

## Founding President of Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand

*guidance as a founding member of our association and its first President."*

Yazdi Mistry, born July 1, 1928 in Ahmedabad to Temulji & Motibai Mistry died in Auckland, New Zealand on August 3, 2009. He leaves behind his wife, Thrity, and children Zenobia, Mahrukh and Tehmus and their spouses Kersi Aspar, Tom Stazyk and Jarafshan Mistry (nee Mobed from Houston, Texas) and five grandchildren: Cyrus, Anahita and Binaifer Aspar and Yazdy and Xerxes Mistry.

Yazdi had a long and distinguished career in India and Malaysia with Godrej & Boyce, Ltd., and as an independent entrepreneur in Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand. Rather than his career, Yazdi's two passions were his family and community service and he made significant contributions to the Zarathushti as well as the wider communities in all the places he lived. He was kind, loving and generous and enjoyed meeting and helping people everywhere.

In Kuala Lumpur where he went in 1969, he was a charter member of the Bharat Club, a social and professional organization for Indian expatriates, serving on the management committee for fourteen years, president for five years and was made an honorary life member in 1988 when he left Malaysia.

As a charter member of the Rotary Club of Damansara, Kuala Lumpur he served in various capacities with Rotary Clubs in Malaysia and New Zealand. He achieved 100% attendance over a 22 year period and was named Paul Harris Fellow in recognition of his distinguished service.

Since 1969 he was a Freemason with the Deolali Lodge (Bombay), Klang Lodge (Kuala Lumpur) and Eden Lodge (Auckland) and in 1997 became the first Asian to be elected to the Eden Lodge Master's chair in its 120 year history. He was active in the Lodge until health issues prevented him from continuing. Yazdi inspired his son Tehmus to join the Eden Lodge where he, too, has served as Master.

One of Yazdi's most enduring legacies is the Zarathustrian Association of New Zealand (ZANZ). In 1988 Yazdi moved to New Zealand when there were only a handful of Zarathushtis he saw the need for an organization to serve the spiritual and social needs of the community and in 1996, with Yazdi as the driving force, ZANZ was established. He served as president for the first five years of the organization's life and continued to actively serve the community. In 2004, in recognition of his long service to the Zarathushti Community in New Zealand, Yazdi was named ZANZ's first ever Patron "in appreciation of his vision, leadership, dedication and



Over the years, ZANZ has grown in strength and Yazdi played a key role in interacting with other similar associations internationally and sharing ZANZ's achievement to other associations around the world. Yazdi's vision was for a close knit, caring and supportive community. He took the lead in fostering community and he and Thrity frequently opened their home to new immigrants and helped newly arrived families to settle into New Zealand.

His devotion to community service extended beyond the Zarathushti community. Till 2004, when health issues prevented his further involvement, Yazdi was an accredited member of Auckland Age Concern, a voluntary organization whose members visit lonely elderly people in their homes every week and was a volunteer driver for the Auckland Red Cross' Meals on Wheels program, delivering food to disabled elderly in their homes.

Till 2004 he was a committee member and the Zoroastrian representative in the New Zealand Chapter of the World Congress of Religions for Peace (WCRP), an organization devoted to peace through cooperation, understanding and dialogue among religions.

In 1994 Yazdi was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and in January 2000 he underwent a quadruple bypass surgery. His doctors advised him to cut back on some of his social/volunteer activities but he would not let illness slow him down and kept busy until May 2004 when he had a fall and broke his hip. He underwent three further surgeries on his hip and knee in 2007-2009, but despite the pain, he never lost his smile and sense of humor.

Yazdi lived life to the fullest and despite his illness, continued to be active as long as he could. He loved to travel and with his wife Thrity he went around the world, and in 2000 even climbed a section of the Great Wall of China. In July 2008, he celebrated with family and friends his 80th birthday. In December 2008, Yazdi was overjoyed to be able to leave the hospital for a day to attend the Navjote of his grandsons, Yazdy and Xerxes and celebrate with family and friends.

As his ultimate act of service to others, Yazdi bequeathed his brain to the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand Human Brain Bank for research in the hope that a cure could be found for an illness that he so bravely battled for almost 15 years.

***And in the end,  
it's not the years in your life that count.  
It's the life in your years.  
Abraham Lincoln***