

# Great Neurosurgeon of India – Prof. Vijay K. Kak

Manoj K. Tewari<sup>1</sup>

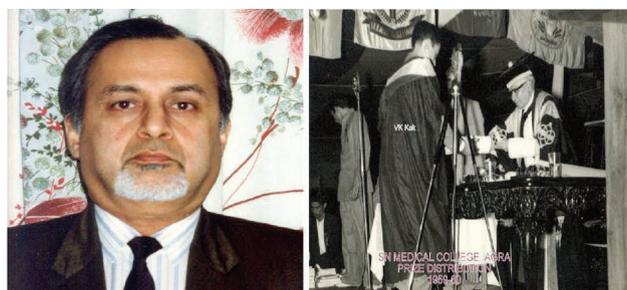
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Prof. Vijay Kumar Kak was born on October 15, 1938, at Saharanpur (Uttar Pradesh, India), and after his initial schooling—DAV institutions at Muzaffarnagar, Kanpur, and Allahabad—he joined S.N. Medical College, Agra, in 1955. He graduated in 1960 with distinctions in seven subjects, several gold medals, and stood first at all the three professional examinations. He was awarded the Chancellor's Medal for the best graduate in Faculty of Medicine of Agra University. He obtained his MS (Surgery) under the able guidance of Professors S.P. Srivastava and A.N. Razdan. After obtaining his master's degree, he proceeded to United Kingdom for higher training in neurological surgery and worked at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, under Mr. Alex Taylor, Colin Gleadhill, and Derek Gordon. He also pursued and obtained the degrees of FRCS (Eng) and FRCS (Edin) while working at Belfast. He is married to Dr. Anuradha Kak, and the couple has three children.

Upon his return from the United Kingdom, he joined Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, as assistant professor of neurosurgery in 1969 under the leadership of Prof. D.R. Gulati. He and Prof. Gulati were instrumental in getting neurosurgery services at PGIMER upgraded from a unit to a full-fledged department in 1978. His areas of interest were spinal surgery, vascular neurosurgery, pediatric neurosurgery, stereotactic and functional neurosurgery, and medical education. He started transsphenoidal pituitary surgery and transthoracic spinal surgery at PGIMER, Chandigarh. He enjoyed, and still continues to enjoy, a very good relationship with his contemporaries in neurology, neuropathology, neuroanesthesia, endocrinology, radiology, and radiotherapy not only at PGIMER but also at other places in India and abroad, and this benefitted his students to a great extent. He became Chairman of the neurosurgery department at PGIMER, Chandigarh, in 1983 and later Chairman of surgical departments. He was Honorary Consultant to Armed Forces, President of Neurological Society of India, Indian Society for Cerebrovascular Surgery, Indian Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery, and Association of Neurosurgeons of North West Zone. He was elected Fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences, Fellow of International Medical Sciences Academy, and Fellow of Institute of Hospital Engineers (London).

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Prof. Kak is a recipient of Dr. B.C. Roy National Award, Chandigarh Rattan, Punjab Rattan, numerous orations, and Lifetime Achievement Award of Neurological Society of India. He has several international publications in the field of neurosurgery which include over 400 articles in various journals in addition to many chapters in books. He is an excellent record keeper as can be seen by his collection of photographs.

Along with Prof. Gulati, he has trained a large number of neurosurgeons. Notable among his trainees are Prof. D. Rout, Prof. Sushil Kumar, late Prof. P.P.S. Mathur, Prof. S.N. Mathuriya, Lt. Gen. S. Biswas, Maj. Gen. H.S. Gill, Prof. V.N. Jindal, Prof. B.S. Sharma, Prof. R.S. Mittal, Prof. B. Indira Devi, Prof. Ashis Pathak, Prof. M.K. Tewari, Dr. Y.R. Yadav, Maj. Gen. P. Singh, Brig. H.S. Bhatoo, and Dr. V.K. Batish, to name a few. He is a hard task master and a perfectionist. He joined the Chandigarh administration as a Secretary of Medical Education and Research cum Director Principal of Government Medical College, Chandigarh, in 1995 for a period of just over 5 years. He was instrumental in developing a state-of-the-art medical college and getting it recognized by the Medical Council of India for the graduate course.

He had been reasonably good at indoor sports since his student life and was a table tennis player in his medical college days and later at PGIMER. He is also a good bridge player and chess player. He has a multifaceted personality with exceptional oratory skills which keeps the audience spell bound.

He retired as a senior professor in October 1998 and has been appointed an Emeritus Professor at PGIMER since 2000.

After retirement, he still is active as a practicing neurosurgeon and teaches the young neurosurgeons who join him in practice.