



Veejaybhai Chimanbhai Patel



Veejay Patel was born in Belgrave, Leicester. His parents settled in Leicester in the mid 1950's. It is fitting that he has represented the Belgrave ward in which is the area he grew up in, located at the heart of Leicester's 'Golden Mile'. Veejaybhai has been elected six times, each time with an overwhelming majority.

Veejaybhai became the first person of Asian Origin to become Leader of a Unitary Authority (Leicester City) in the United Kingdom.

At the young age of 23 he set up his own business providing training services and business consultancy with his wife Varsha. The office was located on Melton Road in the heart of Belgrave. Today, the company represents one of the most prominent and successful organisations delivering Welfare to Work initiatives to the employability sector.

Veejaybhai's parents came to work in Britain's factories and foundries at a time when the country desperately needed workers from its former colonies to regenerate its post war economy.

"Leaving behind their loved ones in India, our parents made their way separately across the ocean with little or no money and no idea how their future may plan out and forms of communication solely by Air letters and that is if they could afford it. Eventually living in small shared bedrooms and extremely damp and cold conditions they sought any employment to



make ends meet. For my mum, it was routine, work, home, cooking and cleaning and for my dad it was working day and night in some of the most dire conditions and at home he spent many hours daily helping others complete relevant forms. He taught us to help others and this remains our philosophy. Our dad was never one to say no, he was humble and content and so proud of his children and grandchildren. A great individual, great values and admired by everyone. A fantastic sense of humour and easily related to the younger generation. The respect he earned is unbelievable and makes us extremely proud to have been incredibly fortunate in life to call him Dad. This means more to us than anything, there are no words to describe the admiration we have for Mum and Dad.”



“At the heart of everything our parents did for us whilst growing up, they maintained strong family ties, respect for one another and a determination to make whatever sacrifices were necessary to better their children’s futures.”

Veejaybhai’s two children were very close to their grandad and remain very close with their grandmother. They have grown up with the values



that they gave their own children, helping others and working hard are key themes. The hard work and sacrifices of their grandparents has provided the opportunities of education and lifestyle opportunities that were unimaginable in the 50's and 60's. As grounded individuals, the ethos of our heritage remains the same, 'work hard, do well and give back to those less fortunate'



Over the years he has achieved many accolades and remains an approachable member of our Samaj on a wide range of subjects. These include:

- Numerous roles and responsibilities since first becoming the elected councillor for Belgrave in 1994, then Deputy Leader and eventually Leader and Finance Chief.
- Veejay has received several annual and lifetime achievement awards and switched the Diwali lights on two occasions.

Veejaybhai remains committed to social value and has recently authored a government document on Workforce Diversity.