Shanti, Shanti.



Padma Shri H. R. Shah

**Member,
FIA Board of Trustees**

Ramesh Patel, chairman of FIA of NY-NJ-CT, and veteran community leader, passes away at 78. Ramesh Patel, chairman of Federation of Indian Associations of NY/NJ/CT (FIA), which organizes the oldest annual India Day Parade in New York, passed away June 6, the FIA said. The veteran community leader was being treated for Coronavirus in the hospital for several weeks. Ramesh Patel was born on April 20, 1942 in Gujarat. A lifelong resident of New Jersey, he came to the US in 1966. He was a recipient of the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor. Mr Patel was an endearing figure in the Indian American community. One of the founders of FIA, as chairman of the organization for decades, he led the organization to new heights. He was a close friend of TV Asia chairman and CEO Padma Shri Dr H R Shah for over 50 years. "Rameshbhai was instrumental in numerous community outreach projects that helped Indian Americans as well brought them mainstream attention in the US and worldwide," said Dr Shah. "He was instrumental in starting and continuing for decades the largest India Day parade outside India in the world's biggest city New York." Dr Shah noted that Ramesh Patel was one of a kind who dedicated his life for the betterment of his fellow human beings and especially the Indian American community. "His dedication to serving the community will never be forgotten. His legacy will live on," Dr Shah added. "He leaves behind a young knowledgeable and dedicated team at FIA that will carry on his work in serving the community. One of his cherished wish and his dream was to celebrate the 50 years Golden Jubilee which remains and now becomes the responsibility of all of us to collectively come together and fulfill it with the same zeal and grandeur that he envisioned it. We mourn his loss but the best tribute we can pay to him is to celebrate his life- a well-lived life in service of others," Dr Shah said. "Our deepest condolences to his wife Suchitabehn, Suhas, Kunjal, Manisha and family," Dr Shah added. "We will miss him for life." TV Asia sends its heartfelt condolences to his family and prays for the departed soul.





Yash Pal Soi

**Member,
FIA Board of Trustees**

I am so sad and heartbroken by the untimely passing away of Rameshbhai. He was a great friend to me. He was a dynamic and very outspoken leader. I used to call him "Iron Man" Patel. We were friends and brothers for more than 50 years and together we wanted to promote the rich culture, traditions and values of Mother India. Therefore, through FIA's flagship India Day Parade in New York City, the FIA annually India's Independence Day. It is the largest parade and celebration outside of India. FIA has been taking a lead in several humanitarian issues as well as various initiatives to strengthen U.S.-India relations. We promise you Rameshbhai, that with your spiritual guidance, we will continue to enhance the rich traditions, culture and values of Mother India. We at FIA will fulfill your dreams in a dignified manner.



Chandrakant Trivedi

**Member,
FIA Board of Trustees**

With the untimely death of my dearest friend, strong supporter and appreciator, Ramesh Patel, a great era of selfless, visionary, and dynamic leadership is over. His incredible intelligence, professional brilliance, political wisdom, ability and vision to unify diversified resources, talents, monumental management skills, powerful oratory, loving, charismatic personality, loyalty and love for his wife, children, and friends, as well as his incredible patriotism and honesty, make Ramesh a legendary personality in our Indian American community. FIA was his 'jeevan mantra', his lifelong devotion and music. In the 36+ years of my working with, and under him, I have witnessed an accomplished leader, blessed by Shankar Dada, to carry on the vast work of the betterment of the Indian American community, and enhancing our successful saga here and back home. Let us work unitedly to celebrate the golden jubilee of FA - his dream project - with dedication and commitment. I have indeed lost a true friend and he community has lost a gigantic personality and leader. I am grateful to God and to Ramesh for providing 36+ years of friendship and working for the community together. I and my wife Niruben convey our condolences to his wife Sucheta and the entire family.

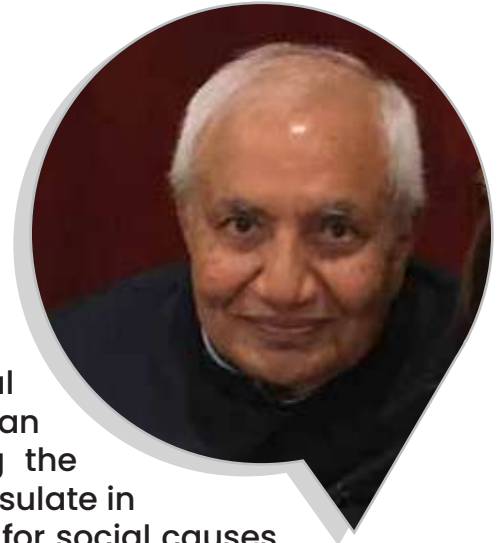




Ram Gadhvi

Member,
FIA Board of Trustees

Ramesh Patel was a personal friend of mine for over 40 years. How do I pay tribute to a man who seemed larger than life? I can speak of the man who was a great community leader. I can mention his tireless work for the Indian community here in the United States. Ramesh was fueled by a passion for the traditional values of India, especially that of Gujarat. His contributions had an immense impact on society. His contributions included serving the Federation of Indian Associations, being a liaison for the Indian Consulate in New York and the Indian Embassy in Washington D.C., advocating for social causes, guarding India's interest in Indo-U.S. relations, and helping countless members of the Indian community with social, medical, and educational needs. I can also speak of Ramesh as a dear and fiercely loyal friend. I liken his personality to that of a coconut: tough on the outside yet soft on the inside. As a true friend, his interest and concern extended to my family as well. When my daughter Ila visited us from Denver with her baby girl Maya, he would rebuke me by saying, "I know Maya and Ila are visiting, so you are not coming to the FIA meeting." Knowing how important my family time was, he encouraged my absence even if I thought it was important to attend the meeting. That was the type of friend he was. He was an important figure to so many and it will be difficult to fill this void created by his death. May the almighty God grant rest to his soul by giving strength and peace to his family to bear this loss.



Prabir Roy

Member,
FIA Board of Trustees

"Chalu Rakh Prabir, - "do not hang the phone line." Ramesh Patel's words are still ringing in my ears. He always used to introduce me as a 'twin tower of FIA' to everyone. In the early 1970's, we used to get together at the footsteps of Earl Hall at Columbia University, and discuss and plan activities for the Indian community - whether political or cultural. When FIA was formed in the mid 1970s, Ramesh got of young people and regional organizations along with him make it vibrant. Day by day he became very vocal. He was very positive and always 'YES' personality. Along with Mono Sen of Jersey City, we demonstrated against the Dot-Buster issue. People were afraid to come out then, but Ramesh had the courage to bring the people out. We travelled together to Washington, D.C. many times to stop AWAC sales to Pakistan. We jointly organized Senator Larry Pressler's meeting with Indian communities. Our friendship and activities for betterment of India rapidly grew, We respected each other. Many a times I confronted him, but Ramesh never yelled at me or said no to me. He had a very soft corner for me. He accomplished a lot, but failed to groom a person from the next generation to hold the torch. Now it's my turn to say "Hey my twin tower friend Ramesh, phone To chalu rakh." Remember you forever.





Bipin Patel

Member, FIA Board of Trustees

Ramesh Patel was a pillar of strength in our Indian community. He made the world a better place. He was the definition of a true leader - someone who commanded a room, motivated others to take action, inspired the younger generation, and had a vision of creating a strong sense of community. I've had the honor of knowing Rameshbhai for over 20 years and I can say that he was not only a mentor to many of us in FIA, but he was a good friend who always picked up his phone, showed up to our family's special events, and pushed me forward in many aspects of my life. The loss of Rameshbhai has left a void in our hearts and in our community. We will miss him forever. May his soul rest in the peace that he so richly deserves.



Andy Bhatia

Past President, Member,
FIA Board of Trustees

May his soul rest in peace and the good lord give his family and his FIA family strength to bear his loss. He was one of a kind who dedicated his life for the betterment of his fellow human beings and especially the Indian American community. His dedication to serve the community will never be forgotten. His legacy will live on. He leaves behind a young and dedicated team that will carry on his work in serving the community. During the last six years or so, he mentored and groomed many of our young men and women for leadership roles. We mourn his loss, but the best tribute we can pay to him is to celebrate his life - a well lived life in service of others.



In prayers and remembering dear friend Ramesh.





Anand Patel

**Past President, Member,
FIA Board of Trustees**

It is a great loss of life time as our dear Rameshbhai has left us. He was a good family man, a good husband, a good father, a good grandfather, and the son of a well cultured family. He was also a leader, a patriot, a 'pakka Bhartiya,' and a good mentor and motivator. To me, he was an elder brother, a 'Purshottam.' He always gave credit to others, Rameshbhai, you will be remembered by me and by so many people. We will definitely miss you, but we are committed to carry on the torch started by you, FIA will keep your dream alive, and you make us proud and happy, wherever you are.



Jayesh Patel

**Past President, Member,
FIA Board of Trustees**

Rameshbhai's passing is really shocking and beyond heartbreaking for me. He was my mentor and inspired me in many ways. He touched me and so many of us in unique and thoughtful ways throughout his life. We have created many beautiful memories together. Rameshbhai truly cherished his lifelong relationship with friends, family, neighbors, acquaintances, as well as religious, cultural and community organizations. Our heartfelt gratitude for the outpouring of your generous support, thoughts, condolences, and shared memories of Rameshbhai. He was instrumental in the inception of FIA Tristate and was closely associated with it ever since. He inspired and supported the young and energetic individuals to bring FIA to the forefront. I worked with him closely to resolve many community issues. He was fond of watching cricket and had a deep interest in politics, and debate. We used to talk for hours when we were gathering. He was very humble, kind hearted and family-oriented. He will be remembered for his unique sense of humor and good heart. We pray to the almighty to rest his soul in peace. Ohm Shanti Shanti Shanti





Srujal Parikh

**Past President, Member,
FIA Board of Trustees**

॥ कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन । मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा
तेसंगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ Ramesh Patel, fondly called Ramesh kaka,
lived by this shloka. The leader of the community and chairman of
FIA, passed away on Saturday, June 6th, 2020. Rameshkaka was a
man of action and was heavily committed to numerous community
events and organizations. From forming the India Student Association
(ISA) when he was a student at Stevens Institute of Technology in 1967 to
becoming the chairman of FIA, he got the Indian American community in the
tai-state area together by organizing world's largest India Day Parade on Madison
Ave in New York city every year.



Ramesh Patel is not a rare name in Gujarat, but then, there is only one 'Ramesh Patel' who has the honor of dining with presidents of United States – Ronald Regan, George Bush, Bill Clinton. Or being invited by Indian Prime ministers – Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and host of visiting cabinet ministers when they arrive in the tri-state area. Rameshkaka lived by the core principles of celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion in his daily life and was a tremendous role model for the Indian American community. Rameshkaka's charm, infectious attitude, and kind heart made him easy to love. He will be truly missed.



Alok Kumar

FIA Immediate Past President

We became orphans, in other words. He was the 'Iron Man' for the Indian community in the U.S. A very humble and great soul. He has great power of listening. For him, the organization came first before anything else. It was the community first, then family.

This kind of human being is very difficult to find in this materialistic world. He felt the need of a new generation and he guided the new generation to take this organization to the next level. Kaka, you will always be in our heart and life, there is nothing that can replace you in my lifetime.





Himanshu Bhatia

FIA Executive Vice President

"Legends never die in our dreams; Because...They will always live within our hearts." Proud son of India and one of the most energetic powerhouse personality of the Indian community is no more with us; "Ohm Shanti Ohm"



Saurin Parikh

FIA Vice President

I joined FIA about 10 years ago. My journey in FIA has been fully motivated and inspired by the FIA giant Shree Ramesh Patel. We called him kaka or Ramesh kaka. He was our mentor and he guided us throughout with love and respect. His exceptional vocational and persistence skills and hard work are the testimony to the successful achievements of FIA and its various Indian community projects. We as a part of the FIA family will surely miss him. Rest in peach kaka and we love you.



Parveen Bansal

FIA Secretary

Mr. Ramesh Patel, whom we all lovingly called 'kaka', was full of energy and enthusiasm to organize and serve the community. He started the largest India Day parade outside of India in New York and brought the Indian American community together in this country to showcase Indian culture and traditions to the global community. Through FIA he helped raise issues concerning the Indian diaspora community to authorities in the U.S., as well as in India. Though he will be missed on every occasion, he will live in our hearts forever.





Amit Ringasia

FIA Treasurer

Ramesh kaka you are very special and you cannot be forgotten for sure.

The impression you have had on me from the very first day when we met during IDP 2010 still remains the same, your voice is still echoing in my ears. The FIA family cannot imagine themselves without you. Words may not suffice to express the heartfelt sorrow that I feel for your passing away.

There are no goodbyes for us; wherever you are, you will always be in my heart.

Bharat Mata Ki Jai !!! Shakar Dada Ki Jai !!!



Mardavi Patel

FIA Joint Secretary

He was full of warmth and charisma, never failing to help anyone who asked for it. He is admired by those around him. He has helped bring the FIA to where it is today. He guided me into the FIA, and I hope to live up to the standards he set. Ramesh Patel is an irreplaceable person.



Haresh Shah

FIA Committee Member

It's been 25 years working with Ramesh kaka. It feels like he was part of our daily life. We have attended so many events together. He will be always there in our hearts. He is one of the greatest leaders of all time.





Ankur Vaidya

Past President, Member,
FIA Board of Trustees

I am at a loss of words to express my feelings about Rameshkaka. In the close to a decade of time spent under his care and guidance, I have so many memories, so many anecdotes. I remember the times I would argue with him to try out new avenues for FIA. Kaka, on the other hand, would calmly listen to me, and with his signature smile, tell me that my time would come too, and that it would come sooner than I'd know. Now, as I look back, I feel lost. It won't be an exaggeration to say that I am still trying to comprehend this untimely episode. Kaka has chosen another path of peace. All we are left with are his principles, blessings, memories and guidance. And with the legacy that he's left behind, we will have to prove to be the shade of a mammoth tree he provided to the FIA fraternity as well as many other associations and friends. And in doing so, he had the keen sense to pick a team good enough to fulfill his dreams and his vision for the FIA. He played the role of a fierce shield who protected and dodged maligned interferences and jealousy-filled intrusions, while the doers did their tasks and played their roles. He lived by the theory of delivery and of the saying, "ideas are dime a dozen, implementation is priceless." Kaka, I know you can hear me. I still feel like a lost rookie not knowing where to start or what to do, but I do know, my kaka, will not leave us stranded. In the form of your choice and a method of your liking, you will guide us, help us, and all of us will again get FIA to those good times you wanted to prevail. About kaka, I will never say he is gone, as I know he is not, and as is with us. "Ankur tame saru kaam karjo ane mane nichu naa ghalavta Bija badha maate.. taro Kako betho che," he would say in Guajarti. Translated into English it means, go and get the good deed done, don't let me down, you have my support. Encouraging others came naturally to him, as did community service, which was his prized jewel which he was always proud to showcase. A picture-perfect quote of Nelson Mandela comes to mind. "A leader is like a shepherd, he stays behind the flock, letting the most nibble go ahead whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along the direction is coming from the back." Kaka's anecdotes after anecdotes over time now serve as examples to review and learn. His almost clockwork-like daily 5 am and 6 am phone calls (except when his son was home) would serve as a morning cuppa joe for us youngsters who would listen to him and he would make sure to check all of us were on the call. If Alok or Srujal were not on the call, he would insist that they be 'patched in' or as kaka would say in Gujarati, "ene join kar." If we still were unable to get a hold of either one of them, that would be Kaka's goal of the day; during the course of the day he was sure to track them down, connect with them, and then update us all. He would say, "pakdi padyo ene" ("I finally got a hold of him") and then go on to brief on the call summary. Anecdotes were inclusive of his family, about his children including those of his son, where he took him to a barbershop as a potential occupation of future if he didn't study and another of him not able to become an interventional cardiologist since he broke his hand while playing basketball. They would also include his sour experiences and examples and a warning to us to watch out for those pitfalls and 'face masks'. A very clean and transparent hearted man, a people's person who loved to interact with children including my own. Kaka was indeed a man of the masses who worked very hard, did right by his family to the best of his ability and to the best of what he knew how to, without caring for those who judged him. His goal was to do right by his family and the community, which he did at the very end. Even during the last phone calls in early April, his fear was not Covid, but the worry that he didn't have a will. His words still echo in my ear. "Ankur I have no will," he said. "You have to make sure somehow we can do it." I know he would have wanted me to do it and so I will say it in an attempt to pay tribute to him and to serve our community that it was not Covid that got Ramesh Patel; Ramesh Patel would eat chew and spit covid and then some. It was the fear-mongering not just for him but for those providing care to him and those whose ill-treatment created the situation that got the best of kaka. I want to go on, but I will say Om Shanti! here.

In conclusion, kaka, I know you are listening and your FIA fraternity nephew promises you that your dream of the 50 years Golden Jubilee will be fulfilled and will be done with you together with us. A lot to share, a lot to talk and a lot to learn still.. so please guide us .. Shandar Dada ki Jai. Love you kaka...stay with us.





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