

In Memoriam

Dr. Mehrangiz Afnan

(1937-2018)



Dr. Mehrangiz (Mehri) Afnan was an active and much-appreciated presenter at the annual programs of the Irfan Colloquium taking place at Louhelen Bahá'í School in Michigan, United States. She also served as a reviewer of the articles published in *Safiniy-i-Irfan*, the annual publication of the Irfan Colloquium in Persian. A number of

articles written and presented by Dr. Mehri Afnan are published in different volumes of *Safiniy-i-Irfan*.

She was born in Tehran, Iran, on 30 October 1937. Her parents had both grown up in Russia – her father, Abolghasem Kiani, in Ishqabad and her mother, Monavar Namdar, in Moscow – before being forced to move to Iran in the early 1930s.

Dr. Mehri Afnan received her medical doctorate from the University of Tehran and was among a handful of young women who studied medicine at that time. She then went on to specialize in pediatrics. She had a tender heart and a great sense of personal responsibility and was a skilled and conscientious doctor, trusted and loved by her patients. She met Dr. Muhammad Afnan through Bahá'í youth activities, and they married in 1961. They had two children, Elham and Omid.

In 1978, the family moved to Norway to settle there as Bahá'í pioneers. Shortly after the outbreak of the Islamic Revolution in January 1979, they were denied a residence permit in Norway, but also were advised not to return to Iran because of their earlier prominence in Bahá'í administration. They moved to Canada, settling in the town of Dundas, where they helped form the Local Spiritual Assembly and became active and much loved members of the community.

Dr. Mehri Afnan studied the Bahá'í Writings deeply and extensively. In addition to her native Persian, she also had a good knowledge of Arabic and English and was an excellent writer and speaker, writing articles on a variety of Bahá'í topics. She and her husband complemented each other and collaborated in many areas. In 1987, this couple started the Institute for Bahá'í Studies in Persian in Dundas, Canada, to continue the services rendered by the Institute of Advanced Baha'i Studies in Iran. It aimed at promoting and supporting the study of Bahá'í literature in Persian and Arabic and became a major publisher of Bahá'í literature in Persian, replacing the services originally rendered by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust in Iran.

In 1989, this couple were invited to move to the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, where they both served in the Research Department for the next thirteen years, until 2002. They had the opportunity to visit the World Center again several times in recent years and worked on various projects each time, including during the last visit that Dr.

Mehri Afnan made alone, in November 2017, a few months after her husband's passing.

This couple upon returning to Canada, settled in Mississauga and once again became enthusiastically involved in Bahá'í activities. They held regular devotionals and study classes in their home, took part in outreach activities, and used every opportunity to teach the Faith. Dr. Afnan also served as members of the Persian Reviewing Panel for many years.

Dr. Mehri Afnan was a loving and devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She was an excellent speaker, writer, and teacher, as well as a gracious host. Above all, at the center of her life was service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. She passed away on 13 August 2018 in Mississauga, Ontario. The Universal House of Justice expressed its appreciation of her life and services in a letter written to her family on its behalf. Irfan Colloquium and its Persian publications are now deprived of the precious collaboration of a learned and dear colleague.