

FROM ME TO YOU

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DR. S. LAL MATTU MAY 25, 1943—APRIL 23, 2026

It is with heavy hearts and profound gratitude for a life well-lived that we announce the passing of our founder, Dr. S. Lal Mattu. Dr. Mattu passed away peacefully in Calgary on April 23, 2026, at the age of 82. He was surrounded by the love of his family, including his devoted wife, Deep, and his three children, Sunil, Neena, and Ravi.

A Lifetime of Service

Dr. Mattu’s journey as an educator began at the age of 17 in Kenya. Over a career spanning 65 years, his path took him from the highlands of East Africa to England, and finally to Canada in 1967. A lifelong learner, he earned a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Education from the University of Oregon before completing his PhD in Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta.

Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Mattu served as a teacher, principal, and Superintendent of Schools in both Alberta and British Columbia. He was a Registered Psycholo-

gist and a pioneer in special education, consistently advocating for children whose needs were not met by traditional systems. His contributions were recognized with numerous honors, including the Alberta Centennial Medal and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the South Asian Inspiration Awards.

The Dream of Third Academy

Despite his many administrative successes, Dr. Mattu’s heart remained with the students. In 1997, he realized a long-held dream by founding Third Academy in Calgary.

He often remarked:

“The best thing that I ever did in my 65 years in education is Third Academy. Everything before this was ‘just a job.’”

Third Academy was established to serve families whose children were “falling through the cracks.” Dr. Mattu envisioned a school that served the public good while remaining independent—a place that was fundamentally therapeutic by design. His guiding philosophy was simple yet transformative: students must first “**heal, then begin to learn again.**”



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Dr. S. Lal Mattu

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He believed that when children are understood, accepted, and nurtured, they can realize their fullest human potential and become contributing members of society.

A Lasting Legacy

What began as a single classroom has flourished into a comprehensive school system, including Third Academy, LYNX, and **ursa**. Thousands of students have passed through our doors, finding the success that once seemed out of reach. These alumni are the living embodiment of Dr. Mattu’s dream—individuals who have healed, learned, and gone on to build meaningful lives.

As we mourn the loss of our founder, we also celebrate the indelible mark he left on the landscape of Canadian education. His legacy lives on in every student who feels safe and valued in our schools, every parent who finds a community where their child is understood, connected, and empowered to find their own path, and every educator inspired by his vision.

Dr. Mattu often told us, “Together, we make the difference.” As we move forward, we carry his mis-

sion in our hearts, ensuring that his dream continues to transform the lives of students for generations to come.

Details regarding a celebration of life will be shared with our community soon.



On behalf of the Board of Directors and School Leadership:

- David Beresford**, Board Chair
- Zeljko Puric**, Board Secretary/Treasurer
- Sunil Mattu**, Head of Schools
- Rehana Mattu**, Principal Third Academy
- Christos Kazyas**, Associate Principal Third Academy Elementary
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- Tracy Gilluley**, Principal **ursa**
- Dean Ingram**, Associate Principal **ursa**
- Joe Smith**, Principal LYNX



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Dr. S. Lal Mattu and Mrs. Deep Mattu at our 20th Anniversary Gala. June 10, 2017, Gasoline Alley, Heritage Park.