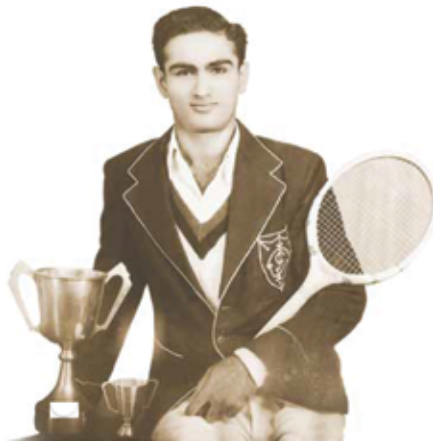


PROLOGUE by Aasif Karim



Yusuf Karim
1935-2009



*H*ow does one define heroism? Is it made of great material wealth? Is it made of great political power? Is it made of great fame of whatever calling?

Yusuf Karim's life is an enduring example that heroism is none of all these. Heroism is much simpler. No sound of trumpets nor any sight of fireworks for this great hero! Humble, generous, kind, honest fair and charitable are only a few words to describe Yusuf Karim. These virtues for him represent boundless wealth. He is the best role model and these qualities are the greatest gift a father can pass on to his son.

It was in the Spring of 1937, that a dhow left the Indian sub-continent powered by the seasonal Monsoon winds. Its destination was a 1000 year-old East African city known as Mombasa in Kenya. It is famous to travelers throughout the centuries for its sheltered harbour, warm climate and hospitable people. Of course, these fine attributes also attracted Arab, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish sea-farers who fought hard to control this beautiful port, giving rise to its Swahili name Mvita, which means a place of war. But the passengers in this particular dhow were not part of a naval armada on a mission of conquest. They were simple, hopeful people looking beyond their shores for a better life.

A two year-old boy sailed in this dhow. His name was Yusuf Karim.

He was born of truly humble origins. He was part of a large family that did not always pull in the same direction. Beginning with that tempestuous voyage across the Indian Ocean, Yusuf Karim's early years were rough and there was almost no respite from the desperate need to keep his head above the water all the time. Out of this adversity, came a great man of outstanding character. Nearly a 100 years have passed since that dhow landed in Mombasa.

This little boy grew into a strong, disciplined young man. He was determined to make a success out of his and his family's life. Yusuf made a substantial impact in sports by playing both locally and nationally three major sports. These were tennis, cricket and volleyball.

For 25 continuous years, he also ruled the tennis courts of Kenya. This is the highest achievement any sportsman can dream of, but for Yusuf Karim, this was no dream, it was a reality. Although struggling to overcome economic challenges, communal, racial and political discrimination, he worked his way to the top, proving to himself and others around him, that hard work and determination really pays off in the end.

More than two generations later, a lot of water has passed under the bridge, yet since embarking on this one-way trip from the Indian sub-continent to Mombasa, they have never looked back with any regrets. The flag of their new home they proudly call Kenya, still flies high. Something unimaginable to him in 1937.

The work goes on. In fact, it has only just seriously begun. Our beautiful homeland has so much to offer as a formidable sporting nation. We can all rise to the challenge of making it even greater.

Yusuf Karim is no longer amongst us and every single day, his family, his children and grandchildren try to ensure that the struggle and hard work has been fruitful and rewarding.

This book takes a look back at the path which has had its occasional hardships and downfalls. It would not have been possible to reach this far without the inspiration of Yusuf Karim and I could think of no better way to begin this book to reflect and share his powerful, yet humble life.

Above all I am immensely proud that this is the man I called -FATHER



Aasif Karim

Aasif Karim
15th December 2012

