

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS MANINDRA K. VERMA**

Professor Emeritus Manindra K. Verma, who died on May 1, 2011, played a major role in the development of South Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Arriving in 1964 with his wife Sheela and a freshly minted Ph.D. degree in linguistics from the University of Michigan, Manindra and Sheela soon became the Hindi-language backbone on the Madison campus. Generations of Madison students took Sheela's first-year Hindi course, then moved on to take Manindra's more-advanced Hindi courses. Manindra's joint appointments in the departments of linguistics and South Asian studies also helped graduate students in both departments.

Throughout his years on the Madison campus, Manindra kept up a steady stream of scholarly publications dealing with India's languages in general and Hindi in particular. He also produced quality materials in Nepali with a grant he received from the U.S. Office of Education. One of Manindra's special interests was historical linguistics. One of my favorite South Asia stories happened when Manindra and I were attending an event with then-Wisconsin governor, Tony Earl. The three of us were in an otherwise empty room. Governor Earl shook our hands and asked what we did. We replied that we were both in the Department of South Asian Studies, and I added that Manindra was a linguist who specialized in Hindi. With his curiosity piqued, Governor Earl asked Manindra how Hindi related to other languages. That launched Manindra into a 15-minute history of Indo-European languages. Throughout Manindra's narration, I stood beside him, basking in the glory of Manindra's encyclopedic knowledge.

Manindra's gifts as an academic administrator were recognized and acknowledged by his colleagues in all his fields. Over the years he served as the chair of the Department of Linguistics, chair of the Department of South Asian Studies, director of the Center for South Asia, and chair of the Language Committee of the American Institute of Indian Studies. Manindra once told me that while he was in high school in Bihar, his family gave him his own room and kerosene lamp so that he could study late into the night, hoping that someday he might become a member of India's elite Indian Administrative Service. But he found his fascination in languages and how they worked. This led to his receiving a Fulbright fellowship that brought him to the University of Michigan, his Ph.D. in linguistics, and his invitation to join the faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Manindra and Sheela arrived in Madison with two charming kids, Sanjay and Mona. We watched the Verma kids growing up through high school, college, and graduate training. Both of them are now following distinguished careers in medicine and business. For many of us in Madison, Sanjay and Mona have been like members of our extended families. Five years ago, Sanjay and Mona helped celebrate their parents' 50th wedding anniversary.

One of Manindra's greatest contributions was the launching of the University of Wisconsin Annual Conference on South Asia. Beginning as a weekend when Wisconsin school teachers met with South Asia faculty to see what teaching materials we might provide, that conference has grown to be a major international event that every year brings to Madison from the corners of the world some of the most brilliant, newest, and most interesting scholars of South Asia. Manindra leaves on the Madison campus two ongoing legacies: the M.K. Verma scholarship fund that will enable selected students to continue their studies, and the University of Wisconsin's Annual Conference on South Asia that this year will celebrate its 40th year of bringing scholars from all over the world to share their knowledge, questions, and insights here in Madison, Wisconsin.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE  
Joseph Elder