

Dr. Ahmed Hassan Khan
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Dr. Ahmed Hassan Khan with grandchildren

“Alhumdulillah, I’m enjoying my retirement with my family and friends in Winnipeg”; says Br. Ahmed.

Br. Ahmed has been a member of Manitoba Muslim community since 1973.

He was born in Jallundar, East Punjab, India before the partition of Indian sub-continent and the creation of Pakistan in 1947. After the partition, he and his family of five brothers and two sisters settled in Faislabad.

“I don’t remember when I was born but I do remember having a great childhood” recalls Dr. Khan. Dr. Khan completed his basic education at Punjab University where he earned a Master’s Degree. During his undergraduate education he enjoyed participating in a variety of sports and athletic activities such as swimming, boxing and hiking.

“I have always had a passion for traveling”, says Dr. Khan. This sense of adventure combined with his work at Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) provided him with the opportunity to travel to Eastern Europe and to the United States in the early 1960s.

In 1963, Br. Ahmed was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship to study at Cambridge University in United Kingdom where he successfully completed his Ph.D. in the field of Cytogenetics. He subsequently returned to Pakistan and continued his employment with PAEC for another five years as a Senior Scientific Officer at Hyderabad. He also served as an associate professor at the Agricultural University in Faislabad.

In 1973, Br. Ahmed's sense of adventure and travel brought him to Canada and USA. He settled first in Winnipeg where he worked at the Department of Agriculture at University of Manitoba. He eventually secured a permanent position with the Province of Manitoba as an agricultural specialist in Altona, a small Mennonite community. He moved to Altona with his family where they lived for the next 20 years.

The Muslim community of Winnipeg used to be very small at that time. Br. Khan remembers frequently traveling to Winnipeg with his family to spend time with his Muslim friends.

Inspired by his keen interest in his children education, he got himself elected and served as a trustee of the local school board for eight years. His experience as a school board trustee and involvement in education was a prelude to his future involvement as the principal of Al Hijra Islamic School at its inception in 1996.

Dr. Khan fondly remembers as to how enjoyable, exciting and humbling it was to be a member of the Muslim community that established Manitoba's first Islamic school.

"Those 5 years were the best years of my working career." Later on, he assisted in the organizing of the Islamic school in Saskatoon and also spent a year with Ottawa's Abrar Islamic School.

"Since retirement I have been enjoying the flexibility to travel and visit with family and friends around the world." Br. Khan has kept a busy schedule, spending summers in Winnipeg and winters in Ottawa, Toronto and Pakistan.

"The Islamic environment in Winnipeg played a major role in the development of my children. My children were very fortunate to participate in the Islamic camps that helped them create strong bonds of friendship".

"MashaAllah, our Muslim community in Winnipeg is growing and there is a need for more religious and social activities so that we can get to know each other. We have a very nice Muslim Community and very dedicated brothers and sisters doing dawah work as a group and as individuals."

"I have had the privilege of having many friends here, and miss those that have left us." Recalls Br. Ahmed. "I was very fortunate to be a friend of Dr. Usmani, who passed away a few years ago. He always enjoyed visiting us in Altona. Then we miss the company of Khalid Iqbal, Asghar Shah, Ayub Hamid and Ahmed Mirza, who moved from Winnipeg for greener pastures or to be closer to their children".

So what is Dr. Khan's advice for the community?

"We are known throughout North America for our winters, mosquitoes along with talented, and energetic individuals in our community. We have exported many of them such as Muhammad Al Sharif, Jawad Shah, Br. Ehab, just to name a few, to other cities. At the same time we have been blessed with the influx of many newcomers have enriched our community.

I pray for the sake of our future that we support our youth and the Islamic schools and the Islamic institutions.

I can foresee great things Inshallah in our future as long as we are humble, patient with each other and stay true to our Islamic foundations".