**Durvasula V. Sastry Biography**

Durvasula “Sash” Sastry was hired by United Airlines in 1961. President John F. Kennedy and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made an agreement to have cultural and technological exchanges between the United States and india, and D. V. Sastry was one of the people offered a home in the United States of America.

D. V. Sastry (a.k.a. Sash) migrated to the United States via a Greek ship named Perseverance for 32 days and landed in New York City on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, 1961.. He stayed in Queens, New York training with United Airlines for a few months and was eventually transferred to the engineering base in San Francisco, California. Sash also spent some time in Washington D. C. before coming to San Francisco.

Upon arriving in San Francisco, Sash began his community activities in addition to his work as an engineer for United Airlines. He raised funds for victims of the Indo-Chinese War and the deadly cyclone in Andhra Pradesh in 1962. He also helped organize the State Department visit of Telugu move actor, Akkinenni Nageswarao. Sash also campaigned for President Lyndon Johnson and Governor Pat Brown.

In the late 1960’s Sash worked with Mocherla Bhaskar Rao and Kalinadhi Sastry to arrange picnics and functions for the small Telugu community in the San Francisco Bay Area and Northern California. In 1971 he started celebrating all Indian national holidays with functions and showing cinemas for the Telugu community in Northern California. He did this for ten years with his wife Lakshmi, whom he went back to Andhra Pradesh to marry in 1969. Lakshmi joined him in 1970. After ten years he incorporated the wildly successful Telugu Association, the Bay Area Telugu Association (BATA) and encouraged others to take charge. BATA whose name and bylaws were scribed by Sash, still thrives today.

In 1977 Sash started many associations. He went to New York as a founding member of the Telugu Association of North America (TANA) along with Guttikonda Ravindranath,, Kiddambi Ragunath and Dr. Kakarla Subba Raoand later served as national Vice President and Cultural Committee Chair of TANA Both multiple times before it split into many associations. He was urged to serve as a unity candidate for TANA President and ATA President with a proposed merger but he declined. The same founders of TANA also founded the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIO) and took counsel form Sash. These same founders also founded the National Federation of indo-American Associations and also took counsel from Sash. Kakerala Chandrasekhar and his brother worked with Sash to start all of these organizations.

During this time, Thomas Abraham, a national Indian-American activist solicited Sash’s help in convincing the Indian-American community to support the reunification of Asian families by supporting the fifth preference in the Simpson Mazzoli bill before Congress. The Abraham and Sastry led group succeeded in allowing Asian Americans to bring their brothers, sisters, and parents to America as legal immigrants.

Also in 1977, Sash founded the South India Fine Arts association (SIFA) that still promotes arts from South India today. The same year he also founded the Hindu Community and Cultural Center (known as the Shiva Vishnu Temple or HCCC) in Livermore, California with Muthuraman Iyer.. He served as the opening ceremony Chairman and was interviewed by the full assortment of Bay Area print media including the Sunday San Francisco Examiner/Chronicle and all Bay Area television news stations.

Sash went on to serve as director or Chairman of the Shiva Vishnu Temple throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s. Sash also advised Hindu Temple organizations throughout America.

In the late `1970’s and early 1980’s Durvaula Ssstry founded the Federation of Indo-Amercian Associations of Northern California and served as President of the FIA for five years. This is an umbrella organization of all Indian organizations in the Bay Area. Sash became famous for celebrating Indian Independence Day and Indian Republic day in grand fashion in Oakland, California. During this time, Sash built relationships with local mayors and political leaders. He also organized support for Gov. Jerry Brown’s campaigns along with Raj Prasad, Kishore Kripalani and Shan Thever.

In the 1980’s as the Khalistan movement rose to prominence Sash was asked by the Indian Consulate in San Francisco and the Indian Embassy in Washington, DC to mediate with the Sikh community that considered D. V. Sastry a friend and a trusted leader. The Sikh activists finally agreed to stop protesting and disrupting Indian functions as the urging of D. V. Sastry.

In 1978, D. V. Sastry worked with the Indian Community in the Bay Area, the Indian Embassy, the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, and his friend Mayor George Moscone of San Francisco to host Prime Minister Maraji Desai of India. This is the only time a Prime Minster of India has been hosted in San Francisco and was the first time the Indian Government and Embassy allowed a Prime Minister to travel to the west coast of the United States. Much of this decision was due to the respect they had for Sash’s competence and organizational abilities.

In the early 1980’s Sash helped to host Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her sons in Los Angeles, California. During this time Sash also arranged the visit of Chief Minister N. T. Rama Rao to Silicon Valley and the Bay Area and arranged for him to get the key to the City of San Francisco from Mayor Diane Feinstein. Sash was an alternate delegate to the 1984 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, California with the help of Dr. Raj Prasad.

In the 1990’s Sash worked with Dr. Romesh Japra to expand the FIA and also became convenor of the Indo-American Trade Fair for business ties between the USA and India. He also became the co-convenor of the National Convention of the National Federation of Indian-American Associations. He also became convenor of the National Conference of the Indo-American Forum for Political Education (IAFPE).

D. V. Sastry’s Father, D. V. Subba Rao was a leading criminal lawyer, legislator, and freedom-fighter in India and went to jail as a political prisoner during the Quit India movement and was a cellmate and mentor to V. V. Giri, the future President of India. Subba Rao was also associated with Mahathma Gandhi and Bhagat Singh during the Freedom Struggle for India’s Independence.

D. V. Sastry’s brother Durvasula Chanti was politician and social worker in India and widely recognized for his services.

Along with his wife Lakshmi, Sash has sons Dinesh Sastry, Manoj Sastry, and daughter-in-law Alejandra Sastry and granddaughters Maya Alejandra Sastry, and Lianna Isabel Sastry and grandson Nicholas Krisha Sastry.

Throughout his 52 years in America, Sash was promoted several times by United Airlines into management and was rehired by them after retirement as a manager. His job took him to Santa Barbara, California, Seattle, Washington, and Mobile, Alabama, and Miami, Florida. In Mobile, Alabama, Sash became the President of the Indo-American Forum for Political Education, Alabama Chapter and also JT. Secretary National IAFPE.

Sash campaigned heavily for President Bill Clinton and was invited to the White House by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. Sash also campaigned heavily in Florida for President Obama in 2008 and 2012. Sash also campaigned for South Asian Congressional candidates Ram Uppuluri, Peter Mathews, and Neil Dhillon, and Dr. Ami Bera.

Sash’s son Dinesh Sastry has been a senior leader of the Democratic Party for two decades having served in positions with the Democratic National Committee and the Democratic Senatorial Committee and has advised political leaders in American and India as a Political Strategist including Presidential candidates and gubernatorial candidates in the USA and Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers in India.

Sash’s son Manoj is a Director at Stanford Hospital and Clinics and is responsible for facilities buildout of the new hospital.

D. V Sastry won the Outstanding Immigrant award by the California Legislature and the East Bay Institute and was nominated for the award by Ramesh Murarka, the Publisher of the reputed India West newspaper.

D. V. Sastry mentored many people who became national leaders of the indo-American community including Haresh Panchal, Dr. Vinod Sawhney, Dr. Romesh Japra, Zeevan Juthsi, and Jayaram Komati, all of whom led national organizations.

Sash has been an excellent Tennis player throughout his life and is an avid sports fan and expert in Arts and Crafts.

 **Some Awards for D. V. Sastry:**

Outstanding Immigrant from India award, California Legislature, East Bay Institute

FAA Diamond award for Aviation Excellence (U S. Federal Aviation Administration)

FAA Gold Award for Aviation Excellence (U. S. Federal Aviation Administration)

United Airlines Community Service Award

TANA (Telugu Association of North America) Lifetime service awards

FIA (Federation of Indo-American Associations) Lifetime service awards

Lifetime Arts and Cultural Organizer Award from Vamsee Arts Theater in Hyderabad, India

Lifetime Achievement Award, Delhi Telugu Academy, New Delhi, India