

IACCGH 16th Annual Gala | September 19, 2015



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INDO-AMERICAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF GREATER HOUSTON

GALA UNDERWRITER



INDO-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF GREATER HOUSTON
PRESENTS

16th ANNUAL IACCGH GALA



**KEYNOTE
SPEAKER**

**AMBASSADOR
RICHARD R. VERMA**

25th United States
Ambassador to India

When Saturday, September 19th 2015
at 6:00 PM

Where Hilton Americas Hotel,
1600 Lamar St.,
Houston, TX 77010

For sponsorship information, please contact:
ASHOK GARG JAGDIP AHLUWALIA
 President Executive Director
allied.inc@gmail.com jagdip@iaccggh.com

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In a historic first for Houston and the Indo American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH), a sitting US Ambassador to India, the Hon. Richard R. Verma was the Gala Keynote Speaker at their 16th Annual Gala on September 19th, 2015.



The IACCGH Board with Ambassador Richard Verma

Ambassador Verma was welcomed warmly by about 650 Houstonians which included city business leaders, high ranking professionals, Chamber members and elected officials at the Hilton Americas.



Keerthana and Kruthi Bhat gave a beautiful rendition of the National Anthems



Executive Director of the Chamber, Jagdip Ahluwalia welcomed the gathering by remarking that he “was overwhelmed at the outpouring of support from the community.” He recalled the year 1999 when with the support of the then Consul General Rinzing Wangdi, Dr. Durga Agrawal and a group of 40 business leaders, which included him, formed the Chamber to promote bilateral trade between the US and India – “when India was not fashionable.” Since then the Chamber, which is inclusive, had grown steadily by broadening the scope of its activities and having a broad spectrum of community partners to become one of the strongest economic Chambers in Houston.



Mistress of Ceremonies, KHOU11 TV Anchor and reporter, Rekha Muddaraj invited Vice Chairman and CEO Asif Dakri from Wallis State Bank and Gala underwriters, to address the gathering. Describing Wallis State Bank as “a commercially focused institution serving businesses from a one man operation to multinationals,”



Asif Dakri remarked that the bank was the number one Small Business Administration lender in Houston for the year 2014 and “currently on track” to capture the title for 2015. Describing the Chamber as “an integral part of the Houston landscape for the last 16 years”, Dakri also lauded the Chamber’s efforts to increase commercial ties and bring “two diverse and powerful economies together.”

In a congratulatory televised message, Senator John Cornyn applauded the tremendous contribution the Chamber has made not only to the Texas economy but also the deepening of ties between the US and India.



India's Consul General of Houston and an Advisor to the Chamber, P. Harish highlighted the personal commitment of the two leaders, President Obama and PM Modi in working together. He was happy to note that the first LNG exports to India is scheduled for early 2017 which would supply one-third of India's imports and one-fifth of its consumption as of last year. It would also "realize the emergence of the US as a significant producer and exporter of hydrocarbons." He also referred to PM Modi's efforts to "make development, economic growth and employment as the principal planks of governance with a multi-agency effort to ease business." India, he remarked, was looking to the US to be a partner in bringing about a transformation through economic engagement.



President Ashok Garg, in his address, welcomed Ambassador Richard Verma and stated that his appointment as the first Indian American US Ambassador to India was “not only a matter of great pride but also striking at a time of closer ties between the world’s two largest democracies.” He also emphasized that Ambassador Verma understands India and would bring a new momentum to the relationship between our two countries. Commending Indo Americans for not only contributing to this great country with their talent and hard work, he stated that they give back to their own country by “building bridges of business and bonds of friendship between the two countries.” President Garg also gave a brief recap of the year’s activities and expressed his happiness that the Chamber’s mission of encouraging trade between the US and India, creating a platform for local businesses and helping members network has been successful and impactful.



In an address that was lightened with humorous reflections and pride at his family's migration from India to the US, Ambassador Verma remarked on how connected Indo Americans are despite the miles that distance them. He was full of admiration for the courage and perseverance of Indo Americans who had come to America to "build a better future, to chase your dreams," and believed that they kept the two democracies together through their shared values." As Ambassador to India since January 2015, Ambassador Verma spoke of traveling across India and "witnessing first-hand the impact and the promise of the US Indo strategic partnership." He also stated that it was increasingly clear the US considers India as "our best partner and one of the most consequential relationships of the 21st century." The two countries, he believed, can be close partners in areas of military, medicine, deep sea and space exploration and combating terrorism and "the trends are heading in the right direction." He was realistic about the challenges faced by India but concluded on an optimistic

note by stating that he was “heartened by the promise we see in India and look forward to a resurgent India.”



Ambassador Verma received a standing ovation and was also recognized as an honorary Texan by a Texas State Resolution from Senator Rodney Ellis, arranged by Past President Sanjay Ram, after which President Garg formally presented the Ambassador as “a fellow Texan.”

IACCGH invited Ambassador Verma to help them recognize the professional and public service achievements of members of the community.



Ambassador Verma presented an award to CEO Umesh Verma of Blue Lance for the Entrepreneur of the Year for cyber security technology innovation.



Mani Iyer, President, Mahindra USA was presented an Inbound Investment Award recognizing inbound investment and local job creation in Harris County.



Wallis State Bank was the recipient of the Business Advocate of the Year Award for fueling small business.



The Community Service Award was presented to India House for bringing communities together and was received by President Dr. Manish Rungta.



Appreciation Awards were also presented to the major sponsors of the evening, Emcee Rekha Muddharaj and Therese Cole-Hubbs of Electric Karma for event management.



President Elect Joya Shukla thanked the Chamber for their trust in her ability to lead the Chamber and looked forward to partnering with the members to “do great things together.”

To access Ambassador Richard Verma’s keynote address [click here](#).

To view Ambassador’s Verma’s Twitter post of the event [click here](#) or to follow him on Twitter [click here](#).

IACCGH Gala Report (below) by Manu Shah

Gala pictures courtesy: Biyani Photography

(The 3 pics below are displayed like:

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2015 Award Winners

Inbound Investment Award

Presented to

Mahindra USA

recognizing inbound investment
& local job creation in Harris County
accepted by President, Mani Iyer

IACCGH

Business Advocate Award

Presented to

Wallis State Bank

for fueling Small Business

accepted by Founder and Chairman Musa Dakri and President & CEO Asif Dakri



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Community Service Award

Presented to

India House

For bringing communities together.

accepted by President of India House, Dr. Manish Rungta

IACCGH

Entrepreneurship Award (Technology)

Presented to

Blue Lance

For cyber security technology innovation

accepted by President & CEO, Umesh Verma.

Incoming President Joya Shukla proposed the vote of Thanks

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