



1st October, 1951 – 31st January, 2022

Full Court Reference in the memory of

Late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri

Senior Advocate

held on Thursday, the 15th December 2022

at 10.30 a.m. in the Court of The Hon'ble The Chief Justice of India

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Letter from the Registrar, Supreme Court of India

H. Shashidhara Shetty
Registrar
Supreme Court of India



Tel. : 011-23112564
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F.No.99/Ref/2021/SCA(Genl)
Dated the 17th December, 2022

Ms. Gurvinder Suri,
Flat No. 12, Golf Apartment,
Suri & Co., Sujan Singh Park,
New Delhi.

Madam,

There was a Full Court Reference in the Chief Justice's Court on 15th December, 2022 in the memory of late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri, Senior Advocate. Rich tributes were paid to Shri Suri by Shri Tushar Mehta, Learned Solicitor General of India, Shri Vikas Singh, President, Supreme Court Bar Association and Hon'ble Dr. D.Y. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India. After the references were read, two minutes' silence was observed. I have the honour of forwarding a booklet containing memorial speeches delivered at the Full Court Reference, as aforesaid.

Kindly permit me to convey the heart-felt condolences of the Officers and members of the staff of the Supreme Court Registry to you and other members of the family.

Encl: As above

Yours sincerely,


Registrar

FULL COURT REFERENCE IN THE MEMORY OF
LATE SHRI RUPINDER SINGH SURI,
LATE SHRI A.T.M. RANGARAMANUJAM,
LATE PROF. BHIM SINGH AND
LATE SHRI CHALLA SITARAMAIAH,
SENIOR ADVOCATES

Coram of Hon'ble Judges at the Full Court Reference

- ❖ *Hon'ble Dr. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. Abdul Nazeer*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice K.M. Joseph*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Mukeshkumar Rasikbhai Shah*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ajay Rastogi*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dinesh Maheshwari*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjiv Khanna*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Surya Kant*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Aniruddha Bose*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice A.S. Bopanna*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. Ravindra Bhat*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice V. Ramasubramanian*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Hrishikesh Roy*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Abhay S. Oka*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Vikram Nath*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Ms. Justice Hima Kohli*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mrs. Justice B.V. Nagarathna*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice C.T. Ravikumar*

- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.M. Sundresh*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Ms. Justice Bela M. Trivedi*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Pamidighantam Sri Narasimha*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice J.B. Pardiwala*
- ❖ *Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dipankar Datta*

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Reference made on 15th December, 2022

by

Solicitor General of India

Shri Tushar Mehta

in the memory of

Late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri,

Late Shri A.T.M. Rangaramanujam,

Late Prof. Bhim Singh and

Late Shri Challa Sitaramaiah,

Senior Advocates

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India, Hon'ble Judges of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India; Vikas Singh, Pradip Rai, Rahul Kaushik, Manoj Mishra & other office bearers of SCBA and SCAORA; My colleagues – Ld Senior Advocates and Advocates of the Bar; Family members of my Late Ld. Colleagues.

Today we have gathered to honor the memory of (i) Late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri, (ii) Late Shri A.T.M. Rangaramanujam, (iii) Late Prof. Bhim Singh; and (iv) Late Shri Challa Sitaramaiah, all of whom were extremely good hearted human being apart from being pioneers of the legal profession. Though their passing is a profound moment of grief, we gather here to fondly remember their many accomplishments.

Shri Rupinder Singh Suri

Shri Rupinder Singh Suri was my colleague - ASG and a dear friend. Shri Rupinder Singh Suri started his practice in 1976 after joining the renowned chambers of late Shri K.S. Suri. He had graduated from prestigious St. Stephen's College and had obtained his law degree from the Delhi Law Faculty. He went on to practice with another leading lawyer of the country, Dr. Y.S. Chitale. He later moved to the Supreme Court in 1981 and founded Suri & company in 1984, which till date is a flourishing firm. To add to the many feathers to his cap, before being Additional Solicitor General for the Central Government, he was the Standing Counsel for State of Punjab before this Hon'ble Court,

Member, National Legal Services Authority of India, and represented various government, public sector undertaking, and numerous Multinational companies.

It's a matter of common knowledge that my late colleague Shri Suri was extremely popular at the bar and had served as the President, Supreme Court Bar Association from 2017- 18 and President, Supreme Court Advocate-On-Record Association from 2004-2006. His list of accomplishments as an office bearer of different organizations and platforms is remarkably diverse.

Shri Rupinder Singh Suri also had many publications to his credit, including India Chapter on Cross-Border Insolvency in the book titled as "Practitioner's Guide to Cross Border Insolvency" and "Remedies Under Security Interest" published by Oceana Publication, Inc/Dobbs Ferry, New York, Background Paper for the CII Conference on Infrastructure and on Competition Safeguards in Telecommunication Industry presented at ITU Regional Regulatory Seminar held in China. He was also a very seasoned and trained Mediator.

He made a lasting contribution to the jurisprudence of this court by his arguments in the Right to Privacy and Aadhaar judgments. He was an indomitable fighter for whichever side he represented, whether it was in the Satluj Yamuna Link Canal or an everyday matter. He was also instrumental in assisting this Hon'ble Court in deciding constitutional issues of seminal importance which arose in Jarnail Singh And Ors vs Lachhmi Narain Gupta And Ors. reported in (2018) 10 SCC 396, Naresh K. Aggarwala & Co. v. Canbank Financial Services Ltd., reported in (2010) 6 SCC 178, State of Gujarat v. Mirzapur Moti Kureshi Kassab Jamat, reported in (2005) 8 SCC 534. These are among many other cases where Shri Suri's contribution in law has been immense.

Outside the law he was a sports enthusiast and played badminton. He was a voracious reader and enjoyed reading both Fiction and non-fiction.

He was a great mentor to many young and aspiring lawyers. As a pilot project he groomed the 'Indian junior chamber' and was also a member Junior Chamber International (JCI). His passing has indeed made the Supreme Court and the bar poorer.

Ms Suruchi Suri & Ms Simar Suri, daughters of Sh. Suri and Ms Gurvinder Kaur Suri, wife of Sh. Suri are practicing Advocates and our colleagues.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to the family members of Shri Suri present in Court.

Shri A.T.M. Rangaramanujam

Shri ATM Rangaramanujam left for his heavenly abode at the age of 89 years. Shri Rangaramanujam was a veteran at the bar and had a vast expertise in Criminal and Constitutional law. Shri Rangaramanujam was looked upon for his vast knowledge by all members of the bar. Not many people know that Shri Rangaramanujam was also deeply interested in politics and had also contested the MLA Elections from his hometown in the 60's.

Shri Rangaramanujam, was the most sought after counsel for arguing complex criminal appeals before this Hon'ble Court. Out of nearly 104 reported judgments of this Hon'ble Court, wherein, Shri Rangaramanujam appeared, almost 67 have been in Criminal Appeals. I also had an opportunity of appearing along with him before this Hon'ble Court in a matter pertaining to validity of Sections 2(1)(o) and 13 of SARFAESI Act, 2002. I was astounded by his rich legal experience and presence of mind. The judgment in the matter came to be reported as Keshavlal Khemchand and Sons Pvt. Ltd. vs. Union of India (2015) 4 SCC 770. Listening to him was an enriching experience.

In one of celebrated case argued by Shri Rangaramanujam reported in (2002) 7 SCC 33, the assistance rendered by him persuaded the Division Bench of S. Rajendra Babu, P. Venkatarama Reddy, JJ. to acquit the petitioners of charges under Section 302 r/w Section 149 of the Indian Penal Code. The said law is still cited, routinely, before this Hon'ble Court, as well as, before the High Courts across the country, whenever, a case of murder by an unlawful assembly arise. The erudite arguments made by Shri Rangaramanujam which were finally accepted by this Hon'ble Court have stood the test of time. He also used to routinely appear in matters pertaining to Prevention of Money Laundering Act and the cases investigated under the Special Acts.

Today he is survived by his daughter in law, grandson Mr. Venkat Raghavan who is a doctor and granddaughter Ms. Navya Sri.

I express heartfelt condolence on the sad demise of Sh. A.T.M. Rangaramanujam and pray to the Almighty to grant eternal peace to the departed soul and bestow immense strength to the members of the family to bear the irreparable loss.

Prof. Bhim Singh

Prof. Bhim Singh, Senior Advocate left for the heavenly abode on 31st May, 2022 after a prolonged illness at Jammu. He had been designated as a Senior Advocate by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court with effect from 11th June, 2011.

Sh. Bhim Singh is survived by his wife Smt. Jay Mala and son Mr. Ankit Love, who are now settled in London.

Belonging to the Dogra warrior family, Prof. Bhim Singh was inherently a firebrand leader and a Senior Counsel.

Prof. Bhim Singh helped lay down a landmark precedent regarding personal liberty of an individual, in the case 'Sh. Bhim Singh, MLA Vs. State of Jammu & Kashmir' reported as AIR 1986 SC 494. The judgment resulted from an incident where Sh. Bhim Singh while he was on his way to attend Assembly proceedings to participate in some important vote in the Assembly, was detained and kept at an undisclosed place without obtaining a remand from the Magistrate. In the writ petition filed by him, he was awarded an amount of Rs. 50,000/- as compensation for his wrongful imprisonment which was held to be per se unconstitutional and illegal. It was for the first time, that compensation for violation of fundamental right was awarded even in exercise of writ jurisdiction.

Prof. Bhim Singh was a person of varied interests and excelled in every field he pursued. He was immensely fond of travelling. He conducted a world tour on motorbike from 1967 to 1973. He visited as many as 130 countries and is credited to be a first person to cross the Sahara Desert on motorcycle from Tan-Tan, Morocco to Senegal through Spanish Sahara and Mauritania. He was friends with many world leaders of the time and had close association with Mr. Yasser Arafat a famous Palestinian leader. For many years he remained as Chairman of Indo-Palestine Friendship Society.

He worked vigorously as a human rights activist and rendered his professional services to innumerable with a motive of securing their human rights. He was nominated as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Legal Aid by Justice Bhagwati, the then Hon'ble Chief Justice of India. Justice Bhagwati described Sh. Bhim Singh 'as crusader for truth and justice'. He also remained senior Executive Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association in the year 2016.

Prof. Bhim Singh worked tirelessly for the upliftment of professional standards and for dignity and honour of the Bar. His efforts for securing Bar Council for Jammu & Kashmir were materialized in the Supreme Court of India when a petition filed by him regarding establishment of Bar Council of Jammu & Kashmir was allowed.

He has authored many books of contemporary importance and one of these titled "An examination of documents on which the State of Israel is based" , "Peace Mission Around the world on Motorcycle".

With passing away of Sh. Bhim Singh the Bar has lost a tall leader, a true friend and a crusader for dignity of the Bar. He exhibited knowledge of law, wisdom and professional excellence and worked tirelessly throughout his life in that pursuit.

I express heartfelt condolence on the sad demise of Sh. Bhim Singh and pray to the Almighty to grant eternal peace to the departed soul and bestow immense strength to the members of the family to bear the irreparable loss.

Shri Challa Sitaramaiah

Shri Challa Sitaramaiah was born on 25-09-1929 in Kakinada. He graduated in B.Com from Annamalai University and later did his LL.B. from Madras University, Tamil Nadu. After briefly working as junior advocate in Madras, he moved to Hyderabad in the year 1957 and enrolled with the bar association post formation of Andhra Pradesh in the year 1956.

He worked under Shri Venkata Rama Sastrygaru prior to moving his practise to the Supreme Court of India in 1983 as a Senior Advocate. He later returned to Hyderabad in 1996 and practiced there till 2019. It was only the COVID 19 pandemic which forced him to refrain from going to court. He is survived by his wife Smt. Shakunthala, daughter Jyothishmathi Evani, son in law Evani Sastry, grand daughter Anjani, and son Dr. Maruth Athmaja. As a husband and father, he gave his all to his family and was a pillar of strength and a source of great pride.

Shri Challa Sitaramaiah was a gentle soul with a fierce and tough exterior, and that his aura and presence will be missed forever.

Shri Challa Sitaramaiah was an erudite and meticulous advocate, passionate about law and an intellectual par excellence. Very few are possibly aware of his many other talents and achievements, like that of artist and a sportsman. I am told that his paintings and sketches were so extraordinary and beautiful that he was offered an admission into a

French University for Arts, which he chose not to pursue, to abide by his father's wishes. He was an avid reader, with interests that varied from the teachings of the Upanishads to the poetry of Milton with a collection of books that would have put a decent library to shame. He was also a very good sportsman and cricketer at the university level, being the captain, he was an opening batsman and an off-spinner.

Shri Challa Sitaramaiah was individual who believed in giving more than in receiving, he chose to follow the philosophy from a very young age. He always chose to keep his contributions and charities undisclosed. Deeply spiritual, and staunch believer of God no one ever returned empty handed from his. His doors were ever open for help in matter whether it may be legal or otherwise. Innumerable religious premises received contributions from him for renovations and repairs, as did many NGOs for their charitable works. He was a regular contributor to the UNICEF and to the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists.

On the legal front he appeared in several important matters and was appointed as Amicus Curiae and appeared pro-bono in the personal matters of several advocates, matters relating to TTD. He argued as Amicus curiae before a 7 Judge Bench in the case of Mekalapathi reported in (2004) 2 ALT 546 in which it was held that the assignment of land was a constitutional obligation and acquired that the assignee would be entitled to get full compensation. He also successfully pleaded and appeared in a 5 Judge Bench reported in (2004) 5 ALT 634 wherein it was held that reservation on the basis of religion cannot be made. He appeared before the full Bench in a decision reported in AIR 1975 AP 278 and also appeared as Amicus curiae in a decision reported in 1981 ALT 333 wherein it was held that decree holder is entitled to interest at decretal amount if decree salient. Sir also made many suggestions in the Puttuswamy case.

Shri Challa Sitaramaiah also authored several books including "Time and its legal aspects & other essays" relating to religion and education. Justice Challa Venkata Ramasastrygaru while writing foreword on his book remarked that the said collection of engaging essays is a brilliant and versatile work by the author Shri Challa Sitaramaiah. His demise has left a great void and this Hon'ble Court will surely miss an intellect whose contribution to law was immense.

Om Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

Reference made on 15th December, 2022

by

Shri Vikas Singh (Sr.)

President, SCBA

in the memory of

Late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri,

Late Shri A.T.M. Rangaramanujam,

Late Prof. Bhim Singh and

Late Shri Challa Sitaramaiah,

Senior Advocates

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India Dr. Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud, Hon'ble Judges of this Court, Ld. Solicitor General of India Shri Tushar Mehta, Law Officers, Members of the family of late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri, Shri A.T.M. Rangaramanujam, Professor Bhim Singh and Shri Challa Sitaramaiah, Members of Executive Committee of SCBA, Shri. Manoj Kr. Mishra, President SCAORA, Members of Executive Committee of SCAORA, Members of the Bar, ladies and gentlemen.

Today, we have assembled here to honour the legacy left behind by late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri, Shri A.T.M. Rangaramanujam, Prof. Bhim Singh and Shri Challa Sitaramaiah. I am deeply saddened by their passing as they were part of our legal family with whom we have treasured memories over the years.

Shri Rupinder Singh Suri

(1st Oct, 1951- 31st Jan, 2022)

Shri. Rupinder Singh Suri was born to a middle-class family on 1st October, 1951 in Ludhiana, Punjab, who had their roots in Rawalpindi. He grew up in the heartland of Punjab and cosmopolitan Delhi. He did his schooling from Dayanand Anglo Vedic School, Hoshiarpur and later came to Delhi to Study Economics from the prestigious St. Stephens College, Delhi. Thereafter, he did LL.B from the Campus Law Centre,

University of Delhi in 1976. Apart from being a meritorious student, he was also a district badminton champion and represented his college at many competitions. He joined the Bar in 1976 and began practising with his father Late Shri K.S. Suri.

He became an Advocate-on Record in 1981. After the demise of his father in 1983, Shri Suri forayed into the world of civil and criminal litigation. His firm, 'Suri & Company', a full-service law firm, is in its 38th year continues to flourish even today having practice in the fields of banking, finance, labour, company affairs, economic offences, environmental, infrastructure advisory, intellectual property etc. and representation before all judicial fora.

As the Standing Counsel for State of Punjab before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India from 1987 to 2003, the cause of defending the waters of Punjab was dear to his heart. In recognition of his diverse contributions and expertise, he was designated as Senior Advocate by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in 2009.

He also appeared before the Court of Inquiry before Hon'ble Mr. Justice D.P. Wadhwa, who was then a judge of the Delhi High Court, into three incidents in which Kiran Bedi, as Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of North Delhi district, had clashed with lawyers in 1988. He also appeared before the Boeing and Mangalore Air crash enquiries. Shri Suri was a trained Mediator and is also considered one of the leaders in Domestic and International Arbitration, especially in commercial disputes.

His cause of giving back to the society led to almost 500 young lawyers getting training under his law firm Suri and Company, who after the training are now well established in their legal careers in India and abroad.

He was fondly remembered as Lucky and was always there in all the good times as well as difficult times of the fellow bar members, especially the youngsters. He was always ready to help and advise. Always exuding a holy personality and an aura of goodness Mr. Suri always had a smiling face while seen around in the court corridors.

In his endeavour to give back to the lawyer community, Shri Suri donated two libraries in the name of his late father, Shri Kartar Singh Suri, at the Tis Hazari Court and at the Income Tax Bar Association. Whilst striving to reach the pinnacle of professional success, Shri Suri also found time to tend to his philanthropic interests.

After contributing as a member of the Junior Chambers (Jaycees), a leadership training and civic organisation for fifteen years, he was elected to become a management trainer. His students and colleagues vouch for his affable yet firm teaching style and have not forgotten the support they got from him when they were young fledglings. Shri Suri would often miss his lunch due to work but going for lunch to India International Centre with his beloved wife Mrs. Gurvinder Suri was something which he would follow religiously whenever he used to get time.

Shri Suri left for his heavenly abode on 31st Jan, 2022. He is survived by his wife Smt. Gurvinder Suri, Daughters - Suruchi and Simar Suri are carrying forward their father's legacy.

Shri A.T.M. Rangaramanujam

(28th January, 1933 - 15th April, 2022)

Shri. A.T.M (Aiyagar Thirumalai Madabhushi) Rangaramanujam, was born on 28th January 1933, in the Chittoor Town of Andhra Pradesh. He did Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law from the Madras University and got enrolled as an Advocate under Andhra Pradesh Bar Council on 15th January 1962. He practised in the Chittoor District Court till December 1987, from there, he shifted his practice to the Hon'ble High Court of Andhra Pradesh. Shri Rangaramanujam was well versed with Court craft and was aware of his legal prowess from very beginning of his career and during his legal journey, he started appearing before the Hon'ble Supreme Court, independently, from the year 1973 itself and had argued several Criminal Appeals and Special Leave Petitions, relating to important constitutional matters.

He made his own place in the lawyer's circle and was counted on by his peers for his knowledge on Criminal and Constitutional Laws in Andhra Pradesh High Court, being one of the leading lawyers of the State and innumerable cases were reported in various law journals.

He, in the capacity of Senior Counsel, was engaged by the AP Transco in several appeals before the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity and appeared before High Court and Supreme Court in related matters. In this context, he was appointed as Senior Counsel on the Panels of M/s Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd and NTPC. He was

also on the Panel of Airport Authority of India, Delhi, and in above capacity, he also represented State Governments of Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu.

Prior to 1988, he had been a defence lawyer in approximately 1200 sessions cases, during his stint in the Sessions Court at Chittoor A.P. and appeared in Sessions Courts of neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. In 1983, he appeared before Justice Y. Venkateshwar Rao Commission which inquired into the fire mishap of Pradirikuppam Village in Chittoor District, on behalf of Harijans. Further, in 1983 itself, he appeared before Justice M. Krishna Rao, who was appointed to inquire into the incident relating to the assault of the professors of Anthropological Department of Sri Venkateshwara University, Tirupathi, on behalf of teaching staff, S.V. University Tirupathi.

During his practice at Andhra Pradesh High Court from 1988 to 1997, he filed about 2000 Writ Petitions, 300 Writ Appeals, 200 criminal appeals and 1000 Criminal Petitions before being designated as Senior Advocate. Shri. Rangaramanujam got designated as a Senior Advocate by the High Court of Andhra Pradesh in November 1997, keeping in sight, his prowess with constitutional and criminal laws and his stature of being a jurist of international repute and his contributions towards Human Rights and Space Laws.

From the year 2002, he started to cater to the litigation in the Hon'ble Supreme Court and contributed immensely towards diverse matters. A well-known international jurist, his writings were widely appreciated at different international legal forums making the Indian legal fraternity proud, globally. His interest and love for Human Rights was well known which is indicated by his participation in various delegations associated with Human Rights.

During his participation at International Bar Association Convention held at West Berlin in 1980 and 1982, his paper on Robot Judges was widely appreciated as also, his paper on the legal aspects of long-distance Air Pollution at the Special Law Conference held in Seoul in 1986, dedicated to the Chernobyl disaster. His legal calibre and acumen are also reflected in the research papers he wrote on unconventional subjects covering diverse topics, ranging from Space law, International Court of Criminal Law and Justice, Human Rights in the context of Globalisation, earning him accolades and

applause from the International Legal fora and a nomination as the Chairman of the Publicity Cell. His demise has been a blow for the legal fraternity, and he shall forever stay in memories, for times to come.

Professor Bhim Singh

(17th August, 1941- 31st May 2022)

Professor Bhim Singh was born on August 17, 1941 in Ramnagar area of erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir during the British Raj in India. His father, Thakur Birbal Singh served as a serviceman in the Allies of World War II and later in the Indian Army, post-independence. His great-grandfather was General Zorawar Singh who is popularly referred to by historians as the “Napoleon of India” for his 19th century conquests of Ladakh, Baltistan, Skardu and the heartlands of Tibet.

Professor Bhim Singh completed his Matriculation in the year 1956 from Government High School, Ramnagar and his LL.B. in 1965 from Aligarh Muslim University. He holds the honour of earning his Masters of Law with distinction in the year 1971 from University of London.

Notably, he was also one of the first Indians to be elected as Secretary of the University of London Union in 1971. He was appointed President of the Youth Congress in Jammu & Kashmir by then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi and later went to become the General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee.

Professor Bhim Singh got enrolled as an Advocate with Bar Council of Delhi in the year 1972, which was transferred to Jammu & Kashmir Bar Council later on. He was designated as a Senior Advocate by the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir on 11th June, 2011.

Forever committed towards the cause of social justice and ensuring access to justice for all, Professor Bhim Singh founded the State Legal Aid Committee in the 1970s to provide free legal aid to the poor and oppressed members of the society. As a recognition of his relentless pursuit towards civil and human rights, he was nominated as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of Legal Aid by Justice Bhagwati.

Professor Bhim Singh was the founder of the Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party and helmed it as its chairman for a period of 30 years, its chief patron

from 2012 till 2021 and its president from 14th February 2021 till 31st May 2022. His popularity was not only at national level but also on the international front. He was elected as a Senior Executive Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association in 2015 and got re-elected unopposed in December 2016.

He provided free legal aid to thousands of poor prisoners, farmworkers, and youth all over the country. He was a man with diverse interests and had a knack of excelling in every field which he pursued.

He left for heavenly abode on 31st May 2022. His demise leaves a deep void in the legal sphere. Professor Bhim Singh is survived by his Wife Smt. Jay Mala, a renowned Journalist and a Senior Advocate in Supreme Court and son Ankit.

Shri Challa Sitaramaiahgaru

(25th September, 1929- 1st August, 2022)

Shri Challa Sitaramaiahgaru, was born on 25th September, 1929 in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh. He was born to Sri Kameswara Rao and Smt. Lakshminarsamma and was the second child of the family.

He embarked upon his legal journey as an advocate in the Madras High Court, and shifted to Hyderabad in 1957. He worked with Sri Venkatrama Sastrygaru, before establishing his individual practice.

Shri Sitaramaiah was a firm believer that legal development turns on proactive thoughts and acts. He had raised the plea of proportionality even in 1960 when he barely had two years standing at the Bar. His theory was accepted in a matter wherein before a seven-judge bench of the Hon'ble High Court of Andhra Pradesh, he had argued as an amicus that assignment of land is a constitutional obligation and when it is acquired the assignee is entitled to full compensation.

He had appeared as Amicus Curiae in several cases before the Hon'ble High Court. His argument that reservation on the basis of religion was wrong was accepted by a five-judge bench of the Hon'ble High Court in T. Muralidhar Rao vs State Of A.P. And Ors. decided on 21 September, 2004 (2004 (5) ALT 634). He appeared in several important cases in all branches of law, except income tax.

The then Hon'ble Justice A.P. Sen once said that “Sri Sitaramaiah advanced the main argument in the legal aspect with much learning and resource and placed all the authorities on this abstruse branch of administrative law, namely, the courts have albeit the governmental action which involves exercise of discretionary powers, control over the exercise of such governmental power by implying limits of reasonableness, relevance and purpose.”

He always appeared pro bono for temples, churches, mosques or other religious institutions. He has authored the books “Time and its Legal Aspects” and “Religion, State and Education”, amongst other essays that he wrote.

The loss of these four gentlemen is felt by the Bar and we all would remember them fondly as great legal minds of their time. While mourning the departed, we find some solace in the fact that these four great gentlemen lived an illustrious life and achieved great heights which will always remain an inspiration for the generations to come. I, on behalf of the Supreme Court Bar Association offer my heartfelt condolences to the members of the families of Late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri, Shri A.T.M. Rangaramanujam, Professor Bhim Singh and Shri Challa Sitaramaiah.

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Reference made on 15th December, 2022

by

Hon'ble The Chief Justice of India

Dr. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud

in the memory of

Late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri,

Late Shri A.T.M. Rangaramanujam,

Late Prof. Bhim Singh and

Late Shri Challa Sitaramaiah,

Senior Advocates

My brother and sister judges, Mr. Tushar Mehta, Solicitor General of India, Mr. Vikas Singh, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, Mr. Manoj Kumar Mishra, President of Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association, Family Members of Late Mr. Rupinder Singh Suri, Late ATM Rangaramanujam, Late Prof. Bhim Singh and Late Mr. Challa Sitaramaiah, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today we have assembled here to pay our respect and tribute to some of the finest members of our bar - Senior Advocates Late Mr. Rupinder Singh Suri, Late Mr. A T M Rangaramanujam, Late Prof. Bhim Singh and Mr. Challa Sitaramaiah whom we lost earlier this year.

Late Mr. Rupinder Singh Suri

As both Mr Solicitor General and Vikas Singh have recounted, Mr. Rupinder Singh Suri's life is full of stories of inspiration for individuals from all walks of life. His journey from a Hindi-medium school to the hallowed halls of St. Stephen's College is just one such story. It was his sheer determination that Mr. Suri never let his initial lack of proficiency in English stand in his way as he followed the advice of one of his British Professors to read voraciously and rapidly improved his language skills. His capacity to similarly be focused was visible in his work as he was always well-prepared in court.

He started his career with Late Shri K.S. Suri, a leading tax lawyer, and then under the aegis of Late Dr. Y.S. Chitale, Senior Advocate and one of the leading constitutional lawyers of his time. As Mr. Suri himself became a leading lawyer, he never

left behind the cause of service and philanthropy. He served multiple clients pro-bono when he was both a struggling lawyer as well as at the pinnacle of his career with his firm Suri & Co. Mr. Suri apparently never turned away anyone in need of help. I believe it was his welcoming nature which led to him being elected and serving as the President of both the Supreme Court Bar Association and Supreme Court Advocate on Record Association.

He was well ahead of his time as he established a law firm setup in 1984. His leading firm was supported by his wife Mrs. Gurvinder Suri who took it over as a Managing Partner when Mr. Suri had to step down on being elevated as a Senior Advocate.

As the Standing Counsel for State of Punjab before the Supreme Court of India from 1987 to 2003, Mr. Suri represented it in all legal matters including important constitutional matters as well as river water disputes. However, not only did he take constitutional law cases, Mr. Suri also made a point to emanate constitutional values in his practice. I have heard that in true secular spirit, in times when parochialism and regionalism dominated chambers, Mr. Suri made it a point to recruit lawyers and clerks from all communities.

Mr. Suri had been serving as the Additional Solicitor General of India from 2020 onwards. In many ways, he was an exemplary for law officers as even while doing justice to his brief for the government, he remained true to their primary duty of being an officer of the court. He remained fair and dedicated to the pursuit of justice. For instance, when he appeared before our Bench in Farzana Batoor, which related to admission of certain students and increasing access to education, we specifically recorded appreciation for Mr. Suri for approaching the proceedings on behalf of the Union in a spirit of dialogue, as opposed to adopting an adversarial approach. His commitment to the rule of law was a testament to his character and his commitment to serving the interests of justice.

Mr. Rupinder Singh Suri is survived by his wife Advocate Mrs. Gurvinder Suri, daughters Ms Suruchi Suri and Ms Simar Suri Pall both are advocates.

My colleagues and I share the grief of the bereaved family.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Late Mr. A T M Rangaramanujam

Mr. Aiyagar Thirumalai Madabhushi Rangaramanujam's journey in law is an inspiration for any young advocate. Mr. Rangaramanujam started working in the Trial Courts after getting enrolled with the Andhra Pradesh Bar Council in the district of Chittoor. As his mettle was recognized, he rose in the ranks and became a sought-after counsel in the Andhra Pradesh High Court on both criminal and constitutional side.

Mr. Rangaramanujam's journey could not have been easy. While he started his practice in 1962 in Chittoor, he moved to the Andhra Pradesh High Court only in 1988. Yet, till 1987 even when he was practicing in Chittoor, he would traverse the distance of over 500 kilometres almost every week to simultaneously establish a practice at the Andhra Pradesh High Court. It was this indefeasible spirit which led to his success at the High Court.

In a similar manner, Mr. Rangaramanujam slowly but steadily built a practice at the Supreme Court by traveling almost once every month from Hyderabad or Chittoor to Delhi much before he was designated as a senior advocate in 1997 and before he eventually moved his practice to Delhi in 2002.

Mr. Rangaramanujam's hard work was visible not just in the manner in which he built his practice but also in the manner in which he expanded his expertise across subject matters. Once in Delhi, Mr. Rangaramanujam did not just continue to work across criminal law and constitutional law, where of course he continued being highly acclaimed, he also expanded his expertise to electricity law cases. He was appointed by AP Transco in a number of appeals before Electricity Appellate Tribunals and also served as a Senior Counsel on the Panel of Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. His expertise in commercial work was also recognized by both National Thermal Power Corporation of India and the Airport Authority of India which empanelled him as a Senior Counsel.

His expertise did not end here but throughout his career he also maintained an active interest in the field of international law and attended as well as presented papers on diverse topics at multiple law conferences, some of which Mr. Vikas Singh just mentioned.

His practice across such wide areas of law and across forums is emblematic of his sincerity to the profession and his dynamism. He practiced for more than 60 years in District Courts, Tribunals, in composite High Court of Andhra Pradesh and the Supreme

Court. He is survived by his daughter in law P. Rasila and grand children Dr. ATM Venkat Raghavan and ATM Navyasree.

My colleagues and I share the grief of the bereaved family.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Late Prof. Bhim Singh

When one speaks of Prof. Bhim Singh, one cannot help but speak of compassion. There are many stories that come to mind but I must narrate one in particular. In 2016, Prof. Singh appeared before me in a matter concerning porters engaged by the Indian Army¹. The porters had put in many years of service in the Indian Army, in arduous conditions and difficult terrain. Despite providing significant support to the Indian Army's operations, they were not treated as regular employees. They approached the Supreme Court seeking the benefit of minimum pay scales on the ground that they had devoted a great deal of time and effort to their jobs. They could not have asked for a better person and a finer lawyer to plead their case before the Supreme Court, than Prof. Bhim Singh. His passion for the cause and his compassion for his clients was evident in his arguments before the Court, which ultimately formulated guidelines for the finalization of a scheme governing the working conditions of the porters. I was one of the many judges who had the pleasure of hearing him argue a case – his razor sharp focus and grasp over the law will be missed. Prof. Singh was deeply involved with the legal aid cell and provided his services pro bono to many marginalized sections of society. As illustrated by the case where he represented the porters in the Indian Army, Prof. Singh was a crusader for the rights of the downtrodden.

*Of course, Prof. Bhim Singh was known not only for being a lawyer par excellence but also because he was party to one of the most significant cases in the history of the Supreme Court. In *Bhim Singh v. State of Jammu and Kashmir*, the Supreme Court awarded Rs. 50,000 by way of compensation for his illegal detention by the police. This was noteworthy because it was the first time that compensation was awarded in exercise of the writ jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.*

His life outside the courtroom was as vibrant as his life within it – he went out of his way to promote Dogra culture and was involved with the Dogra Ratan Awards. He

¹ *Yash Pal v. Union of India*, (2017) 3 SCC 272

founded a political party and was a Member of Parliament and a Member of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly at different points. He travelled extensively by motorbike and otherwise, authored multiple books, and was involved with human rights movements which concerned not only Indian citizens but people across the world.

He will be missed by innumerable people across the bar and the bench.

May we find the strength and courage to carry Prof. Bhim Singh's legacy forward.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Late Mr. Challa Sitaramaiah

The demise of Mr. Challa Sitaramaiah has resulted in an incomparable loss to the legal community. In a career spanning over six decades, Mr. Challa Sitaramaiah earned a reputation for being an authority on almost all branches of law and those who knew him will testify that he was a living compendium on civil law.

One of the most noteworthy moments of his career was in the year 1960, when he argued a case on the basis of the proportionality principle. While the proportionality principle is a commonly applied legal standard in the 21st century, it was practically unheard of in 1960. He raised this argument merely two years after he had begun practicing at the bar. The judge did not accept his argument but this incident reveals why he was regarded an exemplar of innovative legal thinking.

Due to his exemplary legal acumen, a seven-judge bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court requested him to assist as amicus curiae in a case concerning the assignment of land. His assistance as the amicus proved invaluable and he was generally known for being meticulous with every brief he held, regardless of who the client was or how much they could pay him for his services.

Mr. Sitaramaiah's expertise was not restricted to the four walls of the courtroom. His flair for writing was evident from the books and essays that he authored, including on the Aadhar, 'Religion, State and Education,' and 'Time and its Legal Aspects.' His writings are not confined to the black letter of the law. They instead undertake an exploration of the philosophical issues that underlie even seemingly simple legal concepts. The legal community is fortunate to be able to learn from an erudite scholar such as him.

Mr. Challa Sitaramaiah was an avid cricketer from a young age, in addition to being a talented artist. When he was not playing cricket or painting, one could find him reading a book from his large collection.

Above all, he will be remembered for his kindness and generosity. I am certain that he will continue to remain an inspiring figure to all those who have been fortunate enough to know him and to all those who will hear about his legacy.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

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List of Attendees at the Full Court Reference

- ❖ *Shri Tushar Mehta,
Solicitor General of India.*
- ❖ *Shri Vikas Singh, (Sr.)
President,
Supreme Court Bar Association.*
- ❖ *Shri Pradeep Kumar Rai, (Sr.)
Vice President,
Supreme Court Bar Association.*
- ❖ *Shri Rahul Kaushik,
Hony. Secretary,
Supreme Court Bar Association.*
- ❖ *Shri Manoj K. Mishra,
President,
Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association.*
- ❖ *Shri Snehasish Mukherjee,
Vice President,
Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association.*
- ❖ *Shri Devvrat,
Hony. Secretary,
Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association.*

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Attendees including Family Members of
Late Shri Rupinder Singh Suri
Senior Advocate
at the Full Court Reference

- ❖ *Mrs. Gurvinder Suri, Wife*
- ❖ *Ms. Suruchi Suri, Daughter*
- ❖ *Ms. Simar Suri Pall, Daughter*
- ❖ *Mr. Tarun Pall, Son-in-law*
- ❖ *Mr. Narayan Singh Bisht, Personal Secretary of Late Mr. Suri*

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THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

New Delhi - 110001

India