

Profile

Dr. Sayed Amjad Hussain: A Renaissance Muslim

I am delighted to write a brief profile on Dr. Sayed Amjad Hussain, a physician of many talents with numerous accomplishments in diverse fields, a true renaissance man, and a great credit to the community at large and Muslims in particular.

Dr. Hussain graduated with distinction from Khyber Medical College (KMC) in Peshawar, Pakistan, in 1962 and, like many international medical graduates, came to the United States for advanced training. He studied cardiovascular surgery, eventually reaching the highest positions in academic medicine. He currently holds the title of professor emeritus of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery at the University of Toledo College of Medicine in Ohio.

Dr. Hussain invented two surgical devices — the pleuro-peritoneal shunt and a special endotracheal tube to supply oxygen during fiberoptic bronchoscopy in awake patients — and has made numerous contributions to his chosen field having been a visiting professor in several medical schools in the United States, Pakistan, Libya, India, and China. He also donates his services to the Dominican Republic as part of Midwest Medical Missions.

A versatile man of many talents, Dr. Hussain is also an award-winning photographer and has photographed life in Pakistan along its northwest frontier and along the length of the Indus River. His photographs have appeared on 27 magazine covers and in 6 calendars. As an internationally recognized explorer, Dr. Hussain explored the entire 2000 miles of the Indus River. This expedition was chronicled as a cover story in the fall 1997 issue of *The Explorers Journal*. The achievements of Team Indus were entered into the Congressional Records of the U.S. Congress in June 1997 and featured as an hour-long documentary on public broadcasting stations in March and April 2005.

As a community leader, Dr. Hussain helped build the well known Islamic Center of Greater Toledo, one of the largest Islamic centers in North America, known and duly recognized for its moderate religious views, interfaith accommodation, and pluralism. I had the pleasure of visiting this center and interacting with the members and leaders during a very well organized conference dealing with contemporary issues. It was obvious Dr. Hussain was held in very high esteem at this center, where he has served as president for 6 years. Dr. Hussain also helped establish the Imam Chair of Islamic Studies at the University of Toledo.

Dr. Hussain continues to make contributions to his alma mater in Peshawar, having established in 1994 an endowed visiting professorship for KMC at the University of Toledo College of Medicine. Six junior basic science teachers from KMC have come to the Medical College of Ohio on short-term sabbaticals to learn basic research and teaching methodologies. In recognition of his contributions to his alma mater, KMC at its golden jubilee celebration bestowed upon him the first lifetime achievement award recognizing him as its best graduate.

As an award-winning author, Dr. Hussain has written more than 500 articles; columns about history, politics, religion, and culture in America; and pieces for international publications. Since 1995, he has written a regular column for the opinion/editori-



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al pages of the *Toledo Blade*. The daily newspaper with a readership of 160,000 serves northwest Ohio, southern Michigan, and eastern Indiana. Through his writings in the *Toledo Blade* and many other publications, he has brought a moderate voice of reason to the often heated and partisan debate on geopolitical and religious issues. In 2000, he went to Afghanistan during the Taliban rule and reported for the *Toledo Blade* and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's *Post-Gazette* in a series of articles titled "The Secret World of the Taliban". These revealing articles were published 2 months before the attacks of September 11, 2001. These reports were the basis of his book on the Taliban (*The Taliban and Beyond*, BWD Publishing 2000). Dr. Hussain has written five English and five Urdu books on such diverse subjects as religion, culture, history, and international relations.

Dr. Hussain has taken on leadership roles in numerous organizations in the greater Toledo community and has served nationally as past president of the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo, the Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America (APPNA), Khyber Medical College Alumni, Toledo Surgical Society, and the Academy of Medicine of Toledo. He currently serves on the governing board of WGTE Public Broadcasting in Northwest Ohio, and in 2007 Ohio Governor Ted Strickland appointed him to the board of trustees of the University of Toledo.

For his myriad of activities and accomplishments Dr. Hussain not only has been recognized by his alma mater, Khyber Medical College, but by the Ohio House of Representatives and Senate, the Medical College of Ohio, Toledo Surgical Society, the Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America, the citizens of Peshawar City, the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo, the University of Peshawar, and St. Charles Mercy Hospital, Toledo, Ohio.

IMANA is honored to profile one of its outstanding life members with this profile in JIMA.

When asked what advice he has for Muslim physicians, particularly the young ones, his response was:

I see an invisible but readily palpable gulf between some Muslims and the rest of the society in America and Canada. In a pluralistic society, one not only receives but also contributes to the welfare of the society at large. Islam does not require us to isolate ourselves from the mainstream and live in self-created cocoons where we surround ourselves with soothing mementos of our past. These mental and physical ghettos are against the very spirit of Islam.

In a multicultural, multiethnic, and multifaith society, we must take our seat at the table and become part of the mainstream. Other minorities have done it and were able to keep their religious identity, and I do not see any reason why we Muslims cannot. It would require us to isolate those elements within Muslim communities who preach the gospel of intolerance, isolation, and paranoia.

Profile submitted by

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