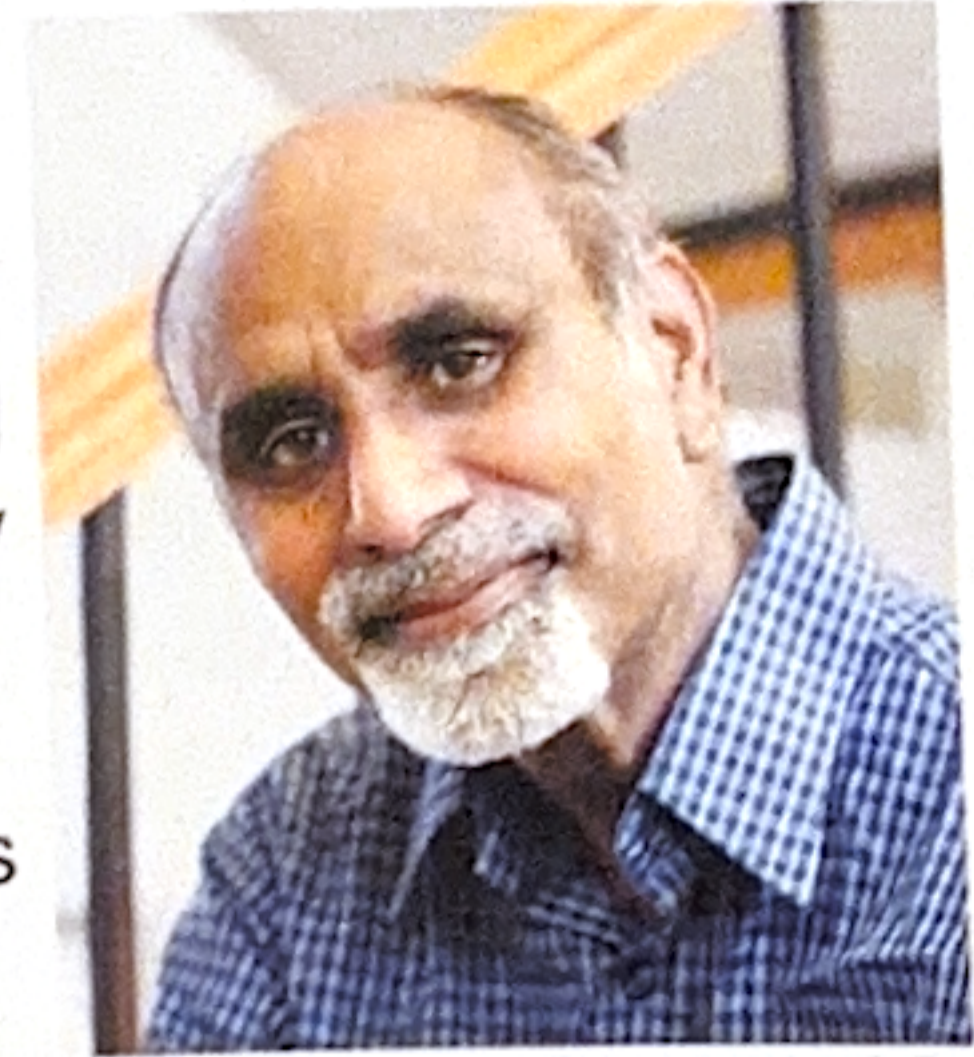


## Alumni and Alma Mater

In the autumn of 2004, the ad hoc committee formed to organize the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Gandhi Medical College had tasked me with the coordination of our fund-raising effort. I teamed up with my family for days on end mailing letters of appeal to over a thousand alumni. (While this number may astonish many, there are in fact nearly eighteen hundred GMC alumni currently living in the United States.)



Over five hundred letters were returned undelivered, as the recipients had relocated leaving no forwarding address.

In the ensuing weeks we excitedly looked forward to the mail, expecting an outpouring of enthusiasm from our many physician brethren prospering in this great country. Some days brought us great joy, but many more, alas, proved dispiriting.

One late summer evening we received a rather remarkable contribution from a GMC alumnus. It was a check for five dollars.

In vivid contrast, I recall the day when I received the first installment of the donation from Dr. Laxmai Manchikanti, who eventually contributed well over *one hundred thousand* dollars – highest to date.

Members of the committee plowed through the list of alumni and personally contacted their friends and acquaintances with much success. I made one such call myself to Dr. B. Amarender Reddy, who was a year senior to me. I had met him once upon leaving college – and that was three decades earlier. Would he remember me? I made the phone call with more than a little hesitation.

A few days later there was a check in the mail for ten thousand dollars. Similar anecdotes of unrestrained generosity by GMC alumni are far too many to enumerate here.

Let me now return to the puzzling five-dollar donation.

Was that physician serious? Or could it have been a cheeky (albeit humorless) swipe to belittle our sincere mission?

This narrative of wide variations in contributions raises a pointed relevant question:

Do alumni have *any* obligation to their Alma mater?

I recall a physician once stating half jokingly, "We have prospered, not because of, but *in spite* of the comparatively 'lesser' education we received at GMC."

It might be true that for several years after GMC opened, our facilities were not quite up to the

standards of the Osmania Medical College – and doubtless, a far cry from similar institutions in developed countries. Yet, that imbalance in quality, be it perceived or real, should in no way take away from the fact that we graduates of GMC are what we are today because of that coveted document our alma mater bestowed on us: our M.B.B.S certificates.

We are all aware that in the U.S and other western countries, alumni donate generously to their alma maters. Alumni of Guntur Medical College raised several million dollars to construct an auditorium and a trauma center. I suspect many of our alumni may be reluctant to donate as generously as they would like to, out of the fear that funds might be misappropriated – not altogether unreasonable fear given the news snippets we read of monies being misused or squandered (or worse) even within reputable charitable organizations. That conceded, we at GMC can proudly proclaim that every *single dollar* received has been put to use wisely – and with demonstrable, measurable efficacy.

Aside from volunteering countless hours of precious personal time over the past decade, the officers of GMCGA have willingly spent untold funds of their own, in addition to their generous donations, and well beyond the pale of their responsibilities. The efforts of the officers of our sister organization, GMCAA in Hyderabad, are immeasurable.

As you browse through this souvenir, we truly hope you will be convinced of our sincerity and be inspired by our efforts to serve those in need.

On behalf of the officers of the two alumni associations and the many alumni striving to advance our mission, we extend to you in advance our sincere gratitude and heart felt appreciation.

Thank you,  
Dr. R.D. Kumar.

