

The Power of Ten

THE PIONEER AWARDS RECIPIENTS



THOMAS ABRAHAM:

For being a pioneer in integrating the Indo American community in the local civic democratic process. Thomas Abraham was the first Indo American to get elected to a public office in greater Houston area. Abraham was elected to Sugar Land Council in 2004 and was recently elected President of Texas Municipal League Region 14, San Jacinto Region-Houston Area.



RAMESH BHUTADA:

25 years ago when it was not an easy time to do business with India in the US, Ramesh Bhutada had the vision to start importing industrial castings from India. Over the years he has built a successful business. Now there are many highly successful businesses founded by Indo Americans in this field, but Bhutada was one of the pioneers.



MEENA DATT:

A household name in Indo American community in the greater Houston area. Datt is a pioneer in getting Indian music on the air. Now there are scores of radio and TV stations devoted to Indian movies, news and music but Meena was on the air more than 20 years ago. Her shows, Music of India and The Asian Hour - Ghungroo are very popular every weekend.



CHITRA DIVAKARUNI:

An award-winning author and poet; her themes include women, immigration, the South Asian experience, history, myth, magic and celebrating diversity. She writes both for adults and children. Her books have been translated into 20 languages, including Dutch, Hebrew, Russian and Japanese. Two novels, The Mistress of Spices and Sister of My Heart, have been made into films. Her short stories, Arranged Marriage, won an American Book Award. She teaches Creative Writing at the University of Houston.



RAJEEV GADGIL:

One of the pioneering professional journalists in our community, Gadgil has been a journalist for over quarter of a century. First with The Times of India in Mumbai then with Indo American News in Houston now as owner of India Herald.



VIJAY GORADIA:

Vijay Goradia founded one of the first Chemical trading companies by an Indo American in the Houston area and made it one of the most successful ones, but that accomplishment fades in comparison to his contribution to humanity by his founding of Pratham USA. With Pratham USA's help, Pratham as an organization is now providing preschool and remedial education to over 300,000 poor children all over India.



SUSHMA (Suzanne) DUGGAL GROVER:

For her pioneering work in introducing Indian jewelry to American women. Since 1974, Duggal Grover has been in the jewelry business, bringing magical craftsmanship of Indian gem cutters and jewelry makers.



HAKU & ROGER ISRANI: (Left to Right)

Founded in 1991 Test Masters is the first Indo American owned test preparation service for various tests such as the SAT, GRE, GMAT and Professional Engineering Exams. Traditional business men would have walked away from this business, thinking that Kaplan had all but locked up the market. Test Masters now offers online courses, books, and services nationwide and is now viewed by many as the best standardized test preparation service in Houston.



Dr. RENU KHATOR:

Talk of breaking the glass ceiling. American institutions of higher learning are filled with outstanding teachers and scientists of Indian origin but there are very few who have been able to break the glass ceiling of becoming the top administrator of a major University. Khator is the first Indo American woman to head a major university.



GOPAL SAVJANI:

A Chemical Engineer who has specialized in the field of Biomedical Diagnostics since 1972: A contributing leader in hormone analysis, especially focusing on women's healthcare, Down's Syndrome, Pediatrics and Cardiac care. Currently his focus is to develop an investment firm specializing in Bio and Nano Technology advances within the US and overseas. A constant giver who contributes to 20+ philanthropic organizations and public causes. Not too long ago, he also initiated participation in the Scholarship program in the Scholarship program to the students at the university of Houston Downtown