



Aligarh Alumni Association, Washington DC

PO Box 1877, Ellicott City, MD 21043

The Association that has been serving the community since 1975

We sincerely thank our patrons for supporting us all these years

Trustees: Tariq Farooqi (Chairperson); A Abdullah, Aftab A Ansari, S Rafat Husain, Aisha A Khan

Executive Council: Razi Raziuddin (President); Wazir H Qadri (Treasurer); Zafar Iqbal (Secretary)

The Torch Burns Bright

The Aligarh Alumni Association, Washington DC (AAA), was founded in 1975 by a handful of Aligs, nostalgic about the literary and intellectual milieu of their homeland and alma mater and wanting to recreate some of it in their adopted country. The AAA, now representing the oldest organization of its kind in North America, has existed and operated continuously for the past 38 years.

A vibrant society, it has been active in a wide variety of realms. It regularly organizes and conducts a plethora of educational, social and cultural activities, including a decades-long scholarship program, Sir Syed Memorial lectures and a much acclaimed annual international mushaira. The annual Sir Syed Memorial Lectures have over the years attracted such luminaries as Anne Marie Schimmel, Zahoor Qasim, Abdulaziz Sachedina and a number of other world-renowned academicians and intellectuals. The Association has hosted a mushaira every year since 1975, in which celebrated poets, such as Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Ali Sardar Jaafri and Javed Akhtar and many others participated.

Besides literary activities, the Association has established a vigorous scholarship program that now supports about 240 students at Aligarh Muslim University, in addition to funding about a thousand students at Feeder institutions at 14 cities in various states of India. The foregoing list of institutions receiving support is by no means comprehensive, and is only designed to give some idea of the range of AAA's activities in the area of education. The Association has proudly hosted many visiting dignitaries from Aligarh, including virtually all the recent vice chancellors. In the US, it was a founding member of the Federation of Aligarh Alumni Associations and sponsored its first ever convention.

We noticed this year another society, led by Mr. Sayed Naved, has also organized a mushaira and Sir Syed Day event in the Washington area. Normally, we would welcome the emergence of a new organization, with interests complementary to ours, aimed at enriching the intellectual environment of our region, except that Mr. Naved and his group have appropriated our organization's name, (AAA). Mr. Naved is not unfamiliar with the AAA or its valuable contributions to the community service. He was one of its long-standing members and is the immediate past president. However, last year on completion of his term as President, for some reasons unbeknown to us, Mr. Naved decided to launch a parallel organization of his own, with name and funds derived from ours.

The Washington DC area abounds in a variety of ethnic, cultural and literary societies. With an infinite choice of names available, it is confounding why anyone would choose to use the name of an existing society that is well known and well respected, such as the Aligarh Alumni Association, even if it is legally permissible to do so.

We at the AAA have watched these unfortunate developments with sadness and dismay. Meanwhile, we have not been passive. We have made a number of attempts at reconciliation, assuring Mr. Naved that if he abandons the use of our organizational name, replacing it with any other of his choice; he will receive our full cooperation and support. So far, regretfully, we have not succeeded. However, if attempts at reconciliation do not succeed, we will have no choice except to seek legal remedies to reclaim and retain the exclusive use of our name. We hope and pray that this latter course will not be necessary, and eventually a sense of justice and fairness will prevail.

Tariq Farooqi
Chairman