

Tribute to Dr. Siraj Ahmad (1939-2025)

By Evelyn Sutton, MD, FRCPC, FACP; and Volodko Bakowsky, MD, FRCPC



Dr. Siraj Ahmad with his wife Munawar and daughter Zareen at his retirement celebration in 2008.

Dr. Siraj Ahmad passed away peacefully at home in Halifax in October 2025.

Born and educated in Peshawar, Pakistan, Dr. Ahmad completed his secondary education at Islamia College before entering Khyber Medical College, where he was a proud member of the institution's first graduating class in 1960. His pursuit of medical excellence took him abroad to the United States, where he completed an internship at Albany Medical College in 1963, followed by a residency in Internal Medicine at St. Vincent's Charity Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio.

In 1967 he joined Dalhousie University to begin a fellowship in rheumatology, where he formed a life-long friendship with Dr. Jack Woodbury, whose mentorship helped shape his career. Through Dr. Woodbury's support, Dr. Ahmad studied for several months with Dr. Eric Bywaters in Taplow, England — an experience that further deepened his expertise and passion for rheumatology.

Following his training, Dr. Ahmad had a long and successful career as a rheumatologist, splitting his time between his bustling outpatient private practice and a faculty position at Dalhousie University with hospital-based responsibilities. He was a recipient of the Brian M. Chandler Lifetime Achievement Award in Medical Education.

Following his retirement in 2008, he worked toward strengthening Khyber Medical College in Peshawar through collaboration with Dalhousie University.

Beyond medicine, Dr. Ahmad was devoted to his faith, family, and community. Together with his beloved wife, Munawar, he was instrumental in establishing the first mosque in the Halifax region — a lasting contribution that continues to serve as a place of worship and gathering for generations. A man of quiet faith, Dr. Ahmad led by example rather than words, embodying humility, integrity, and compassion in every aspect of his life. He took immense pride in his children, son Kamran, daughter Sabeena and daughter Zareen, who followed in her father's footsteps to become a rheumatologist in Toronto.

Dr. Ahmad will be remembered for his pioneering spirit, his dedication to patients and students, and his gentle, steadfast presence in the community. His legacy endures through his family, his faith, and the many lives he touched.

*Evelyn Sutton, MD, FRCPC, FACP
Professor of Medicine, Division of Rheumatology
Department of Medicine, Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia*

*Volodko Bakowsky, MD, FRCPC
Associate Professor, Division of Rheumatology,
Department of Medicine, Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia*