



HDF-THANKS SCHOLARSHIP
41
Established in 2019



By Bashir and Tesneem Chaudhary of Augusta, GA

BASHIR AHMAD CHAUDHARY

SCHOLARSHIP

FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF

GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOL # 1 ABBOTTABAD

This scholarship is a tribute to our dedicated teachers, wonderful friends, and a delightful time of my life.

I attended this school from 1961 to 1963, doing my ninth and tenth grades. I was fortunate to get an excellent education and graduate as the top student (with 713 marks) and the fourth position in the NWFP Board examination, an honor and a blessing.

My father had his last posting before retirement at the Army Medical Corps Center.



With our father, just before our move from Rawal Pindi

From left: Rashid Khawar, our father Abdul Rehman, Bashir Ahmad, and Nazir Shams



With my brothers Nazir and Rashid



With brothers and a cousin

I want to share some of my memories.

ABBOTTABAD

I remember Abbottabad to be a charming city. The town was beautiful with lots of parks and outside recreational places. My school was adjacent to a beautiful garden where we used to play cricket. The whole city used to be clean, and the roads were shiny after each rain. The eucalyptus-lined broad roads were so alluring. There were a lot of activities in summer because of the excellent weather. Pakistan hockey team had some matches, and I collected the signatures of most of the players. The people were nice, friendly, and welcoming.



Akram (Iki) and Bholu pahalwan

(My first purchase from my own money was an Agfa Synchron Box camera)

School and Teachers.

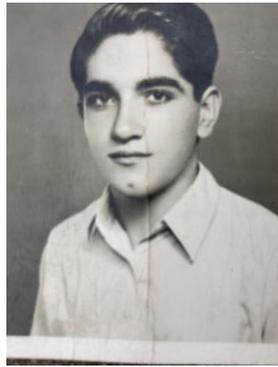
I take pride in being a student at this school, which was aptly considered # 1 in the area. We used to have frequent visits of government officials. One time, the education minister, Begum Feroz Khan Noon, visited the school.

I remember my teachers to be very skilled, kind, and caring. Our sports teacher, Dadan Khan, came to my home with the whole cricket team when I was sick. Our chemistry teacher Afsar Shah was excellent, friendly with the students, and had an ever-present smile. Master Idris, the second headmaster, and Master Khalil were excellent teachers.

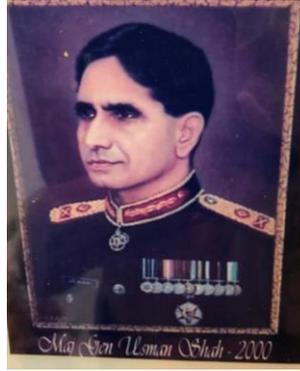
Friends.



MAQSOOD CHOUDARY



FAROOQ BABARAKZAI



USMAN SHAH



M. SALIM

My father was in the army and transferred to a new place every two to three years. Each time, my brothers and I would shed tears about losing our friends, but then we will make new friends in the next city. With each transfer, I had the opportunity to make more friends. Allah gave me many good, and I consider it one of the greatest blessings to have many lifelong friends.

Maqsood Choudary was my classmate in the ninth grade, but his dad was transferred, and he did not finish high school with me. He recently retired as a professor at the University of Texas, St. Antonio, Texas.

My best friends were Farooq Babrakzai, Usman Shah, and (late) Salim and (late) Asad Ullah in the tenth grade.

My friends were good students, and we all competed with each other.

Usman Shah was a studious and high achiever student. We competed for various academic honors. He used to be the first to answer any question whenever a dignitary visited our school. His matric score was 703, and we were the only two to get NWFP Board's high ranking and scholarships. He was determined to go to the army. We used to ride together on a bicycle when going home from school. He had a very decorated career in the military and retired as a major general. Later, he became a pioneer in teaching governance and administration at NUML (National University of Modern Languages) in Islamabad.

Farook Babrakzai was from Abbottabad, but he welcomed us- the army brats with open arms. He invited us to his home many times. After graduation, his family moved to Afghanistan. , He later taught at the Kabul University and later at the University of Hawaii. He has traveled extensively and is a master of multiple languages.

Asad Ullah (late) was a transfer from Burns High School and was good in math.

Salim(late) was an excellent writer, and many of his stories won national competitions. He later worked for a pharmaceutical company.

Cricket.

Our high school had a top-notch cricket team, and I was fortunate to be part of the team. We used to have frequent matches with other schools. We also traveled to different places like Mansehra and Haripur to play cricket matches. I used to feel pride in representing our school, wearing a white uniform during match days, when everybody else was wearing militia uniforms.

I want to share a story about a cricket match. When I read or hear somebody praying for something, I recall this cricket match.

Sometimes, even when you get what you prayed for, you still may end up crying.



The high school cricket team of 1962-63, standing 6th from left, next to our sports coach Dadan Khan.

I have relived this match many times in my dreams and wished that I had a different prayer, and consequently, a different outcome. Now, however, I appreciate the outcome that nudged me to a different path for future studies. My heroes in those days were Fazal Mahmood (the bowler) and Hanif Mohammad (the batsman). The year was 1963, and we were nearing the end of the cricket season. I was vice-captain of the team, a good batsman, but my forte was bowling. Our school cricket team was one of the favorites to win the regional championship and go on to NWFP High School Championship in Peshawar. We had reached the semifinals, and our match was with the Government High School, Mansehra. Our team players were somewhat apprehensive about this match as just a few weeks earlier, our cricket coach, who had worked hard to prepare our team, was transferred to Mansehra high school and was now the opposing team's coach.

We batted first and were all out with 70 runs. I was the opening bowler. The first ball was hit but was caught at right slip (fielder adjacent to wicketkeeper). The second ball went straight to wickets, and the batter was clean bowled. My heart rate was close to supraventricular tachycardia rate, thinking about the possibility of a hat trick (three players out on three consecutive balls). The third ball hit the leg pad of the batter, who, in my view, was clearly standing in front of the wickets. The umpire did not agree. I still think the umpire was biased in favor of the opposing team!

I have had a replay of the following three balls of that over in my dreams many times. The fourth ball resulted in a runout. The fifth ball was hit and caught. The next ball missed the bat and hit the wickets with bails flying high. At that moment, the roar of shouting and clapping from my schoolmates was loud- loud enough to break any record of noise at Company Bagh playground.

The feeling I had at that time has remained unmatched ever since. **FIVE OUTS WITH A HAT TRICK-MY PRAYER HAD BEEN ANSWERED.** I got what I had prayed for!

The rest of the game did no go well for us, and we lost by four runs. I sobbed at the end. Master Idrees (now coach of the other team) hugged me and told me that my first over was the best he had ever seen. Again, and again he told me, "It is just a game."



I received the "1963 Cricketer of the Year" award. Our chemistry teacher Afsar Shah is at the extreme left.



I remember this game as if it happened just yesterday. Had we won that game, I wonder if I would have recalled all the details so well. My memory of the rest of our cricket matches is hazy and sporadic.

I do not know; was that my prayer or just happenstance? Praying for winning our cricket matches was what most of my prayers used to be in those days. My prayer now is concise, and I have not changed this payer despite being told to add this or that.

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

"Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire."

~ Surah Baqrah 2:201

To me, this prayer takes care of all my needs and desires. Asking for just one particular desire makes me nervous. I ask for everything because my lord can bestow.

تو سہی ناداں چند کلیوں پر قناعت کر گیا
ورنہ ٹکشن میں علاج تنگی داماں بھی ہے

Scouting, First Aid, Rifle Drills

Our school had many extracurricular activities, and I was a part of quite a few of these opportunities.

Our school's scouting team represented our region at the state competition in Peshawar. We stayed in one of the hostels and still remember the bedbug bites.



Our '**First Aid**' team won the championship competition in Peshawar, and we stayed at the Government High School #2's hostel.

Our "**Rifles Drills**" team won the first position in the Hazara District.

THANK YOU, MY SCHOOL, MY BELOVED AND RESPECTED TEACHERS, AND ALL THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE WHO MADE THAT PERIOD A MAGICAL ONE.

Bashir Ahmad Chaudhary retired as Emeritus Professor of Medicine from the Medical College of Georgia, Augusta, Georgia.

He is married to Tesneem, and they have two children, Rabea and Omar, and four grandchildren: Nylah, Faiz, Jenna, and Tayyib.

This scholarship will award the three top students in the 9th and the 10th classes of this school each year. The top students from my class of 1963 are on this webpage.

شکوہِ ظلمتِ شب سے تو کہیں ہنتر تھا
اپنے حصے کی کوئی شمع جلاتے جاتے

Our previous HDF scholarships



1, 2, 3, 6, 21, 31