Welcome to this inaugural issue of Hofstra Sikh Studies Bulletin, the annual newsletter supported by the Bindra Endowed Chair in Sikh Studies. The aim of this newsletter is to provide the broader community with up-to-date knowledge, information and news about courses, projects and events being organized at Hofstra University. This newsletter will be published at the time of the Vaisakhi festival. Vaisakhi is both the harvest festival and the Sikh New Year, marking the birth of the Sikh order of the Khalsa.

The publication of this newsletter also coincides with a remarkable period of expansion in the study of religions at Hofstra. Since the establishment of the Sikh Chair, the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies has hired scholars specializing in New Testament studies (early Christianity) and more recently in the study of Islam. With a Chair in Catholic Studies on the horizon, the department will be able to offer undergraduate study in a wide selection of the world’s religious traditions, including Chinese religion, Sikhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

In future issues, we hope to highlight not only the activities of the previous year, but also the work of our students who are studying Sikhism and South Asian religions.

Welcome from Bindra Endowed Chair Dr. Mandair

In This Issue

Bindra Chair Established .............2
About The Bindras ..................2
A Look Ahead .........................3
A Look Back ........................3

Mark Your Calendars:
Sikh Studies 2004 Events ...
The Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra Endowed Chair in Sikh Studies was endowed by Mr. Ishar Singh Bindra and family in honor of Mr. Bindra’s wife and family matriarch, Sardarni Kuljit Kaur Bindra. The Chair was established to promote the academic study of Sikh religion, culture and history. The endowment supports the appointment of a faculty member in Sikh Studies, builds the University Library’s holdings in Sikhism, provides scholarship assistance to students interested in Sikh religion and culture, and funds annual conferences and lectures directed toward the academic community as well as the general public.

Mr. and Mrs. Bindra were both born in West Punjab, now part of Pakistan. After completing a distinguished career as a senior telecommunications engineer in India, Mr. Bindra and his family immigrated to the United States in 1978. Along with his sons, Mr. Bindra established an export-import business in the garment industry. Under his astute management, the Jeetish Group of Companies has evolved into a successful, diversified enterprise with interests in apparel, commodities, real estate and hotels.

Ishar Singh Bindra is a founder-trustee of the Sikh Forum of New York and senior vice president of the Sri Hemkunt Foundation. He has a rich and continuous record of accomplishments in communal affairs and has been a leading supporter of various humanitarian endeavors. He was honored by the Narjis Dutt Memorial Foundation, a non-profit organization devoted to the support of medical facilities in India. He is also the first Indian to be honored as Humanitarian of the Year by the Interfaith Nutrition Network, a nonprofit organization serving the hungry and homeless.

“Professor Mandair seeks a breadth of similarity, and parallels religious ideas, even from my own Jewish studies … he is very passionate in his approach to Sikh studies.”

Seth Harris
Spring 2004 Sikhism student

“We learn terms and phrases from the scripture, but also where their concept was derived from … I’ll continue to study Sikhism, even when I’m at law school.”

Ajit Heir
Spring 2004 Sikhism student

Hofstra Sikh Studies Bulletin, published by The Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in cooperation with the Office of University Relations and the Publications Department of Hofstra University, Undergraduate assistant Trevor Wolfe is a contributing writer; Dana Siljander is the graphic designer. For more information call Suzanne Shored, Associate Director for University Relations, at (516) 463-4601.