



THE LAWRENCE SCHOOL SANAWAR

CLASS OF 1966



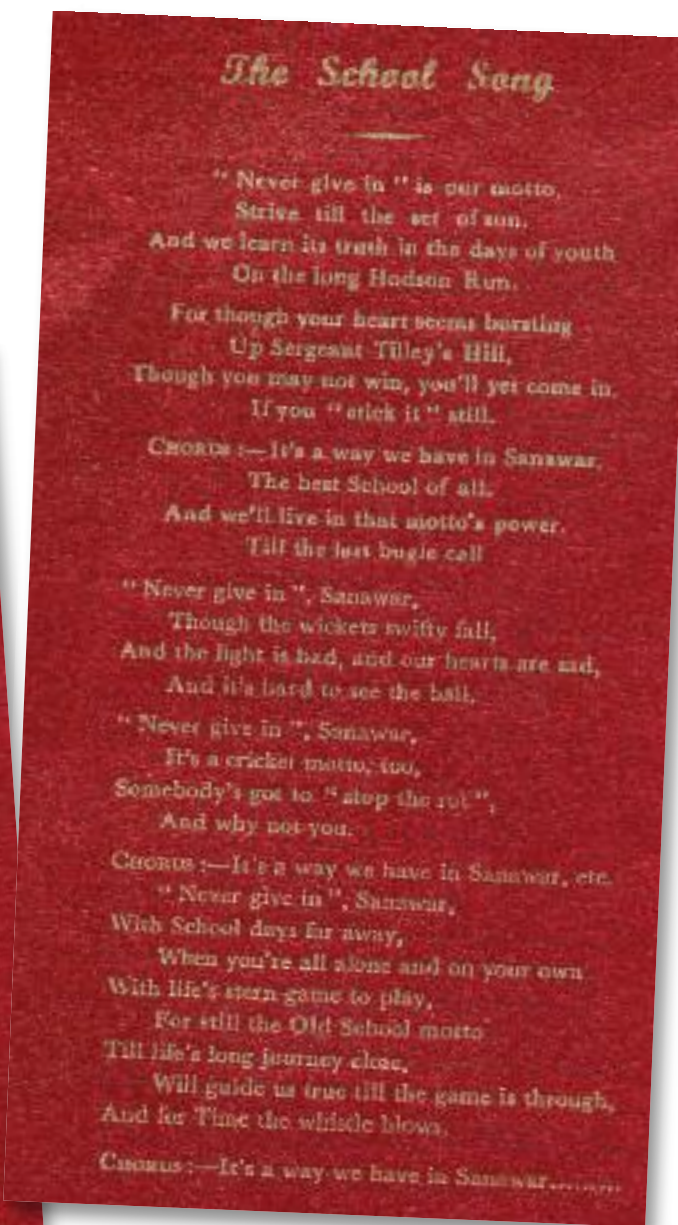
CLASS OF 1966



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Introduction to the Class of 1966



We - the Class of '66 - have reached that place, where most of us have retired and are scripting a new chapter in our lives. We have had time to think and reflect on the past. With the celebration of our Golden Jubilee and the making of this book, we have been compelled to rewind to the very beginning. In so doing, we are acknowledging in full measure what our Alma Mater means to us; and the invaluable lessons we learned in Sanawar.

Without exception, each one of us has expressed a strong sense of gratitude to our teachers, whose memories remain etched in our minds. They were exceptional human beings who gave generously of themselves. They made us feel they cared; and they encouraged us to dream. The exemplary conduct of the Headmaster and his team inspired us to emulate them. They trusted us and we learned not to let them down. They taught us to own up and confess our own crimes.

The dreaded morning P.T. laid the foundations for physical fitness. The NCC Parade practice and the command, "Don't move even if a snake comes near you!" taught us self discipline. Doing well for one's House far outran the desire to do well for oneself. We learned to be team players. "JOSH" was of the essence. It made up for a multitude of sins.

Sharing the same classroom, acting and debating together taught us to feel comfortable in the company of the opposite sex. We fell in love, too; had our hearts broken and learned to move on. We were truly equal. The very British custom of clothing us all in the same shabby, worn out uniforms; and strict rules on "tuck" and pocket money, ensured an egalitarian environment. Sleeping and Walking Out Passes were doled out sparingly.

We learned to take pride in our House, our School and our country. When the boys played inter-school matches, the girls were there - cheering until they were hoarse. The boys too were no less supporting. We left School in tears and vowed to stay in touch. As the years rolled by, we were caught up in our lives. Memories faded. School days seemed so far away.

Sadly, we lost eight of our dear classmates along the way, starting - in 1971 - with the hero of the Battle of Basantar, Arun Khetarpal posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra, the nation's highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy. Then, Pushpinder Singh Sahi left us in very unfortunate circumstances; followed by Lalit Ranjan Joshi in 1997. Our incomparable Head Boy, Gurjit Singh Chima was stricken by a fatal illness in 2000. Arun Rattan died in a tragic accident in 2003. In 2015, Gurmeet Singh Oberoi passed away within three years of his wife's death, leaving his children bereft. We lost two classmates in the very year of our Golden Jubilee. Keith Anil Manley slipped away in early 2016, after bravely battling a long illness. Vijay Singh Sukhdial, who was so looking forward to our reunion, died suddenly of a cardiac arrest just a few months before Founder's Day.

Our Golden Jubilee brought the rest of us together again but our happiness was tinged with the sadness of losing our comrades. Together, we lit a candle at the Memorial; and said a silent prayer for those who had gone before us. We remembered them fondly.

As our Reunion progressed, fifty years of separation fell away. We recalled old times, reminisced about our escapades in School; and were young once again.



Amar Talwar

I have lived dangerously since the word go: was delivered at home, as I couldn't wait for Mom to get to hospital!
No midwife, no blade - Dad a Sardarji! Chord around my neck! BUT MADE IT!

Earliest memory is of falling out of a moving car in Simla, landing on my head on the road and rolling down a khudside. SURVIVED!
I was also adept at upsetting my parents because I always played with the servants' kids, as opposed to regular ones.

Sanawar was bliss. But in December '60, I upset my folks by handing over a brand new, expensive woollen sweater to a beggar boy!

College went by in a haze of the 60s thing, with the music, the highs and the anti-establishment movement. And secretly sharing most of my pocket money with beggars!

1970s: Graduated from St. Stephen's with a First, listed as one of its six outstanding students. I wanted to be a farmer and grow trees but it did not work out! So, I found myself stuck in Delhi, taking up small jobs and lying low, doing minimum damage to the environment. That was the mantra: keep it small and plant trees wherever you can! This led to experience in the Furniture and Decoration fields, then Lighting and finally Garments Export-Import; and to places in Delhi and Chandigarh where my 45-year-old trees still survive!

1980s: Realised there was a future in Photography. I turned Professional Photographer, roamed and discovered the nooks and crannies of my beloved country. During this eventful decade, I got married and divorced and discovered Manoj: a 2-and-a-half-year old destitute, who was on the verge of having his tongue cut off - literally - because his Papa said "Is mein bhoot hai, baat hi nahi karta. Design kharaab hai iska". So I adopted him. He started talking from day one! Single-parenting him, I managed his admission to Sanawar in '93. He became School Prefect, Vindhya, just like his Dad!

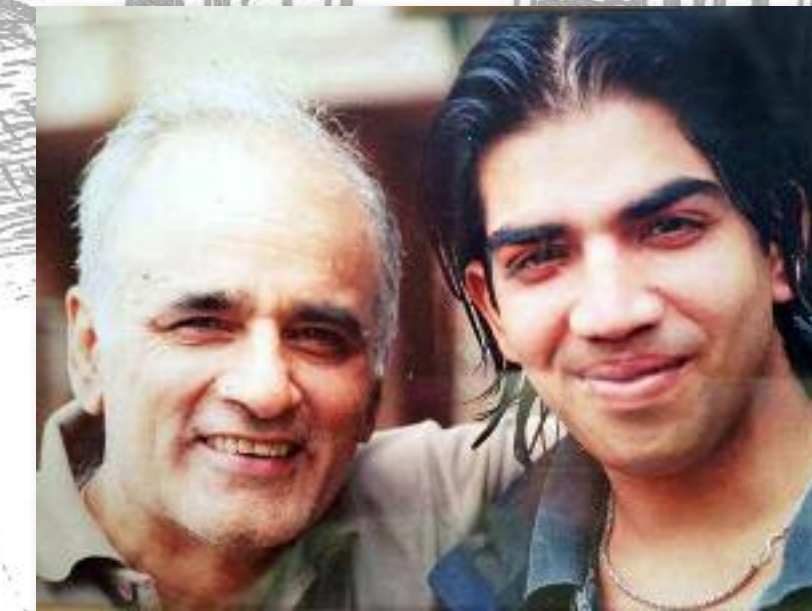
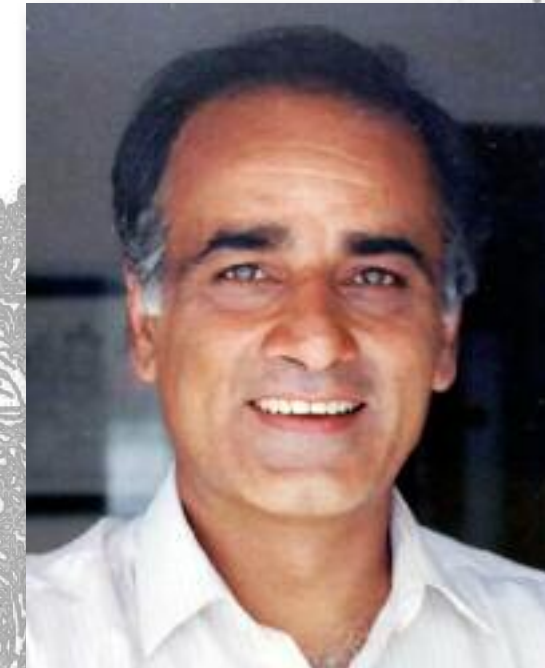
1990s: Ten years' success as a photographer led to boredom and to a chance meeting with Barry John, who immediately cast me in a play. Then, four years of hectic amateur acting on stage in Delhi led to an offer from Bollywood for a role in India's first daily soap, 'Shanti', and the rest is...!

Through all of this, the little boy - who played with servants' kids, gifted sweaters to and shared his pocket money with beggars - grew up to become Manoj's Daddy; and father-figure to a still-growing number of formerly destitute people.

For all my experience and achievement in various fields, I consider it my biggest success to have always shared whatever Fate has brought my way, by of material gains, with those less fortunate. I have done it throughout my life.


Today, I care for Mom, and am the head of a big and growing family of young girls and boys and moms and dads stretching from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Gujarat to Assam. And, of course, I continue to plant trees!

Motto? Stick to your guns - NEVER GIVE IN!





Ambika Sindhi



I joined Sanawar as a seven year old, very shy, very insecure and completely lost. It took me some time to adjust to my new surroundings. I am very thankful to some of my seniors and teachers for being there for me, for guiding me, helping me and supporting me.

College was fun in Chandigarh. I taught in a school for some time after my Teachers' Training. Loved the children and got very attached to them.

The Defence Services always fascinated me and I was lucky to get married to a doctor in the Indian Air Force. Then postings: packing, unpacking, parties and making new friends became a part of life. I was lucky to have travelled all over India.

Our son and daughter are well settled in life. They have given us four beautiful grandchildren, three boys and a girl; and as all grandparents say 'they are the loves of our lives'.

Life has been good... hope we stay healthy.

Brig. Amrit Pal Singh Gujral

Having left school in 1966, I joined the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla in 1967 and was commissioned into the Corps of Signals.

My first posting was at Amritsar in 1971, and I had the good fortune of fighting the 1971 Indo-Pak war on the Punjab front. After the war, I was intimately involved, initially as Officer in Charge of the hotline between the Army HQs of the two countries. Thereafter I was responsible for providing communications from Attari railway Station to the Wagah Check post, during the repatriation of nearly 90,000 Pakistani Prisoners of Wars in 1972. This being an era when physical lines were the primary means of communications, it was quite a challenging job to maintain and upgrade the communications.



Thereafter, I have had a career full of fun and adventure in the Army. I did my B.E. Electronics from the College of Military Engineering and the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering. In the course of my thirty five years of service, I have held numerous interesting and eventful appointments as an instructor in training institutions such as the Indian Military Academy, the Army War College and the Military College of Telecommunications. These postings - besides being educative - enabled me to interact with young officers, who are in high ranks today; and remember me fondly and remind me that I played a part in grooming them.

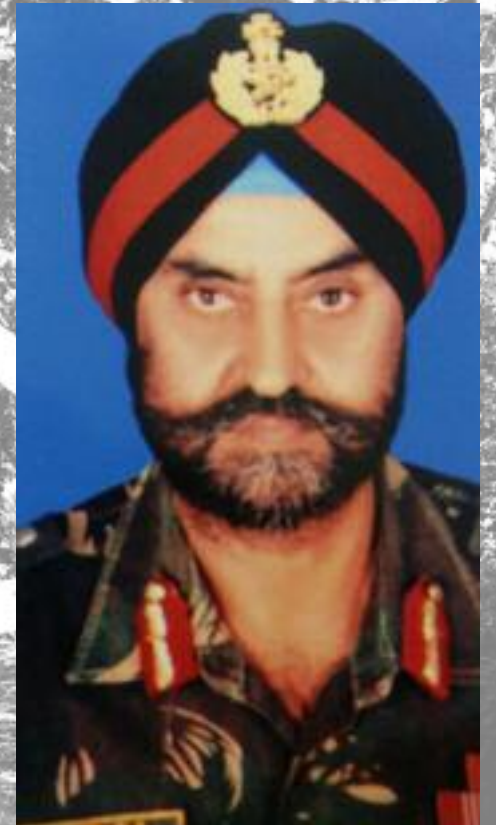
I have held numerous staff appointments in diverse fields; notable being General Staff Officer Grade I in a Project dealing with Electronic Warfare; and Col General Staff (Training) at Lucknow where I had the opportunity to establish the Army Adventure cell and the nodal centers for micro light flying, hot air ballooning, kayaking, river rafting and hang gliding.

Having participated in Op Vijay (the Kargil conflict), I was appointed as Chief Signal Officer of a corps - on the western front - that was involved in planning and provisioning of communications during Op PARAKARAM in the desert sector.

The Army has also given me the opportunity to excel in sports. I took an instant liking to golf and have gone on to represent the Eastern Command Team in the Services Meet. I also won the Central India HSBC Golf cup for Amateurs in 2005. Golf remains my passion and I continue to play the game.

Post retirement, I took up a job in the private sector with the DLF group at Gurgaon, looking after their clubs. But was not able to adapt and mentally reconcile to the nature of the corporate world; and left after a 2 year stint.

I met my wife in 1976 and we were married the same year. We are blessed with two children, son and daughter who are married and well settled. My son and daughter in law are both working in the corporate sector while my daughter is married to an Army Officer. Both are further blessed with a boy and a girl each. Their families are also complete and presently my wife and I are enjoying the company of our adorable grand children and savouring every moment of their childhood.





Anita Sobti Kochhar



I joined Sanawar in 1958, in Form 1. My stay in Sanawar was glorious and I have nothing but love and fond memories. In Sixth Form, I was awarded the Music Prize for playing the violin and also won the Opens Championship Athletics Medal. My journey after Sanawar started with the Government College for Women, Chandigarh from where I migrated to the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, USA. I obtained a Bachelors Degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences; followed by a Masters in Biological Sciences; which culminated in a Ph. D in Systematics and Ecology, with specialization in Population Biology. During my education in the United States, I was nominated and elected into the Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society and was also awarded the U.S National Internship by the prestigious International Institute of Education.

I met my husband, Deepak Kochhar in Chandigarh and tied the knot in November 1977. I returned to India under the “Prevention of Brain Drain Scheme” and joined Jawaharlal Nehru University as Assistant Professor in the School of Environmental Sciences. My second full time job was “Motherhood”, devoted to our first born, Samir. When I decided to seek a new job, I got three offers within a week but my son’s ayah eloped with our neighbor’s driver! So, it was back to square one.

Thus the birth of ‘ask Management Consultants’. I conducted an environmental audit, found my way into placement and became a pioneer of head hunting. I expanded operations to other aspects in HR such as organizational development, job evaluation, market research and business development. I edged my way into my husband’s office in Nehru place and operated from there; and virtually delivered our second child, Diya in the parking lot!

Samir is currently in Bollywood, a big screen and TV series actor who also hosts live TV shows. His wife, Radhika, has her own Event Management Company, Swaha. They have a one and half year old son, Kabir. Diya, a National Basketball player in school and college did a Masters Degree in Arts and Design from the University of Bedfordshire, UK and has set up her own Interior Architecture firm, Envisage Design Projects. Her husband, Vandit is an MBA and Engineer from Leeds University, UK. He currently manufactures and digitally sells women’s accessories from his firm, The House of Tara.

After 33 years of hard work and having fulfilled my parental duties, I decided to retire to a leisurely life. My hundred year old father lives with us. Now my days pass pursuing my hobbies of gardening, cooking, reading and looking after family including our darling dogs. I also enjoy babysitting our grandson whenever possible.

When I look back, I realize that I have led a very happy life. As for giving back to society, Deepak and I are proud to have helped in the adoption of nine orphans from various orphanages.

We 66ers reunited after 50 years; and very quickly forged an overwhelmingly strong bond of unconditional love and friendship; meeting as often as we can and communicating through Whatsapp, emails and phone calls.

Arun Khetarpal

My brother, Arun was a year older than me. He joined Sanawar in 1962; and I followed the next year. We were in Nilagiri House. Typically, at school he was but another Sanawarian. Like the rest of us, he played all the games; and was a “Banda”, where he played the clarinet and the saxophone.

We come from an Army family. Our father, Brigadier M. L. Khetarpal fought in World War II, and grandfather in World War I. Hence, it was ordained that the elder son, Arun would become an engineer and the younger son, Mukesh - the less intelligent one - would join the Indian Army. Fate decreed otherwise. After School, Arun joined the National Defence Academy, Khadak-wasla. He was the Senior Under Officer of Fox Trot squadron. I am told that at NDA - if you are “Foxie” and with the name “Arun” - you are spared all forms of corporal punishment. Arun passed out of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun in June 1971; and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant into the 17 HORSE (POONA).

Arun joined his Regiment - under its legendary Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Hanut Singh - in the field, where it was preparing for war. Hanut's orders were clear. All tank commanders and crews were to be fully trained and battle ready. Arun would proceed on the mandatory Young Officers' Course at the Armoured Corps Centre and School, Ahmednagar, before he could assume the responsibilities of a troop leader. Arun begged his CO to let him stay; and train with the Regiment. He promised that he would not let him - and the Regiment - down.

It was on the morning of 16 December during the battle of Basantar – Bara Pind in Pakistan – that the Indian bridgehead across the Basantar River was under fierce, repeated and determined counterattacks by 13 LANCERS of the enemy. Responding to the clarion call made by his CO to every one of his tank commanders to stand and fight ‘where is as is’, Arun's troop of four tanks, acting as reinforcements, was drawn into the bridgehead battle. Unmindful of the early loss of one of his tanks, Arun with his remaining two tanks fearlessly closed with the enemy destroying tanks, anti-tank gun detachments and infantry positions. At one stage of the battle, his tank was hit and caught fire. He was ordered to pull back and attempt to extinguish the fire. He retorted by saying “I will not abandon my tank. My gun is still working: I will get these bastards”; and promptly switched off his radio set. Suddenly, at a distance of a mere 100 meters, he was face to face with an enemy tank. In a virtual enactment of a medieval duel, both tanks engaged each other near simultaneously; both scored direct hits; and both crews were compelled to abandon their tanks. The Pakistani tank crew took cover under their disabled tank until darkness fell. Arun was mortally wounded and died on the battlefield, a short while later. It transpired that the Pakistani tank was that of the 13 LANCER Squadron Commander, Major (later Brigadier) Khwaja Mohammed Naser.

During the battle, Arun's troop was credited with having destroyed ten enemy tanks. His troop had saved the day for the Basantar bridgehead. After the battle, his worthy adversary is reported to have famously said “I salute Arun for having stood like an insurmountable rock”. Arun was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra, the nation's highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy.

In hindsight, would Arun have done things differently? I think not. Living the School motto ‘Never Give In’ and in the spirit of 17 HORSE (POONA) – Fakr-e-Hind, Arun did what was expected of him.

I do think that Arun remains with us on Peacestead. On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Class of '66, we may have grown older; but Arun will remain forever young - just twenty one.

Mukesh



Arun Rattan



My brother, Arun

After Arun left Sanawar, he went on to obtain his undergraduate degree from Kirori Mal College, Delhi University. Thereafter, he joined the Merchant Navy, starting with the Shipping Corporation of India. Subsequently, his career – of over two decades at sea - covered assignments with various foreign shipping companies.

It ended with a tragic accident on December 29, 2003 involving the overhead moving Gantry crane as he was supervising loading of cargo pallets in the hatch at Port Alfred, Quebec, Canada, and while on board MV Pelican Arrow.

He is survived by his wife Dr. Ira and son, Aditya. They reside in Mumbai. Aditya is married to Deepti; and they have an adorable son named Anant.

Rajesh Rattan

My father, Arun

It's been a very long time since I have written about Dad.

He was a loving husband and a great dad. He had a magnetic personality. Dad inspired me and all those who came into contact with him.

It was difficult not to be impressed by him. His aura was always positive.

Dad always used to say:

“Battles to fight.

Battles to win.

Life always greets you.

Never give in!

His untimely demise shook us to the core.

Life moves on.

However, I strongly believe that he's our angel; still looking after us. He is - and will always be -my pillar of strength.

Aditya Rattan



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← BOYS DEPT
← CAR PARK (BD-QUAD)
← TUCK SHOP
← BARNES FIELD
DO NOT LITTER





NEVER GIVE IN
Class of 66

Walkway
Dedicated by the Class of 1966
November 2016

NEVER GIVE IN
THEY WHO BELIEVE IN THE MOST SHALL BE ALL BELLING IN THE MOST



SANAWAR