

The 25th Annual Parents' Day Alliance of Virginia honored Parents' of the Year

William Selig
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Manassas, VA -- The 25th Annual Parents' Day Alliance of Virginia honored Bishop and Mrs. Tyrone and Valarie Allen (Herndon) and Mr. and Mrs. Ravi and Shashi Chopra (Fairfax Station) as "Virginia Parents' of the Year, 2018 at a ceremony held at the VFW Post 7589 in Manassas on Saturday, July 14. The event featured over 40 local families, friends, community leaders, ministers, teachers, students, and, of course, parents.

In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Ram P. Khanal and Tirtha K. Paudel (Winchester) were given a certificate of recognition for their "Excellence in Parenting." These couples were nominated and selected because of their integrity and how they have influenced the lives of their children and the community.

The program began with past VFW Post Commander Pete MacLeod leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by an invocation offered by Rev. Ernest Patton of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. VFW Junior Vice Commander Wayne Moore extended a few words of welcome.

Emcee Dr. William Selig introduced Mr. Thomas McDevitt, chairman, UPF-USA who gave a brief history of Parents' Day going back to 1994 when it was created as an annual federal holiday (the fourth Sunday of July) to honor fathers and mothers. The holiday was enacted with bipartisan leadership and strong support in Congress, primarily through the efforts of former Rep. Dan Burton, Indiana Republican and Rep. Floyd H. Flake, New York Democrat. President Bill Clinton signed it into law on Oct. 14, 1994.

Mrs. Barbara Moseley-Marks, Founder/Coordinator, Virginia Parents' Day Alliance introduced the "Excellence in Parenting" award to Ram P. Khanal and Tirtha K. Paudel. Born in Nepal, they are highly involved in spreading and educating the public about the Nepali culture. Mr. Khanal runs a Nepali news

website (<http://www.nepalmother.com>). In his acceptance remarks, he expressed gratitude to UPF-USA. "We are always trying to be good parents. We believe that parents have the power to shape and mold kids in becoming good human beings."

Then the recipients of the Parents' of the Year were recognized: Bishop Allen and his wife, Valarie, pastors of the Christ Star Church of God in Dulles, VA. Tyrone and Valarie are very involved in the community through their ministry and community organizations including Mobile Hope, Northern Virginia Unite, Loudoun Awakening and Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter. The Allens were recommended for the honor by the Bishop's father, Apostle John and his wife, Pastor Gloria Allen of the Greater Pentecostal Temple of Christ in Fairfax. In accepting the honor, First Lady Valarie Allen said, "I'm honored to receive this award. Now that the children are all grown up, at this point in my life, it's good to see the fruit of one's labor."

Then to share the Parents' of the Year award were Ravi and Shashi Chopra of Winchester, who are also extremely active in their community, including as Founders of the Gandhi Global Family, which promotes Gandhian ideology of peace and harmony, and the Evergreen Senior Group. In the 1980s, after emigrating from India, the Chopras along with 5 other families organized the first Hindu Temple in the Virginia area. Today, the Rajdhani Mandir in Chantilly is the largest temple in Virginia and serves more than 5000 Hindu families. The Chopras were joined on the stage by Amar Nath Gupta, head priest of the Hindu Capital Temple, who blew into a sacred conch-shell and gave his blessings to the couple. Alok Srivastava, who praised the couple for their devotion to the Hindu faith and Indian culture.

Ambassadors for Peace were appointed by Mrs. Moseley-Marks. The honorees included: Mr. Pete MacLeod, Past Post Commander; Mr. Ronald Knowles, Post Chaplain, and Chairman of the Youth Committee and Scout Leader; and Mr. Rick Raskin, Post Quartermaster and State Senior Vice Commander. Mr. Raskin said, "Despite what the media says, this country is in good shape. There is a patriotic spirit among young and old. Everything is going to be okay."

Participants were invited to participate in a Blessing Toast for Marriage and Family. Led by Rev. Werner Seubert of the Northern Virginia Family Church, the participants were invited to stand, face their spouses and with grateful hearts toast to the sanctity of marriage and the blessings of the Creator upon our families and nation. The 25th Parents' Day celebration was co-sponsored by the Virginia chapters of the Universal Peace Federation, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, American Clergy Leadership Conference and Pure Style, Inc.

Group photos were taken with the honorees and all the participants. Everyone enjoyed the delicious lunch and celebratory cake. Laughter and good will filled the room as everyone expressed gratitude for the occasion that brought together such a diverse group.