

Intro: Professor Hari Shankar Shukla

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Professor Hari Shankar Shukla MS, FRCSEd, PhD, Fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences (India), and an ex-Captain of the Army Medical Corps has achieved the summit of success through sheer hard work. Inspired by his father, a Professor of *Sanskrit*, he climbed the surgical ladder under the guidance of doyens in surgery like Professor Pritam Das and Professor L.E. Hughes.



The venerable parents



Hari Shukla, a Medical Student: 1964



War time: 1971
Hari Shukla an army captain

As a brilliant scholar, he won several medals and honors during his under graduate days at his Medical School in Allahabad. He joined the Military Hospital in short service commission, and saw action in the war of 1971.

He returned to the alma mater after 5 years, completed the surgical residency program and was awarded the degree of Masters of Surgery. His work on abdominal tuberculosis at that time earned him international acclaim.

He was selected as a Surgical Registrar of the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff (UK). He gained experience in clinical immunology and nutrition and pursued clinical surgical work in breast, gastrointestinal

and head and neck surgery under his mentor, Professor L.E. Hughes. With his young and innovative mind, he designed a new flap reconstruction for the perineal defect after abdominoperineal resection for rectal cancer, now a landmark.

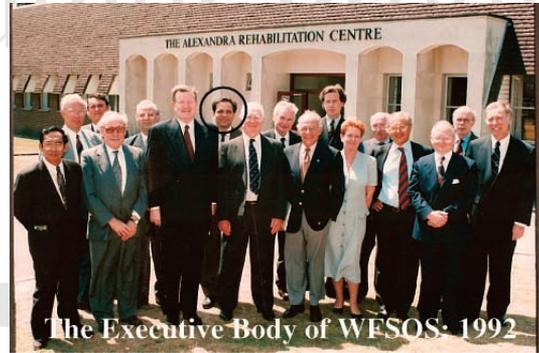
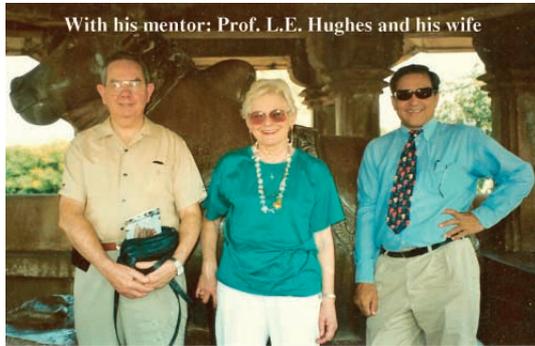
A project scheme under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India helped to bring

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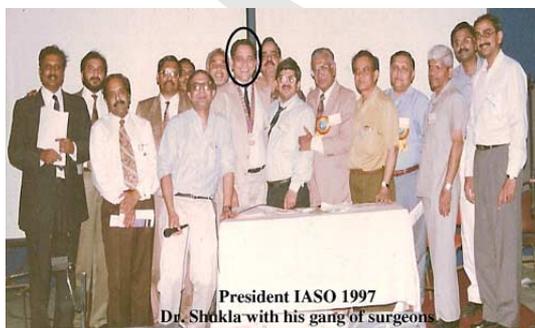
him back to work at his Medical School at Allahabad in 1977. During this period also, he did not fail to make a mark among his residents working in the Department of Surgery, a number of who are holding key academic positions in the country today.

Professor Shukla then moved to the Department of Surgery, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, to the eternal city of Varanasi, in 1979 and made Varanasi his home. With years of hard work he rose from lecturer and reader to professor.

His relentless efforts led to the creation of the new Department of Surgical Oncology. Here he has built around him a sumptuous academic unit attracting huge research grants, a trail of doctoral students and buzzing clinical and teaching activities. His legendary surgical skills have benefited thousands of cancer patients and of course, his residents. He has to his honor various orations and awards and his administrative skills fetched him key positions at home and abroad. The most notable being appointment of Chairman of Academic Committee of All India Institutes of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.

He has served as the President of the Indian Association of Surgical Oncologists (1997) and currently heads his Department of Surgical Oncology, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.

He is also a member of the executive committee of the World Federation of Surgical Oncology Societies (WFSOS) since 1998.



Professor Shukla, a man of varied interests, travels extensively in academic pursuits and burns the midnight oil to work out special packages on clinical surgical research, teaching and patient care with keen emphasis on the Indian perspective. He affectionately follows up the academic careers of many of his students and colleagues and takes pride in their success. An action-oriented compassionate person, he is handsome, humane, and humorous. Dedicated to the cause of his patients, he regularly visits his native village to help create awareness of cancer among the villagers. He always takes his close friends and teachers to plant trees in his village.

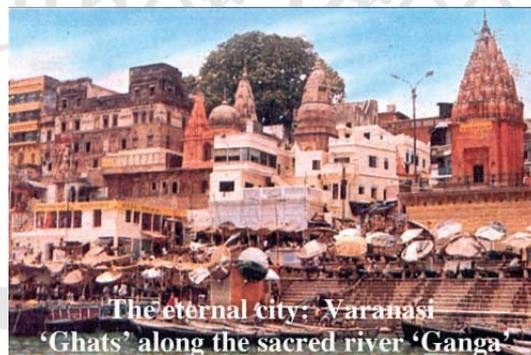
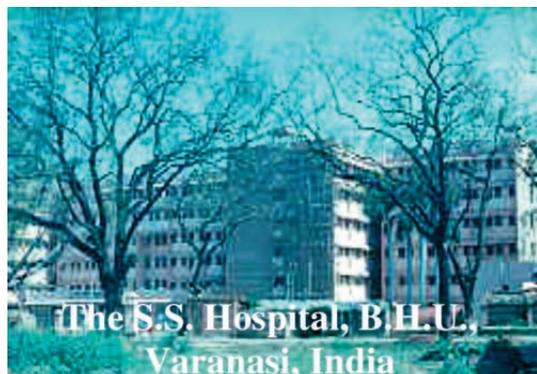
I, *Mallika Tewari*, personally came to know Professor Shukla during my undergraduate days at my Medical School. I still remember the days when my friends and I would rush to attend his lectures. His surgical clinics were full of flavors of all kind-knowledge, clinical tips, clever stints of his great presence of mind, and laughter associated with a kind of charisma. He used to be the most popular professor in our batch.

Praising and gifting books on surgery are some of his own unique ways of enhancing the interest of his students in surgery. He participates actively in functions organized by students like a student himself, and donates generously. His humorous, warm, caring, and understanding nature has made him the most lovable teacher of our institute.

I was thrilled to have him as the supervisor for my post graduation in surgery and further as a senior specialist registrar of surgical oncology. It was during these years when I had the opportunity to be associated with him in clinical and academic research.

He is an amazing surgeon with an exceptional skill of carrying out picturesque dissections. It is a treat to watch him operate even on the most difficult cases with great ease. He never loses his cool and I do not recollect if he ever got 'hot' on his residents. Once as a surgical resident during an emergency laparotomy for intestinal obstruction, I found a well perfused but massively swollen, dull colored intestine and mesentery. I was about to do an ileocolic bypass, when the professor came in for a look. While cracking a silly joke he washed for the case. To my utter surprise he carefully dissected through those

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swollen bowel loops and showed it to be actually a patient with intussusception due to malignant lymphoma of the ileocaecal region, something that I had missed altogether! Seeing my drawn sullen face he laughed and said “Well, it happens stupid. I am an old guy and have a lot more experience than you. So get down and do the resection and anastomosis.”

Rich or poor, patients to him are all equal. Dealing with an emotionally shattered cancer patient can at times be difficult especially so if the patient hails from a poor background. I have seen the professor building up confidence and hope that had long vanished in the ailing patient. The ‘never say die’ attitude is his asset. His comforting few words brings a little smile even on a dying patient.

Ours being the tertiary care hospital in the northeastern part of India, we come across a hoard of cancer patients each day. Many patients present after amateur surgery outside in late stages when nothing much is possible. There is a natural tendency for refusing admission to such patients due to limited number of beds available. But,

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Professor Shukla would admit the dying on priority and would not hesitate to operate upon them, if necessary.

I have never found professor looking down upon any employee of our hospital. His academic interests have fetched him a score of honors. But to him the happiest moment is when his patients come back smiling years after their cancer surgery. He never feels timid of belonging to Varanasi, India, the oldest living city of the world. Instead he strives hard to make a mark on others.

Professor Shukla was brought up in a small village near Allahabad, India. He owns a vast agricultural land in his native village and works in the fields on the weekends. In fact, I was not able to spot him working amongst his laborers! Professor is a great pet lover too. He would fondly buy shoes, shampoo, muzzle, coat, and toys for my pet dog from all around the globe.

Above all, Professor Hari Shankar Shukla is a nice human being and all that we can say to conclude is:

“Thoughts are many, but words are few, we are lucky to be with you and pray a happy future for you.”



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