

The History Teacher who was a Role Model

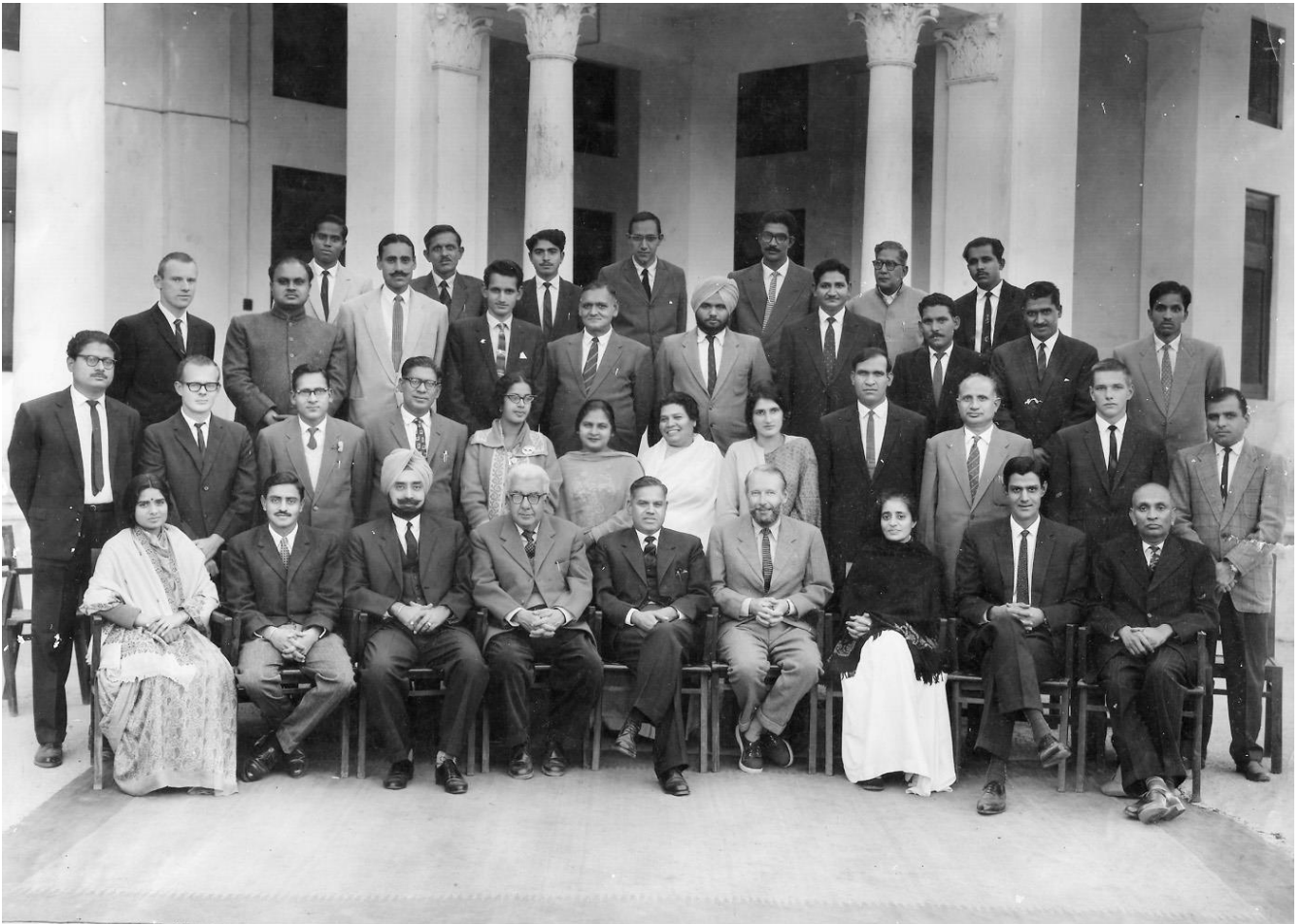


Mr. Yash Pal Bhardwaj (1935-2021)

The Punjab Public School Nabha and The Old Nabhaites Association ‘Family’ is shocked by the passing away of their beloved ‘The First History Teacher of the School’, Mr. Yash Pal Bhardwaj, on 25th of August, 2021. The ‘Family’ shares the sorrow of Mrs. Mondira Bhardwaj and Bhardwaj children and offers its heartfelt condolences.

Mr. Yash Pal Bhardwaj (popularly known and remembered as ‘YPB’) was born on July 9, 1935 (in South Africa, according to Mr. OP Bhatnagar, his close friend and ex-teacher). After schooling from Birla School, Delhi, he did his BA and MA from the coveted St. Stephen’s College, Delhi University, in 1956 and 1958 respectively. In 1960 he did his Bachelors in Education from Central Institute of Education, Delhi. Thereafter, he joined The Punjab Public School, Nabha on May 10, 1960. The great Headmaster of the School, Mr. JK Kate, Padma Shri, selected him not only because of his academic qualifications but also for his wonderful personality and his sporting background which was a huge asset to the School and its students.

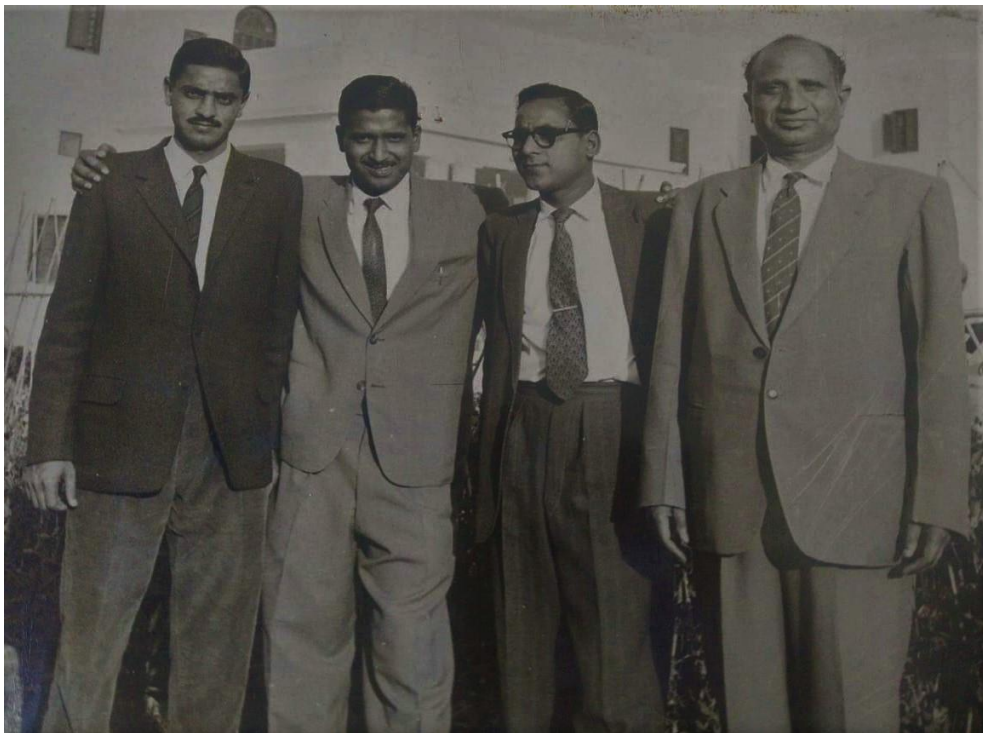
He was in the league of the great founding teachers of the School considered the 'Pillars', on whose shoulders the school gained strength and all India fame, being counted as one of the best Public Schools, within a span of a few years.



In League with "The Pillars" of The PPS of Founding Years in 1960s. YPB is seated second from left. Invaluable all of them, in their own right. The staff seating was in order of seniority in School. Here, YPB is sitting in august company of the legends like Mr. SC Cowell, Senior Master fourth from left to right, Mr. JK Kate the 'Great Headmaster', Mr. Michael Vodden the British Council Teacher and Head of English who wrote the School Song, Miss GB Malkani, mother like legendary head of Junior School, Mr. MN Tankha the great executor of many events in school and right hand of Mr. Kate at the start of the School.



Great friends of 1965-66, from left YP Bhardwaj, YP Johri, R. Sibal, KC Tandon and David Goldberg (US peace corps). They had regular 'Bridge sessions' of cards.



The members of a great team of teachers. From left YP Bhardwaj, YP Johri, OP Bhatnagar and PN Mathu.

On October 16, 1960, YPB organised and conducted the first ever GK Quiz in the School. On October 23, he launched the History Society of the School.

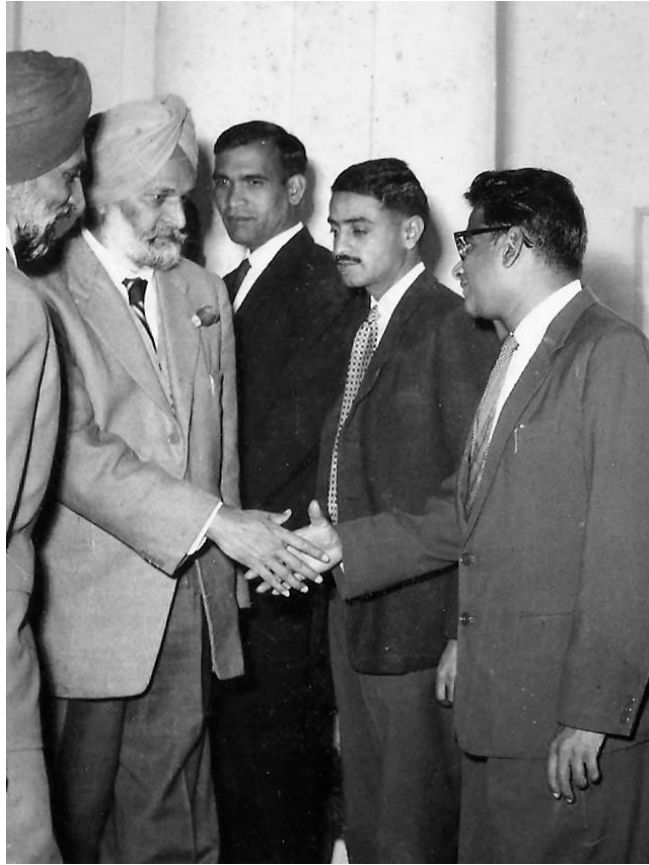
Not only was he a great teacher of history and House master of Jumna House but also a great sportsman who had huge effect on the students by his own performance on the field. On 5th Feb, 1961, the school team including Mr. MS Bhatnagar and Mr. YP Bhardwaj (both Ranji trophy players) played a cricket match against Ripudaman College and won by 24 runs. On 22nd May, 1961, the School team (comprising six boys and five staff) played a hockey match against the local army unit, the famous Scinde Horse. Mr. Bhardwaj spearheaded the attack and we won 3-2.

While at school he represented Southern Punjab in Ranji cricket against Delhi at Patiala. To the delight of the group of his students who went to watch the match, their beloved teacher stole the show with both bat and ball. He took 1 wicket for 31 runs and scored 28.

He had to his credit bagging of Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi (captain of India) out on first ball, an out swinger. He was one of the best out swingers in India at that time. He somehow missed the chance, when he was called for but was unable to attend, the India team trials.



At the Inauguration of The Punjab Public School, Nabha. The President Dr Rajender Parsad is being introduced to the staff. YPB is third from left in the faces seen.



Senior Master Dr Surjit Singh introducing Gyan Singh Kahlon, ICS , Chief secretary of Govt of Punjab to the staff. YPB sir is second from right. (Around 1962)

In the company of Geography teacher, Mr. Tankha, a diehard trekker, YPB also undertook many trekking trips to the mountains. In September, 1962, they with Mr. OP Bhatnagar took a group of seventeen boys to the Kolahai Glacier. On their return they gave a presentation with a slide show, which was remarkable in those days.

In March , 1965, he was one of the staff members at the first inaugural meeting held to start The Old Nabhiates Association.

He was also the Games master. He coached boys on the playground with vigor and enthusiasm. His dynamism rubbed off on all the teams of Hockey, Football and Cricket teams.

His passion for sports, especially cricket, endeared him to the boys. His amiable character, easy-going manners and friendly nature made him popular with both staff and students. He was full of action and inspired students to aim and achieve higher.

His former students fondly recall his favourite word “WASTER” that he would use for anybody who was lazy and showed a lack of initiative.

He was an extrovert, witty, with a great sense of humour, (Mr. Kate would often turn to him for light talk when needed). He had that slow swaggering walk, keen observant eyes, with a good sense of dress, flamboyant and stylish demeanour which left an indelible impression on the minds of young boys of the school. No wonder boys admired him, respected him, adored him and wanted to emulate his mannerisms. HE WAS THEIR “ROLE MODEL”.



YPB sitting in his usual relaxed and cool style with the great Senior Master of the School Mr SC Cowell. Both in a great happy moment.

Mr. Bhardwaj, after a six-year stay at PPS, made a career move to Mayo College, Ajmer. On May, 8th, 1966, before the end of the term, Home day dinner was held early as Mr Kate the Headmaster put it, to enable the school to bid farewell to departing staff members Mr. YP Bhardwaj, Mr. Lowell Edwards and Mr. David Goldberg (Peace Corps teachers from US).

He gained significantly in experience in the first school he served. Many years later he again served under Mr. JK Kate at The Sports School, Rai, which he also later headed. Based on the knowledge and experience gained under Mr. Kate, he went on to head many elite schools and became an acclaimed educationist. Under one of the greatest Headmasters of India, he had learnt the ropes of efficient and ideal running of a Public School.

The Punjab Public School, Nabha honoured him with the highly coveted **Life Time Achievement Award** in 2015 for meritorious services to the School and later to education in the different schools he served.



As guest at the ONA dinner with the Punjab Governor Gen. Jacob at PCA Club, Mohali (2001)



The forty-year reunion of 1967 batch in the Naval Mess on Shahjahan road. Mr. and Mrs. Bhardwaj were the guests of honour at the occasion. Here they are sitting in the center.(2007)





Mr. YP Bhardwaj in October , 2012 with his former student and now the chief of Army Staff (COAS) of India, General Bikram Singh (B-71,1968).



Below are some of the tributes paid by students of YPB from across the world.

YPB had been my close friend in the PPS and Mayo. All the praise that his colleagues and pupils are singing for him are correct. He has been a large-hearted gentle man. It is extremely rare to find sportsman of his level of skill and spirit. He has been highly intelligent and witty.

He was born in South Africa. He was St Stephen's Hockey captain. He played Ranji Trophy for Delhi for nearly 8 yrs and also played for Southern Punjab as an opening bowler and opening batsman. During his hay days he was the best outswinger in India. He was called for test trials, but he couldn't go. He played Basketball for Delhi state. In Mayo he played tennis very well.

Initially all of us took him as sports person and not as a good classroom teacher. Gradually I found that he was a wonderful teacher of his subject. What he taught was on students' fingertips. His residence was never locked. Boys of Jumna House could freely go, sit on his sofa in his absence and read magazines. He was a cricket coach per excellence. I have been very close to him. During 1960 floods the whole school camped for 5-6 months in the Junior School building. He was my room- mate. He was more than eager to help anyone anytime. He is adorable.

Soon after joining I was chatting with him in May 1960 in his room. I mentioned that I drew portraits from life. He immediately gave me his letter pad and a red pencil and asked me to do his portrait. Material was unsuitable, light was unsuitable. I still did his portrait. He preserved that for at least four decades. Out of all the teachers, who are still living, I have been his closest friend. He made immense contribution to PPS. He is a gem.

I wish him complete recovery. May God restore him to perfect health.

O. P. Bhatnagar, (An old message, some time back from the Ex-Hindi and Arts Teacher, The PPS) (Pune).

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He was a great teacher and had his individual style of teaching. I remember him walk into the class with a book and a note book in his hand or under his arm wearing a nice tweed jacket with elbow leather patches. He would head straight for the black board, pick up a chalk and start writing in his neat handwriting from the note book, the lesson notes for the day in abbreviated form with dashes in between. We would copy it down in our note books. This would take about ten to fifteen minutes. Then, he would explain the lesson to us in a clear fashion. After another fifteen minutes, he would do few minutes of light talk, humouring some individual students in the class. In the last ten minutes he would take out the book which was titled, “**101 great lives**”. He would pick up one life of a great historical personality from it and read it to the class. It could be Captain Cook, Napoleon, Alexander, Abraham Lincoln, Churchill, Caesar or Dr Livingstone.

What a great way of impacting the minds of young with history!

Good bye Sir!

Dr. Jashanjot Singh (S-52,1967), Mohali

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Dear Benu, Chumki and Rana, I am stunned, shocked and saddened to know that our dear Yash is no more. Thousands of his grateful students and, like me, hundreds of his admirers, mourn the loss. May God grant his soul eternal peace and give you all the strength to bear this irreparable. You are all in my thoughts and prayers. I share your sorrow with you.

BS Bhatnagar (ex-English Master, The PPS), Hong Kong

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Rarely do we come into contact with a person like YPB. He was for us the House Master, parents, friend, philosopher, guide and of course History Teacher, all rolled into one. May the divine grant him eternal peace.

Om Shanti;

Kedarnath Bansal (J-4,1964), Nabha

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We use to eagerly look forward to his coming to junior school to teach us History, as 10 year olds we use to look out of our class room window , we had the corner class room in class 5.He use to come on a bicycle. We loved each moment of his class.

He was so full of life and energy. Farewell dear Sir. 🙏🙏

Jyoti Kate (R-52,1967), Pune

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The inevitable has happened with the passing away of YPB Sir. Glowing tributes are just pouring in which again are inevitable. One wonders how one can put in words to describe someone like YPB. Personally, we, who were in PPS in the early 60s were lucky to have him for a good period of time since he left for his new assignment. I personally remanence the fond memories and shall cherish them for the rest of my life. My prayers to the Almighty to give strength to the family to bear this irreparable loss. Rest in peace dear sir till we meet again. Om Shanti!

if YPB is so lauded, it is because he had in him something unique, as the saying goes 'successful people don't do different things, they do things differently'. YPB surely is an epitome of the teaching profession.

Dr. Narinder Kohli (B-79,1966), Calcutta

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Extremely sorry to read about the demise of Mr Bhardwaj. A very lovable teacher. May his soul rest in peace. May Almighty give strength and courage to the family to bear the loss. RIP Sir

Col Dr Dharamveer Chhiber, Canada (R-39,1963)

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Extremely sad news. He was a great soul. He was indeed a combination of simplicity and style. A totally down to earth Personality with humane approach. He imbued in us the spirit to be a fighter as also to accept defeat in an honourable manner. I remember the Julu Dance performed by Jumma House in African style after winning Inter House Football match. His Motto of Straight Bat and modest mind was a success mantra in my life. He was and will continue to be a Role Model to his students. His loss is irreparable to the Educational Fraternity.

Om Shanti!

Maj Gen Suresh Tiwari (J-34,1963), Jaipur

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Pushapraj: Hello Uncle - this is really sad news. I remember him fondly, as I used to call him थप्पड़ uncle. Please pass on my heartfelt condolences to his family.

👉 Above is the message I received from Monty Tankha (USA) son of Mr and Mrs Tankha. Yash was a very close friend of the Tankhas.

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Really sad to learn!

Ma'm kindly accept our heartfelt condolences. Sir will always be alive in our memories. Sir YPB was one of the greatest teachers of The PPS. Those of us who have spent the formative years of the school in the early 60's won't ever forget him. In Jan,1961 my Father handed me over to him as J 51 in the corridor outside the tuck shop and was gone in a jiffy! Sir YPB leaves a mark in the golden pages of the history of The PPS! An all-rounder in all spheres of the school activities. But most of all a most stylish personality par excellence!

Vijay Plaha (J-51,1964), New Delhi

*

YPB was one of our founder teachers.

Handsome, stylish, flamboyant. He could play any sport like a pro.

Laid a strong foundation for sports at PPS.

Col Amarjit Shahid (B-102,1971), Canada

*

A dear friend and the only one left out of those who joined The PPS (Sainik School) in 1960. We are shattered with the sad news! God bless his soul & grant strength to bear this loss!

Mondira Bharadwaj has been very brave throughout his suffering!!

Our heartfelt condolences!  Shanti!!!

Mrs KPK Tandon (who joined with YPB in 1960 as founder teacher). Mohali

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So very sorry to hear. My heartfelt condolences to the family. A true stalwart. He will be missed. His contributions in every field were enormous and will be remembered in the annals of PPS history. RIP.

Pushapraj, (PA to Headmaster JK Kate in 1960-70s), USA

*

So sorry to learn about the passing away of Mr YPB. He will be remembered for long time. Om Shanti!!

Dr Satish Jain (R-107,1970, in hospital himself, post-surgery), Delhi

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Mondiraji.

I am shocked to know about your loss. I will always miss him. I was very close to him. We used to eat, play, have discussion and do many things and go on treks and tours. What a man!

A rarest of the rare gem. I share your grief. My wife joins me in offering my heartfelt condolences to you and to every member of your family. May God grant eternal peace to the noble soul and give strength to you all to bear the unbearable. Om, shanti, shanti, shanti!!!

O. P. Bhatnagar (Ex-Hindi Teacher), Pune

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YPB – Sir, at the time 'we were boys in the school', he was larger than life, almost an iconic figure. He had that wonderful swagger and was flamboyant in his younger days. He would talk about getting Mansur Ali Khan alias Nawab of Pataudi, on his first delivery in a Ranji match. He would fondly talk about his dating Ms. Reita Faria, who probably was first Asian Miss world. All these musings which come to my mind really made him larger than life to those associated with him.

His life is reminiscent of two iconic movies -To Sir with Love with Sidney Poitier as the main lead and 'Goodbye Mr. Chips', with Peter O'Toole in the lead. The handsome face of YPB, makes me think of Peter O'Toole and he being his look alike.

Goodbye YPB Sir. 🌸

Davinder Sodhi, DGM, SBP (Retd.) (J-75, 1969), Chandigarh

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A very popular teacher and a keen sports person. Lived a wholesome life. May his soul rest in eternal peace. 🙏 Shanti

Gen. Vinay Sharma (S-129,1967), Gurgaon

*

Deeply grieved to hear of the sad sad demise of our MOST RESPECTED HISTORY TEACHER, Mr.Yashpal Bharadwaj. What a noble soul!.....A thorough gentleman

and a wonderful HUMANBEING. It was an honour to be his student till Class 11. What a noble soul.....a perfect gentleman.....a great cricketerand MOST IMPORTANTLY our outstanding HISTORY TEACHER.

Kulwinder, Ex-headmaster, GGSPS, Sangrur. (R-44,1967)

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YPB Sir, was a great man and a human being. Excellent cricketer. Taught us history and made it interesting to learn. Was our Jamuna housemaster. Last met him in Delhi get together of our batch at Kota house. Learnt a lot from him. Great loss for all of us. May his soul rest in peace. God bless!

Col Harjit Chahal (J-49,1967), Chandigarh

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Deeply saddened. Gentleman, cricketer, historian, perfect House Master, motivator and well-wisher.

Even if you were the audience for the tennis ball cricket or football you were part of the group to go to Greens for the ice cream! Nick name 'Black Knight' for me was his brain child.

The only person who had 6 pairs of the same shoe so they were cleaned and polished once a week for use each day. Learnt a lot. Taught by example.

RIP Sir.

Cmdr. IJ Arora, retd. (J-40, 1967), USA

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Very sad to hear of YPB's going. Very very sad, indeed. As our cricket coach (And didn't he enjoy sharing in good fun how he got Pataudi out with an outswinger!) and

teacher of history, he was my hero at school and the single greatest influence to have fashioned my life. Thank you, Sir, and Mr Sibal for making the time to come my screening at the Habitat in Delhi a few years ago. How I wish I could have thanked you more. There are certain artistic debts in life one can never redeem. May YPB be stylishly happy wherever he is.

Vijay Singh (Author, film maker, director, journalist in PARIS) (B-113,1967), Paris

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Sad news a teacher who was friendly and made us feel happy to attend his class and a good sports man and hero Our prayers to God to rest his soul Rest In Peace

Maj VS Bindra (USA) (B-51,1967), USA

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He never liked boys to walk about with their hands in their pockets even if it was very cold. He was always very smartly dressed and expected the boys to be so. While in school or playing cricket. Once after a player got out and left his bat for the next batsman, he asked him to pick up his bat and walk back. Don't walk without a bat.

God bye Sir!

Vilas Kate (S-96,1970), Pune

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Heartfelt condolences to the family. A dedicated teacher, I was fortunate to have been his student. May he achieve sadgati. Om Shanti. 🙏🙏🙏

Basanti Sathu (R-73,1967), New Zealand

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Will always remember YPB...had the good fortune of visiting him at CR park and just sitting next to him in solitude one evening not so long ago for an hour or so....a great teacher and friend....will always remember playing football with a tennis ball on the side of the building...three sides built. Jumna house on Sunday evenings....RIP Great Teacher...🙏 especially for Jumna House boys! Playing Tennis ball football with him was so much fun! Other players: Budh Prakash, S Tiwari, Hoshiar Singh Harpreet et al.

And the high treat was that once in a while we jumped the back gate with him and he treated us to coke and ice cream at the Green Hotel...

And no one else but I will remember this greatest lesson taught to me... to be humble by YPB ..I joined PPS from ninth class onwards coming from St Francis High School, Amritsar. I was new in school and took nine wickets in an innings against Ravi House and began gloating about it. News reached Mr. YPB through 'Bhoond ji' (Kulwant Dhindsa) and boy in the history class next day he really admonished me saying the famous words 'Man is indispensable ' by Mahmud of Ghazni.

Also told, JS Bedi (J-3), the cricket captain not to offer me the new ball against Kunjpura...and lead the bowling attack thru 'Bumper'(Naresh Sehgal, Mehta and himself and made me field as the long wicket keeper. I can easily say that most of my personality was shaped and groomed by YPB and I would believe so many others that passed out of PPS.

Dr. Ishpal Ghai (J-61,1964), Delhi

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An excellent teacher and a great man with lots of style and substance. Will always be missed. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Col Kulwant Gill (B-25,1966), Canada

*

Our childhood inspiration and motivation. Exceptional personality. May his soul be with Cod

Col JS Soharu (B-30,1966), Gurgaon

*

Who can forget him? Rest teacher. May his soul RIP.

Harikirtan Singh (S24,1966) CPA, Canada

*

A stylish personality with superb aura; a great educationist & excellent sportsman who was our housemaster. He was also Director & Principal Motilal Nehru Sports School, Rai (Sonipat). May God bless his soul.

Col Ram Singh (J-31,1966), Delhi

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No doubt was a great teacher & a good coach. RIP sir

Suresh Khanna (B-26,1966), Canada

*

Today I'm feeling sad coz I've lost my house master. He was my idol. 'Coz of my boxing and gym, he had nicknamed me as 'Chutt', the name I still carry proudly.

Niranjan Salaria (J13,1966), Pathankot

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Very sad! Will always remember him, Condolences om shanti om! God bless departed soul.

Brig Yashpal (S-43,1967 H.Sc) Gurgaon

A sad day. YPB sir, was not only my cricket coach but also taught history. We used to enjoy playing soccer next to Jamuna house on Sundays. May the departed soul rest in peace.

Shivpal Virk (R-40,1965), (*first boy to score a century in school*). USA, Florida
Police,

*

This first delivery dismissal of Tiger Pataudi was at Patiala Baradari ground. 1965.

He had gone from school to Patiala to play that match. The few students who were taken to watch the match were proud witnesses.

Col Inderpal Singh (J-77,1965), Chandigarh

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An icon for generations of PPS students. I was fortunate to be mentored by him as my house master, cricket coach and above all as a student of history that he taught. Time and space will never do justice to YPB's contribution to character building and molding the minds of us 10:11/12-year-olds in the school. An oak has fallen. He now sups with God leaving earth that much poorer with his absence. May his soul rest in eternal peace. 🙏🙏

Admiral Jagjit Singh Bedi (J-3,1963-ISC), Pune

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Very, very sad indeed... he never taught me, but was a favourite of J40, Inderjit, my elder brother... I was in touch with him while working with Dr. Lal Path Labs in Delhi. I had been to his place in Chittaranjan Park, did some tests for him... ace cricketer, learnt sportsmanship from him... in fact, come to think of it - whenever the word sportsmanship is said, somewhere at the back of my mind I'm reminded of him... Sad to know he's passed away...

Dr. Param Dayal Singh (J-108,1970) , Pune

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Very sad. He was a great teacher, sportsman and house master 🙏

Satnam Waheguru 🙏

Cmdr. Mitinder Sethi (J-76,1966) Ex-IIT, Indian Navy. Pune

*

My heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of Mr. Y.P Bhardwaj my Guruji and mentor for cricket.

I.S Koonar (R-19,1967 H.Sc), Chandigarh (*a cricket protégé of YPB who took 6 for 2 when YPS was bowled out for 11 runs in Feb 1967*).

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Good bye! Adieu! Sir, from your students and the staff of The Punjab Public School, Nabha who will never forget you as long as they live.

-Compiled and prepared by ISC batch of 1967