

# modern-day heroes - BIMDA's leaders

Glad Kurian, BIMDA's honorary executive director and co-founder, shares his insights about the association and its distinct leaders and spouses who have contributed to its success



(Pictured standing left to right): Dr. Abdul Karim; Glad Kurian, CIMA; Dr. Mukesh Aggarwal; Dr. Jashbhai Patel; Dr. Homi Cooper; Dr. Ravi Palaniyandi; Manhar Shah, PhD; Naren Shah, MS. (Pictured seated left to right): Dr. Ashok Shah; Dr. Mahesh Soni; Dr. N. Rao Kopuri; Dr. Gobivenkata Balaji; Dr. Ravi Shankar; Dr. Prakash Reddy. (Absent): Dr. Aravind Kumar; Dr. Subhash Rege



Aparna and  
Dr. Gobi Balaji

## “THE HEROES OF BIMDA

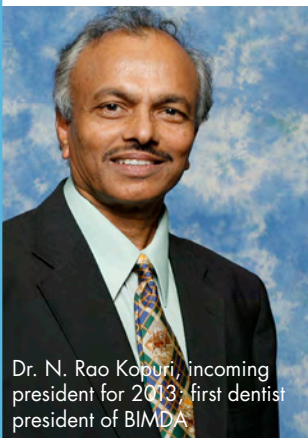
(the Brevard Indo-American Medical and Dental Association) have been many over the years,” says Glad Kurian, a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley Smith Barney in Melbourne, and a volunteer leader with BIMDA since 1996.

Kurian functions at the center of group interaction, coordinating each year with the current president and the leadership committee, giving the group direction from a strategic angle while constantly pushing the envelope of excellence. Kurian, along with Dr. Ashok Shah, has been

instrumental in expanding relations with the group’s many supporters over the years – hospital systems, sponsors and broad-based non-profit groups such as United Way of Brevard. “Diversity and unity are accomplished at both the leadership level and in our relationships with our supporters. Volunteerism and community involvement are important values that we cherish,” says Kurian.

## ■ UNSURPASSED SPOUSAL SUPPORT

“...Thriving medical couples are modern-day heroes; not just in terms of performing



Dr. N. Rao Kopuri, incoming president for 2013, first dentist president of BIMDA

“It takes a balance of talent, integrity, personality, drive and a keen sense of volunteerism to make leaders. BIMDA provides an organic platform for leadership and skill development, which prepares individuals for larger roles in life as physicians and community leaders.”

*Glad Kurian, honorary executive director and co-founder of BIMDA (pictured above)*



## Dr. Mukesh Aggarwal shares the group's mission statement



Dr. Mukesh Aggarwal, media & public relations chair; past president (2003)

**D**r. Mukesh Aggarwal is BIMDA's past president (2003) and founding president of Brevard's Indian Association of the Space Coast (IASC, established 1991), the pre-cursor to all Indian-American related activities on the Space Coast.

"BIMDA's mission statement is providing compassionate medical and dental care to Brevard in pursuit of a better life for Brevard residents," explains Dr. Aggarwal.

"Health care is changing from the care we knew back in the late '70s," he continues. "We, the members of BIMDA, are very much involved with the community, by not only hiring some 4,000 to 5,000 people in the local workforce, but often with on-the-job training for different people in the medical and dental field. We encourage young high school and college graduates to become doctors and ancillary staff. We have held conferences for young students to get into medical fields in cooperation with the deans of medical, dental and pharmacy schools. Our doctors are very much involved on a personal basis in local charities, such as Rotary Club and Lions Club, providing free care for indigent patients in cooperation with local charity clinics, hospitals and emergency rooms. Our members are involved on an international level by conducting medical missions, giving medicines and equipment and teaching local doctors overseas. These are some of our contributions."



"BIMDA is a premier medical organization, dedicated to serving the people of Brevard County."

*Dr. Mahesh Soni pictured above with his wife, Rita.*

extraordinary fetes, but, even more, in our definition of the term: Heroes create safe spaces for other people..." (Success in Medical Marriage, 2007, Dr. Wayne M. Sotile and Mary O. Sotile, M.A.).

The collective physicians and spouses of BIMDA create these safe places for patients in Brevard County. "The success of a physician is in large part due to the support of his or her spouse, family and community," says Kurian. Kurian applauds a more "traditional approach" to medicine which unites physicians, dentists and health care providers with family and community—two pillars of support.

While BIMDA's broad community contribution expands yearly, physician spouses have earned their place as an invaluable pillar of support. "Traditional is togetherness," says Aparna Balaji, BIMDA's spouse's auxiliary chair for 2012. The spouse's leadership each year is usually led by the president's spouse.



Dr. Ashok C. Shah, sponsorship chair; past president (2005); pictured with his wife, Geeta.

## Dr. Ashok Shah, sponsorship chair, shares an interesting observation

Glad Kurian for his early vision of this event which he masterfully executed for the first time in 2002 with great success.

"Over the past decade, Glad Kurian has been recognized statewide as a leader in the medical community, working with several similar groups in cities ranging from Ft. Lauderdale to Orlando, Port St. Lucie, Palm Beach and Jacksonville, bringing together all players – physicians, hospitals, care givers, risk managers, pharmaceuticals and medical device makers."

Dr. Ashok Shah has been serving as the chairman of sponsorship & underwriting since 2002, and is recognized for leading the organization's growth since 2004 with his fundraising prowess. Dr. Shah is a member of Parrish Medical Center's medical staff. His leadership has expanded BIMDA's presence in Titusville with great prominence, connecting the dots for BIMDA along its 72-mile stretch in Brevard County that reaches the outskirts of Palm Bay and Malabar.

**"**It wasn't until the dawn of the Medical Expo in 2002 that BIMDA's meteoric rise as a state leader in organized medicine was firmly established. BIMDA gives credit to



(Pictured standing left to right): Dr. Aparna Kopuri; Radhika Shankar; Eileen Cooper; Dr. Sudeshna Mitra; Neena Shah; Dr. Rajashree Kumar. (Pictured seated left to right): Uma Shah; Rekha Vyas; Aparna Balaji; Anjana Reddy; Nandini Patel

Aparna Balaji, who is President Dr. Balaji's wife, maintains that many BIMDA spouses volunteer in different capacities and contribute to the goals of the organization, helping with child care, planning the menus for the conference and organizing volunteers for the host committee.

### ■ EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION

BIMDA's medical conferences each year gives physicians an opportunity to engage in Continuing Medical Education (CME). BIMDA will once again showcase this on November 17 at The Hilton Melbourne Rialto at its Annual Medical Conference. Florida Institute of Technology will be present, sharing information on its pre-med science programs. Select high school seniors will also be invited to attend and learn firsthand from speakers on diverse topics such as cancer research, caring for the elderly, pulmonary / critical care and long-term acute care. Exhibitors will showcase the latest in drug development, treatments and cures. "Our newest sponsor, Space Coast Pathology, will have physicians who will explain the various processes involved in diagnoses of cancer and other diseases," says Kurian.

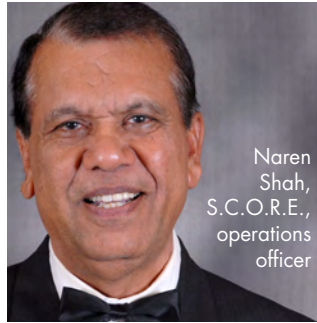
"Our conferences are open to all physicians. Membership is not required for any physician to attend our medical seminars. They



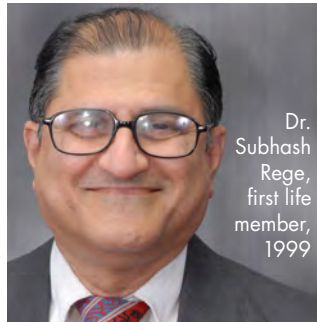
Dr. Ravi Shankar, membership director



Dr. Sue Mitra, chair of hospitality



Naren Shah, S.C.O.R.E., operations officer



Dr. Subhash Rege, first life member, 1999

are free and jointly supported by all local hospital networks, various pharmaceutical companies and medical service providers," says Dr. Aggarwal.

BIMDA is credited with being the unique platform in Brevard that attracts the support of all players in the field of medicine. "The common goal is the advancement of medical education, professional development, medical research and training," says Dr. Mahesh Soni.

### ■ MILESTONES OF GROWTH

Informal medical education dinner meetings in the early '90s, organized by Dr. Mahesh Soni and Glad Kurian, marked the start of BIMDA. Its formal incorporation took place in 1999, and the group witnessed steady growth through 2001. The first medical expo in 2002 is seen as a major turning point in the group's growth. In 2003, with Dr. Aggarwal as president of BIMDA, the AAPI Convention in Orlando further solidified the group's role as a leading member organization in Florida. In 2004, the addition of Dr. Ashok Shah brought strength in underwriting and sponsorship. The addition of Dr. Sue Mitra and Dr. Prakash Reddy brought expanded interaction with a younger generation of physicians and the group witnessed further growth in members. Recently, AAPI chapters in Florida have started an informal Florida Federation, a state-level group, and are hosting their first event in Orlando as a fundraiser for AAPI Charitable Foundation on September 28.

Dr. Subhash Rege signed up as the group's first life member in 1999, establishing his role as the dental co-founder. Dr. N. Rao Kopuri, orthodontist,

is slated to be the group's first dentist president in January 2013, leading the way to greater collaboration between physicians and dentists for better patient care.

### ■ FOCUS ON CHARITABLE GIVING

Charity is at the heart of BIMDA's mission statement. The group is known to rally to action at the call of natural disasters and medical emergencies in grief-stricken areas. Locally, BIMDA has partnered with several charitable organizations including United Way of Brevard, Cancer Care Foundation, Space Coast Cancer Foundation, Women's Centers, Children's Home Society, Jess Parrish Medical Foundation, Health First Foundation and Rotary Foundation, just to name a few. Dr. Jashbhai Patel, chair of charitable giving, says, "BIMDA strives to always give back to the community by supporting a diverse group of charities that serve human needs."

"I enjoy fund raising for BIMDA, but ultimately my satisfaction comes from supporting BIMDA's charitable outreach. As physicians, charity and kindness are core values that we endear," adds Dr. Ashok Shah.

The field of medicine is fast changing and BIMDA is a positive group adapting to change, busy preparing the next generation of doctors and community leaders for the challenges and opportunity that change brings.

For more information on BIMDA, visit [BIMDA.com](http://BIMDA.com) or call (321) 952-0853. ■