

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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for MAUNA LANI RESORT ASSOCIATION

Meet your Mauna Lani neighbors...

The Mauna Lani community is comprised of diverse individuals from all walks of life. Get to know them a bit better through our new series of **Member Spotlight** articles.



Umang Gupta

“Mauna Lani is a wonderful, wonderful property. From the time we saw it, we thought, ‘This could be fantastic.’ When I wake up every morning I hear birds that remind me of my childhood [in India]. ...”

-Umang Gupta

Umang Gupta, Pauoa Beach at Mauna Lani

Umang Gupta is a font of entrepreneurial wisdom. One of Silicon Valley’s pioneering business leaders, he spent the better part of the last forty years weathering the ups and downs of life as a tech industry entrepreneur and CEO.

Born and educated in India, Gupta came to the U.S. to pursue an MBA and fell in love—with the US, with technology, and with his future wife, Ruth, herself an immigrant from England.

After working for IBM for seven years, and moving to a then-nascent Silicon Valley, Gupta went to work as one of the earliest employees for software industry groundbreaker Oracle. He wrote the company’s first business plan and became a vice president of its PC division.

After three years at Oracle, Gupta seized an opportunity to start his own software company, Gupta Technologies—one of the first companies to expand the personal computer beyond its early role as a glorified typewriter and calculator, by creating networked software to run critical business automation functions. “When we started out,” he says, “we didn’t think we were creating a technology revolution. But somewhere along the way it became known as the ‘client-server’ revolution.”

Over the next eight years, Gupta experienced the exhilaration of building a startup company into an industry leader. However, players like Microsoft soon joined the game, crowding the market with less expensive products. Then the Internet changed the game entirely. After missing an opportunity to sell his “baby” for a good price to his ex-boss Larry Ellison of Oracle, Gupta sold his shares and walked away.

After a period of self-reflection, Gupta became an angel investor for many innovative Internet startups, one of which was Keynote Systems, a company using distributed software technology to track website performance. Armed with a vision for Keynote’s future, Gupta became its CEO and built it into an industry leader. With a combination of good timing and the business savvy that comes with hindsight, Gupta steered the company through two successful public offerings at the peak of the dot com bubble. When the bubble burst, Gupta had plenty of cash on hand to navigate some losses and steadily regrow the company. By the time he sold in 2013, Keynote was thriving with over 4,000 customers and \$125 million in revenue and a solid reputation as the market leader in its field.

Meanwhile, Umang and Ruth raised a family, and despite the intense nature of his work, Umang made certain that he was always home for dinner. “I’m a great believer in work-life balance,” he says. Their first child, Clare, recently received her PhD and is working for the Kohala Center. Their second, a son named Raji, suffered from developmental delays and passed away before age three. Their third child, Kashi, currently works for Disney. To this day, the Guptas actively support nonprofits serving individuals with developmental delays.

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Says Ruth, “When we needed it, we received support from families like ourselves and social services from the get-go, and it made us realize how fortunate one can be to be surrounded by people who are supportive and helpful.” That’s why in their philanthropy, they reach out to families who are experiencing similar challenges.

Always eager to learn new things, Gupta has now shifted his work focus to educational technology-- angel investing in small companies looking to improve educational practices across the globe through innovative technologies, and even incubating a tech startup to help young children with oral reading.

Locally, Gupta has been active as president of the Pauoa Beach Homeowners’ Association, is the newest member of the MLRA board, and is chairman of the board’s ad hoc Beach Club committee. He’s taken action on issues burdening the club’s already stretched capacity limitations; namely, use of club parking and beach amenities by non-members and improvements to the club’s facilities to better serve the evolving needs of the community.

Umang and Ruth fly from California every couple of months to enjoy their island home for several weeks, which, like many Mauna Lani homes, was designed by Lucky Bennett. “We asked Lucky to design a home that reflected a mix of my Indian heritage and Ruth’s Western heritage,” says Gupta. The main entrance features a banyan tree and enormous 17th Century Indian doors opening onto an interior courtyard graced by water features. A glassed passage on one side of the courtyard is defined by a series of corbels bearing carved Indian motifs. Ruth was hands-on in the design process, and a trip to Bali brought Indonesian elements into play alongside western and eastern ones. “This is our Shangri-La,” says Umang. “We built this house because we wanted a place where we could come and spend time and recharge our batteries, and still work on things we feel passionate about.”

The Guptas purchased their lot in 2002 after a decade of regular family visits to the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel. Ruth calls the purchase a spur of the moment decision, “The most impetuous thing we’ve done—but to good effect.” Umang echoes the sentiment, saying, “Mauna Lani is a wonderful, wonderful property. From the time we saw it, we thought, ‘This could be fantastic.’ When I wake up every morning I hear birds that remind me of my childhood [in India].” Ruth and Umang enjoy daily walks around the resort grounds and to Tommy Bahamas, periodic trips to Hawi and Hilo, and hitting the dance floor at the Blue Dragon.

It would seem that the roots of Gupta’s success trace back to his parents’ belief in him. The name ‘Umang’ in Hindi means a mixture of ‘enthusiasm and hope.’ “I suppose my parents had much enthusiastic hope for me,” says Gupta. That hope’s fruition has benefited not only the tech industry, but the Mauna Lani community as well.

— By Gillian Culff



The Gupta Family at their Pauoa Beach residence (l-r: Clare, Umang, Ruth & Kashi)

Gillian Culff is a writer and creative writing teacher who has lived in North Hawaii for nearly twenty years. She currently teaches writing groups at Mauna Lani. For more information on Gillian and to sign up for a writing group, visit: www.gillianculff.com