

My Lord, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the High Court of Delhi, Mr. Justice Markandey Katju and Hon'ble companion Judges, President of Delhi High Court Bar Association, Mr. A.S. Chandiok, Central Government Standing Counsels, Counsels for Central Government, Standing Counsels of Delhi Administration and Various statutory authorities, my esteemed colleagues at the Bar, Ladies and Gentleman.

I stand here with a heart full of grief at the shocking and tragic passing away of two of respected lady members of our Bar – Mrs. Swarna Mahajan and her daughter Mrs. Anuratha Mahajan. Mrs. Swarna Mahajan, born on November 29, 1932 in Hissar, hailed from a highly respectable family. Her maternal grandfather was the Public Prosecutor in pre-partition North Western Punjab. Other eminent members in her family include Retired Mr. Justice S. S. Dhawan (former Governor of West Bengal), A. S. Dhawan, India's former Ambassador to the Phillippines, Justice Ravi Dhawan, Chief Justice of Bihar and Prof Satish Dhawan (former Chairman of ISRO).

Mrs. Mahajan graduated from Christ Church College in Simla and got married to Amrit Mahajan on January 29, 1955. Driven by her desire to be more than a housewife and encouraged by her family, 16 years after her marriage, she joined law classes at Kanpur University, graduated at the top of her class, and joined at the Bar in Kanpur.

In 1972, she started independent practice at Patna. Her sympathy for downtrodden and less fortunate combined with her knowledge of law inspired her to become a crusader for change. She conducted several pro bono matters for the poor over her career.

In 1975, the family moved to Delhi and she had the opportunity to join the chambers of Late Mr. Danial Latifi who was a senior and well respected Advocate and argued several important constitutional matters.

Unfortunately, she lost her husband suddenly on March 22, 1977 leaving 2 young children to care for. Over the last 31 years, she valiantly fought and went on to become a leading advocate of Delhi. She became an expert in service matters, military matters and service law and played a key role in several historic judgements.

Mrs. Mahajan was Honorary President of several leading Women's organizations and former President of All India Federation of Women's Lawyers. She fought for rights of women lawyers and better representation of women in the Judiciary.

A person of many talents she was an excellent painter, astrologer and singer, apart from being a voracious reader. She was deeply religious and always kind and sympathetic to the poor and their cause. She was a warm and loving mother and brought up her children in a religious environment to be independent, open-minded, honest and committed individuals.

Most unfortunately, her daughter, Ms. Anuratha Mahajan, was also taken away by the cruel hands of fate in the same heinous crime that caused the sad demise of Mrs. Swarna Mahajan.

Ms. Anurathan Mahajan graduated from Delhi University and obtained her law degree from Kanpur University, after which she joined her mother's law practice. Like her mother, she was actively involved in various women's rights, legal aid forums and never hesitated to help the needy and poor. As her mother's health failed, she took over her practice while

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continuing to nurse her ailing mother. Though her brother Sanjiv Mahajan lived abroad, she loved his children and treated them as her own. She always put her family above herself and devoted her life to their welfare.

Bar hasnot only lost two eminent Advocates but also two courageous ladies who were kind hearted, fiercely independent and diligent and committed to family as well as work. They are survived by Mrs. Swarna Mahajan's son – Sanjiv Mahajan, who runs his own management consulting company in Princeton, USA.

I, on behalf of the Government of India, my esteemed colleagues Central government standing counsels, other Government Counsels and on my own behalf, request the Hon'ble Chief Justice of High Court of Delhi to convey our heart felt condolences to the bereaved family and pray to the Lord Almighty to bestow courage on the grieving family to bear this irreparable loss and may their departed souls rest in everlasting peace always.

P.P. Malhotra

(P.P. Malhotra)
Addl. Solicitor General of India.
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