**Durvasula V. Sastry Biography**

Durvasula “Sash” Sastry was hired by United Airlines in 1961 when The United States and India decided to have technology exchanges.

D. V. Sastry migrated to the United States via a Greek ship named Perseverance for 32 days and landed on 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 along with friend, Mocherla Bhaskar Rao and Kalanidhi Sastry began 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, and Dr. Kakarla Subba Rao and 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.

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 Durvasula Sastry founded the Federation of Indo-American 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 Moraji 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 was co-convenor of many national trade, cultural, and political conventions. Sash’s late father, DV Subbarao was a leading criminal lawyer, legislator, and freedom-fighter and his late brother, Satyanarayanamurthy a leading politician.

Sash passed away peacefully in sleep while clutching his wife’s hand on his 48th Wedding Anniversary. Sash is survived by his wife Lakshmi, and sons Dinesh Sastry, Manoj Sastry, and daughter-in-law Alejandra Sastry and granddaughters Maya Alejandra Sastry, and Lianna Isabel Sastry and grandson Nicholas Krishna Sastry.

Sash is also survived by two sisters, Annapurna Chavali and Suryamala Peddapudi and one brother Prasad Durvasula.

Throughout his 56 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.

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.

Sastry had a life time passion for playing tennis and rooting for the Bay Area sports teams especially tge San Francisco 49ers.

**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