

**TRIBUTE TO LATE KIRIT N. RAVAL,  
FORMER SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA.**

**FULL COURT REFERENCE: MAY 2, 2005**

Hon'ble the Chief Justice, My Lords, Mr. P.P. Malhotra, Additional Solicitor General of India, Chairman-Bar Council of Delhi, office bearers of Delhi High Court Bar Association and other Bar Associations, Standing Counsel for the Government of India and National Capital Territory of Delhi, respected senior members of the Bar, dear friends, ladies and gentlemen:

On April 26, Mr. Kirit N. Raval, left for his heavenly abode, after an incessantly brave fight against a deadly disease for over two years. To every one's surprise, about a year ago, after a stint of treatment, he resumed practice with more vigor and renewed enthusiasm. One could see him running from one court room to another and that made every one believe that nothing could ever win a fight with Mr. Raval. He actively felt as if he could do anything and unlock the infinite potential that he learned was inside every one of us. He started once again to cherish life and to see the divinity in every aspect of it. However, the irony was that he never gave up, but the disease got the better of him. He is no more amongst us. He was too young for the eternal journey, as he was only a little over 52. When we argue and win or lose cases, that everlasting joker of time, death, follows us closely, with a winking eye and a mischievous murmur - "wait! Next is you and I will give you no room to argue." Nobody, however mightier or wealthier he is, has escaped him for ever. However, death can only destroy, as Hemingway

said, it cannot defeat man. Mr. Raval knew that time is running against him, yet he never let it bog him down and was at his desk and on his legs, with fine ease and exceptional charm.

Mr. Raval had a brilliant academic career marked by distinctions throughout – first in graduation, first in Law in the University and a coveted MBA from the prestigious Ahmedabad Institute. Even after being armed with the most coveted MBA that could easily win him top positions anywhere in the corporate world, he chose law as his forte. Thus he set an example for youngsters and added more respect to the study and practice of law. Not only that, he proved the worth of his choice as well. Perhaps he was the youngest to be appointed to the coveted position – Solicitor General of India, which he richly deserved for his fathomless skill, legal acumen, intelligence and ingenious appreciation of facts and law.

As I know, ever since I first met him at his residence sometime in 1998, he was a fine human being and a great lawyer. So affectionate, so warm and so joyous was he. Despite the position he held and the knowledge he owned, he took keen interest in the smallest of small and the least initiated who came in contact with him.

About his court room performances, I need not say anything here, as I am speaking of him in the Hon'ble Court itself, where he performed like a king. He played his tactics with an aggressive edge. Most of us knew him. The Hon'ble Judges viewed him as a genius. From the sizable assemblage of legal fraternity and others who filed past his mortal remains to pay their last homage showed the admiration he won and the love and affection he enjoyed.

He had a keen interest in promoting quality education, particularly in law. The National Law School University in Gujarat stands a towering testimony to this. He was instrumental in its establishment. Perhaps he alone played a major role in getting about fifty acres of land allotted for the Law School. Today it is one of the premier institutions in the country and the first in the State of Gujarat providing five year integrated professional course in law.

I had a number of chances to interact with him and few chances of appearing before him where he was the Arbitrator. Every time, the man was like nothing less than a legend. Had he been alive for few more years, he would have perhaps been one among those legends, who themselves are legends among legends. My experience with him reminded me the words of Lord Denning that *“the barrister is not the mouthpiece of his client.....He owes allegiance to a higher cause. It is the cause of truth and justice.”*

Mr. Rawal laid the canvass of ideals and values, virtues and wisdom. He has drawn there the path of traditions and spirit, challenges and milestones. He coloured the visions of a believer and an achiever, a seeker and a leader. We must try to live upto his dreams and his canvass.

I still remember walking past his desk one day, when a quotation perched on it caught my attention. It was of Churchill's. It read

*“Sure I am that this day we are masters of our fate, that the task which has been set before us is not above our strength; that its pangs and toils are not beyond my endurance – as long as we*

*have faith in our own cause and an unconquerable will to win, victory will not be denied us."*

It spoke volumes about the man that Kirit was. He strongly believed that *"to know and not to do, is really not to know"* and *"one learns best when one teaches another."* Not only he believed, he practiced both as well.

My heart goes to Kalpana, his wife and his two sons, who have yet to complete their college education. Their loss is more direct. While I pay my respects to the departed soul from my side and on behalf of the Delhi High Court Bar Association, I pray may God give enough strength to Kalpana and the children to bear the loss and steer ahead like Mr. Raval, who was never afraid of anything.

May his soul rest in peace.

A.S. CHANDHIOK