



Mississauga Legends Row

Sampradaya artistic director compelled by tragic loss

By CHRIS CLAY
Staff

Award-winning artist and choreographer Lata Pada has left an indelible mark on both Mississauga's and the country's arts scene.

Pada, the founder and artistic director of South Asian dance company Sampradaya Dance Creations, came to Canada in 1964 and quickly established herself as a mainstay in the city's arts community. She's been honoured many times for her arts work, including winning the 1995

Class of 2013: Lata Pada

Mississauga Arts Award and she also received a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal last year.

In 2011, Pada was recognized with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award — India's highest honour for overseas Indians. She was honoured for her contributions to the promotion of Indian dance in Canada as well as for her role in pressing for an inquiry into the 1985

bombing of Air India Flight 182 (Pada lost her husband and daughters in the crash off the coast of Ireland that killed some 329 people, including 29 Mississaugans).

"My life's work has been committed to showcasing the richness, complexity and beauty of classical dance with the highest standard for all audiences," said Pada, shortly after receiving the award.

"The loss of my family in the 1985 Air India terrorist bombing compelled me to advocate for anti-terrorism legislation and I will continue to do what I can to prevent such acts from happening again."

In 2009, she was awarded the Order of Canada by the Governor General of Canada and she holds the distinction of being the first South Asian artist to be awarded the honour.

Pada holds a master's degree in dance from York University and is an adjunct professor of dance at York. She's also a founding member of the Royal Ontario Museum's South Asian advisory committee and has served on the Canadian Dance Assembly's advocacy committee.

Other awards include Toronto Sanskriti Sangha's Lifetime Achievement Award and the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce's Professional Woman of the Year Award.



Lata Pada

The lowdown:

- born Nov. 7, 1947 in Bombay, India
- formed Sampradaya Dance Creations in 1990
- awarded Order of Canada in 2009 for contributions to the arts
- awarded 2012 Chalmers Foundation Senior Fellowship to research the performance traditions of the Ramayana in Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia
- named 2003 Professional Woman of the Year by Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce