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Dr. Vikram H. Kaji

April 27, 2020

Obituary & Services

Tribute Wall

Obituary

Vikram Hiralal Kaji, MD, MBA, FACOG

11/12/35-4/27/2020

Dr. Vikram H. Kaji, a noted OB/GYN and long-time resident of Yardley, Pennsylvania, passed away on April 27, 2020 after a short illness due to COVID-19 at Capital Health Medical Center in Hopewell, New Jersey.

Vikram Kaji was born in 1935 in Bombay, India, in Manek House, and grew up surrounded by extended family. The son of Principal Hiralal L. Kaji and Vasant Kaji, he was the youngest of six surviving children. Gifted in music, art, mathematics and woodworking, he attended premedical studies at Elphinston College in Bombay, graduating in 1951, going on to obtain his MBBS in 1957. He subsequently graduated as Doctor of Medicine from the Gorhandas Sunderdas Medical College in 1962, and was invited by Mercer Medical Center to the United States to serve his medical internship. He completed further medical training in London in 1964 and then returned to the US to complete his residency at the Brooklyn Cumberland Medical Center. In 1966, as he completed his residency, he married the former Andrea Todd Lewis of Yardley, Pennsylvania, and remained her devoted husband until his passing.

Dr. Kaji began his professional career at the Neighborhood Health Center in Trenton, New Jersey before assuming the practice of Dr. Percy Smith. Over the ensuing decades, he built a large private OB/GYN practice with offices in Yardley, Pennsylvania as well as in Trenton and Bordentown, New Jersey. As the practice expanded he was joined by the late Dr. George Shepard, and later by Dr. Alicia Tesoro. During this time, he also worked extensively for Planned Parenthood and Mercer Regional Medical Group. In discussions with his granddaughter Maddelena Kaji recently, he explained that he chose OB/GYN as a specialty because it was a “happy-ending specialty with babies being born, making sure that mother and child are healthy, and it was as simple as that.” Although he entered medical studies as a teenager at his father’s direction, it quickly became his “duty and pride” in life.

Dr. Kaji was not afraid to use new methods or approaches in the delivery of obstetrical and gynecological care, focusing on the needs of patients and their families to be part of the birthing process when that practice was far from the norm. In the 1970’s, Dr. Kaji pioneered the concept of the out-of-hospital “birthing room” in the mid 1970’s, first in Bordentown, New Jersey and then in Yardley, Pennsylvania, allowing women to have the experience of childbirth in a more home-like and nurturing environment, although this idea was considered somewhat radical at the time. He was also was one of initial advocates for the involvement of midwives, employing Susan DeSantis CNM .

Although he also practiced at St. Mary’s Hospital in Langhorne, Pennsylvania and Helene Fuld in Trenton, Dr. Kaji spent the majority of his career on the staff of Mercer Medical Center, and his children have many fond memories of being taken to the hospital by their father, sitting in the call room where he spent many hours, being held up on his shoulders to peek into the nursery, taking two cars to every event in their childhood should he be called in for a delivery, and hearing the inevitable buzz of the radio beeper. As part of a small practice, Dr. Kaji was frequently called in at all hours, including a memorable event in the 1980’s when he had to have the police transport him by snowmobile to St. Mary’s during a blizzard.

Dr. Kaji did not discriminate in his care between those with or without insurance, and kept an office in Trenton at 740 West State Street for decades to help care for those patients. As part of his personal commitment to helping others, which he did throughout his life, he also helped support communities in his homeland of India, endowing and supporting the construction of facilities and structures at the Apang Manav Mandal in Ahmedabad, India, including the Smt. Vasantben Hiralal Kaji Girls Hostel and the Kalindi Kaji Fashion And Apparel Design Training Center. For decades throughout his life, he supported the education of the children of many friends and acquaintances from India, opening his home to them for years at a time and paying for their education at Temple University.

Although medicine was certainly a calling for Dr. Kaji, he took great pleasure outside of work in spending time with friends and family. From his earliest days in India, he was a mentor to his younger nieces and formed close bonds with his older and younger cousins, whether helping them with homework, giving them rides on his scooter, excelling at table tennis, or listening together to the family radio. After emigrating to the U.S., he was a mentor and friend for many relatives as they came to the U.S. and began their own families here, always available for advice and support, often opening his home to them. Throughout his life, he had no greater joy than spending time with family and would think nothing of driving hours to visit with his relatives or flying regularly to India for extensive visits with his sisters and brothers, introducing his children to the country of his birth. The same joy in fellowship with others extended to his work life, and he was quite famous for having large gathering of work colleagues, friends and families during the holidays or at the New Jersey Shore. In later life, he enjoyed taking trips with his children and grandchildren, and was rarely without a camera strap around his neck. In leisure time with his children, he enjoyed tennis, racquetball, miniature golf, carrom and enjoyed card games at home with Andrea. In his later years, he became enamored with “latch hooking”, and made many wonderful keepsakes for his children and grandchildren which they treasure. Never content to let his mind rest, you could also say he was addicted to Soduku, sharing that love with his granddaughters.

When describing Dr. Kaji, both colleagues and family alike are quick to mention his quiet stability , his unflappable and peaceful nature and his approach to life. He was an accepting and kind person, and always looked for and found the best in everyone he knew. He faced both the joys and travails of life with equal composure. He was adventurous and an eternal optimist, and did not waste time second-guessing himself or looking backwards, always making plans for the future. Both professionally and personally, he was a role model for his children and family, always stressing the importance of education and family ties. He had a wonderful sense of humor, and enjoyed nothing more than joking around and being silly with his grandchildren.

Dr. Kaji leaves behind his devoted wife, Andrea Todd Lewis Kaji, and his brother Kanishka H. Kaji, of Ahmedabad, India, in addition to many nieces, nephews and cousins in India, Canada and the U.S. He also leaves behind his three loving children: son Arjun Vikram Kaji, MD of Tallahassee, FL, daughter-in-law Diane Robinson Kaji ARNP, son Ashwin Lincoln Vikram Kaji of Holland, Pennsylvania and daughter-in-law Roseann Kaji, and daughter Naomi Vikram Mardesich NP of Tallahassee, Florida (predeceased by his late son-in-law Patrick Mardesich MD), in addition to grandchildren Mina Kaji, Anna Kaji, Maddelena Kaji, Rohan Kaji, Ajay Kaji, Michael Nimmo, Daniel Nimmo, Casey Wilson (Nimmo), Mira Mardesich, Brennan Mardesich, and Nicole Mardesich.

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Services

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