

## **Meet the Colorado Dragon Boat Festival's 2008 Honorary Chair- Professor Ved P. Nanda**

An advocate for world peace and human rights, a former delegate to the World Federation of the United Nations Association and the teacher of Cabinet members, Professor Ved P. Nanda provides inspiration to our community and to the world!

**Q: Where are you from originally and how did you come to reside in Colorado? How long have you lived here?**

**A:** I was born in New Delhi, India. I moved to the states to study law at the University of Chicago, followed by Northwestern and then Yale. From Yale, I was sent as an intern to the United Nations and later worked in the Legal Department. I decided to start teaching and had seven offers from different universities. (Teaching was a very different market then. Now it is much more competitive!). Madeline Albright's father was the dean of international studies at the University of Denver at the time, and I thought it would be a great opportunity to work with him in the wonderful setting of Colorado. I decided to come here for one year. Forty years later, I'm still here!

**Q: When did your passion for the legal profession begin and how did you specifically get in to international law?**

**A:** Growing up in India, I read about Abraham Lincoln and others who had been lawyers and made an impact on society all over the world. The horribly violent aftermath of the partition of Pakistan from India took place during that time and had a life-altering impact on me. With world peace and human rights being so important to me, international law became my passion. This happened primarily at Yale when I was influenced by a great teacher,, Myres McDougal. He was so good with his students and I decided that if I was going to teach, I would have the same type of relationship with my students.

**Q: You formerly served as the U.S. delegate to the World Federation of the United Nations Associations in Geneva, and you now serve on the National Council of the UN Association. What were/are some of your experiences when you worked as a delegate and now on the Council?**

**A:** Although people criticize the UN, I feel very strongly that it's one central hope for the world where countries can come together and communicate. A conglomeration of 192 countries, the UN can't function unless all agree. It's an important forum for international challenges, where problems can be sorted out and solutions can be found. The U.S. can't solve the world's problems; no one country or group can address international problems that a world body can. The U.S. must be active or the UN loses its respect and legitimacy. I hope that the U.S., as the only remaining world superpower, can use its power through this forum in a skillful way and can play a leading role in solving the world's enormous problems.

**Q: You received a founding gift from University of Denver alumni Doug and Mary Scrivner to launch the Ved Nanda Center for International and Comparative Law at DU. Tell us a bit more about this project and your plans for the first year of programming in 2008.**

**A:** I'm very proud to say that Doug was a student of mine who founded the Center in my name. Beginning last fall, several distinguished jurists and law professors from all over the world, including those in the U.S. Department of State and the United Nations have been invited to speak and share their experiences and their wisdom with our students and the community. Over the coming years, many great speakers will be brought in for conferences, publications and as fellows for the Center. This will be a center on the cutting edge of international law that will bring people together to make a contribution to society and deal with issues pertaining to human survival.

**Q: What do you find most rewarding about being a professor of international legal studies and in general?**

**A:** Even if you touch one life, it's important. I have taught such brilliant, wonderful minds. When they go on to do great things, you love them dearly! I have been in the unique position to have had three of current President Bush's cabinet members (including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice) as my students and we have all stayed in touch! I have been in the company of very bright minds; many who have had and will have great impact on this country and the world community. As a teacher, I also derive great pleasure from thinking, reflecting and writing. (I enjoy writing a column for *The Denver Post* on current international topics.)

**Q: If you could communicate one thing to the youth of the Asian Pacific American community, what would that be?**

**A:** Be proud of your culture, but remember that you are still in this country (the U.S.), and that you are a part of this wonderful community. Contribute from the basis of your unique heritage, nurture and remember your roots, and know that you play an important role both in this country and in the international community.

**Q: As a Distinguished Visiting Professor and Scholar, where have you traveled? What have some of your experiences been at various universities and in these countries?**

**A:** I have taught all over the U.S. and abroad. I'm teaching this summer in Brussels, Luxembourg, Salzburg, Vienna and Montreal. I go back to India twice a year on average to teach and give lectures at the University of Delhi and for the Indian Society of International Law. I also enjoy visiting my sisters and brother who still live there. Some of the other places I've taught include England, Ireland, Beijing, Manila and several other places throughout Asia. I especially enjoy my frequent teaching during summers in Honolulu, where the Asian community is especially present in a U.S. city!

**Q: Have you attended the Colorado Dragon Boat Festival in the past? If so, what is your favorite aspect of the Festival? What do you feel the CDBF brings to the Denver community?**

**A:** I have been to the CDBF a number of times and I'm deeply honored to have been asked to work with the Festival this year. I'm very pleased with the way my friends are running the CDBF and can't pick out one part that's my favorite! It has brought together the whole Colorado Asian Pacific American community to create awareness for these wonderfully diverse cultures. In this country, most immigrants came from a European setting, such as the Irish, Italians and Germans. People of Asian Pacific descent who have made this country their home need to make an imprint in to the country's literature and culture. This process is gradually evolving, and I hope annual events like the CDBF continue to help it move at a more rapid pace. That movement is important.

**Q: Would you like to share anything else about your professional or personal life?**

**A:** I'm married to a lawyer; a Colorado gal who I met in Denver shortly after I moved here. She recently came out of retirement and is primarily working on her own in criminal appeals. We have a daughter, whom I'm proud to say is following in our footsteps and going to law school in the fall. She is working this spring and summer for a human rights firm in Honolulu.