

Harjinder (Helen) Kaur and Harbanse (Herb) Singh Doman

Harjinder (Helen) Kaur Lashman was born at the King's Daughters Hospital in Duncan in the late 1930's. Her father Lashman Singh Parhar first came to Canada in the year 1907 from the village of Karnala. Lashman Singh lived and worked in Vancouver for a few years before moving to Vancouver Island for more work in the lumber mills. In 1928, Lashman Singh returned to India and married Maha Kaur. Maha Kaur arrived in Canada in 1929 and joined her husband Lashman Singh in the small community of Paldi.

The Lashman family moved to Duncan in 1948 where Helen attended high school. She was not able to complete her post-secondary education because there was no university or college on the island at the time. She recalls that during the time, there were very few Indo Canadians in her school. As such there also used to be discrimination sometimes when kids in the high schools wouldn't talk to them or called them 'Hindoos.' Helen also remembers a time when her sister tried to get a job at a local store but was refused because she was Indo Canadian. After high school, Helen obtained a job at the Duncan Municipality. She really enjoyed it there and got along with everyone.

Harbanse (Herb) Singh Doman was also born at the King's Daughters Hospital in Duncan on April 9, 1932. His father, Attar Doman Singh arrived to Canada in 1905 with a vision of establishing a successful lumber company on Vancouver Island. However he passed away when Herb was at the young age of 12 years old. From there, Herb quit school and started delivering newspapers and selling magazine subscriptions. When he was 16, he bought a truck and started to deliver sawdust to earn money. When the demand from his customers grew, Herb along with his brothers, founded the Doman Lumber Company in 1953.

Herb and Helen Doman were wedded in 1955. Their families had known each other for a long time and were close friends. While growing up, they had both lived in Paldi and in Duncan. Herb's family lived on one side of Lashman Avenue in Duncan and Helen's family on the other. An interesting fact that Helen explains is how their surnames changed from the Indian ones to their father's first names. She explains that while the fathers were working in the mills, there were no nurses in Paldi. The mother would be taken in a taxi to the hospital in Duncan and since they did not know much English, when asked "what is your name" they would reply "Lashman Singh" or "Doman Singh." So the names were written down as baby Lashman and baby Doman. Hence, the father's name became the family surname.

In 1955, Herb incorporated his lumber company to 'Doman's Lumber and Transport Ltd.' Herb and Helen had four children: daughters Darcia, Sherry, Verinda, and son, Jaspaul (Rick). Helen explains how Herb was always busy traveling to places such as China, Japan, and India because of his business and involvement in the Social Credit party of B.C. Therefore, Helen would stay home and take care of the children. Helen also started to occupy herself by becoming more involved in community events and later began volunteering at the Duncan Hospital. She recalls

being the only Indo Canadian at her age who was involved with things politically such as the community and municipality.

Helen remembers dressing up a lot during those days and wearing high heels. She had a very modern look and when she went to town, people would ask her if she was Mrs. Doman based on assumption. Herb Doman was very well known all over Vancouver Island at that time. Helen also mentions how at one point, Herb was offered the position for Lieutenant Governor of B.C. but he declined it because his children were too young and he had to run the mill.

On July 25, 2007, Herb Doman passed away leaving behind a great legacy. He was known for his loyalty to his community, family and friends. Herb was known to care for his employees and always provided them with work no matter what. He created over four thousand jobs for people and contributed greatly to Vancouver Island. His empire consisted of nine sawmills, two pulp mills, two million acres of timberland and close to \$1 billion a year in sales. Even with a small education, Herb Doman was a very smart businessman. He always believed in creating jobs for people close to home and created much employment for workers in the Cowichan Valley. Herb Doman's legacy and contributions continue to be remembered to this day and will never be forgotten.