



Deepak receives the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman from Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil in January 2009.

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he landed in the UK and pursued his Air Traffic Control course, but there, he needed money for his survival because his uncle had paid his tuition fees only. Therefore, Deepak needed to earn his living expenses in the UK. The period he spent in the United Kingdom, he says, was an early lesson on sound financial management.
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Alberta constituency of Calgary East and Parliamentary Secretary to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Besides working devoutly for further improvement of Indo-Canadian bilateral relations, Deepak has also earned eminence for the pioneering achievements he has made in Canada. It was due to his concerted efforts that resulted with the first ever Diwali celebration being held on Parliament Hill in 1999, and with which Canada became the first country in the western world to have such festive celebrations in a federal Parliamentary setting. The second ground breaking feat goes to Deepak's credit for his accomplishment made in the formation of the Canada India Parliamentary Friendship Group which aims at promoting and building a strong relationship among Parliamentarians of the two countries. In 2009, these feats earned him the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman from the Government of India.

Thus, Deepak's journey to the corridors of power is covered through roads cluttered with bumps and barriers. But with the support of his entire family—wife Neena, children Priti, Kaajal and Aman and son-in-law Robin Martin coupled with the blessings of his mother, brother and sister and close friends and through hard work and determination, Deepak has managed to overcome adversities, break barriers and chart a path that he was destined to do.

Deepak was born in Tanzania in 1950 in a small German hospital in a rural town called Oldeani, near the world famous Ngorongoro Crater. Deepak's father, the late Om Prakash Obhrai ran a quarry in Moshi, Tanzania before he passed away at the age of 36, when Deepak was only six years old. The demise of Deepak's father at such a young age shook the very foundation of the family. He says it was a lesson of life that taught him to expect the worst, but to keep a positive outlook at all times.

Deepak recalls: "After my father's death, my mother went to work, first as a teacher, then as an administrative clerk in a sugar factory in Arusha Chini (close to Moshi) and as a bank clerk in Arusha, where she retired." Thus, whatever Deepak is today, the credit goes to his mother and to his supportive wife and children. Deepak also fondly remembers the support of his sister Rita, who now lives in Calgary with her husband. His elder brother, Neil Obhrai, who was raised by his grandparents, is well settled in the UK with his wife and two daughters.

Having no father and only a working mother there were

not much financial resources available to pursue higher education. Available resources permitted Deepak to only finish primary school in Tanzania at the Aga Khan School and at the Arusha Secondary School. His chemistry teacher in Arusha recommended to his mother that Deepak be sent to India to complete high school. It is how he ended up at Daly College Indore, one of the most prestigious public schools in India. Deepak credits the experience at Daly College as an invaluable gift of education that helped lay the foundation for his future successes.



Deepak greets Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh upon his arrival in Toronto for the G-20 leaders summit in June 2010.

Following his stint at Daly College, from where he graduated with honours, Deepak set his sights on higher education. It was his uncle, Mr. Tilak Raj Behal, who stepped in and paid for Deepak's tuition fees to go to the UK and get trained as an Air Force or in Civil Aviation. Although becoming a pilot in Air Force or in Civil Aviation was still an unrealistic dream in Africa at that time, Deepak was determined to make his dreams come true. Thus, he landed in the UK and pursued his Air Traffic Control course, but there, he needed money for his survival because his uncle had paid his tuition fees only. Therefore, Deepak needed to earn his living