

2016 Edward Mott Moore Award Physician Recipient: TARUN KOTHARI, MD, FAGG, FACP

Dedicated, innovative, charitable and born leader are words that the Monroe County community uses to describe Tarun Kothari, MD, FAGG, FACP, the 2016 physician recipient of the Edward Mott Moore Award.

For more than 36 years, Dr. Kothari has inspired the Rochester community with his innovative ideas, volunteerism and charitable contributions. He has been a major contributor to the community in his roles as a practicing and teaching gastroenterologist. Many of his activities go well beyond the day-to-day business of a busy physician.

His love for helping others spawned from childhood when his parents took him to orphanages to donate clothing. Dr. Kothari was the first in his family of 11 children to go to college and medical school in India. He brought this passion to aid with him to America in 1974, when he migrated here with his wife for a better education and life, with only \$16 in their pockets. He completed a fellowship in Gastroenterology at the University of Rochester in 1979 and began to practice at Rochester General and Unity Hospitals. In his capacity as President of the Park Ridge Hospital Medical Staff, Dr. Kothari was instrumental in the seamless medical staff mergers of St. Mary's Hospital and Park Ridge Hospital to become Unity Health System in 1997. In this endeavor, Dr. Kothari seamlessly combined two diverse medical staffs, as well as two different cultures of teaching and non-teaching institutions, to work efficiently as one unit. He became part of the volunteer teaching faculty at Unity, where medical residents have written scores of abstracts and presented numerous papers at national GI meetings over the last fifteen years.

In 1981, Dr. Kothari became a founding member of the Indian Community Center (ICC), where he continues to invest philanthropically.

He joined the Unity Hospital board in 1998 and served on a number of committees up until 2014. In his service as the Chief of Gastroenterology at Unity Health System, Dr. Kothari's creation of a state-of-the-art GI facility at Unity, which bears his and his wife's names, has boosted the number of GI procedures per year from 2,500 in 1998, to over 15,000 currently. In 2007, his colleagues at Unity honored him with their Physician of the Year Award for championing quality and compassionate patient care, as well as his leadership and collaborative efforts to bring a diverse group of gastroenterologists under one collegial atmosphere.

Dr. Kothari is a co-founder of Rochester Gastroenterology Associates (RGA), where he worked until he retired in January 2016. During his time at RGA, he was known as a compassionate physician who took indigent patients at their words and provided free care and services to those who couldn't



Tarun Kothari, MD

afford it, particularly the patients suffering from Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. He and his staff provided round-the-clock support for his patients, leading to increased medication compliance and ultimately, better outcomes. Several hundreds of Dr. Kothari's patients have been cured of Hepatitis C. Dr. Kothari also offered a financial incentive to his patients to lose weight, and to his staff for their smoking cessation efforts. Dr. Kothari's compassion extends further than his practice.

Both he and his wife, Dr. Kamal Kothari, a practicing radiologist, have together donated and fundraised close to one million dollars for Unity and Rochester General Hospitals, the India Community Center, the Hindu Temple of Rochester, the Officer Pierson Childrens' Fund, the United Way, the former Lakeside Memorial Hospital, the International Hindi Foundation and International Hindi Association and the Kothari Family Foundation in India – providing health and education for the poor in India and indigent patients who are unable to pay for their gastroenterology and radiology services.

He credits his influences to two important people in his life. "My older brother, Pratap Kothari, guided me through my childhood to adulthood," Dr. Kothari said. "He and my best friend and wife, Kamal, have molded me into who I am today."

Dr. Kothari and his wife have been married for 42 years and have two successful daughters and two grandchildren. He is a published poet and has acted in three local plays. He has also played league tennis for 25 years. A competitive golfer, he has won three President's Cups at Locust Hill Country Club, two Senior Cups and two-time league championships. Since retiring, Dr. Kothari started taking foreign policy, psychology, and civil rights classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Rochester Institute of Technology. He continues to teach residents and is a board member of Rochester Regional Health System, and also serves on a number of committees. Dr. Kothari is also an MCMS delegate to the Medical Society of the State of New York House of Delegates. In April 2016, in his first year as a MSSNY delegate, he jumped right into the discussions and volunteered to judge the medical and resident student poster contest.

Dr. Kothari's best stress relief is his "Forgive and Forget" philosophy. "I do not carry forward grudges or any anger. I love my work to a passionate level so it has never been stressful." He is a community leader and community servant well-known for having a large heart for his patients. Out of all of his accomplishments, however, one of the most meaningful is when his patients or relatives give him hugs and gratitude for his efforts and compassionate care. "Serving people and giving back to the community which has given us so much is one of my greatest joys."