



Meet **DR. KHAN**

By Scott Oakley | Photo by Lori Buda, Wren PhotoStudio

The riches of our community are in the people that make us who we are.

We enjoy world class experts in many areas of life from academic to professional, athletic expertise to artist excellence. As we've come to know Shah-Naz Hayat Khan M.D., FRCSC, F.A.A.N.S, it became clear that it was important to share her story.

"I grew up in Pakistan", she said. "I am forever grateful to my parents who provided me with the best education and instilled values that have held me in good stead. I came to the USA to get the best available training and had every intention of returning home."

"Somehow, over the years, the USA became home! I started out my training at Sinai Hospital Detroit, then went to New York Uni-

versity (NYU) for a neurosurgery fellowship and then the University of Connecticut for sub-specialization in Neurotrauma."

"Subsequently, I went off to Saskatchewan, Canada where I did bench research in stroke with a world-famous stroke neurologist, Dr. A. Shuaib, and a neurosurgery residency under the chairmanship of Dr. R. Griebel. I rounded off my training by a cerebrovascular and endovascular fellowship at Mayfield Clinic/University of Cincinnati where Dr. A. Ringer was my mentor. Eventually, I landed right back here in Michigan!"

When we asked about how she spent her time away from her practice she smiled as she told us, "I enjoy road bicycling and hiking. I try to practice what I preach; I am always looking for

opportunities to exercise. When possible, I do my reading and notes on a treadmill or stationary bike. On occasions when I am out of town at a conference, I try to attend a classical music concert or an opera."

"I also enjoy writing and have contributed to medical journals, written a book and textbook chapters. Sometimes, I wax lyrical on general interest topics!"

"I have lived in Highgrove Court since 2017, it is serene and away from the hustle and bustle. It is a great, friendly and safe neighborhood. There are some fantastic individuals here who volunteer their time to make things run smoothly for everyone. My neighbors are unintrusive, friendly and very kind."

**Dr. Khan, please tell us about your practice: Institute of General and Endovascular Neurosurgery (IGEN).**

"A Doctor and Neurosurgeon, is what I wanted to be since childhood. So, I just pursued my passion."

"We provide advanced, high-end neurosurgical care with techniques and standards that match academic centers. This includes treatment of various forms of strokes, aneurysms, neurotrauma including head injuries, and General neurosurgery including spine disorders such as, disc herniations and spine fractures."

Dr. Khan is the first and only neurosurgeon in this area who subspecializes in the fields of cerebrovascular and endovascular neurosurgery as well as, neurotrauma.

She added, "After various academic and private positions across the US, I started my own practice here in 2014. We chose the location of our office, ensuring it will be easily accessible to all patients."

**What's the philosophy behind your business?**

"Excellence, Ethics and Integrity."

"I am very proud of the traditions of my profession and uphold them steadfastly. Consequently, a patient is treated the same way or better than how I would want my own family treated. I recommend what I believe is the best for the patient and in his/her interest. I do surgery when it is the better option, and do not subject patients to unnecessary procedures."

"I also do not subscribe to marketing fads. Consequently, my 'patients' remain my 'patients', are treated respectfully and with courtesy. I do not couch that relationship in terms such as "clients", "guests", "customers" etc. Nor do I call my "practice" a "business". If we remain true to the roots of our profession, the rest takes care of itself."

"It is also important to pay it forward. Many outstanding individuals took the time to teach and train me, enabling me to do what I do. So, I try to repay that debt by sharing my experience and knowledge with residents whenever, the opportunity arises. We also provide opportunities to those embarking in other facets of healthcare. My office staff regularly trains students such as, medical assistant trainees, ensuring their time is well spent and they acquire skills that will enable them to succeed in their careers."

**Dr. Khan, what is your biggest inspiration in life or in your job? What do you enjoy most about your work?**

"The words of my grandmother have stayed with me. While I was a medical student, she spontaneously advised, 'Always, be kind to your patients'. At the time, I did not understand why she

said it, since I thought I was! However, progressing through life, I better understood. We go through stages when we can become cynical, or disappointed, or have patients who are "difficult". The advice was particularly for those times. Our profession demands that we always place patients first."

"From my parents, I've learned that one succeeds if one perseveres, the importance of having fun, being courteous, doing stuff well and with style."

"I enjoy all aspects of neurosurgical care. It is exhilarating when one is operating with complete focus, such that one forgets time and, the surroundings almost cease to exist. There is just the elegant anatomy that needs to be treated with finesse, the steps of the procedure and, the disease removed with none or the least insult to normal tissue."

"I also enjoy using the latest technology to do minimally invasive procedures with technical dexterity. These procedures previously required general anesthesia and major surgeries. Now, with the patient awake or mildly sedated, I can navigate through their blood vessels with the stealth of a thief! A disease such as a brain aneurysm is addressed, without the brain ever being touched. It is rewarding treating these conditions, as they can mean a difference between death or severe disability vs carrying on with a normal life."

**Dr. Khan, do you have a special message to share with the neighborhood or community?**

"I do, to enjoy life, good health is important. No amount of wealth or reward can make up for it. So, pay attention to your health. Eat wisely, sleep well and exercise. These three simple steps may make a huge difference for the better in your life."

"Go to physicians you can trust and feel comfortable with. Usually, they will also be there for you when you have emergencies. Do not be coerced into believing their unavailability and have alternatives imposed on you. Do not hesitate in getting additional opinions especially, if something does not make sense. Unfortunately, because of the associated material incentives, you may be offered procedures that are unnecessary or harmful. So, before undergoing surgery, make sure you understand its goals, risks and benefits. There is hardly any procedure without risks and these should be explained. If someone is too busy to see you or cannot be bothered to honestly explain the 'why' and 'how', that should be red flag."

**Dr. Khan, how do you make your work day fun?**

"Khalil Gibran said, 'Work is love made visible. If you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.'" "When we do what we love, it is always fun. I have experienced a great sense of reward or accomplishment actually from the more challenging cases like, when I have toiled for hours trying to repair complicated head injuries with skull fractures and brain damage and after having worried about the patient day in day out, to find the results far more spectacular than I was hoping for."

"What could be more rewarding than seeing a little tyke run about as if a catastrophic injury had never occurred, a teenager returned to his/her usual activities and spared the complications of a head injury? Or, a senior citizen relieved of pain to the extent that they can function and enjoy life. I may not be able to achieve that in every case but that is what I strive for."