

Manuchehr Derakhshani

1932-2025

Dr. Manuchehr Derakhshani served for many years on the Board of Haj Mehdi Arjmand Memorial Fund and was instrumental in coordinating and arranging the Irfan Colloquia held at Louhelen and Bosch Baha'í Schools.

Manuchehr Derakhshani was born on the 15th of February 1932 in Tehran, Iran, to Farahangiz Iman and Habibu'lláh Derakhshani. From a very young age, he witnessed his parents' devotion to the Faith and their willingness to obey the directives of the Beloved Guardian. In 1942, the family moved to Aligúdarz to fulfill a goal of the Forty-Five Month Plan. Later, after some years back in Tehran, they pioneered to Imámzadih Qásim, a suburb of Tehran, to help form the Local Spiritual Assembly.

As a young man he studied English literature and spent some time in Edinburgh, Scotland where he studied at the university in 1951-52. In 1958, responding to the Guardian's call for pioneers during the 10-Year Crusade, he moved with his wife, Mahvash Ala'i, and daughter to Morocco. After the passing of his wife Mahvash in 1966, he decided to continue his education in the United States. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education in 1971, a Master's Degree in Psychology in 1973, and a Ph.D in Educational Psychology in 1976.

In 1973 he married Rezvan Mohragi. Together, they decided to move back to Iran, where he worked as Research and Development Director at the National Institute of Psychology as well as Professor at various universities. Plans to remain in Iran were disrupted by the revolution in 1979. They were forced to return to the United States. Within a few months of his arrival, he was

called by the National Spiritual Assembly to start the office of Persian American Affairs to help Iranian refugees integrate into the American community. The office was also charged eventually with assisting the displaced families and individuals through all the administrative and emotional hurdles of refugee resettlement. Manuchehr Derakhshani, lovingly called Dr. D. by his staff and others around the National Center, served as Director of the Office for the next 28 years. He devoted long hours in service of the friends who had been displaced because of their faith during a particularly difficult time of the Iranian Baha'is.

In addition to his work at the National Baha'í Center, Dr. Derakhshani served as liaison for the Universal House of Justice with the Persian Literature Review Panel for 35 years, continuing this work beyond his retirement. His erudition in the sacred writings of the Faith as well as his excellent mastery of Arabic, Persian, and English made him a remarkable asset to the Review Panel. These same skills were extremely valuable in the many boards of directors of scholarly organizations on which he served, such as the Association of Friends of Persian Culture, the Wilmette Institute, and the Irfan Colloquium among others.

Manuchehr Derakhshani dedicated his life to serving the Baha'í Faith in myriad ways, as a pioneer, as a scholarly resource, as an administrator, and as a mediator and councilor. After his passing, many people commented on his humility, generosity, kindness, courtesy, and humor.

