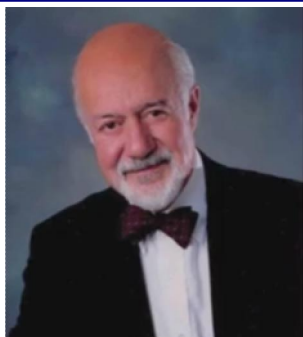


## In Memoriam

**Professor Mohsen Ziai;  
A Pediatrician with Many Gifts  
(July 29, 1927- March 27, 2013)****Elaheh Malakan Rad, MD; Ali Rabbani, MD**Department of Pediatrics, Tehran university of Medical Sciences,  
Tehran, Iran

*Iranian Journal of Pediatrics* lost a famous Editorial Board member and the Iranian medical community lost a leader on 27th March 2013, with the death of Prof. Mohsen Ziai, at age 86. Prof. Ziai was highly respected and widely regarded as a giant in pediatrics, not only in Iran, but in the U.S. as well. Numerous textbooks teach pediatrics but no book is written on how to become a noble, dedicated and superb pediatrician. However, the life story of Prof. Ziai, illustrates how a young man from Khorasan, Iran, traveled to the U.S. soon after World War II, received a great medical education, returned home to practice and teach medicine, and ended up with a highly distinguished career in pediatrics .

**Education and Achievements**

Prof. Ziai was a world-renowned pediatrician with specialty in infectious diseases. He was born in Torbat Haydariyeh, Iran, in 1927, to the seventh generation of physicians. At the age of five, he moved to Mashhad with his family. After the death of his father, his family moved to Tehran to live with his grandfather where he studied at the prestigious Alborz High School. Upon graduation from Alborz high-school, despite being accepted in Tehran University Medical School, he chose to go abroad to study medicine. In 1946, he traveled by ship to the United States and two years later, he graduated from Davis and Elkins college in West Virginia.

Later, he recalled memory of the dean of the college, Dr. Talbot, on the last days before starting his study at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

In 1952, he graduated from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine as he had dreamed since he was a young man. After pediatric residency at Harvard's

prestigious Boston Children's Hospital, under the tutelage of Dr Charles Janeway, he went to Shiraz as Chairman of Pediatrics Department at the newly founded Namazi Hospital .

In 1959, he married Nahid Gharib, the oldest daughter of the late Prof. Mohammad Gharib and the sister of Prof. Hossein Gharib, a famous endocrinologist at the Mayo Clinic. During his tenure at Namazi hospital from 1955 through 1967, he helped modernize undergraduate and graduate medical education in Iran. In 1965, he returned to the United States as Associate Prof. of Pediatrics and Director of Pediatric Ambulatory Services at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.

After two years, he returned home to become Chancellor of Mashhad University. Then, in 1969 he was appointed Dean, University of Tehran Medical School, and soon thereafter, installed as the Medical Director of former Reza Pahlavi Medical Center and Deputy Director of Imperial Organization for Social Services, a position he held until his final departure from Iran in 1977 .

In these years, he visited China and witnessed firsthand "the barefoot doctors in action project". This visit triggered a novel idea in his always-visionary mind to establish a health network in Iran to serve the underserved rural population in the villages. He himself has said in this regard:

*"We were really astonished by some of the things these so-called barefoot doctors were doing and some young people with little education were able to do".* Following this visit he established the very earliest nidus of health care houses in Iran. Arguably, this project was his greatest contribution to Iranian medicine.

In 1977, at the age of 50, he was appointed as the Chairman of Pediatrics Department at the Rochester General Hospital in Rochester, New York. In 1982, he relocated to Virginia and served as Chairman of Pediatrics Department at Inova Fairfax Hospital for 17 years, until his retirement in 1999, at the age of 72. His contributions and accomplishments at Fairfax Hospital were many, including establishment of the first and only PICU in Northern Virginia, the opening of the Women's and Children's Building, the inception of the Inova Pediatric Center, the initiation of the pediatric cardiac surgery program, and establishment of a pediatric residency program. In recognition of his outstanding contributions, a large portrait of him is installed in the lobby of the hospital.

He received many awards and honors during his life. He authored or co-authored numerous articles and many books. He attended several annual International Congresses of Pediatrics in Iran, and conducted lectures and seminars so helpful to our students and younger colleagues.

He passed away at home in Virginia surrounded by his family and friends. He is survived by his wife,

Nahid, 4 daughters, 10 grandchildren, and 2 sisters.

### Outstanding Character

Dr. George Dover, the Chairman of Pediatrics Department at Johns Hopkins Medical School, as well as others, have described him as a visionary pediatrician, teacher of teachers, gentle and tenacious mentor, untiring advocate for world's children, consummate pediatrician, profoundly kind and compassionate human being, brilliant scientist, beloved educator, ardent proponent of international training in pediatrics, expander of the professional horizons of future pediatricians, a true product of and a credit to Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the Harriet Lane training program. He was a pediatrician who treated the individual with the disease rather than the disease itself. As Sir William Osler has said:

*"The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease."*

### Memories by Friends and Colleagues

Prof. Assadi, an Iranian physician who worked and lives in the US, reports the following memory from him:

*"I have known Prof. Mohsen Ziai since September 1977 when he delivered Grand Rounds on "Tuberculosis in Iran", as the Dean of Tehran College of Health Sciences, at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia where I had began my pediatric nephrology training a few months earlier. Following his talk, I was honored to serve as his tour guide to show him the hospital physical plant and having a private lunch with him. At the lunch break, he said to me "Always have your bags packed. You never know where life's journey is going to take you." He continued saying that, I have packed some more tangible items in my bag. Symbolic items, really, that represents my top priorities for the years ahead. And now, I want to share these items and priorities with you. Let me start with my stethoscope. I'm carrying it to serve as a constant reminder of my responsibility to the patients I see and to all children everywhere. As a physician I look forward to standing up for our children and I will be continuing on your voice and your actions to help me. I am also carrying in my bag the code of ethics. A physician shall be dedicated to providing competent medical service with compassion and respect for human dignity. A physician shall deal honestly with patients and colleagues. A physician shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to seek changes for the best interests of the patient. A physician shall continue to study, apply advance scientific knowledge. I am proud of the way I responded to these codes. Ethics and professionalism gave us the solid foundation - the credibility and respect - needed to achieve my responsibilities as a physician and an educator. I couldn't disagree with what he had said to me. I tried to follow his footsteps and have been in close contact with him ever since. We published 2 original articles in Pediatric Research, and attended International Pediatric Congress in Tehran in two memorable occasions".*

Dr. Hadi Mohseni, assistant professor in pediatric intensive care unit of SickKids Hospital in Toronto, Canada, describes the following:

*"Professor Ziai was a consummate clinician, teacher and mentor who directly or indirectly touched lives and carriers of countless young patients and physicians. I met Dr. Ziai in person only once and had a few phone conversations and mail correspondences with him. What I can say about Dr Ziai is that he was a very kind man who despite all his fame, busy schedule and responsibilities was always able to find time to help his fellow Iranians who were looking for further training in the States. He had a beautiful Farsi handwriting; probably the most beautiful handwriting for any doctor I have known. Professor Ziai considered two legendary paediatricians, Dr. Mohammad Gharib and Dr. Charles Janeway as his greatest mentors and he followed their ways in medicine and in humanity".*

Professor Hossein Gharib (MD, MACP, Rochester, Minnesota), his brother-in-law, writes in the National Funeral Home Guest Book: *"Mohsen Ziai was like a brother, and my best friend, confident & colleague since he married my sister, Nahid, some 50 years ago. We shared similar medical, political and social visions. I shall miss him greatly".*

### Legacy

Our famous poet, Sa'adi, so rightly said in his book Golestan several hundred years ago:

*"The man with good name never dies; he dies whose name is not remembered well."*

The Mohsen Ziai Pediatric Conference will be held by Inova's Children's Hospital and National Children's Center in Virginia, November 2013, as it was also held in 2012 during his life.

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Prof. Ziai is receiving the Samuel Asper Award at Hopkins

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