The goddess of fashion at Liz Claiborne
Aru Kulkarni - President, Liz Claiborne Apparel Division

After graduating from University of Pittsburgh in 1984, a career in the fashion industry wasn’t exactly what Aru Kulkarni aspired to. Nevertheless, as president of $5 billion Liz Claiborne’s apparel division, Kulkarni is ecstatic she stumbled upon a career that has brought her so far.

“I had no reference points or experience as far as the fashion industry was concerned,” says the Mumbai-born executive reflecting on her job hunt in Pittsburgh. As an economics major, a finance or banking job looked more promising, but an offer from retail chain Joseph Horne’s seemed too good to pass up on. One thing led to another, and after a four-year stint at Horne’s, Kulkarni moved to New York, secure in the belief she was ready to jump into the mecca of global fashion industry.

“I was at Maidenform, a women’s lingerie company, from 1989 to 1992 and then moved to Warnaco where I held various sales and marketing executive positions and eventually moved up to senior vice president of sales and marketing for Calvin Klein Underwear,” she says.

In November 2000, Kulkarni made another strategic move and joined Liz Claiborne as vice president and general manager for missy casual sales. In 2004, she was appointed to her present position, a coveted title considering her division has a portfolio of 34 brands and is responsible for 40 percent of the company’s bottomline.

While there aren’t many top women executives in the American fashion industry, let alone an Indian American, Kulkarni attributes her success to her leadership style. “I have been told that I’m a very direct, yet motivating leader. My inclusive philosophy of leadership has helped me to build strong teams, which ultimately helps the business,” she explains. "I pride myself on not being a micro-manager, but rather empowering my team and being a strategic leader.”

As an Indian American, Kulkarni remains bonded to her roots and is closely networked with the community, although socializing is a luxury given her work schedule. Business brings references to India and Kulkarni is rather fascinated by India’s integration into the global fashion industry.

A frequent visitor to Mumbai and Pune, she never experienced the concept of “ready-to-wear” clothing growing up in India. “Now there are Benetton and Levi’s stores. The difference may be because, with more and more Indian people employed by multinational corporations, the disposable income of the average person has risen since I left back in the early 80s,” she observes.

And with global fashion trends quickly adopted in India now, she is ensuring Liz Claiborne sources extensively from India. “Our executives are really impressed with the work ethic and quality of merchandise in India and we do buy a lot from there,” quips Kulkarni.
Leading by example at Newsweek
Fareed Zakaria - Editor, Newsweek International

Fareed Zakaria’s career reads like some razy American fantasy: Neoconservative policy wonk becomes darling of the ultra-liberal Daily Show. Political columnist and editor of Newsweek International, he is dubbed an "intellectual heartthrob" by Jon Stewart.

Zakaria was named editor of Newsweek International in October 2000, overseeing all Newsweek’s editions abroad. The magazine reaches an audience of 24 million worldwide.

Zakaria was born in India to a practicing Muslim family. His father, Rafiq Zakaria, was a former government minister, deputy leader of the Congress party and a respected scholar.

His mother, Fatima Zakaria, was for a time the Sunday editor of the Times of India. His brother Arshad is a former head of investment banking at Merrill Lynch and is currently the head of New Vernon Capital, the largest hedge fund investing in India. His two other siblings, a brother Mansoor and a sister Tasneem, are from his father’s first marriage.

Zakaria attended the Cathedral and John Connon School in Mumbai where he was School Prefect and House Captain for Palmer, one of the four school Houses. After graduating from the Anglican school, Zakaria attended Yale University where he was a member of Scroll and Key Society, President of the Yale Political Union, and a member of the Party of the Right. Zakaria received a B.A. from Yale and later graduated with a Ph.D. in Government from Harvard University, where he studied under Samuel P. Huntington and Stanley Hoffmann.

Before his current position with Newsweek, Zakaria was managing editor of the magazine Foreign Affairs, a journal of international politics and economics.

Prior to joining Foreign Affairs, Zakaria ran a research project on American foreign policy at Harvard University. He has taught courses in international relations and political philosophy at Harvard, Columbia and Case Western universities. He has written for such publications as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The New Yorker and The New Republic, and has also worked as a wine columnist for the webzine Slate. His 2002 essay for The New Yorker on America’s global role has been widely quoted, as have several of his Newsweek cover-essays. He is the author of the 1998 book From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America’s World Role (Princeton University Press), his PhD thesis, and co-editor of The American Encounter: The United States and the Making of the Modern World (Basic Books). His most recent book, The Future of Freedom, was published in the spring of 2003 and became a New York Times bestseller as well as a bestseller in several other countries. It has been translated into more than eighteen languages.

In April 2005, Zakaria premiered as host of a new foreign affairs program on PBS, Foreign Exchange with Fareed Zakaria.

Zakaria has won several awards for his Newsweek columns, including for his October 2001 Newsweek cover story, “Why They Hate Us.” In 1999, he was named “one of the 21 most important people of the 21st Century” by Esquire. In 2005, he won the World Affairs Councils of America’s International Jour-nalist Award. In 2006, he was...
named one of the 100 most influential graduates of Harvard University. He currently serves on the boards of Yale University, the Trilateral Commission, and the Council on Foreign Relations, New America Foundation and Columbia University’s Inter-national House. Zakaria is a recipient of The International Center’s Award of Excellence.

**Passion for philanthropy**

**Robin Raina - Founder, Robin Raina Foundation**

Robin Raina, a successful businessman and voted amongst the top 100 Most Powerful people in insurance in North America by Insurance magazine is passionate about his foundation and community work. Atlanta-based Raina is the founder of Robin Raina Foundation, a philanthropic organization that has pledged $15 million to build houses for slum-dwellers in India. The youngest of four children and named Raina because he chattered like the bird as a kid did his schooling and college in Punjab, holds an Industrial Engineering degree from Thapar University in Punjab and an MBA from IIM Calcutta. He is presently president and CEO at Ebix, a 28-year old publicly traded American company and has lead the transformation of this company into a profitable Global Group with offices in Australia, NZ, Singapore, London, Chicago, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Park City, Walnut Creek, India & Toronto. Raina is credited with leading the insurance industry’s march into the 21st century in terms of redefining the technology arena and has been credited with introducing many novel concepts to the insurance industry: Raina likes to play a role in improving Indo-US trade, while generating increased employment both in India and United States. Today, he has made India into the nucleus for this American company, with approximately 250 employees presently in India. He dreams to have close to 3000 employees by December 2008 in India. The Indian company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the American company, runs an advertising campaign with a slogan – "American Company with an Indian Heart." That sums up Robin’s desire to bring the two countries together. Today, the company owns two large buildings in Noida, India and has built a name for itself as one of the key American multinational BPO operations in India.

**The ‘pundit’ at Citigroup**

**Vikram Pandit - CEO, Citigroup**

A brilliant student throughout his academic life and a go-getter by nature, 51-year-old Indian American Vikram Pandit hogged the media limelight worldwide when he was declared as the youngest CEO of the world’s largest conglomerate, the Citigroup in 2008. The group operates as Citi and happens to be the largest financial institution in the world.
Pandit was born in Nagpur to a reasonably prosperous Marathi Brahmin family. His schooling happened at Dadar Parsee Youths Assembly High School at Dadar in Mumbai. After this, he shifted to United States at the age of 16 and took admission in Columbia University. He received B.S. and M.S. in electrical engineering in 1976 and 1977 respectively and a Ph.D. in finance in 1986. Pandit happens to be a trustee at the Columbia University.

Pundit also has had a stint as a professor at Indiana University in Bloomington and thereafter, joined Morgan Stanley.

For the next two decades, Pandit worked for Morgan Stanley. He was appointed the president and Chief Operating Officer (CEO) of the Institutional Securities and Investment Banking Group at Morgan Stanley and was in charge of the total operation of the group. Pandit looked after aspects like the trading, sales and infrastructure of the business from the year 2000 to 2005.

Pandit was the managing director and head of the US Equity Syndicate for Morgan Stanley from 1990 to 1994. Then from 1994 till 2000, he worked as the managing director and head of the Worldwide Institutional Equities Division for the same firm.

The accomplished Pandit finally decided to leave Morgan Stanley along with some colleagues to begin a hedge fund, Old Lane Partners that was purchased by Citigroup in 2007 for $800 million.

Pandit is a part of the board of the Columbia University, Columbia Business School, the Indian School of Business and The Trinity School. He also happens to be a former board member of NASDAQ, the New York City Investment Fund from the year 2000 till 2003.

He lives with his wife Swati in Central Park West, New York in a $ 17.85 million-worth apartment bought from late actor Tony Randall.

Silicon Valley’s helping hand
Lata Krishnan - Founding president, AIF

Lata Krishnan has been the founding president of the America India Foundation (AIF) since 2001.

She is also CFO of Shah Management, a private investment company that manages over $300 million in assets. In 1989, Krishnan co-founded SMART Modular Technologies and served as CFO. In 1999, SMART merged with Solectron Corporation in a transaction valued at over $2 billion.

As vice-president of Smart Modular, Krishnan was said to be the highest paid female executive in Silicon Valley.

However to her credit, Krishnan is equally well known for her generous contributions to society. She and her husband Ajay Shah donated $1 million to the Gujarat earthquake relief very early on in the fundraising effort.

For all her commitments, Krishnan wasn’t too busy to accept the post of AIF president for which is paid $1
annually and is expected to make the project a nationwide phenomenon.

In the long term, the non-profit organization hopes to provide technological and managerial resources to the residents of India and to help solidify the bond between the US and India.

Earlier last summer, the AIF sent 21 young professionals as part of its pilot India Service Corps project designed to assist Indian non-governmental organizations.

Before SMART, Krishnan held corporate accounting and finance positions in Montgomery Securities, Arthur Anderson & Company LLP, and Hill Vellacott & Company.

Krishnan received a Bachelor with honors from the London School of Economics and is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. She and her husband Ajay live in Fremont, California. They have a daughter and a son.

She re-invented Pepsi into a global brand

Indra Nooyi - PepsiCo CEO

Indra Nooyi, Pepsi’s brand-new chief is a powerful force behind the consumer giant’s strong profit pipeline and $108 billion stock market valuation. Formerly CFO and president, the Chennai-born strategist reached the top even though she never ran a line operation at Pepsi. Nooyi believes in constant reinvention: “The minute you’ve developed a new business model, it’s extinct, because somebody is going to copy it.” For Nooyi, 51, the shocking thing isn’t who she is but the world she has inherited. Globalism wasn’t new when she joined PepsiCo more than a decade ago, but the globe part has changed. “The world has gone through a radical shift,” says Nooyi. “There’s incredible macroeconomic stability. That hasn’t happened in the last 35 years.”

As Pepsi’s strategist—she’s a former management consultant—Nooyi helped position PepsiCo for growth in China, the Middle East and her native India. “I am a global thinker in everything I do,” she says.

Her vision is performance with purpose. It means not just delivering localized products—Walkers crisps in Coventry and Sabritos in Santiago. It’s about sustainability on multiple levels: human, talent and environment. Efficient water and energy use has obvious paybacks. But creating a better community? “I need a healthy consumer out there,” says Nooyi. “The only way I can do that is sustainability.”

According to the polls Forbes magazine conducted, Nooyi ranks fifth on the 2007 list of The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women. Nooyi has been named the No. 1 Most Powerful Woman in Business in 2006 and 2007 by Fortune magazine.

She received a Bachelor’s degree in Chemistry from Madras Christian College in 1974, and immediately entered the business administration program at the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. After graduating from IIM-C in 1976, she worked in India for several years (including a stretch at Madura Coats). She was admitted to Yale School of Management in 1978 for a master’s degree in Management. Nooyi then started at The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), from where she moved on to strategy positions at Motorola and ABB.
She joined PepsiCo in 1994, was named president and CFO in 2001. On August 14, 2006, she was named the CEO of PepsiCo, becoming the fifth CEO in PepsiCo’s 42-year history.

While at PepsiCo, Indra Nooyi has played a vital role in starting Tricon, which is currently known as Yum! Brands Inc. Nooyi recommended spinning off Taco Bell, KFC and Pizza Hut, arguing PepsiCo couldn’t bring enough value to the fast food industry. Nooyi also took the lead in the acquisition of Tropicana in 1998, and merger with Quaker Oats Co.

According to BusinessWeek, since she became CFO in 2000, the company’s annual revenues have risen 72%, while net profit more than doubled, to $5.6 billion in 2006.

She lives in Greenwich, Connecticut with her husband, Raj Kishan Nooyi, and their two daughters.

**A journey that bears lessons for managers, teachers alike**

*Dipak Jain - Dean, Kellogg School of Management*

Dipak Jain, the two-time gold medallist from Guwahati University is the first Indian dean to head the Kellogg School of Management. His journey to the top from humble beginnings in Assam indeed bears lessons for managers and teachers alike.

Son of an army officer, Jain, in 1980, was just appointed as a lecturer at Guwahati University and was simultaneously working for doctorate degree in operations research. Lack of proper access to academic journals or research materials that were required for his doctoral study made Jain to step up proactive approaches to acquire knowledge. So he wrote letters to researchers at universities in the United States, asking them to send him their working papers. During one such interaction, with his letter to Professor S Prakash Sethi, who was at the University of California, Berkeley, he came into contact with Professor R. Chandrasekaran, professor of operations research at the University of Texas at Dallas.

On his arrival in the United States in 1983, Jain switched gears from operations research to marketing. It was a pivotal shift for, on completion of his thesis, he was accepted as an instructor at Kellogg, which was known for its marketing expertise. On January 5, 1987, Jain taught his first class. Fourteen years later, he got the responsibility to navigate the course of the premier business school in the world.

In 1994, Jain was named the school’s Sandy and Morton Goldman Professor of Entrepreneurial Studies and professor of marketing.

In addition to teaching at Kellogg, Jain served as a visiting professor at the Koblenz Business School, Germany; Nijenrode University, the Netherlands; Chulalongkorn University, Thailand; IIT Delhi; Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong; and Tel Aviv University, Israel.

Aware of the challenges ahead of him after succeeding Don Jacobs as the Dean, at Kellogg, Jain soon after taking office laid emphasis on regular interface with alumnus, recruiters and partners to strengthen the brand image of Kellogg.

Jain’s areas of research include the marketing of high-tech products; market segmentation and competitive market
structure analysis; cross-cultural issues in global product diffusion; new product diffusion; and forecasting models. He has had more than 50 articles published in leading academic journals.

Management thinker speaks about fortune at the bottom of pyramid
C.K. Prahalad - Business professor and management thinker

Coimbatore Krishnnao — C.K. Prahalad was born in Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. He studied physics at the University of Madras. He worked as a manager in a branch of the Union Carbide battery company, before continuing his education in the United States, and earning a PhD from Harvard. He has taught in India and America, eventually joining the faculty of the University of Michigan’s Business School, where he holds the Harvey C Fruehauf chair of Business Administration.

At Ann Arbor, Prahalad met Gary Hamel, then a young international business student. Their collaboration ultimately resulted in the best-selling, Competing for the Future (1994). In his last book (written with Venkat Ramaswamy), The Future of Competition (2004), Prahalad argues that companies have not made enough use of the opportunities provided by globalization. There is an inability to realize that not only have the rules of the game changed but the role of the players has been transformed too, says Prahalad. The ‘customer’ is a more powerful and pro-active figure. Customers are no longer abstractions that have to be satisfied. Thanks to the Internet, they are agents creating and participating in transactions. The concept of value has also changed. It is not inherent in products or services. It can’t be instilled by producers or providers. It has to be co-created with consumers. They build this by experiencing it. The only way companies can compete successfully is through building new strategic capital.

Alongside this work, Prahalad has been wrestling with the perplexingly complex and political issue of poverty. This led him to write The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid (2004) in which he identifies the world’s poor (the ‘bottom of the pyramid’) as a potential untapped market for companies, worth anything up to $13 trillion a year. “The real source of market promise is not the wealthy few in the developing world, or even the emerging middle-income consumers. It is the billions of aspiring poor who are joining the market economy for the first time” he explains. A market at the bottom of the pyramid could be co-created by multi-national and domestic industry, non-governmental organizations and, most importantly, the poor themselves.

Prahalad has been named among the top ten management thinkers of the world in every major survey for over ten years.

In India, Prahalad studied at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, where he fell in love with a student at a nearby university. It took five years for their families’ approval; the couple married and then left for Harvard Business School. There Prahalad wrote a doctoral thesis on multinational management in just two and a half years, graduating with a D.B.A. degree in 1975.

Prahalad was co-founder and became CEO of Praja Inc (“Praja” from a Sanskrit word “Praja” which means “citizen” or “common people”). The goals of the company ranged from allowing common people to access information
without restriction (this theme is related to the “bottom of pyramid” or BOP philosophy) to providing a testbed for various management ideas.

Seasoned educator administers U. of Houston
Dr. Renu Khator - President, University of Houston

Renu Khator is the current president of the University of Houston and chancellor of the University of Houston system. Before assuming the position in January 2008, Khator served as provost and senior vice-president at the University of South Florida. She is the first foreign-born president of the university, and the second woman to hold the position.

Before moving to the United States, Khator earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Kanpur in 1973. Beginning in 1985, Renu Khator began a twenty-two year career affiliation with the University of South Florida (USF). Khator served in various positions at USF, culminating in her position as provost and senior vice-president of the university.

In October 2007, the University of Houston announced Khator as the sole-finalist for the vacant position of president at the university and chancellor of the affiliated system. Khator officially took her position in January of 2008.

A devoted teacher, seasoned educational administrator and respected scholar, Dr Khator has a doctorate and masters degree in political science from Purdue University and earned her bachelors degree from Kanpur University in Uttar Pradesh, which is her native state.

She arrived in the US in 1974, shortly after her marriage to Suresh Khator. She and her husband pursued graduate degrees at Purdue University.

Dr Khator becomes the third person to hold the dual title of UH System chancellor and UH president.

Dr Khator has a long history of community engagement, serving on numerous boards, including the Moffitt Cancer Hospital Board of Directors and she recently served as a member of the National Advisory Council on Environmental Policy and Management. She has recently been appointed to the National Science Foundation Integrate-ive Graduate Education and Research Program Panel and the American Council on Education Forum on Internation-alism and Multiculturalism.

The Khators were honored by the Indian government. The honor is given to NRIs who make outstanding contributions in their chosen fields.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services included Dr Khator among its 2006 Outstanding American by Choice awardees.

HP’s image-maker
Vyomesh Joshi - Executive vice president, HP
Even during the bad times, Vyomesh Joshi’s printing business at Hewlett-Packard was the go-to place for good news. The affable executive vice president’s unit accounts for nearly half of the overall company’s $100 billion revenue.

A recent New York Times article offered some insight into Joshi and his goals for his company’s future. HP makes half the world’s printers. And yet, Joshi recently started a large company meeting by sharing the following piece of information: “He said one of his daughters, a college student, had told him, ‘I don’t need a printer,’ the Times wrote. “Like many people of her generation, she lives online and finds it unnecessary or too difficult to put bits onto paper.”

But no challenge is tough for Palo Alto-based Joshi, a trained engineer from India who received a master’s degree from Ohio State. Though he currently serves on the board of Yahoo! and takes home an annual compensation of over $12 million, like most immigrants he has seen difficult times in the past.

‘In 1984, when we started, we had no idea we would be so successful,’ Joshi once told the audience at a Net Impact Conference. ‘We simply saw a market trend—that personal computers would be big.’ Reasoning that people would want to print off their desktop, his team figured out how to use inkjet and laser technologies to create low-end products for home users and upscale models for offices. In the last five years under Joshi’s leadership, HP’s printing and imaging unit has grown revenue from $19 billion to $26 billion and doubled its operating profit to $3.8 billion. VJ spearheads HP’s drive to become not merely the world’s premier printer company, but the world’s premier printing company.

The Googler’s guru likes challenges

Rajeev Motwani - Professor of Computer Science, Stanford University

Rajeev Motwani may be one of the star professors of Stanford University’s computer science department, but at first glance, the forty-four year old looks more like a corporate executive on holiday rather than an academic. Nor does he indulge in heavy-handed academic jargon in his speeches, making him instantly more accessible to a larger audience. That is because Motwani is not just a regular academic; he is also a highly successful venture capitalist and entrepreneur, investing in software companies dealing with online security and privacy.

But Motwani also happens to be the guru of two of technology’s most influential voices, Internet search engine Google co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page, who were enrolled in the doctoral program at Stanford in the mid 1990s. They all got together to start a research group, Midas, short for Mining Data at Stanford. “We all wrote a couple of papers together, involving some of the ideas which later became the technology behind Google.”

Over the next few years, Midas collaborated with several other groups on these research projects, but nobody really considered them as a business proposition. “We attacked a problem and took up research issues like
managing large volumes of data, information retrieval and data mining, and we were just focused on resolving these,” Motwani says with a laugh. “It is just that one small group of students built something that turned out to be the precursor of Google. It is not as if the entire research group set out to devise a technology in the hope that it would lead to a company on search engines. We were into resolving pure technical challenges and there were several outcomes, of which one turned out to be Google.”

Like many of the success stories in his field, Motwani is a product of India’s fabled Indian Institute of Technology. “I went to IIT Kanpur and earned a Bachelor’s degree in computer science - was among the first batch in this field. I applied to universities in the United States and got into the University of California, Berkeley for a Ph.D. program,” he recalls. As he was completing his dissertation, he was introduced to Professor Don Knuth, one of the founding fathers of the computer science program at Stanford, who convinced him to join his department without even applying for jobs elsewhere.

Today, Motwani wants to make a difference to the knowledge industry all over again and is doing so with Dot EDU Ventures. “We are a seed stage venture fund out to help companies spinning out of academic research and not just from Stanford,” he says.

**Young filmmaker makes a mark with cult hits**

**Jay Chandrasekhar - Hollywood filmmaker**

Perhaps you know him as Ramathorn the party-loving police officer in Super Troopers, or as Putman the dreadlocked British tennis instructor in Club Dread? Jay Chandrasekhar has for the last 12 years been an integral part of the comedy troupe Broken Lizard, directing each of their films beginning with 1996’s Puddle Cruiser.

Born in 1968 in Chicago, the Tamil-American writer-director Jay Chandrasekhar ignited his show-business career as the most active contributor to the five-member Broken Lizard sketch comedy team.

Chandrasekhar — a graduate of Lake Forest Academy — attended Colgate University in the early ‘90s, where he met his contemporary Lizardians Kevin Heffernan, Steve Lemme, Paul Soter, and Erik Stohlanske. The troupe initially christened itself “Charred Goosebeak,” but quickly went with the name “Broken Lizard” instead. Club dates and, eventually, two feature films ensued, the 1996 Puddle Cruiser and the 2001 Super Troopers; Chandrasekhar took the director’s chair for each.

Rife with sight gags, scatological puns, double entendres, and slapstick, the movies (which premiered at Sundance) suggested influences by such laff-fests as the Police Academy series and the “Kentucky Fried Theater” films. Fox Searchlight picked up Super Troopers and it made indie box-office gold; a 2004 follow-up, the less successful slapstick/horror hybrid Broken Lizard’s Club Dread, followed.

At this point, Hollywood acknowledged Chandrasekhar’s talent, not only by inviting him as a guest director to helm episodes of such hit series as Arrested Development, Undeclared, and Cracking Up, but via an invitation to direct the 2005 Dukes of Hazzard update, co-starring Jessica Simpson, Johnny Knoxville, Seann William Scott,
Burt Reynolds, and, in supporting roles, additional members of the Broken Lizard team. The film revealed that Chandrasekhar had his hand on the audience’s pulse — unlike the director’s prior motion pictures, it soared to number one across America. Chandrasekhar then announced work on a fourth Broken Lizard vehicle, Beerfest, another wild comedy, about a couple of Americans who travel to Deutschland for the Oktoberfest. Chandrasekhar is married to the actress Susan Clarke; they have one child.

Both of Chandrasekhar’s parents are physicians. He has three siblings including a sister, Sandy, who is a lawyer. When Chandrasekhar, whose complete name is Jayant Jambulingam Chandra-sekhar, announced, while studying history and arts at Colgate University, that he wanted to get into the performing arts and the movies, his family was fully behind him, father AJ Chandrasekhar recalls. “We told him that, after a couple of years, if he felt he wasn’t making progress, he should think of some other career, like law,” he adds.

Jay does not remember being called by his given name. “But in college some of my friends discovered by middle name,“ he says, ”and they would often call me Jambulingam.”

The name is, in fact, the name of Jay’s grandfather. Jay’s son has it as his middle name too. “I have used the name Jambulingam while editing films such as Super Troopers and Puddle Cruiser,” he says. “I like the look and sound of it.”

Along with M. Night Shyamalan and actor Sendhil Ramamurthy, Chandrasekhar is one of the few prominent entertainers working in Hollywood with an Indian heritage.

Kal Penn digs gold in Hollywood
Kal Penn - Hollywood actor

Los Angeles-based Kal Penn qualifies as one of the very few Indian American actors in Hollywood of Gujarati heritage working in Hollywood. He is known for his starring roles in National Lampoon’s Van Wilder, Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle, The Namesake (2007), and the recently released Harold & Kumar Escape From Guantanamo Bay (2008). He is currently playing Dr. Kutner in the TV series House.

He was born Kalpen Suresh Modi on April 23, 1977, in Montclair, NJ, to an engineer father and a mother employed as a fragrance sampler for a perfume manufacturer.

He began using the name Kal Penn, a variation on his first name Kalpen, to get more roles; he believed that his difficult foreign name would scare away potential employers.

Penn was offered a part in “Planet Terror,” the Robert Rodriguez segment of Grind-house (2007), but turned it down due to the conflicting shoot of The Namesake (2006).

His favorite book is “The Namesake” and used to check into hotels under the pseudonym of “Gogol Ganguli”, the lead character of the book. When he found out that Mira Nair was making a film out of it, despite her having already cast an actor in the part, Penn lobbied for the role and eventually won it.

Penn bravely and intelligently cut against the grain of social expectations as a child, rejecting the prompting of his
peers to join the soccer team, and instead joining the school drama team. Though allegedly mocked by classmates for his decision, Penn changed everyone’s mind with his performance in a school production of The Wiz, and received a standing ovation for his work in that production — no mean accomplishment for a beginner. During elementary school and junior high, Modi felt struck, again and again, by the crass Indian stereotypes perpetuated in Hollywood films, specifically in movies such as Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984) and 1986’s Short Circuit, in which Caucasian actor Fisher Stevens plays the Indian American Ben Jabituya for comic relief. Quietly vowing to work against this trend, Penn actually spent years attaining the box-office clout to make it happen. After his secondary school education (first at New Jersey’s Howell High, then at Freehold Township High), Penn trained intensely as a dramatist on the Manhattan theatrical circuit, then attended UCLA as a drama major in the mid-’90s, and simultaneously started to land television parts right and left, in such series as Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Sabrina, the Teenage Witch, and Spin City. At about that time, he took the advice of friends and family, and — though initially reluctant to do so — anglicized his name, changing it to Kal Penn. As a result, he later reported, job offers escalated by 50 percent. Penn made his feature debut coming in the 1999 culture-clash drama Freshmen. A supporting role in the independent romantic comedy American Desi (2001) quickly followed — ironically, an exploration of race and identity, about an Indian American boy, Krishna (Deep Katdare), who moves away from home and changes his name to Kris to disguise his ethnicity, but finds himself saddled with several roommates of like heritage. Penn plays Ajay, an Indian student who has immersed himself in black (“Afrocentric”) behavior. The film received extremely limited U.S. theatrical bookings in the spring of 2001 and fair reviews from the critics who saw it. Penn’s onscreen activity escalated meteorically from 2003 through 2006, with the young actor averaging around seven or eight first-run features per year, and ascending to higher and higher credit billings. Most notably, he co-starred as Kumar (alongside fellow Gen-Xer John Cho) in 2004’s stoner comedy Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle, a surprise sleeper hit (and recipient of many enthusiastic notices) about two buddies, an Asian-American banker and an Indian-American medical student, whose unstoppable quest to find some White Castle hamburgers gives way to an epic road trip. Penn also delivered a memorable supporting turn as Stanford, a henchman of Lex Luthor (Kevin Spacey) in 2006’s well-received blockbuster Superman Returns. Meanwhile, Penn made an indelible impression on the small screen as well, as Harrison in the 2004 NBC 9/11 NBC drama Homeland Security.

**Inventor of the Pentium computer chip essays fascinating journey**

**Vinod Dham - Serial entrepreneur**

“Living in the Silicon Valley, if you do not do a startup, then something is wrong with you,” says, Vinod Dham, when asked why he left a high-profile career in Intel after having successfully completed the Pentium project. “In 1995, I was 45 and facing a midlife crisis. I could have ridden a Harley Davidson, or gone bungee jumping or done a
startup. Since I am a pretty conservative guy I chose the last,” he laughs.

From the hills near Rawalpindi to the Valley, the Dhams have gone through a fascinating journey. Coming to India during Partition as his father was posted there. His early education was in Pune and Dham considers himself a Puneite, speaking fluent Marathi.

He did his Bachelors in Electrical Engineering from Delhi College of Engineering in 1971. Thereafter he had a brief stint with Continental Devices, a Delhi based semiconductor company.

In 1975, Vinod Dham went to the US and did his Masters in Electrical Engineering from the University of Cincinnati, where he studied microprocessors. Dham wanted to know what went on inside the devices. After MS, Dham went to Dayton and joined MCR.

"It was cold and lonely but I got my green card and work experience. I got some patents from the work I did there. I was presenting it in an IEEE conference in Monterrey, California. The Intel people were also there presenting their work and they said they wanted me to join them.

While in Continental Devices I had read about Gordon Moore, Robert Noyce and all that in the technology magazines but they were asking questions like how PhDs would run a business. It was fascinating. Of course, I joined as a lowly engineer. I worked on EPROMS (I was a co-inventor of flash memory) for seven years,” recalls Dham.

However, Dham wanted more action and started looking around. At that time, the 386 chip had been designed and had gone for production. Dham wanted to get into microprocessors, he applied for a job in that division but he was rejected since the project was on course. That would not deter a determined Dham. He went nosing around and found that there were problems in production. The fab thought may be it was at fault and was cleaning up its shop, the designers were at tethers end after several redesigns and Dham thought he could lick the problem. He went to the program manager and told him that he would act as his consultant and need not be given a formal position. When Dham straightened out the problem, Intel’s fortunes shot up and the boss was happy. So he made him in charge of 386 and went on to 486 himself. It so turned out that he was then shifted to 486 since his former boss had quit.

However 486 was in deep trouble, the fab was ready, the chip had been announced to go one up on competitors but there were numerous problems at all levels.

"I worked so hard I thought I died, but finally I finished the project in November 1989. I took a month off to India to unwind and came back in January 1990 and was made incharge of 586 or Pentium,” says Dham.

He joined Nexgen, which was a startup that was acquired by AMD later. After helping AMD seriously challenge Intel with its vastly popular K6, Dham left AMD and joined Silicon Spice, a startup, as chairman, president and CEO though others had founded it.

Broadcom acquired Silicon Spice for $1.2 billion and everybody, including some office staff, have become millionaires. Photographs and certificates from Andy Grove and Craig Barret about 386, 486 and Pentium adorn Dham’s office walls as well as one from Bill Clinton for being the presidential advisor on minorities.

Dham’s favorite hobby is carpentry and his favorite TV show is Home Improvement. ‘Tool Man’ Tim Taylor’s Do It Yourself does not quite work. This hi-tech craftsman’s chips sure do.
A ‘photographic’ journey from Jallandhar to Manhattan
Baldev Duggal - Founder, Duggal Visual Solutions

When Punjab-born Baldev Duggal opened a photo lab in Manhattan 40 years ago, it is unlikely he could envision his business becoming an institution.
Duggal’s success has been a result of Duggal Visual Solutions, a photo company that he started in New York. Today, it has come to represent the standard in high-end photo imaging and printing in the city, as the big names in photography and graphic design flock to its loft-like space on West 23rd Street in Manhattan, in the heart of what is now known as the photo district. Clients include top photographers like Robert Fraber and Joel Meyerowitz, fashion houses and museums like the Guggenheim and the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Growing up in India, Duggal’s ambition was to make it big in the United States. His ambition then was to make more money than the US President and to own a Rolls Royce. Today, not only does New York-based Duggal make several times more than the resident of the White House, but he has also been through two Rolls Royce cars.
Duggal’s reputation for precision craftsmanship made the lab a favorite of photographers, advertising agencies, digital artists, publishing houses, and fine art creators, though average Joes can still take their film to a street level retail counter.

In 1993, Duggal became the first company to fully wrap a building with a full-color digital mural, and they have gone on to produce outdoor graphics installed on billboards, buses, subway cars, and ships. They can print and wrap an entire vehicle at their Manhattan plant, and they offer creative artwork from scratch.

The word retail has a double meaning at Duggal. For one, he immersed his company’s creative talents about eight years ago in his store display business. Some of his large retail clients include Macy’s, Benetton, Ann Taylor, Victoria’s Secret, and Tommy Hilfiger to name a few.

The other side of retail is the company’s retail sales division. One location, Duggal Overnight, is truly the old-fashioned conventional photo lab, which churns out many interesting stories as well.

In one instance, following 9/11, every New York imager took a hit: photographers, ad agencies, artists, graphic designers, printers, and last but not least, commercial photo imaging labs.

On that fateful day, Duggal Overnight stayed open until midnight, with Baldev’s son Michael and the store manager stepping in to process the film because almost no staff could make it into the city.

The farmlands of Jallandhar at dusk are now a distant memory for a man who lives in a plush apartment in the Trump Tower, who sends his prized Tibetan carpet to Switzerland to be cleaned and who was named Entrepreneur of the Year in 1997 by the accounting firm Ernst and Young.

Making a name in peach farming
Didar Singh Bains - California’s largest peach farmer
When it comes to the success of Indian Americans in farming, the name of California’s peach king Didar Singh Bains is foremost. This simple Indian farmer is one of the biggest peach growers in America.

Forty years ago, Bains came to America with $8 in his pocket with the belief that money grows on trees. He was right.

Bains was a young “jat” from Punjab, where farming is next to godliness. He took one whiff of the prime Columbian loam lining the fields of Sutter County in California and figured he’d found paradise.

Driving tractors and irrigating orchards for 75 cents an hour, he did the work of four men, and soon bought his first peach orchard.

He bought another, then another, and by 1978, had become the largest peach grower in California.

Today Bains — whose first name roughly means “visionary” in Punjabi — owns more than 40 parcels of land in 13 counties, including 667 acres next to Sacramento International Airport and much of rapidly developing western Yuba City.

The turban-clad Bains, who hasn’t cut his silver beard since 1982, is now one of the wealthiest men in Northern California, worth somewhere in the neighborhood of $75 million.

“I worked from 5 a.m. until 10 p.m.” says Baines.

Bains, like most other Sikh immigrants, learned the secrets of farming in the fertile fields of Punjab.

He followed his father and grandfather into the orchards of Sutter County, and after three years without a day off, had saved enough to buy a 25-acre farm.

By 1980, Bains owned 12,000 acres in California and Canada.

Unraveling the mystery of heart disease in Indian Americans
Dr. Enas Enas - Cardiologist

In the early 1980s, Dr. Enas. A. Enas, a cardiologist practicing in Chicago, decided to dedicate his time and effort to unravel the mystery of coronary heart disease (CHD) in Indian Americans.

Working with AAPI (American Association of Physicians from India), he established the CADI (Coronary Artery Disease in Indians) research study and started collecting data diligently, first from Indian physicians during the annual meetings and later from non-physicians. Blood samples were analyzed for cholesterol and other lipid components. He published many papers in prestigious peer-reviewed journals and spoke at medical meetings and public forums to share his findings, warn all Asian Indians of this impending epidemic and how to deal with it.

CADI study became the catalyst for similar studies in the US, England, India and other countries wherever Indians had immigrated. In 1995, British Medical Journal wrote an editorial about “Premature coronary deaths in Asian
Indians in Britain” and made a strong appeal, “Spend now on prevention or pay later for treatment.” Based on epidemiological studies, the article concluded that immigrant South Asians share a significantly higher mortality from CHD than the indigenous white population. More frightening is that this increased risk also applies to the second-generation Asian Indian immigrants who have adverse risk factor profiles for CHD.

Dr. Enas is currently the director of the CADI Research Foundation and Advanced Heart Lipid Clinic in Downers Grove, Illinois and Clinical Associate Professor at University of Illinois at Chicago.

Born and raised in Kerala, Dr. Enas immigrated to the United States in 1970, where he completed six years of training including cardiology at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. He is Board Certified in Cardiology.

Enas, who has done pioneering research on heart disease among Indians during the last 15 years, is author of more than 50 articles published in major cardiology journals. He not only was among the first to sound the alarm on the high rate of heart disease amongst Indians in the United States, but also reported the high levels of lipoprotein (a) - a genetic variant of LDL cholesterol among Indians and its crucial role in the high rates of premature heart disease among the Indian population. For his groundbreaking research on heart disease, he has become a sought-after speaker at national and international medical conventions and seminars. The research at Dr Enas’s CADI Research Foundation shows that abdominal obesity is two to three times more common among Indians than in general obesity measured by BMI (Body Mass Index). Fat around the waist and abdomen is the most dangerous fat for cardiovascular and diabetic risk, compared to fat in thighs and buttocks. The problem with the big belly is that visceral fat serves as an active chemical factory, producing biological and active molecules and hormones that lead to the development of diabetes and heart disease.

**Gripping stories about life of a surgeon**

**Dr. Atul Gawande - Surgeon and Author**

A surgeon and a writer, Atul Gawande is a staff member of Brigham and Women’s Hospital, the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and the New Yorker magazine.

As a practicing surgeon and an accomplished writer, teacher and speaker, Dr. Gawande offers audiences a unique perspective on the joys and uncertainties that lie at the heart of modern medicine and a thoughtful, sensible approach to U.S. healthcare reform.

Gawande received the MacArthur Fellowship, popularly known as the “genius prize,” in 2006, for the “fresh and unique perspective, clarity, and intuition” in his written work and his “energetic and imaginative” approach to finding practical ways to improve surgical practice. His book, Complications: A Surgeon’s Notes on an Imperfect Science, was a finalist for the National Book Award in 2002 and has been published in more than 100 countries.

His recent book, Better: A Surgeon’s Notes on Performance, uses the high stakes challenges that he faces as a surgeon to explore the universal struggle to perform well. Through gripping stories of diligence, ingenuity, and what it means to do right, he gives us an inside look at the life of a practicing surgeon and offers unique insights into what it takes to succeed in any area of human endeavor. The book is a New York Times bestseller and one of
Amazon.com’s ten best books of 2007.

Newsweek Magazine also named him one of the 20 Most Influential South Asians.

Born to Indian immigrants, both doctors, Gawande and his sister grew up in Athens, Ohio. His father runs a urology practice there and his mother is a pediatrician. He obtained an undergraduate degree from Stanford University in 1987, was a Rhodes scholar (earning a P.P.E. degree from Balliol College, Oxford in 1989), and later graduated from Harvard Medical School. He also has a Master of Public Health degree from the Harvard School of Public Health.

As a student Gawande was a volunteer for Gary Hart’s campaign. And while a Rhodes Scholar, he raised money for the African National Cong. After graduation, he joined Al Gore’s 1988 presidential campaign. He worked as a health-care researcher for Congress-man Jim Cooper (D-TN), who was author of a “managed competition” health care proposal for the Conservative Democratic Forum. After two years he left medical school to become Bill Clinton’s health care lieutenant during the 1992 campaign and became a senior advisor in the Depart-ment of Health and Human Services after Clinton’s inauguration. He directed one of the three committees of the Clinton Health Care Task Force, supervising 75 people and defined the benefits packages for Americans and subsidies and requirements for employers. He returned to medical school in 1993 and earned his M.D in 1995.

It’s indeed all in the heart

Dr. Valavanur Subramanian - Head of surgery at Lennox Hill Hospital, left, with his wife

Dr. Valavanur Subra-manian, head of surgery at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, is a world-renowned surgeon who has pioneered the field of minimally invasive cardiac surgery. He developed “off-pump” bypass and many other cutting edge techniques for the surgical treatment of heart disease, including robotic cardiac surgery. For the past 15 years, New York magazine has named Dr. Subramanian among the best cardiothoracic surgeons in New York City.

For the past eight years, alternatives to open-chest surgery have been expanding for some of the most common, and devastating, operations performed on the motor of the body. In the mid-nineties, Dr. Subramanian helped perfect a coronary-bypass method in which he manipulated one or two grafts through a small incision -- without having to use the heart-lung machine, which studies have linked to risks of neurological damage.

Since then, he’s performed hundreds of successful bypass surgeries this way. But it’s a practice limited, for the most part, to people who need only one or two bypasses; the need to manipulate three or four or five coronary arteries — in front, in back, on the side of the heart — usually precludes the possibility of an operation through a small incision.

Minimally invasive surgery involves making only small, 2.5 inch incisions in the chest and sometimes utilizing robotic technology to perform the procedure. “We don’t divide any bones or ligaments,” says Dr. Subramanian,
adding that "the morbidity rate is extremely low, and patients can return to their functional life in a couple days."

When it comes to minimally invasive heart surgery, Dr Subramanian talks fast and a lot about his favorite subject and says some amazing things.

For example: "With this procedure we are paving the way for out-patient bypass." The procedure he's referring to is his specialty--robot-assisted, minimally invasive direct coronary-artery bypass, a.k.a. robotic MIDCAB. It’s surgery in which he bypasses from one to four blocked coronary arteries while operating via robot (Intuitive Surgical’s da Vinci system) through one 2-inch incision and two small holes, without spreading the ribs and without stopping the heart.

Though MIDCAB (with and without the robot) accounts for just a tiny fraction of the more than 300,000 bypass operations performed annually in the United States, and usually involves just one or two arteries (Subramanian’s experience enables him to do more), he is confident that the procedure will catch on with surgeons and the public alike, because it works so well. Subramanian has sent patients home as soon as 14 hours after surgery, he says. "One of them drove the car himself when he left," he adds.

A vision for using technology to a better society
Sam Pitroda - CEO, WorldTel

The name, Sam Pitroda can better be explained by the yellow phone booths all across India. Yes, it was mainly because of the efforts of this inventor, technocrat, and social thinker that telecom revolution started in India. It is interesting to know that Sam Pitroda first used a telephone only after moving to the US.

The biggest virtue of Sam Pitroda is that he has a definite vision to use technology for the benefit and betterment of society. Along with being a pioneer in telecom, Sam Pitroda has made strong case for food, clean water, and adequate shelter for the unprivileged section. Through his efforts, Pitroda has brought telephones to some of the world’s previously isolated regions. In the field of telecom, his emphasis was on accessibility rather than density.

By providing public access to telephones, Pitroda revolutionized the state of telecommunications in India. Currently, Pitroda is the Chairman and CEO of World-Tel Limited, an International Telecom Union (ITU) initiative. He is also the founding chairman of a non-profit Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions in India. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Pitroda was involved in the cutting edge technology research work in telecommunications and handheld computing. He is particularly known for having introduced microprocessors in telephone switches leading to early digital switching. His invention of the Electronic Diary in 1975 is now regarded as one of the earliest examples of hand-held computing. With over 100 patents to his credit Pitroda has been a leading name in telecommunications and information technology for over three decades.

In 1983, he also designed his own computer-themed card game called Compucards, which used binary numbers (1, 2, 4, 8...) instead of decimal and had a computer bug as the joker. The equivalent of a king in a regular deck
of cards was the ‘Programmer’ that bore an uncanny resemblance to Pitroda himself.

Pitroda was born in Titlagarh, Orissa. He did his schooling at Anand Vallabhi Vidyalaya in Gujarat and Masters in Physics and Electronics in Baroda. In the year 1964, Sam Pitroda came to the US and did his Masters in Electrical Engineering in Chicago. Thereafter he worked at GTE and formed Wescom Switching, Inc. In the year 1984, Pitroda returned to India and founded the Center for Development of Telematics (CDAC) and later became advisor to the PM of India on National Technology Missions.

Pitroda lives in Chicago, Illinois with his wife Anu, son Salil and daughter Rajal.

**Crusader for New York cabbies**

*Bhairavi Desai - Executive director, NY Taxi Worker’s Alliance*

Most New Yorkers probably don’t know Desai, but they know her handiwork. In May 1998, the 35-year-old labor activist went head-to-head with the city’s combative mayor, organizing one of the biggest 24-hour taxi strikes in New York history to protest city policing of the industry.

A history and women’s studies graduate from Rutgers, Desai burned with a passion to take up the fight of the cab drivers, some 60 percent of whom, like her, are immigrants from South Asia, many of them working up to 80 hours a week for as little as $18,000 a year without health benefits, or even any certainty that they will be paid.

Desai’s family had emigrated from Gujarat to Harrison, N.J., when she was six years old. Her father, who had been a lawyer in India, had trouble finding work and resorted to running a grocery store, and some of Desai’s earliest memories were of racist attacks by skinheads. “I remember being chased down the street,” she says. “I remember the hostility, and that politicized me.”

After graduating from Rutgers, she joined New York’s Taxi Workers Alliance, where she is now staff coordinator. “I wanted to organize around issues of labor and class,” says Desai. “I wanted to organize the immigrants, and it was important for me to go beyond what the AFL-CIO was doing. It was important to focus on life issues and not just the labor.”

Desai bridged the ethnic, religious and regional differences among South Asian cab drivers by emphasizing that everyone is subject to the same difficulties. “We speak more than 100 languages,” she says, “and yet there is a common language of exploitation that we all know. Because of our common goals, we were able to organize a common front.” Now she plans to organize a South Asian Labor Alliance linking workers in the U.S. with those on the subcontinent.

“Because our countries are underdeveloped, people are forced to migrate to countries that are often very hostile to them,” says Desai. “It is important for us to have solidarity with workers in the Third World. They are not the ones who are stealing the jobs.”
Conquering the final frontier
Sunita Williams - NASA astronaut

Sunita Williams is a United States Naval officer and a NASA astronaut. She was assigned to the International Space Station as a member of Expedition 14 and then joined Expedition 15. Williams is the second woman of Indian heritage to have been selected by NASA for a space mission after Kalpana Chawla. She holds the record of the longest spaceflight (195 days) for female space travelers.

Williams was born in Euclid, Ohio, and attended Needham High School in Needham, Massachusetts, graduating in 1983. She went on to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical science from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1987, and a Master of Science degree in Engineering Management from Florida Institute of Technology in 1995.

Williams received her commission as an ensign in the US Navy from the US Naval Academy in May of 1987. She was designated a Naval Aviator in 1989, and graduated from the Naval Test Pilot School in 1993. Selected by NASA in June 1998, Williams began her training in August 1998. Her Astronaut Candidate training included orientation briefings and tours, numerous scientific and technical briefings, intensive instruction in Shuttle and International Space Station systems, physiological training and ground school to prepare for T-38 flight training, as well as learning water and wilderness survival techniques.

Following a period of training and evaluation, Williams worked in Moscow with the Russian Space Agency on the Russian contribution to the ISS, and with the first expedition crew sent to the ISS.

Williams was launched to the International Space Station with STS-116, aboard the shuttle Discovery, on December 10, 2006 to join the Expedition 14 crew.

In April 2007, the Russian members of the crew rotated, changing to Expedition 15. Among the personal items Williams took with her to the International Space Station (ISS) were a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, a small figurine of Ganesha and some samosas.

After the landing, 41-year-old Sunita was chosen as “Person of the Week” by the ABC Television Network. In December 2007, the network noted, she had her long hair cut so she could donate her locks to help those who lost their hair while fighting an illness.

In September of 2007, Williams visited India. She went to the Sabarmati Ashram, the ashram set up by Mahatma Gandhi in 1915, and her ancestral village Jhulasan in Gujarat. She was awarded the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Vishwa Pratibha Award by the World Gujarati Society.

Williams is married to Michael J. Williams, a Federal Police Officer in Oregon. The two have been married for over 16 years, and both flew helicopters in the early days of their careers.

Her parents are Dr. Deepak Pandya and Bonnie Pandya, who reside in Falmouth, Massachusetts. Deepak Pandya is a famous neuroanatomist.
Williams’ roots on her father’s side go back to Gujarat in India and she has been to India to visit her father’s family.

**Award-winning physician, activist fights social ills**

**Dr. Sudhir Parikh - Allergist, community activist and philanthropist**

New Jersey-based Dr Sudhir Parikh is the recipient of the prestigious, and Ellis Island Medals of Honor 2005 for his lifetime of community service, the highest civilian honor an immigrant can receive in the US for commitment to community and social service. With the award, Dr Parikh joins the elite list, joining such distinguished personalities as Presidents George W. Bush, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton, as well as Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and Colin Powell, General Norman Schwarzkopf and boxing legend Mohammad Ali. The award is instituted by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO).

Dr. Parikh is also a recipient of the 2006 prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, the highest civilian honor bestowed on Non Resident Indians (NRIs) by the Government of India. The US Congress has honored this achievement with a special mention in its congressional records.

Dr. Parikh, who emigrated to the US in the 1970s, is a practicing consulting allergist in the United States. He has received international acclaim in the treatment of allergy, asthma, and immunology, and is listed in the Who’s Who in America in the Field of Medicine.

Apart from treating patients for more than two decades, Dr. Parikh fought social ills plaguing society by contributing in cash and time, besides using his influence, and collective efforts, doing it all without a tinge of selfish motive.

Dr. Parikh has long been at the forefront of a movement that seeks empowerment among Indian Americans, with a view towards securing more lobbying power in the US government and administration. On more than one occasion, he lobbied successfully in Washington DC when critical votes related to India were being discussed before Congress.

Currently serving on the board of Federation of Indian Associations (FIA), Dr. Parikh is the Patron and Trustee of the AAPI Charitable foundation and also the immediate past president of the Indian American Forum for Political Education (IAFPE).

As a community activist, Dr. Parikh has supported several charity organizations in India and the US through donations totaling over $2 million. However, it was his effort to help tsunami victims last year that brought him to the limelight.

Recently, he acquired Indian American, a glossy magazine targeting affluent Indian Americans. He is married to Sudha S. Parikh, an anesthesiologist, and they have two children. The family lives in NJ.
Dr. Raj Reddy, head of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Lab at the prestigious Carnegie Mellon University, is on a mission to bridge the digital divide but with a difference — empowering illiterates to actually use computers!

Having started with the design of a low-cost innovative entertainment-cum-communication device referred to as PCTV, that builds on open source software, Dr Reddy is now engaged in building artificial intelligence into speech recognition software and language process synthesis. These would enable even a person with language barrier actually access the benefits of a computer, while reaping the advantages of entertainment.

Andhra Pradesh-born Reddy, 71, is world-renowned researcher in artificial intelligence, robotics and human-computer interaction.

Reddy is currently the Mozah Bint Nasser University Professor of Computer Science and Robotics at Carnegie Mellon University; he was formerly the Herbert Simon University Professor there. The several institutes at Carnegie Mellon founded under his initiation include the Robotics Institute, the E-Commerce Technologies Institute, and the Institute of Software Research International. He is also the chairman, Governing Board of IIIT Hyderabad.

After his undergraduate studies at the College of Engineering, Guindy (now part of Anna University) in 1958, he did a master’s degree in Civil Engineering at the University of New South Wales, and a PhD in Computer Science at Stanford University in 1966. He was the first doctoral student to graduate at Stanford under Turing Award winner and artificial intelligence pioneer, John McCarthy.

Among many awards, he received the Turing Award with Edward Feigenbaum in 1994, the most prestigious prize in Computer Science, “For pioneering the design and construction of large scale artificial intelligence systems, demonstrating the practical importance and potential commercial impact of artificial intelligence technology.”

He is also a fellow of the Acoustical Society of America, IEEE and AAAI.

He received the IJCAI Donald E. Walker Distinguished Service Award in 2005, the IBM Research Ralph Gomory Visiting Scholar Award in 1991, and more recently, the Honda Prize for his “Contributions to eco-technology” in 2005.

Most recently, he received the 2006 Vannevar Bush Award given by the National Science Board “...in recognition of his contributions to science and his statesmanship on behalf of science and the nation...”

Reddy also served as a co-chair of the President’s Information Technology Advisory Committee (PITAC) for Bill Clinton.

He also serves on the Microsoft Technical Advisory Board, the Board of Directors at 3Com.

Reddy was awarded the Padma Bhushan by India in 2001 and the Legion of Honor by President François Mitterrand of France in 1984.
Leading an affluent town with a 95% white population
Harvinder Anand - Mayor of Laurel Hollow, NY

New Delhi-born Harvinder “Harry” Anand was elected the Mayor of Laurel Hollow, New York on June 19, 2007. He is the first elected Indian American Mayor in the State of New York. He was sworn to office on July 2, 2007.

Laurel Hollow is a picturesque village located on the North Shore of Long Island. Laurel Hollow is predominantly a residential community with home values range from $2 million to $35 million.

The Village has its own private beach with mooring rights for its residents. Laurel Hollow is the home to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, a leading institute in the research of cancer, neuroscience and genetics.

Mayor Anand, 47, also serves as the Commissioner of Police for Laurel Hollow.

He attended the Civilian Police Academy in Nassau County, New York.

He also serves as the Director of the Nassau County Law Enforcement Exploring Advisory Board. He is an active member of the Nassau County Police Reserves.

Anand is a chemical engineer from Panjab University in Chandigarh. He migrated to the US in 1982.

He is the president of Royce International, a multinational company involved in the manufacture of industrial chemicals.

Since his historic election, many articles have been written about him in Indian and American media including New York Times. He was also interviewed on Meet the Leaders program on Cablevision.

Major Indian and American media including CNN covered his inauguration ceremony.

In July 2007, The New York Times took note Anand as the first member of any minority group to be mayor of a 95 percent white community of 2,000.

“His election was an unparalleled event. In fact, he is part of what political analysts see as a new pattern: while minority candidates are usually propelled into office from densely populated enclaves of their own ethnic groups, a small but recently growing number of Indian American officeholders has been getting elected in communities across the nation where they are the tiniest of minorities,” the NYT noted.

Sociologist, author is Chicago gang leader for a day
Sudhir Venkatesh - Sociologist and author

For seven years, sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh led a double life.

Most people have never dared venture inside a gang selling crack cocaine — not to do research, anyway. But as a 23-year-old grad student in sociology, Venkatesh went against the University of Chicago’s strident warnings to stay within the bounds of safety, visiting one of the city’s notorious housing projects.
For days, Venkatesh stayed inside one of Chicago’s worst housing projects living with poor families and hanging out with gang members. Then he would return to the tidy neighborhood of Hyde Park, where he was a graduate student at the University of Chicago.

Now a professor of sociology at Columbia University, Venkatesh ventured into Chicago’s Robert Taylor Homes housing project in the 1990s to do research for his doctorate. He befriended the leader of the Black Kings, one of the country’s largest and most violent crack-dealing gangs, and led the group for a day. Venkatesh’s new book, Gang Leader for a Day, captures his years inside the projects and how residents and gang members interacted, coexisted and raised families.

Venkatesh’s guide during his research was J.T., the leader of the Black Kings who took an interest in the budding academic and showed him the ropes inside the projects. Though J.T. had a college degree, he left corporate America to run a drug operation that made him up to $100,000 a year.

Over time, J.T. challenged Venkatesh academically, pushing him to think more clearly about urban poverty in America. And after a few years of friendship, J.T. handed Venkatesh the reins to his gang for a day, a job Venkatesh found wasn’t as easy as it looked.

Over the next seven years, Venkatesh got to know the neighborhood dealers, crackheads, squatters, prostitutes, pimps, activists, cops, organizers, and officials. From his privileged position of unprecedented access, he observed JT and the rest of the gang as they operated their crack-selling business, conducted PR within their community, and rose up or fell within the ranks of the gang’s complex organizational structure.

In Hollywood-speak, Gang Leader for a Day is The Wire meets Harvard University. It’s a brazen, page turning, and fundamentally honest view into the morally ambiguous, highly intricate, often corrupt struggle to survive.

Leading the US Soccer Federation with aplomb
Sunil Gulati - President, US Soccer Federation

Allahabad-born Sunil ‘Kumar’ Gulati is the current president of the United States Soccer Federation or USSF and president of Kraft Soccer for the New England Revolution in Major League Soccer.

The United States Soccer Federation is the official governing body of the sport of soccer in the United States. The headquarters are in Chicago, Illinois.

Elected in March 2006, Gulati is one of the most influential figures in the development of US soccer over the past 30 years. Former USSF president and Major League Soccer founder Alan Rothenberg called Gulati “the single most important person in the development of soccer in this country.” Gulati served as USSF Vice-President for six years and played a key role in major USSF decisions for many years prior to his election as president.

Gulati’s tenure started off with turbulence. Gulati was criticized in some media outlets for failing to land former German National Team manager (and longtime California resident) Jürgen Klinsmann as the successor to Bruce Arena after a 5-month interview period that left the American national team dormant. On December 7, 2006,
Klinsmann withdrew his name from consideration for the US head coaching position. Shortly after, the USSF issued a press release naming Bob Bradley as the interim head coach. Gulati later hired Bradley outright, citing the team’s development and performances during the early part of 2007.

Gulati is an alumnus of Cheshire High School in Cheshire, CT. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Bucknell University and earned his M.A. and M.Phil. in Economics at Columbia University. He served on the Columbia Economics Faculty from 1986 to 1990. In 1991, he joined the World Bank through its Young Professionals Program and served as Country Economist for Moldova.

Soccer is what has interested Gulati since age 7. He was 5 when his family immigrated to Connecticut, a soccer hotbed at the time. He played, coached and refereed all the way through high school.

After graduation from Bucknell, Gulati went to work at the Olympic Development Program and, in 1985, he was asked to run a national camp. But the organization was a disaster and, when he met Warner Fricker, then the president of the federation, Gulati let him know as much. Fricker responded: “Send me a note. But don’t go sending me a 17-page letter.”

Gulati did exactly that. His 17-page treatise on what was wrong with the federation led Fricker to tell him, “Come and do something about it.”

Gulati continues to teach three courses at Columbia. Not surprisingly, college students with dreams of professional soccer attend his office hours with more than grades in mind. He recently tried to talk an engineering student out of leaving Columbia to join a youth soccer program that Gulati himself helped to create.

“It’s very different than it is in England or Brazil, or in Italy where a gifted 17-year-old isn’t thinking about the University of Rome, he’s thinking about playing for A.C. Milan,” Gulati said. “If a kid is choosing between a place like Columbia, that’s a different decision from somebody who doesn’t have 1400 SATs and might be thinking about another alternative. Opportunity cost, as we would say in Principles of Economics.”

He lives with his wife Marcela and two children in the New York City area.

At 25, a net worth $100 million!

Gurbaksh Chahal - Serial entrepreneur

Gurbaksh Chahal rode the wave of online ad networks and online ad optimization to a lucrative career, having founded and sold ClickAgents and BlueLithium. This was all accomplished before the age of 25, leaving Chahal with a personal fortune of $100 million from his efforts.

Gurbaksh Chahal dropped out of school at 16 to found the online ad network ClickAgents. Two years later, he sold it to ValueClick for $40 million in stock. Once his noncompete ran out, he started BlueLithium, a global online ad network that focuses on behavioral targeting. Last year, Yahoo acquired that business, which then had 175 employees and nine offices, for $300 million. He remains CEO of the company through the transition period.
Chahal's parents are Indian immigrants who struggled financially for years, but his family is well taken care of now. Chahal's current net worth is more than $100 million, he says. He has been recognized as an innovator in the online advertising space by Business 2.0 as well as a sought-after speaker, featured at conferences including Red Herring, JP Morgan, Bear Stearns and Ad:Tech. Under his leadership, BlueLithium was named one of the top 100 private companies in America three years in a row by AlwaysOn.

Having evolved into one of the most widely embraced and rapidly expanding online global advertising networks, BlueLithium has established San Francisco-based Chahal as one of the most innovative and talented entrepreneurs in the trade.

Presently, Chahal is in the midst of working on his first book, “The Dream,” a fiercely honest account of his rags-to-riches rise from immigrating to the States. Starting out as a kid with just $25 and a high school drop out, Chahal defied all odds to become an entrepreneurial success. His inspiring book will be distributed in 2008.

Chahal is also in the planning stages of business venture number three, in addition to starting a large philanthropic endeavor, which will fittingly be named “The Chahal Foundation.”

The lawyer’s den
Neal Katyal - Law professor, Georgetown University

Neal Kumar Katyal, 36 is the John Carroll Professor of Law at Georgetown University Law School and was the lead counsel in the Supreme Court case Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, which held that military commissions set up by the Bush administration to try detainees at Guantanamo Bay “violate both the UCMJ and the four Geneva Conventions.”

In May 2005, Katyal was named one of the leading “40 lawyers under 40” by the National Law Journal. “Not only is Katyal a young professor at a top-tier law school, he is also involved in some significant cases of the decade,” the Journal says.

The Journal chose 40 top young attorneys who showed evidence of “extraordinary achievements early on in their careers” and who they expect to “continue to exert influence in the legal profession.”

An expert in national security law, the American Constitution, the Geneva Conventions, and the role of the President and Congress post 9/11, Katyal has forged a worldwide coalition of support for his challenge to the Guantanamo Bay policy.

Raised in a suburb of Chicago, Katyal is the son of Indian immigrants who hoped he would become a doctor. “My parents are Punjabi. Like many Indians, they hold the legal profession in not the highest of regard,” he says. Katyal’s mother is a pediatrician and his father was an engineer. Katyal’s sister, Sonia Katyal, is also an attorney; she teaches law at Fordham University.

He was born in a Hindu household but studied at Loyola Academy, a Jesuit Catholic school in Wilmette, Illinois. He attended Dartmouth College, where he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity, and Yale Law School. At Yale, Katyal
studied under professor Akhil Amar, with whom he published articles in law review and political opinion journals in 1995 and 1996. After graduating, Katyal clerked for Judge Guido Calabresi of the U.S. Court of Appeals, and then Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer.

Katyal is also a visiting professor at Harvard and Yale law schools.

Katyal served as National Security Adviser in the U.S. Justice Department and was commissioned by President Clinton to write a report on the need for more legal pro bono work. He also served as Vice President Al Gore’s co-counsel in Bush v. Gore of 2000, and represented the deans of most major private law schools in Grutter v. Bollinger, the University of Michigan affirmative-action case that the Supreme Court recently decided.

While working on Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, he accumulated nearly $40,000 of personal debt for travel and other expenses.

He was named Lawyer of the Year by Lawyers USA for 2006, Runner Up for Lawyer of the Year by National Law Journal, one of the top 50 Litigators in the nation by the American Lawyer Magazine, and was awarded the 2004 Pro Bono Award by the National Law Journal.

**The Google news-gatherer**

**Krishna Bharat - Principal Scientist, Google**

For those who know it well, Google News is among the largest news services online, gathering content from more than 4,500 sources. And, while the creation of these stories requires the effort of thousands of professionals, the organization and display of stories on Google News is managed entirely by computer programs.

Credit for this goes to an Indian American scientist called Krishna Bharat, a Principal Scientist at Google. What makes Bharat’s contribution so pathbreaking is the role he has created for himself at Google.

Bharat created Google News in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks to keep him abreast of the developments. Since then, it has been a huge hit and a popular offering from Google’s services.

It is interesting to note that Google News was one of Google’s first endeavors beyond offering just plain text searches on its page.

Bharat was born in India, and grew up in Bangalore. He completed his schooling from St. Joseph’s Boys’ High School in Bangalore, and received an undergraduate degree in computer science from the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Madras. He subsequently received a Ph.D from Georgia Tech in Human Computer Interaction.

His work on the Hilltop algorithm earned him a joint patent with Google.

Hilltop is a critical piece in the way Google Searches works. His research work in the search engine space is highly acclaimed and he is a well respected authority in this arena.

His efforts are mention in the book The Google Story, by David Vise and Mark Malseed, which many view as the
**Standing up for laughs**  
**Vidur Kapur - Stand-up comedian**

New Delhi-born Vidur Kapur left behind his job and the life that he had built for himself to become one of the very first South Asian comedians to enter the mainstream media in America.

Raised in a conservative upper middle class family in New Delhi, Kapur has been an overachiever with a degree from The London School of Economics and Ph.D. coursework from the University of Chicago.

His stand-up comedy is based on the social commentary of a one-man culture clash and his experiences as a misfit in a family focused on arranged marriages and social status, as a chic urban trend-crazy gay fashion victim in West Hollywood and Manhattan, as a corporate executive from blue chip international firms, as an immigrant to the US and as a person horrified at being mistaken for a terrorist in a post 9/11 America.

He stated, "I wasn’t happy, I felt that something was missing in my life. There was a dissatisfaction with my life.” He then decided to leave consulting and go into ‘executive recruiting,’ which according to Kapur is “a slightly less intense field.”

After entering the recruiting field, Kapur had more time on his hands and decided to do something a little more creative such as take a stand-up comedy class.

Kapur remembers his first day vividly. He stated, “The first day of my class was September 10th, 2001. I absolutely loved it. I began doing it more as a hobby to begin with and I made a lot of progress and discovered that I was one of the only South Asians doing it.”

Asked as to when he began telling jokes, Vidur began laughing and said “as soon as I came out of the womb-I think I’ve always had the funny bone.”

Kapur has also featured in many prominent international media and television including, NBC, CBC in Canada, NPR, TV Asia, New Delhi TV, MTV Desi and PBS’s Asian America among others. Simultaneously, he has toured internationally, including Canada, India, the UK, Ireland, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates.

Along with these many accolades have been pouring in: Kapur was one of the original “Gurus of Comedy” in a show produced in 2003 along with Russell Peters; was one of the nominees for “Favourite South Asian Comedian” award of the South Asian Media Awards, 2005. Vidur was also one of the 7 comedians selected to be included in a documentary on leading comedians in America called “Making Funny,” which was filmed at New York’s Gotham Comedy Club.