

In Mr. Alibhai's case, the big plans are not just talk. In September, he co-sponsored a \$350 million initial public offering of a real estate investment trust, one of the largest in United States history. Paine Webber was the lead investment banker and Mr. Alibhai was initially the biggest individual shareholder.

Today Gencom affiliates, which began with a single Best Western that Mr. Alibhai's parents bought in 1979 after emigrating from Kenya, own all or part of 47 hotels in 13 states. Properties include the 759-room Radisson New Orleans, the 650-room Sheraton AstroDome in Houston as well as Marriotts, Hiltons and boutique hotels in Boston and San Antonio. Revenues are expected to exceed \$200 million this year.

Like his parents, Mr. Alibhai said, he "worked the desk, drove the shuttle van to the airport and learned to fix the sewer plant." In the three years after finishing college in 1984, years in which the Houston hotel industry bled red ink, he still did odd jobs at the hotel, but spent most of his time learning the business.

"Operating during that recession was my M.B.A.," said Mr. Alibhai, a trim, tennis-playing executive whose office is in a sleek Houston high-rise. In 1987, with the economy looking up but hotel values still down, Mr. Alibhai began buying distressed properties, often jointly with other Indian-Americans.

"That's when the real learning process began," he said, "not just acquiring the properties but convincing lenders who had tightened their purse strings to finance me. I had to change their perception of Indians as being identified with low-end hotels."

In many ways, Mr. Alibhai's world of revenue streams, variable inflation rates for assessing potential purchases and structuring deals with investment bankers is alien to the generation of his 60-year-old father, Akber, who is in charge of purchasing for Gencom.

"The older generation is still very cautious about sharing information, like the cost of hotels," said Jay Patel of Colorado Springs, a 43-year-old native of Zimbabwe who is part owner of seven hotels in Colorado and California. "The younger generation is much more forthcoming."

There are other differences.

"When you come from India and Africa, your view of labor is very different," Mr. Alibhai said. "People are thankful just to have a job. That's their bonus. Here, employees also want to feel appreciated. I prefer this system." Most of Gencom's corporate employees are given stock or bonuses, he said.

In the early years, Indian-Americans had problems typical of many newcomers in trying to get financing and insurance. By their account, insurers in the early 1980's suddenly canceled property insurance to all Indian hotel owners, believing them to be part of an Indian conspiracy to buy properties and burn them down to collect insurance money.

"We were turned down by about 200 insurance companies, until we convinced underwriters that these immigrants were outstanding risks," said Ron Thomas, a vice president of United Insurance Agencies in Muncie, Ind., who is widely admired by Indian hotel owners for his early efforts on their behalf.

Discrimination also took other forms, including boasts by rivals that their properties were "American owned."

Much of the more blatant bias began to wane with the formation of an Indian hotel owners' association in 1989, vigorously supported by Henry R. Silverman, the chairman of HFS Inc., and Michael A. Leven, then president of Days Inn. Starting with about 100 members, the group now numbers more than 4,000 hotel-keepers.

"Indian franchisees have been the engine of growth for the entire economy-hotel sec-

tor," said Mr. Silverman, whose company's franchises include Days Inn, Knights Inn and Super 8. "They were willing to build with their own capital when no one else was willing to."

For all their success, though, Indian-Americans have stayed away from luxury hotels and five-star resorts, and often from full-service hotels, mainly because of their cost but also for cultural and religious reasons.

"Most Indian hotel owners here are Hindus from Gujarat state and don't do well with anything involving alcohol and meat," said Mr. Patel of Colorado Springs. (Most Hindus from the western state of Gujarat are vegetarians, according to the Indian Embassy in Washington, and most Gujarati women do not drink.)

But younger Indians feel differently. "They realize you can offer meat and alcohol to your guests, because it's all part of the hotel business," Mr. Patel added.

"Within the next five years you'll see a lot of us owning luxury properties, like Ritz-Carltons," said Tushar Patel, the 31-year-old president of Tarsadia Hotels in Costa Mesa, Calif. About half of Tarsadia's 13 properties—including the 440-room Clarion Hotel at the San Francisco airport—are full-service hotels, with restaurants and bars.

Tushar Patel, by the way, is not related to Jay Patel of Colorado Springs, unless distantly, or to most of the thousands of other Patels who own hotels in the United States. Almost all Patels, even those from Africa, trace their ancestry to Gujarat, where hospitality is highly regarded.

In the United States, many Indian immigrants turned to lodging because they could buy cheap motels, they could live rent free and the family could work the front desk, clean rooms, do laundry and make repairs.

When they stepped up to franchised properties, for as little as \$20,000 plus 8 percent of revenues, the Indians acquired not only toll-free reservation systems and the benefit of bulk purchases, but an education about prices, payrolls and bookkeeping.

"We'll soon have eight hotels and we're looking to open a 200-room one soon, and it's no big deal," said S. Jay (you guessed it) Patel of Alpharetta, GA. "Now we're experienced enough to know we can handle it."

His father, J.K. Patel, left a 10-year career with Barclays Bank in Kenya to come to America in 1978, spending six months looking for a business before buying a hotel in South Carolina. The elder Mr. Patel attributes the Indians' success in this country to "the way we were brought up."

Parents instilled the need for education and trust between families and among their own ethnic group. "In January I did a deal with an Indian partner in Dallas for two hotels," said Mr. Alibhai of Gencom. "We shook hands, and before the contracts were signed I wired him several million dollars."

Arvind Patel, who with his wife, Bhavna, owns a 39-room Days Inn in West Point, Miss., cites another factor—the willingness of extended families and acquaintances to provide financial help.

"We work together as a team," said Arvind Patel, a native of Tanzania. "A lot of families give you \$10,000, even \$30,000, without charging you interest and without any collateral. They figure one day you may help them."

But like many Indians, these Patels are branching out and moving up, building an 81-room Wingate Inn and a 58-room Hampton Inn elsewhere in Mississippi. Meantime, both continue working a full shift each day behind the desk of their Days Inn, with their 12-year-old son and 10-year-old daughter pitching in on weekends.

"And if our help doesn't show up," Mrs. Patel said, "my husband and I still clean the rooms."

Many of the older Indian-Owned motels were long ago refurbished, if only to measure up as franchises—a method the Indians quickly saw as a route to financial independence. Some properties have been kept for the next generation, but most have been sold to a newer wave of Indian immigrants.

When Indian-Americans graduate from college, many have chosen to become doctors, engineers, lawyers and accountants. "But in most families at least one son or daughter will become hoteliers, because they realize it isn't the hard work it was for us," said J.K. Patel, the former Barclays banker. "The difference is, we used to man the desk ourselves. The new generation likes sitting in the office and delegating the work."

TRIBUTE TO STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN OPERATION VALENTINE

HON. FRANK TEJEDA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 22, 1996

Mr. TEJEDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the students of R. T. Barrera Elementary School, Pearsall Intermediate School, and La Vernia High School for writing valentines to our Armed Forces stationed in Bosnia. These valentines were sent to our troops through the Operation Valentine program, a nationwide valentine writing campaign designed to boost the morale of our men and women serving in the U.S. military in Bosnia. Through the pens and pencils of these children, more than 150 valentines of love and support were sent to uplift our troops.

A 1st grade student from R. T. Barrera Elementary School wrote, "I am a first grade student in Roma, Texas. Thank you for being so proud of our country. We miss you and we want you to come home."

A student from Pearsall Intermediate School wrote his valentine addressed to "Dear soldier." He went to say, "I am from Pearsall, TX. I am 9 years old. I like football. My favorite team is Dallas Cowboys. They are champions. We miss you. We are proud because you are peacekeepers. * * *

La Vernia High School also expressed support. Members of the La Vernia High School Student Council wrote 50 valentines to both mobile forces and land forces stationed in Bosnia. One of these valentines, written by an 11th grade student council member, stated: "Happy Valentine Day * * * you are admired and appreciated for everything you have accomplished and sacrificed for our country, you are respected and supported (no matter what you might do). Never forget that you are a leader and looked-up to by me and the rest of our Nation. Stay safe * * * and always remember that you are in our prayers."

These wishes are just a few of the scores of valentines that young people across my district wrote to our soldiers involved in the Bosnian peacekeeping mission. I commend all the schools for supporting our Armed Forces, and I am honored to share their remarks with my colleagues today. I speak from experience—letters from home, expressing love and support for a soldier while stationed overseas, uplifts morale and keeps spirits high. I trust these valentines will do just that.

SALUTE TO ALL ISLAND HANDICAPPED SPORTS, INC. SLED HOCKEY TEAM

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 22, 1996

Mr. KING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute a very special group of athletes, the All Island Handicapped Sports, Inc. sled hockey team. This outstanding collection of sportsmen has done themselves, and all of Long Island, proud, representing New York at the Wendy's International Sled Hockey Tournament in Hamilton, ON, Canada.

The team defeated Hamilton, 3 to 2, on a goal by Tony Fitzgerald, assisted by Larry Northorn, and two goals by Vic Calise with assists from Larry Northorn, Rich Northorn III, James Abatino, and Tony Fitzgerald.

Downing Kitchener/Elmvale, 3 to 1, the team was led by scorers Fitzgerald, Larry Northorn, Calise, and William Schwarz. Defeating a determined Chicago squad 4 to 2, the team reached the gold medal round against a very tough Kingston, Canada team.

Although downed 7 to 0 by Kingston, the New York team earned the tournament's silver medal. Throughout the tournament, the New York team got stellar goal tending from Ryan Bora, hard-hitting defense from Dr. Stephen Mordecai, William Schwarz, Chuck Albert, and Donald Saracen, and excellent line play from Joey Messing, Vito Giambruno, Zachary Lynn, Gregory Nelson, Anthony Donaroma, Jonathan Rotkin, and Mark Turan.

Every member of the team can be proud of earning the tourney's silver medal. As a fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers, I would like to offer the All Island Handicapped Sports team the following encouragement: wait 'til next year—I know you can bring home the gold.

NEW YORK SLED HOCKEY ROSTER

James Abatino #62, Chuck Albert #8, Ryan Borja #20, Victor Calise #9, Anthony Donaroma #3, Anthony Fitzgerald #22, Vito Giambruno #83, Zachary Lynn #1, and Dr. Stephen Martucci #2

Joseph Messina #52, Gregory Nelson #13, Lawrence Northorn #60, Richard Northorn III #14, Jonathan Rotkin #5, William Schwarz #16, Donald Sorokin #32, and Mark Turan #99.

IN RECOGNITION OF DOROTHY BARNES

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 22, 1996

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, one of the privileges that I have most enjoyed as a Member of the House of Representatives is the opportunity to offer assistance to the hundreds of veterans who reside in the Fourth District of Texas, and today I would like to recognize and pay tribute to someone who has devoted countless hours in this cause—Dorothy Bateman Barnes, whose exemplary service as the Van Zandt County Veterans Service Officer has earned her the respect and gratitude of those veterans who have called on her for help.

"Dottie" Barnes was appointed to the veterans post in August, 1984. A native of Wills

Point in Van Zandt County, she contributed to the war effort in the 1940's while working in the accounting office of North American Aviation. Years of Federal Government service followed, the last 7 with the Department of Defense. Her late husband, Maj. (Ret.) Matthew J. Barnes, was a veteran of World War II and the Korean war, and was wounded in the Korean war and left for dead but managed to escape. This ordeal gave Mrs. Barnes a heightened awareness of veterans' needs and an empathy for their plight.

Known for her dedication, professionalism, and long hours of service, Mrs. Barnes was presented the Outstanding Veterans Service Officer of the Year award for the Dallas Region in 1991, having been selected from 200 officers for the annual award. Commenting on the award, she stated, "My main purpose in life is serving the veterans of this county and anybody else who walks through my door." In addition, she was given a Distinguished Service Ward by the United States Marine Corps League and has received frequent commendations from the Van Zandt County Judges and Commissioners. The county's consultant on the Americans With Disabilities Act stated that Mrs. Barnes "may be one of the best veterans services officers in the country."

Veterans Service Officers routinely provide an array of assistance to veterans—including compensation and pension matters, hospitalization, insurance, transportation, education, G.I. home and farm loans, disability retirement, military records, and others. Mrs. Barnes provides all these services—and more. She works long hours and takes paperwork home with her at night in an effort to provide efficient service to those in need. She organized the first veterans' health screening clinic in the area, which continues to be an overwhelming success.

In addition to the long hours that she devotes to veterans, Mrs. Barnes somehow finds time for a number of other worthy causes. She is a member of both the Canton and Wills Point Chambers of Commerce, a member of the Business and Professional Women's Club, holds lifetime memberships in the Wills Point Historical Society, the Van Zandt County Genealogical Society, and the Van Zandt County Friends of the Library. She served as chairman of the Van Zandt County Historical Commission for a number of years, is the current vice-chairman, and was chairman of the county's Sesquicentennial Committee. She is also a certified nursing home ombudsman and is chairman of the Selective Service Board for the East Texas area.

In recognition of her outstanding service to the county, Mrs. Barnes was named Van Zandt County Citizens of the Year in 1987. She also received an Award of Achievement and Appreciation from the Wills Point Chamber of Commerce and was given an Award of Merit for Outstanding Achievements from the Genealogical Society.

Mr. Speaker, Van Zandt County is truly fortunate to have a veterans service officer with the depth of experience, compassion, and integrity that Mrs. Barnes brings to her job—and a citizen so devoted to community service. Dorothy Barnes embodies the highest ideals of both government service and civic responsibility, and she deserves our profound gratitude and respect. I ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to this outstanding American.

TRIBUTE TO TEXAN WHO WILL OFFICIATE AT OLYMPICS

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 22, 1996

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in a tribute to a great citizen of Texas, Mr. Herbert Allen, Sr., who has been selected as one of the track officials for the Summer Olympics Games in Atlanta, this coming summer.

Mr. Allen is very deserving of this opportunity and responsibility. He has officiated the Texas State High School Track and Field Championships and the Texas Relays at the University of Texas at Austin for the past 6 years and served as referee of the State High School Track and Field Championships. He also officiated the Olympic Trials in 1992, the NCAA Track and Field Championships in 1992 and 1993, the Mobil Track and Field Championships from 1989 through 1995, the Youth National Track and Field Championships from 1992 through 1995, and the Junior Olympics Track and Field Championships last year.

Mr. Allen also coached at Klein High School, taking the Bearkats to the State final-four baseball tournament in Austin in 1983. He was the first African-American baseball coach to take a team to the Class 5A Final Four and was named the Houston Post High School Baseball Coach of the Year in 1983. Later that same year, Mr. Allen coached the North All-Stars to a 5-3 victory in the Astrodome in the Texas High School All-Star Baseball Game. In 1986, Mr. Allen was honored with induction into the Texas High School Coaches Hall of Honor.

Mr. Allen's job this summer will be on the field officiating the long jump and triple jump events, during the Olympic Games, July 22 through August 4. He will also work the Olympic Trials in June.

Congratulations to a great Texan, Herbert Allen, Sr.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY 1996: A DAY OF CELEBRATION AND DEDICATION

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 22, 1996

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, we are all looking forward to St. Patrick's Day festivities back home.

For me, the upcoming celebrations bring back memories of the wonderful friends I made in Ireland last year when I accompanied President Clinton on his historic visit to that beautiful country—and of the message they conveyed in their words and actions: We want peace.

For those of us involved with Irish issues, the recent setbacks brought true heartache. But that's why now, more than ever, the United States must stand firm in its commitment to help the Irish people win a lasting peace.

Perhaps our best opportunity to do this is by promoting opportunities for economic growth in Northern Ireland and the Republic. This will