



Sikh Coalition Member Organizations

American Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee (AGPC)
Bay Area Sikhs
Columbia University Sikhs
New England Sikh Studies Circle
Sikh American Association (SAA)
Sikh Heresy Regulation Board
Sikh Network
Sikh Sewa
Sikh Sisterhood
Sikh Youth Federation of North America

*Special thanks to The Sikh American Association for
hosting The Sikh Coalition Awards Banquet*



Donations should be made payable to The Sikh Coalition
PO Box 7132, New York, NY 10150-7132 or at www.sikhcoalition.org

The Sikh Coalition Awards Banquet

Hosted by the Sikh American Association, in conjunction with



May 14, 2002

The Kellogg Conference Center
Gallaudet University
Washington, DC



The Sikh Coalition is grateful for your presence at the first annual Sikh Coalition Awards Banquet, hosted by the Sikh American Association.

The Sikh Coalition Awards Banquet is an opportunity for Sikh Americans from across the country to formally recognize those champions of tolerance and respect within Congress, federal agencies, advocacy groups, and the media, who have been crucial in ensuring the safety of at-risk communities following the horrific events of September 11th.

The Sikh Coalition thanks you for joining us at this historic event.

Program:

6:30 – 7:30 pm Reception & Dinner
7:30 – 8:15 Keynote Addresses
8:15 – 9:20 Awards Session

Keynote Speakers:

Senator Richard Durbin
Congressman Mike Honda
Congressman Christopher Shays
Dr. James Zogby – Arab American Institute

Awardess

Earnest Bayner & Susie Ahn – Office of Congressman Mike Honda
Natacha Blain – Chief Counsel, Senator Richard Durbin
Deborah Barfield – Newsday
Paul Igasaki – Vice Chairman, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Deepa Iyer – Department of Justice
Deborah Kong – Associated Press News
Norman Mineta – Secretary, Department of Transportation
Karen Narasaki – NAPALC
Dr. Navinderdeep Singh Nijher
Len Wolfsen – Office of Congressman Christopher Shays
Blane Workie – Department of Transportation

Senator Richard Durbin*Outstanding Leadership Award*

Senator Durbin is the 47th U.S. Senator from the State of Illinois and the first Illinois Senator to serve on the powerful U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee in more than a quarter of a century. He is the state's senior Senator and chairman of the bipartisan Illinois delegation.

Elected to the U.S. Senate on November 5, 1996, Senator Durbin serves on the Appropriations Committee, Senate Judiciary Committee, the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Senate Committee on Rules & Administration.

Senator Durbin has taken to the Senate his fight to protect children from the harm caused by tobacco, authoring landmark legislation to ban smoking on commercial airline flights. For his work, he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Lung Association. In 1999, he was honored as the American Public Health Association's "Legislator of the Year." Senator Durbin also led the effort to consolidate and modernize the fragmented federal food safety system under one agency.

Senator Durbin has been a champion of Illinois farmers and has fought tirelessly to promote ethanol use. In 1998, he secured passage of a provision extending the ethanol tax incentive to 2007. In 2000, he worked with other members of the Illinois delegation for funding for the construction of an ethanol research pilot plant near the Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville campus, a project he has promoted since the early 1990s.

Senator Durbin received a B.S. in Foreign Service and Economics, as well as a law degree, from Georgetown University. He and his wife, Loretta, have three children and one grandchild.

Dr. Navinderdeep Singh Nijher*Service to Humanity Award*

On September 11th, Dr. Nijher was one of the first responders who volunteered to join in the struggle to save the lives of fellow Americans at the World Trade Center. Despite the overwhelmingly bleak situation, Dr. Nijher and other volunteers continued to provide medical support in the weeks following the attacks.

Sadly, Dr. Nijher's physical appearance as a Sikh led to harassment, hate-motivated gestures, and physical threats in the days, weeks, and months after September 11th.

Dr. Nijher completed both undergraduate and medical school studies at Boston University before joining a surgical residency in Brooklyn, NY. He currently lives in Manhattan with his wife, Sukhbir.

Len Wolfsen*Dedication to Service Award*

Mr. Wolfsen works in Congressman Shays office and was instrumental to ensure safe passage of a Senate Resolution condemning hate crimes against Sikh Americans, and all Americans. Working with representatives from co-sponsor Congressman Honda's office, Mr. Wolfsen was a tremendous resource for the Sikh Coalition during the education and outreach campaign conducted following September 11th.

Blane Workie*Department of Transportation*

Ms. Workie has been a true friend to the Sikh American community. She spearheaded the DOT initiative to craft DOT / FAA guidelines for security personnel with regard to Sikh travelers. The issuance of these guidelines in November led to a marked decrease in the number of incidences of profiling and unwarranted "turban searches" of Sikh travelers.

Ernest C. Baynard*Dedication to Service Award*

Mr. Ernest Baynard serves as the Communications Director and Spokesman for Congressman Mike Honda. In 2001, Ernest proposed and implemented a project with the *National Football League* and *Major League Baseball* that resulted in the production of a nationally televised spot calling for racial and religious tolerance in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks. He has also worked for Congressman Michael Forbes and served as Special Assistant to the office of Secretary Cuomo at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Karen Narasaki*Community Outreach Award*

Karen Narasaki is the President and Executive Director of the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC). Ms. Narasaki also serves on the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights as the Chairperson of its Compliance/Enforcement Committee.

Before joining NAPALC, Ms. Narasaki was the Washington, D.C. Representative for the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the nation's largest membership-based Asian American civil rights organization. Ms. Narasaki directed JACL's national advocacy program. Prior to that she was a corporate attorney at Perkins Coie in Seattle, Washington. Before joining Perkins Coie, she served as a Law Clerk to Judge Harry Pregerson on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in Los Angeles.

Congressman Michael M. Honda*Outstanding Leadership Award*

Congressman Mike Honda was born in California, but spent his early childhood with his family in an internment camp in Colorado during World War II. His family returned to California in 1953, becoming strawberry sharecroppers in Blossom Valley in South San Jose. In 1965, Congressman Honda interrupted his college studies to answer President Kennedy's call for volunteer service. He served two years in the Peace Corps building schools and health clinics in El Salvador.

Congressman Honda went on to earn degrees in Biological Sciences and Spanish, and a Masters in Education. He became a science teacher in Sunnyvale, conducted educational research at Stanford, and went on to become a principal of two public schools while marrying and raising his family in what is now called Silicon Valley.

In 1971, Congressman Honda was appointed by then-Mayor Norman Mineta to the San Jose City Planning Commission. In 1981, Mike was elected to the San Jose Unified School Board. In 1990, Mike became the first and only Asian Pacific American to serve on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. Congressman Honda was elected to the California Assembly in 1996 and was reelected in 1998 with over 75% of the vote.

As a newly elected Member of Congress from Silicon Valley, Congressman Honda is taking a leading role in bringing Democrats and Republicans together to better understand technology issues. He also serves as Vice Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and continues to be a strong voice for the cause of social justice, tolerance and civil rights in California and the Nation's Capital.

Congressman Honda's wife, Jeanne, is a teacher at Baldwin Elementary School in San Jose. They have two grown children, Mark and Michelle.

Congressman Christopher Shays
Outstanding Leadership Award

Congressman Shays, representing Connecticut's 4th District, has been compared by the New York Times to Theodore Roosevelt and Robert Kennedy. He is a leader among moderates in the Republican Party. He advocates fiscally conservative and socially moderate views both in Congress and on the national stage.

Congressman Shays is known as a hard-working advocate for reform, making Congress more accountable and responsive to the people it serves. He was the driving force behind the Congressional Accountability Act, which requires Congress to live by the laws it sets for the rest of the country. Not only is he a leader of the coalition supporting campaign finance reform, but he is also a nationally recognized environmentalist. Congressman Shays has been endorsed by the League of Conservation Voters and the Sierra Club for his strong support of Clean Water and Endangered Species legislation, as well as his aggressive stance in favor of strict new Clean Air regulations.

Congressman Shays serves as the Chairman of the Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security, which oversees the Departments of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs. Additionally, as a state representative, Congressman Shays spoke out against abuses in the state probate system, and, while a Connecticut state representative, was sent to jail by a judge for speaking out against the corruption in the court system. Congressman Shays has been a member of the House of Representatives since 1987.

Congressman Shays attended Principia College and then gained an MBA and MPA from New York University. He lives in Bridgeport, Connecticut with his wife, Betsi deRaimes, and daughter, Jeramy Alice.

Norman Y. Mineta
Outstanding Leadership Award

As Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta oversees an agency with 100,000 employees and a \$58.7 billion budget. Created in 1967, the U.S. Department of Transportation brought under one umbrella air, maritime and surface transportation missions.

From 1975 to 1995 he served as a member of U.S. House of Representatives, representing the heart of California's Silicon Valley. As a member of Congress, Secretary Mineta was known for his dedication to the people of his district, for consensus building among his colleagues and for forging public-private partnerships. Secretary Mineta's legislative and policy agenda was wide and varied, including major projects in the areas of economic development, science and technology policy, trade, transportation, the environment, intelligence, the budget and civil rights.

Secretary Mineta and his family were among the 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry forced from their homes and into internment camps during World War II. After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley, Secretary Mineta joined the Army in 1953 and served as an intelligence officer in Japan and Korea. While in Congress, he was the driving force behind passage of H.R. 442, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which officially apologized for and redressed the injustices endured by Japanese Americans during the War. In 1995, George Washington University awarded the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Medal to Mineta for his contributions to the field of civil rights.

Secretary Mineta is married to Danealia (Deni) Mineta. He has two sons, David and Stuart Mineta, and two stepsons, Robert and Mark Brantner.

Deepa Iyer*Spirit of Fellowship Award*

Ms. Iyer is a civil rights attorney in Washington, DC. She has been a Trial Attorney with the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice for two years now. She works primarily on cases involving employment discrimination based on an individual's national origin, immigration status or accent. Since September 11th, Ms. Iyer has been addressing backlash-related issues of discrimination against Sikhs, Muslims and other South Asians. As part of this work, Ms. Iyer has conducted outreach to South Asian organizations, received and referred complaints of discrimination to appropriate federal agencies and served as a liaison between South Asian communities and governmental entities.

In her spare time, Ms. Iyer serves on the Board of Directors of SAALT, South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow, a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing civic engagement among South Asian Americans. She is the Director of a project, entitled "Raising Our Voices: South Asian Americans Address Hate," intended to raise awareness about hate crimes and bias incidents committed against South Asians.

Deborah Kong*Excellence in Journalism Award*

As a national minority issues writer for the Associated Press, Ms. Kong ensures that minority voices are presented in a fair and accurate way on the newswire. After September 11th, she covered many issues facing Sikh Americans in an accurate and unbiased manner.

Ms. Kong is, unfortunately, unable to attend from the West Coast but sends her heartfelt appreciation for this honor from the Sikh Coalition.

Dr. James Zogby*Spirit of Fellowship Award*

Dr. James J. Zogby is founder and president of the Arab American Institute (AAI), a Washington, D.C.-based organization which serves as the political and policy research arm of the Arab American community. Since 1985, Dr. Zogby and AAI have led Arab American efforts to secure political empowerment in the United States. Through voter registration, education and mobilization, AAI has moved Arab Americans into the U.S. political mainstream.

For the past two decades, Dr. Zogby has been involved in a full range of Arab American issues. A co-founder and chairman of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign in the late 1970s, he later co-founded and served as the Executive Director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Dr. Zogby has testified before U.S. House and Senate committees, has been guest speaker on a number of occasions in the Secretary's Open Forum at the U.S. Department of State, and has addressed the United Nations and other international forums.

In 1975, Dr. Zogby received his doctorate from Temple University's Department of Religion, where he studied under the Islamic scholar, Dr. Ismail al-Faruqi. He was a National Endowment for the Humanities Post-Doctoral Fellow at Princeton University in 1976, and on several occasions was awarded grants for research and writing by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Defense Education Act and the Mellon Foundation. Dr. Zogby received a Bachelor of Arts from Le Moyne College. In 1995, Le Moyne awarded Zogby an honorary doctoral of laws degree and in 1997, named him the college's outstanding alumnus.

Dr. Zogby lives in Washington, DC with his wife Eileen Patricia McMahan and is the father of five children.

Susie Ahn*Dedication to Service Award*

Ms. Suzie Ahn serves as a Legislative Assistant at the Office of Congressman Michael Honda. In this capacity she advises Congressman Honda on all matters considered in The Committee on Budget. She additionally drafts legislation and advances it through the legislative process. Ms. Ahn has worked with Congressman Honda for almost a year. Prior to this position she held a similar position at the Office of Congressman Xavier Becerra where she advised the Congressman on all matters considered in the Committee on Ways and Means. Ms. Ahn started at Congressman Becerra's office as a Field Deputy. Prior to her work with the Congressmen, Ms. Ahn worked with the Korean American Coalition. Ms. Ahn holds a B.A. in Political Science from The University of California at Irvine.

Natacha Blain*Dedication to Service Award*

As Chief Counsel for Senator Richard Durbin, Ms. Blain was instrumental in crafting the Senate Resolution condemning hate crimes against Sikh Americans. She provided the invaluable guidance in securing critical initial co-sponsorship of the resolution. Natacha diligently pursued passage of the resolution while working closely with members of the Sikh American Association and Sikh Coalition.

Deborah Barfield Berry*Excellence in Journalism Award*

Ms. Barfield Berry is a Washington correspondent for Newsday, the eighth largest newspaper in the country. She covers domestic policies, including welfare, poverty, prescription drugs and other social issues.

While in Washington, Ms. Barfield worked on the impeachment of former President Bill Clinton and covered the 2000 presidential campaign traveling with Democratic candidates Senator Bill Bradley and Vice President Al Gore. In the wake of September 11th, she has covered everything from the humanitarian aid efforts in Afghanistan to concerns about racial profiling and protecting the civil liberties of Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and Sikh Americans.

Paul M. Igasaki*Community Outreach Award*

Mr. Igasaki is the Vice Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He was initially nominated by President Clinton and confirmed by the United States Senate in 1994. From January to October, 1998, Mr. Igasaki served as Acting Chairman. He was confirmed for a second term as Vice Chair on October 21, 1998. He is the first Asian American to serve in these positions at EEOC.

Mr. Igasaki is the architect of the agency's strategy for handling charges more efficiently and to zero in on cases that will have the greatest impact on job discrimination. His team's recommendations led to an overhaul of the EEOC's case processing and the creation of a National Enforcement Plan.

An attorney in California and Illinois, Mr. Igasaki received his J.D. from the University California, Davis and his B.A. from Northwestern University.

