Sikh Society of Minnesota

9000 W Bloomington Freeway, Bloomington, MN 55431
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MN SIKHS

CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Board of Directors 2024 Election

(For Term 2025-2027)

IMPORTANT	• **CANDIDATES SUPPLY THE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION** • **SIKH SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA DOES NOT VERIFY THE ACCURACY OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

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Dr. Charanjit Singh Rihal

MD, MBA



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** As a long-time resident of the State of Minnesota (1986) and being involved in the Sikh Society of Rochester MN, I feel it is a very positive step to bring SSRM and SSM closer together. I hope to be able to contribute and do seva on behalf of the society in service of our Sagat.
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.** Having grown up in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s I am aware of the struggles Sikhs go through and have maintained a lifelong commitment to Sikhism. I have trained professionally in medicine and business at the University of Manitoba and Minnesota and also the University of Oxford. I have extensive experience in leadership and management and serve on the Board of Trustees of Mayo Clinic. I have been a founding member of SALDEF and support various Sikh charitable organizations. I am committed to the principles of Sikhism as taught in Gurbani and to the principles of the pluralistic society we live in the United States.
3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising).**

	Very comfortable and experienced in visioning, strategic and operational planning, financial and personnel management.
4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.** Seva, outreach, financial support to charities. I wish I could have done more however.
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** Yes, I am concerned, however, with modern technology and tools and asynchronous communications, we can make it happen as long as the reciprocal commitment is there.

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Deepinder Singh Baveja

Business Owner - B.S.



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** I have been a member of the Gurdwara since 1998. I have always been available for any fundraisers, langar sewa, volunteer work, and any help needed by any member inside and outside the gurudwara. I want to become a board member so I can help the organization in achieving its goals and objectives. I want to promote unity, solidarity, and cooperation between all the members of SSM. By becoming a board member, I want to work towards maintaining the credibility and reputation of the board while helping the organization achieve its growth and expansion plans by leveraging my expertise in obtaining finance, budgeting, and real estate knowledge.
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.** I have done all my schooling in India in Ludhiana. I studied for 10 years in a Catholic school following up with 2 years in Guru Nanak public school and doing my degree in Business and Commerce at GGN Khalsa College. I have resided in MN since 1998 and have been a business owner since the age of 26. From understanding financial concepts to real estate management, managing employees, and how to promote teamwork, I have done it all. I have great people skills and know how to bring everyone on the same page and work with each other.
3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on**

	its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising). Being a business owner I have a wide range of experience. I have been dealing with banks, city councils, real estate development committees, employee management, and teamwork, and I understand how all these things work. I am a people person and have the skills to keep the atmosphere lively and make everyone work as a team.
4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.** Born and raised in a Gursikh family I was always taught to serve the Sikh community. From doing langar sewa. helping in fundraisers, participating in cultural activities, and donating towards Sikhism causes are a few ways I have served the Sikh community in USA and India.
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** I will be available for my commitment of time to the board.

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Harpreet (Rimpy) Singh

MBBS, MHA



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** I have been associated with Gurdwara and Sangat since 1999 and have been either directly or indirectly involved in activities related to Sikh religion and Punjabi Culture. This includes but is not limited to langar sewa, fundraisers, organizing Sikh community picnics, organizing Turban Tying Booth at IAM, organizing cultural programs, involvement in Gurudwara's real estate planning/operations, working with local and national organizations to promote religion, Punjabi language and culture (details in section 4). I feel the SSM needs young ambitious leaders with experience in strategy, growth, real estate management, and who can collaborate with our sangat and the regional/national organizations and I believe with my experience in all these disciplines I could be valuable for this position. If Sangat provides me an opportunity to serve in the Board position, I will work with the other Board members with the focus on the following: I. Expansion of Gurudwara. 2. Creating an inclusive culture where people regardless of ethnicity, caste, or color are treated with respect, and everyone feels welcomed. 3. Promote transparency to Sangat/General Body of all the Board's activities and plans.
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.**

	I am a foreign-trained Physician with a Master's in Health Care Administration from the University of Minnesota. I started my professional journey in Minnesota as a Researcher at the University of Minnesota where I worked on multiple studies funded by NIH and local industry grants. I was able to publish 7 manuscripts and 35 abstracts in peer-reviewed journals and presented my work at national meetings. After completing my master's degree, I transitioned to the business side of healthcare, and in the last 12 years, I have served in senior and executive leadership roles at private, for-profit, and non-profit healthcare organizations. Currently, I serve as a Chief Administrative Officer for a healthcare organization here in MN. I have extensive experience in strategic planning, growth, financial management, HR management, compliance, leading bigger teams/programs, and collaborating across multiple disciplines.
3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising).** I have extensive experience in strategic planning, financial management, collaborating with local and national organizations, compliance, building professional relationships, and doing fundraisers. I believe all these skills will be helpful to me if I am allowed to serve on the Board of Directors of SSM.
4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.** Being born and raised in a Sikh Family, I have always admired the teachings and learnings of Sikhism. Back in India, I have been involved in many religious and cultural activities at my school and college level and that is not limited to fundraisers. organizing Nagar kirtans, doing langar sewa and other sewa at gurudwaras, etc. As a former Board Member in the Sikh Society of Minnesota, I have a deeper understanding of Gurdwara's operations, opportunities we have in terms of expansion, etc. I have been involved either directly or indirectly in organizing religious programs for the Gurudwara here in Minnesota. I was deeply involved in some of the other work that was associated with Sikhism at the MN State level and that included working with multiple parties to get the following accomplished: • Proclamation signed by Governor Tim Walz as April being the Sikh Heritage Month. •• To get Sikhism included in Schools' curriculum Social Study Standards. ••• To organize a first-ever Sikh Prayer at the Minnesota House of Representatives at the State Capitol.

	I have also collaborated with other local organizations to promote the Sikh religion (a pioneer in setting up the turban-tying activity at India Fest about 10 years ago, which has received recognition year after year by IAM) and Punjabi culture (organized more than 30 cultural events which promoted Punjabi culture and collaboration with other Regional Associations in MN).
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** As a Board Member, I will be fully committed to whatever time it will take to accomplish the responsibilities tied to this role.

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Manjeet Singh

IT Professional - M.S., PMP



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** I have been serving on the SSM board on and off for the last 18 years. I have been helping the current board with the maintenance and upkeep of the Gurdwara building for the comfort of the Sangat. I am also serving as Communications Director on the current board. I have very good relations with all the community members. As a board member, I would listen to and communicate, collaborate, and build consensus amongst the Sangat members for their suggestions related to the betterment of Gurdwara's functioning and important board decisions. I have been serving for the betterment of Gurdwara selflessly, I have no conflict of interest whatsoever. I along with my family, are a regular contributor towards Gurdwara Golak and langar sewa. My focus of interest would be an expansion of the Gurdwara building, extending the kitchen, and restrooms and expansion of entrance rooms. I feel one needs some influence to make impactful changes in the organization. And that is the reason I would like to serve on the board. My relentless service towards Gurdwara and the community will not stop, even if I am not given a chance to serve on the board.
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.**

	I am a well-educated person with a Master's degree. I have been in the computer software industry for more than three decades, consulting many State of Minnesota departments and top organizations of Minnesota. I have been serving on the SSM board and performing sewa in Gurdwara for more than 20 years. I am also President of the Minnesota Punjabi Society that is promoting education, good citizenship, community development, civic commitment, and involvement, and preserving Punjabi Culture, language, sports, and performing arts of the North-Indian state of Punjab among its community members and mainstream Americans in Minnesota and beyond.
3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising).** I have served on the Future 2040 committee in the City of Bloomington. I have good relations with the city of Bloomington officials, which is important for the functioning of any organization in the city. I have organized many events for Gurudwara like religious programs, Gurpurabs, and cultural programs such as Vaisakhi Mela, Lohri, and others. I have been developing and maintaining relationships with vendors for the supplies and maintenance of Gurdwara/SSM. I have raised a significant amount of funds when the existing Gurdwara building was bought. I also keep raising funds for the functioning of the Gurdwara by making announcements every Sunday to the Sangat. My Public relations with every community in Minnesota are very good for promoting good citizenship and community development and supporting each other.
4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.** My Service to the Sikh Community in Minnesota is as follows: - I have served the Sikh community for the last 20 years being a board member and non-board member. I have been helping the current board with the maintenance and upkeep of the Gurdwara building. I am also serving as Communications Director in the current board. I am also President of the Minnesota Punjabi Society that is promoting education, good citizenship, community development, civic commitment, and involvement, and preserving Punjabi Culture and language. I have been organizing religious and cultural programs for our community for more than 20 years. I have represented the Sikh community at IAM-India Festival Day in the Minnesota State Capitol and organized Turban Tying, Chabeel, and youth activities to represent Sikhi and

	Sikh Culture to around 20,000 people who come to attend the India Festival Day. I have very good relations with all the community members and would like to interact with all the Sangat members.
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** I have no concerns about my commitment of time and energy to the service of the SSM board and community at large. For many years, I have been spending around 9-10 hours every week in the service of Gurdwara as a Sewadar/volunteer, for communications with Sangat, outside vendors, and educational institutions, ordering supplies, taking stock of supplies, and organizing supplies as well for the maintenance and upkeep of Gurdwara building.

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Surinder Singh Manak

Business Entrepreneur (Retd.)



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** Community members are requesting me, a senior member of the community & currently the Advisory Committee Member to serve on the SSM Board of Directors as he has a very strong history of actively serving the Gurdwara Sahib in various roles and capacities for over 40 years. I am one of the founding members of the Gurdwara Sahib and as a successful businessman, I bring my expertise in operations, finance, business, real estate, and other relevant fields. I have been part of the growth of the Gurdwara from the beginning when we used to conduct paath at someone's home.
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.** - Successful entrepreneur with expertise in finance, real estate, business, operations, and other area - I am an excellent communicator and like to interact with community members in Gurdwara or outside to help me remain connected with the growing Sikh community in MN - I actively support the community members - new or who needs help -to ensure they get timely help and support. I always want our community to remain vibrant and flourish and am ready to contribute whatever is in my capacity to make it happen.

3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising).** I bring expertise in business, finance, strategic planning, fundraising, real estate, and operations either from my profession or my active involvement in the Gurdwara since its inception 40+ years ago. I am one of the founding members of the Gurdwara, who envisioned the Gurdwara when we used to conduct the Gurdwara congregation at someone's home. I actively contributed to the growth of Fridley Gurdwara, moving to the current location, planning, and conducting Gurpurabs and Kirtan Diwans from time to time.
4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.** - Provided resources such as free food (Langar), and shelter, and employed the community members as and when needed. - Actively involved in the growth story of the Sikh Community and the Sikh Society of MN Gurdwara Sahib from inception. - Planned and conducted celebrations of Gurpurab, Kirtan Diwans, and special religious events regularly. - Actively involved in fundraising efforts in building the Fridley location, and the current Gurdwara. I am looking forward to contributing to the future expansion plans.
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** As a successful retired businessman, I have an ample amount of time and expertise to devote to the Sikh community and the Gurdwara Sahib. I have no problem devoting time to the regular operations of the Gurdwara. I am excited to contribute actively towards the mid-term or long-term expansion plans that would require fundraising, planning, real-estate expertise, collaboration & communication to sangat, strategy, and regular day-to-day management to ensure the execution of the plans toward reality.

Charanjit Singh Channi

Solution Architect – M.S.



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** Dear members of the SSM, I am writing to express my interest in serving our community through the SSM Board. Since 2010, I have had the privilege of contributing to SSM sangat as a Punjabi Language teacher and Gurmat Sangeet instructor, Seva and Kirtan. I am fluent in Hindi, Punjabi, Sanskrit and English. One of the primary challenges facing our community is the growing disconnect between our younger generations and our rich cultural heritage i.e. our languages, Gurbani, and value system. My vision includes implementing programs to enhance our children's fluency in our regional languages, ensuring that the profound wisdom of Gurbani continues to resonate with future generations. Respectfully. Charaniit Singh Channi
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.** Bachelors in Mechanical Engineering, Masters in Information Systems and Technology. I am an Oracle Certified Implementation Professional since 16 years and has been working in the IT industry. I have worked Globally and have expertise in Finance and Supply Chain.
3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising).**

	Public relations, Fund Raising, Accounting, Strategic Planning, Sikhi Outreach, have been part of Interfaith meetings.
4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.** In the past, I have supported multiple Projects in India for Sikligar Vanjara Sikhs. I have headed the Sikh outreach team for the Sikh Society of New Zealand from 2003-2006. I have been president of Sukmani Sahib Seva Society in Chandigarh from 1995-2000.
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** I acknowledge that board service is a true commitment of time and energy. I will accommodate my schedule as needed to accommodate board responsibilities. I will train other members, segregating the job responsibilities and sharing the tasks.

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Harpreet Kaur

Manager, MBA



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** To me, 'A Sikh' is someone who can help themselves and assist others to grow. When it comes to sharing, we don't just share our food-we share Gurbani's wisdom, responsibilities, and compassion. We help others gain new skills and spread kindness. A 'Gurudwara' provides an excellent platform for cultivating leadership skills among our youth. By involving them in small-scale fundraising initiatives, we can foster their personal growth and organizational abilities. I aspire to see the SSM Board actively engaging our young members, recognizing their potential, and valuing their contributions to our community. I would like your support to make this vision a reality. Thank you for your consideration and support. Respectfully. Preet.
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.** I am an MBA Graduate and currently Working as a Manager in USPS. I am active in the Minnesota Sikh community and have plans for our kids to provide them with the environment and skills for learning Gurmat Sangeet. I want to help these kids so that they have something to give to their progeny and keep them connected to their roots.
3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising).**

	Public relations, event planning for Khalsa Camps for Kids, Planning, School, fundraising
4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.** Inviting Raagis and appropriate teachers for Khalsa Camp for our kids. I am a regular attendee of SSM Gurudwara and an active member of the community. We perform Asa Ki Vaar Kirtan and arrange Kids program on every third Sunday.
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** I will prioritize Board duties in my schedule, allocating specific time blocks for meetings and tasks. I'm committed to open communication with the Board, promptly addressing any potential conflicts that may arise.

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Jagdeep Singh

Project Manager - B.S., PMP



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** I am interested in the position on the Board of Directors for the Sikh Society of Minnesota because I believe in the importance of community engagement and cultural preservation. I am passionate about supporting initiatives that promote Sikh values, education, and outreach. By joining the board, I hope to contribute my skills and experience to strengthen our community, foster inclusivity, and ensure that our heritage is celebrated and passed on to future generations. I am committed to collaborating with others to create meaningful programs that benefit both our members and the wider community, especially for children.
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.** Bachelors in Information Technology. Over 20 years of professional experience in leading large teams globally. Expertise in IT Infrastructure domain. I have been certified in the industry recognized certifications like PMP (Project Management Professional).
3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising).** Public relations, planning, and execution of big projects for the improvement and expansion of Gurudwara to make it one of the best in North America.

4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.** 1. Served in SSM for over 13 years. 2. Served in India for multiple Sikh Gurudwaras.
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** I acknowledge that board service is a commitment, and I will accommodate my time by adjusting my schedule as needed.

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Ravinder Singh

IT Architect - Graduate



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** I am interested in a position on the Board of Directors because I am passionate about serving the community and believe that I can contribute positively to the Gurudwara. I aim to bring new ideas and perspectives that can enhance our services and better meet the needs of our community members. Together, I believe we can drive meaningful change and foster a more inclusive environment.
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.** I graduated from Delhi University and have been working as an IT professional since 1999. Throughout my career, I have developed strong problem-solving and project-management skills that can benefit our organization. In addition to my professional background, I have consistently served as a sewadar at local gurdwaras, contributing to various community initiatives and events. This blend of technical expertise and dedication to community service equips me to support the mission of SSM effectively.
3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising).** I bring strong skills in public relations and strategic planning, particularly in organizing community events and camps. My experience in engaging diverse audiences and

	building partnerships will strengthen our Board's efforts to communicate effectively and promote our initiatives. Additionally, my ability to develop and implement strategic plans will help ensure that our organization meets its goals and effectively serves the community. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to SSM's mission and enhance our impact.
4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.** I have actively served the Sikh community by providing voluntary services, including teaching Gatka and participating in various events across Minnesota. My commitment to sharing our culture and traditions has allowed me to engage with community members and promote our values. I strive to be a dependable resource, helping to foster a sense of unity and pride within the Sikh community through these educational and participatory efforts.
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** I can commit 4 to 5 hours each week to Board service and will prioritize my responsibilities to ensure I am consistently available. I understand the importance of this role and am dedicated to managing my time effectively to meet the demands of Board activities. Should any conflicts arise, I am prepared to communicate proactively and find solutions to ensure my continued involvement.

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Simmarjit Singh

Business Owner - Graduate



1.	**Briefly describe why you are interested in a position on the Board of Directors.** Dear Sikh Society of Minnesota Members, I am deeply committed to Sewa, Simran, and my love for the Sangat. The reverence for Guru Granth Sahib Ji is paramount to me. Gurbani's wisdom is the guiding light in our lives. If selected for the SSM board, I will prioritize making the Gurdwara a clean and welcoming place for all. Having served the Sikh Society of Minnesota for 30 years, my active involvement has inspired me to develop initiatives connecting our younger generations with their cultural heritage. I am dedicated to creating engaging programs for our children and young adults. Respectfully, Simarjeet (Harry Singh)
2.	**Briefly describe academic and professional background, and other relevant experience.** I am a Graduate and run my own Shipping business.
3.	**Briefly describe the skills and expertise you bring to SSM that you believe will strengthen our Board and enhance the ability of our organization to deliver on its stated goals. (E.g. public relations, event planning, legal, accounting, real estate, strategic planning, fundraising).** Event Planning, Fundraising, Public relations
4.	**Briefly describe how you have served the Sikh community.**

	I have performed many Anand Karaj ceremonies for the Sikh Society of Minnesota. I have always stood by the Sikh Sangat of Minnesota and have given valuable suggestions. You can find me doing SSM Community Kitchen and Chaur Sahib Seva of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.
5.	**Board service is a true commitment of time and energy. We estimate the Board service could be a commitment of 4-5 hours each week. Do you have any concerns or potential conflicts that may serve as impediments to this time commitment? If so, how will you manage the demands on your time?** If elected to the SSM Board, I will collaborate closely with fellow members. We will distribute tasks efficiently. I recognize that serving on the SSM Board is a significant responsibility, one that I am prepared to undertake with dedication.