



CLASS OF
1978

Dr Jagdish Chand Maharaj

Fiji School Of Medicine

Qualifications

- Diploma in Surgery & Medicine (DSM) - Fiji School of Medicine, Fiji, 1978
- Diploma in Clinical Hypnotherapy (DCH) - New South Wales School of Hypnotic Sciences, Australia, 1983
- Basic & Advanced Hyperbaric Medicine - Royal Australian Navy, Australia, 1987
- Master of Public Health (MPH) - University of New South Wales, Australia, 1995
- Master of Medicine (MMed) - University of New South Wales, Australia, 1996
- Fellow of the Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (FAFRM (RACP) Hons) - Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Australia, 1999
- Psychological and Physical Rehabilitation in the Community - MCTC Israel, 2000
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) - University of the South Pacific, 2011

There are amazing athletes who entertain us with their zeal and competitive spirit. Then there are incredible people who have succeeded in athletics in spite of all the odds stacked against them - some of them are born with birth defects while others sustained injuries that altered their lives forever. Sports are full of daring, strong people, however with proper holistic support the physically disabled athletes can become the cream of the crop.

Such was the vision Dr Jagdish Chand Maharaj aspired to achieve, and he has proved that indeed it can be done.

Since his humble beginnings growing up on a sugarcane farm in Ellington, Rakiraki, Dr Maharaj has strived to excel in his education and career. Third youngest of 11 siblings, Dr Maharaj admired his father, who worked on the farm by the sweat of his brow yet was a fanatic for social work.

Whether it was a religious gathering, sporting event or community affair, Dr Maharaj's father featured prominently in such occasions and encouraged his children's integrated participation.

"My dad's most notable contribution was towards the establishment and management of the Ellington Primary School. Perhaps he was motivated by my grandfather, who did the same for Wairuku Primary School in Ra, recognizing early the true value of education," Dr Maharaj, 63, relates.

Dr Maharaj worked on the family sugarcane farm while studying to become a doctor at the Fiji School of Medicine. He drew immense inspiration from his parents and the hardships endured by them in his pursuit to study medicine.

"My upbringing and the struggles of the farm drove me to push myself harder to achieve the goal of becoming a doctor. Despite our large family, my parents did their best to educate all my siblings and I, recognizing that education was crucially important for the advancement not only of our individual lives but of our family

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also,” Dr Maharaj said. “My early ambition of becoming a doctor was to help the people of my community. Reflecting on that now, I can see that I was able to do this in Fiji, having worked for over 25 years in the public service.”

As a medical student, Dr Maharaj participated in numerous sporting activities including karate, soccer, hockey and chess.

In his early career as the Area Medical Officer in the Navua Sub-division, Dr Maharaj was the lone medical officer in-charge of the Navua-Namosi-Serua highlands providing for their basic medical needs. He progressed up the health service from Medical Superintendent of Tamavua Hospital to the Consultant in-charge of establishing Fiji’s National Rehabilitation Medicine Hospital.

‘His leadership and management were instrumental in founding sporting bodies for athletes with disabilities, and these were Fiji Paralympic Committee and Oceanic Paralympic Committee. He availed key mentorship and guidance in youth development with the most successful example being Fiji’s and the South Pacific’s only Paralympic Gold Medalist and current Assistant Sports Minister Honourable Mr Iliesa Delana.’

Dr Maharaj has fulfilled the role of Fiji Team Manager and Fiji Team Physician on multiple occasions to various local, regional, and international sporting

competitions, including Chef-de-Mission of the Fiji Paralympic team to the 2000 Sydney games.

He has authored numerous scientific papers and his research and clinical interests include stroke, spinal cord injury, disability issues including quality of life and psychological well-being.

Dr Maharaj’s contribution to sporting community is ongoing in his role as the Director of Finance for the Oceanic Paralympic Committee which supports the development of sporting talents in athletes with disabilities throughout the Pacific region.

In recognition for his efforts, he was awarded Fiji Medical Association Annual Mudaliar’s Prize for contribution towards Medical Education and Continuing Postgraduate Education in Fiji for 1999-2000. He was also awarded Administrator of the Year in 2000 and Fiji Olympic Order 2012 by FASANOC in recognition of exemplary qualities and service to sports.

Dr Maharaj has been a senior lecturer at FSM for nearly 20 years. Dr Maharaj has also performed services for the Royal Fiji Military Forces (1982-2003) and has been part of the United Nations Forces in Lebanon deployment in 1982 with the rank of Captain. Since his promotion to the rank of Major, Dr Maharaj served as medical advisor to the Commander.

Dr Maharaj, who left Fiji at the end of 2003 after retiring from the Ministry of Health, trusts that becoming a doctor is not the end of learning as the profession demands lifelong commitments.



“The climb up the professional ladder is not a rapid one as experience within the clinical setting could dictate pace and sometimes this could take years to achieve,” he relates.

Currently Dr Maharaj is the Director of Medical Services of a specialist 34 bed rehabilitation hospital at Lords Hospital and Community Health Service in Dubbo, New South Wales, Australia, and leads a high functioning multi-disciplinary group of health professionals as the Senior Staff Specialist and Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine. He is also a Clinical Associate Professor at the School of Rural Health, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney.

Dr Maharaj is married to Sashi with two children, and is a grandfather to one. He advises aspiring alumni to have short and long term goals, both in their career and personal lives and to work hard towards achieving them.

“Begin to monitor your progress and regularly review your path. Always look for opportunities on how you can contribute more throughout your career. Finally, don’t let setbacks deter you; reset, refocus and aim higher than the benchmark.”