

Archives of Surgical Research | Prof Syed Zafar Haider Memorial Feature

Prof Syed Zafar Haider: Bright Star of Surgical History of Pakistan

Asaf Beg Mirza

IMPORTANCE Prof Syed Zafar Haider has been a shining beacon of light for the younger surgical lot for past four decades. He had exceptional qualities as a surgeon, leader and teacher. His services for developing endocrine surgery and esophageal surgery within Pakistan have been phenomenal and exemplary. Many have learned from him and have benefited the society. His role in creating a great surgical class of surgeons in Pakistan would be acknowledged forever.

KEY WORDS Prof Syed Zafar Haider; Surgery; Pakistan

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Prof. Dr. Syed Zafar Haider is a very well-known name in the field of surgery in Punjab. I have had long cherished association with him as an undergraduate student and his assistant professor in King Edward Medical College and Mayo Hospital, Lahore.

Shah Ji, came from a very educated and respected Syed family. As his undergraduate student, I remember his enthusiastic approach towards teaching clinical methods and skills. He would ensure students participation and full attention to the subject.

Prof. Syed Zafar Haider after passing MBBS from K.E Medical College became house surgeon to Prof. Dr. Ameer ud Din in Mayo Hospital, Lahore. He was very proud that he received his training in good discipline and profession when Dr. Amir ud din was at his climax as a teacher and surgeon. All his life he stayed closely associated with Dr. Ameer ud din for his advice and guidance.

Syed Zafar Haider proceeded to UK for further training and received his FRCS. He spent 5 years in UK, learning English manner, discipline and to behave as a gentleman. He had lot of praise for English teachers and surgeons and would like his own students in Pakistan to conduct themselves gracefully.

Returning to Pakistan was appointed in teaching cadre and served at Nishter Medical College and Hospital, Multan. Because of love for teaching surgery he soon became very popular with his medical students he was very keen to make his surgical ward most presentable and providing best possible care to his patients, because of his profound engagements, actually he attained his own professional climax in Nishter Medical College Multan. From Multan he

brought Dr. M. Azeem Khawaja as his registrar in Mayo Hospital, Lahore. Azeem Khawaja was equally fond of Syed Zafar Haider and would carry out faithfully all teaching and operation orders of SZH. In Mayo Hospital, besides other surgical work, they specialized in thyroid and parathyroid surgery and also taught their technique to other surgical colleagues.

For a short period SZH also served as the Medical Superintendent, Mayo Hospital Lahore. He especially ensured supply of quality surgical instruments and other supplies to surgical units.

Prof. Syed Zafar Haider was a very versatile personality and was well aware of country politics and religious aspects of society. He was devout practicing Muslim and was always very helpful to his patients, trainees and assistant colleagues.

Shah Ji also had a loving soft corner for me, mainly because I trained with Dr. Amir ud din as a house surgeon and registrar. During my interview for assistant professor surgery in Punjab Service Commission, he was medical advisor and he ensured that I get selected.

Many people do not know that when Punjab government decided to make a medical college in Lahore general hospital, "SZH" along with his 'son' Syed Ali Haider worked hard and convinced the authorities that the proposed medical college must be named "Ameer-ud- din Medical College " and they were successful in their endeavor that goes to show Syed Zafar Haider's respect and love for Dr Ameer-ud-din's strict professionalism.

Syed Zafar Haider got married to his uncle (Dr. Bahadur Ali Shah's) daughter Tahira Bukhari who herself became

professor of anatomy. They had three beautiful children, two daughters and a son named, Syed Ali Haider. Syed Ali Haider was house surgeon in East Surgical Ward Mayo hospital, Lahore, when I was assigned Professor Surgery there. He was a handsome, intelligent and hardworking young man. He got his FRCS ophthalmology from U.K and was trained retinal surgeon. Unfortunately, during a sectarian violence he was gunned down and martyred along with his younger son. Naturally such a tragic incident was condemned by all the society but this shock had to be

borne by Syed Zafar Haider, Tahira Bukhari, his sisters and family.

No doubt Syed Zafar Haider was a great man with lot of good qualities; though at times he got angry when things he thought were right, were not carried out according to his wishes.

In the end, I pray that Allah Almighty bless him and grant him high place in heavens Amen.

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