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Angela Anand elected president of the National Federation of Indian Associations

By Aziz Haniffa

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Angela Anand

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TYSONS, Virginia – Angela Anand, the first woman to be elected president of the National Federation of Indian Associations in its 40-year history, is a veteran of community involvement, both in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area and in California.

Anand, 73, has been the driving force behind a number of conferences for women which had become a flagship of NFIA's conventions and has been credited with attracting Gen Xers and millennials to an organization that for a time was viewed as largely patriarchal. Her

conferences always featured speakers drawn from the White House, State Department, World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Commerce Department as well as from the local universities and the private sector.

Anand had previously been an organizer of youth conferences in Los Angeles and also founded the Asian Indian Women's Network which continuously sponsored events on a quarterly basis in that city to provide networking opportunities for Indian-American and South Asian-American women.

Along with her late husband, Rajen Anand, who served in senior positions in both the Clinton and Obama administrations in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, she was also active in the Democratic Party. Anand was elected as a national delegate to its conventions in New York City and later in Denver. She served as the secretary of the Orange County Democratic Party for two terms, and since she joined NFIA, has been instrumental in organizing congressional lunches and White House briefings.

Anand told India Abroad that her goal as president will be to work with area associations and revive all the NFIA chapter across the country, revitalizing regions where NFIA has a presence, starting in 2019.

“I also intend to set up several committees for education, outreach, involving youth, women, seniors, technologists, and business people who can offer mentoring opportunities to our younger generation, because that's the only way we can attract younger members, who are our future and who could one day take over the reins on the NFIA and maintain its stature as the premier Indian American umbrella organization.”

Anand said, “I am very confident with all the promised help from NFIA stalwarts and cooperation of the new team, that we can move NFIA to the next level of community activism. I also strongly believe that the community is ready to receive me and the other five women elected members to help NFIA become more effective and action-oriented.”

She said she was grateful for the support pledged by past presidents.

A technical writer by profession, Anand has spent the last 14 years working for a global company with a multinational presence—the Harris Corporation, and in the last year for another company with a global presence, Peraton, Inc. The company manages government contracts with the departments of State, Defense, and NASA, providing services and technology support.

A native of Amritsar, Anand was born Asha Bawa. She lived in New Delhi before moving to the United States nearly five decades ago. Her father and two siblings had a lumber business, working with construction services and a variety of allied products in India. She immigrated

to the U.S. after a chance meeting with the man who was to become her husband - Rajen Anand. He had been visiting his parents in Meerut after finishing his PhD from the University of California in Davis.

They first lived in Long Beach, California, where Rajen Anand got his first teaching appointment at the university to teach nutrition and physiology, which were his specialties.

After moving to California, Angela Anand took marketing and business courses towards an MBA program at the university but motherhood intervened: She did not complete her studies as she soon became mother to two boys. The couple's sons now live and work in California.

Noting that Anand was one of four co-conveners of the recent three-day convention in the Washington, D.C. area in November, former president Inder Singh told India Abroad "she was the only one who kept the delegates and media in the loop about the convention and NFIA's past action-oriented history."

He said her efforts in organizing congressional luncheons, women's conferences and White House briefings, was well-received by delegates and the community. "She has been part of the NFIA family as a volunteer but got active in the last six years as chair of the Women's Task Force and then as vice president of NFIA."

He said he believed that as the NFIA leader "she can motivate the team and bring back old glory for which NFIA has been known in the community. My sincere hope and best wishes for her and her team."

Subash Razdan, another former president, saying her election was historic in the annals of NFIA history. "I look forward to her vision and leadership to scale newer heights for NFIA and wish her and the entire team a lot of success."

Founder Thomas Abraham, also a former president, said Anand's leadership stood out among the Indian-American women participating in the NFIA convention activities. He expressed confidence that the new team led by Anand would "reach out to all Indian-American community and professional organizations and make NFIA a truly representative body for the whole 4.5 million community."
