

## **Returning the Favor**

*Girish Reddy never forgot his Cornell experience.*

Girish Reddy came to Cornell from India to earn a master's degree in engineering with the assumption he would pursue a career in engineering. Along the way, however, he decided he'd be more valuable to employers with an MBA. "I thought an MBA would be a helpful addition to my quantitative background," he says. "I had come to the United States on a student visa. For me to be sponsored by a U.S. company, clearly I needed to have something different."

Further graduate work was a financial stretch, however. Graduate scholarship aid for international students was virtually nonexistent. But Cornell, interested in helping acclimate international students into the academic and social life of the university, created a scholarship for a graduate international student to help design such programs. Reddy was the first recipient. In exchange for a 20-hour-a-week job, he received assistance with room, board, and tuition.

"That's what enabled me to earn my MBA from the Johnson School," Reddy says. "I have always been grateful. I also left with a lasting impression about the importance of international students and their participation at Cornell."

That was the impetus behind Reddy's \$1 million gift to endow four scholarships at Cornell: an undergraduate and graduate scholarship in operations research and industrial engineering, and two graduate scholarships in the Johnson Graduate School of Management. All four scholarships are earmarked for Indian citizens or other students of Indian descent.

"One of the great strengths of the Johnson School community is the diversity of its members, in terms of experience and capabilities as well as nationality," says Robert Swieringa, the Anne and Elmer Lindseth Dean of the Johnson School. "To truly provide an effective learning experience, our environment must reflect the increasingly global nature of business today. Girish's gift will help ensure that we continue to attract top candidates from growing economies to add to the richness of our community."

"I thought this was a good way to interest Indian students in Cornell, and at the same time benefit Cornell by having these scholarships to attract the talent," he says.

After earning his MBA in 1979, Reddy launched a very successful investment-banking career. "A lot of the finance arena was just beginning to move away from being an accounting-based business—geared toward the general management of industrial businesses—to more quantitative finance, in both fund management and investment banking," he says.

Reddy spent six years in the investment management division of Traveler's Insurance, an early pioneer in introducing a quantitative approach to investing, before becoming part of a California partnership that provided hedging strategies to pension funds and endowments. In 1990, he joined Goldman Sachs in London.

"Derivatives as a business was just starting to grow outside the United States, and they wanted someone with that experience to build their business in Europe," says Reddy, who retired as a

partner in March 2001. He has since turned his focus to philanthropic projects, most having to do with education.

In addition to his Cornell gift, Reddy serves on the executive board of the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad. He is also involved in helping his undergraduate alma mater, the Indian Institute of Technology, transition from being completely government funded to more of an American model, supported by student tuition and an endowment. “I’m working with them to establish scholarships and to raise funds from alumni to build an endowment,” he explains.

“Education is really my passion right now,” Reddy says. “I’m using own educational and professional background to make a contribution.”—*Renée Gearhart Levy*

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