

Minister in the Spotlight

The Legacy of Education—Honoring SS Dr. Siri Akal Singh

Interviewed by SS Sarb Nam Kaur Khalsa, Sikh Dharma International Ministers' Newsletter Editor

Long-time educator and Sikh Dharma International Minister SS Dr. Siri Akal Singh feels passionate about creating spaces for innovative learning among young people. Dr. Khalsa spent many years helping to re-imagine what a school should be—a place for “igniting student creativity...with a sound set of virtues to guide them,” he shared.

His philosophy is to “educate students to lead lives of human flourishing” and thus he dedicated the past several years as President of the Chapel Hill-Chauncey Hall School (CH-CHS) in Waltham, Massachusetts to re-engineering teaching and learning for the 21st century. His methods combine the latest in technology (iPad, educational software) with basic values (“human-ware”). These values include:

- kindness
- concern for others
- compassion
- respect
- honesty
- integrity
- connectedness to all other human beings



Dr. Khalsa received recognition for this service at a special ceremony in April 2014, where the Board of Trustees of the school established the [Khalsa Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning](#) in his honor. Dr. Khalsa—a Minister of Sikh Dharma since 1986—said that his career in education began in the early 1970s. The Siri Singh Sahib directed him to study education and then requested that he and his wife, Hari Kaur (a Nurse Practitioner) work in Mussoorie, India, where many Western Sikhs sent their children to boarding school. Dr. Siri Akal also helped establish the Guru Ram Das Academy in Dehra Dun, India and later served as Chair of the [Miri Piri Academy](#) Board of Trustees from 2007-2009.

Dr. Siri Akal Singh’s advice as a Minister in service is to stay open to serving every opportunity as it arises. He says that being a Minister means “to minister where[ever] there is suffering, where[ever] there is pain or unhappiness...wherever that may come from, never hesitate to step in where there is need.”

He is most humbled that the Board of Trustees of the school he served at for 14 years thought it fitting to light a candle in his honor by naming the Center in his honor. His prayer is that future students of the school will become innovators. He said the focus of the Khalsa Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning is to create a physical and virtual space that will allow young people to cross boundaries and tie together bodies of knowledge not previously connected.

Dr. Khalsa is excited and humbled as he prepares to move on from his position at CH-CHS to begin a new chapter in his journey. He will be taking on the role of Executive Director of the National Association of Independent Schools ([NWAIS](#)), serving 110 private schools from Alaska to Utah, and Trustee on the Board of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), which serves more than 1700 private schools across the nation.

His enthusiasm, integrity, creativity and wisdom will no doubt continue to spark innovation in learning. He is an inspiring individual whose legacy has already left a mark as a “sensitive and caring school leader.” Congratulations to Dr. Siri Akal Singh.

©2014 [Sikh Dharma Minister's Newsletter](#)