American Society of Indian Engineers (ASIE) is a Houston, Texas based non-profit organization established in 1994 for engineers, architects, and designers of Indian origin. After laying a solid foundation for the future, the senior professionals of ASIE decided to take the organization to the next level and focusing on Building the Future together with the younger generation. In appreciating the hidden jewels, who had made a difference, the ASIE organized a special event, honoring senior engineers and architects for their community service. The Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony event was held on Friday, June 14 at the banquet hall of Sankalp Restaurant in Sugar Land, Texas packed with 140 people. With a generous sponsorship by Virendra Bansal, the current member of Advisory Board, this first time ever happened an event was a magnificent success.

The event started with networking and social hour. ASIE President Vishal Merchant made the welcome address with brief information of ASIE, which was followed by wonderful presentation of awardees. In his opening remarks he said, “This year we will recognize 11 professional engineers and architects for their illustrious careers, accomplishments, ingenuity, entrepreneurship and contributions to the Indo-American Society and the society as a whole. These Honorees come from different walks of the engineering and architectural fields, however they share one thing in common and that is their dedication to their disciplines. This enthusiasm and commitment has resulted in decades of creativity and thousands of projects not only in Houston, but all over the country. We the young generation, look up to them as our role models and inspiration as we move forward in our professional careers.”

Sam Kannappan, the current board member of Texas Board of Professional Engineers, and other distinguished guests presented the award to each honoree. It was very interesting to learn the history form each honoree from their individual remarks. The entire event was further evidence of a successful growth of the ASIE and its vision to reach out more and more professionals who work and practice in the Greater Houston Area. ASIE President Vishal Merchant, a young dedicated engineer and his enthusiastic members of the committee organized the first time ever event with the help of some of the senior members to honor eleven professionals for their outstanding contributions to the local industry and also to the Indo-American Community. After the buffet dinner served by Sankalp, the program was concluded with vote of thanks.

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Front row (L-R) Hasmukh Doshi, Ben Bansal, Jasbir Singh Sethi, Ravi Arora, and Ramesh Garg. Back row (L-R) ASIE Board member Raj Basavaraju, Dinesh Shah, Krishna Vavilala, ASIE current President Vishal Merchant, Rao Ratnala, Mahesh Wadhwa, and Narendra Gosain. Chad Patel was unable to attend.
Hasmukh Doshi
Mr. Doshi received a Civil Engineering Diploma in 1964 from the Government Polytechnic and a B. S. in Mechanical Technology in HVAC System Design in 1968 and B. S. in Civil Engineering in 1972 from the University of Houston. He is a Registered Professional Engineer and a Registered Professional Land Surveyor. He worked as a consultant for 10 years designing Water and wastewater treatment plants, Land Planning and Development, HVAC System Design and Land Surveying. He also worked for 17 years providing services to the Petrochemical Industries. He founded DOSHI ENGINEERING & SURVEYING COMPANY in 1998 to provide diversified consulting engineering services to Light Industrial and commercial projects. His community involvement includes: Boy Scouts of America – Troop Leader; Gujarrat Samaj of Houston – Chairman of the Property Management; Jain Society of Houston – Trustee; Jain Vishwa Bharati Meditation Center – Director; American Society of Indian Engineers – First President, Advisor; and Friends and Families of India – Founding member.

Ben Bansal
Mr. Bansal is a Registered professional Civil Engineer in the State of Texas with years of experience in Engineering, Project Management, Construction Management, Teaching and Contracting. His projects include Municipal Engineering Infrastructure (Water/Wastewater/Storm/Drainage and Transportation), Airports, Petro-Chemical Refineries, Nuclear Power Plants, Institutional /Industrial /Commercial Buildings, Contracting. His employers include City Of Houston Public Works and Engineering, Schal Associates, Chicago, IL; Lummus /M.W. Kellogg, Houston, TX; Dravo Corporation, Pittsburgh, PA; Self Employed as Owner /Manager with Banco Interests Inc. and T.D.I. Group Inc., Houston; and University of Houston. Mr. Bansal is a Life Member of ASIE; Life Member of Hindu Worship Temple Society; and Vice Chair of India House, Inc. (a community based organization). He has participated in several community based fund raisers and actively involved in promoting Civil Engineering and Para Engineering disciplines (Testing /Inspection).

Ravi Arora
It has been said, anybody can spend money but it takes a special kind of person to donate his time. Mr. Arora graduated from Delhi College of Engineering in 1970 and came to the US in 1979. Began working for the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department (PID) in 1980 and received his professional engineering license in 1989. He went on to work for Harris County for 27 years before retiring. Working with various sections of Harris County PID such as Community Development, Capital Improvement Projects, and as the Manager of the Engineering Design Section, Mr. Arora gained valuable knowledge and insight pertaining to roads, bridges, development of community centers, parks and more. Over the past 34 years he has served the South Asian community in Houston through his volunteer work. Of these, Mr. Arora’s service to ASIE is one of utmost prominence. He has served as Treasurer, President and Advisor of ASIE from 1997-1999. His work with the organization has been instrumental in establishing it as an important contributor to the educational pursuits of children of Indian descent in the engineering field through its scholarship program. Currently, Mr. Arora is also volunteering with the Indian Senior Citizens Association and is actively working on a national convention for seniors with Indian heritage across USA.

Dinesh Shah
Dinesh Shah has been a Houstonian since 1975. He and his son Pritesh Shah CCIM, operate SHAH COMPANIES, a commercial real estate development firm in Sugar Land. Dinesh is a Professional Civil-Structural Licensed Engineer and approved engineer to practice architectural. He possesses several other licenses and performs Property Tax Consulting and Windstorm Engineering design and inspection. With a MBA degree and over 35 years of design build experience, he has become a “Master of All” including Plan, Design, Build, Manage, and Own. He is not only a commercial real estate developer, but also a community developer. He is a sincere worker and a great humanitarian. With his technical experience and knowledge, he has provided community services for BAPS in Houston and Chicago, India House, Fort Bend Corps, and Child Advocate of Fort Bend. He is ASIE life member and serving as a Board of Advisor. Many recognitions and awards have been bestowed upon him. As a hobby, he writes press releases and articles related to real estate, politics, and engineering topics.

Jasbir Singh Sethi
Mr. Sethi has a B.S. C.E. Honors from Punjab Engineering College Chandigarh (1956); Gold Medal in Law (1966) from University of Gorakhpur; Management Diploma from UK; M.S.I.E (O.R.) from Rutgers University (1972); P.E. in M.E., C.E. He is passionately involved in various divisions of engineering and created his affiliations with globally known organizations such as CWPC (Central Water & Power Commission); Indian Railways; M.W.Kellogg, Brown & Root (Now KBR); Bechtel, Dow Chemicals, S&B and a few others. He was congratulated by the Mayor of Houston, in 2002, when the NRI Welfare Society of India (NGO) awarded “Hind Rattan (Jewel of India)”. Mr. Sethi been mentoring, inviting, and helping Indian Engineers to get well settled. Helped in setting up religious, cultural, entertainment and business presence of Indians and Indian Engineers in particular, and even pioneering IACC (Indo American Chamber of Commerce) that was instrumental in the First Indo-American Conference on Joint Tendering. All this spade work was instrumental in the birth of ASIE. His support to ASIE was never lacking, in membership drives, finding sponsors, educational scholarship programs, and other activities.

Ramesh Garg
Mr. Garg has an MBA in International Business from University of Houston Main Campus, MS in Mechanical Engineering from University of Kansas, Lawrence, and BS in Mechanical Engineering from PEC Punjab University, Chandigarh. He is a Registered Professional Engineer, State of Texas. Mr. Garg has received DuPont and Fluor Awards for Innovation, Safety, Leadership, VIPS, Client Satisfaction, CPI and Excellence in Execution. He is also a National Merit and University Merit Scholarship holder in India. Mr. Garg has Senior Management Experience in managing operations and projects of global Owners and EPCs related to refineries, chemicals, industrials, and energy plants; Myers-Briggs ENTJ High Achiever with proven leadership and entrepreneurship skills; CPI and Knowledge Management Leader in driving paradigm shifts, better risk management, and raising performance bars. He has achieved personal success through superior communication skills, self-assured motivation in problem solving, and being a competitive team player with unquestionable integrity.
Krishna Vavilala
Mr. Vavilala is a Life Member and a former President of ASIE (1997). He brought up the organization to the forefront and doubled its membership by staging a high profile ASIE GALA in South West Hilton Hotel that commemorated India’s 50th Anniversary of independence. Instead of presenting a cultural show to celebrate the occasion, Mr. Vavilala thought it fit for ASIE as an Engineers’ organization to show case what a young and independent India had achieved in a relatively short period of time particularly in Space Technology. During Mr. Vavilala’s time, ASIE, for the first time, got the attention of mainstream corporate advertisers like Texas Instruments, Compaq, Kvaerner John Brown, Houston Ship Repair Inc., Air India and the like, who contributed to the success of the GALA which was proclaimed by Houston Mayor, Robert Lanier as “ASIE DAY”. He helped promote ASIE membership drives and arranged Grant money for the ASIE scholarships. Mr. Vavilala has been a community worker and an incessant campaigner for India’s causes in America. He has served the Indo-American community in an exemplary manner in numerous capacities during the past 38 years in America. At 76, he continues to be an active social worker to help the community.

Mahesh Wadhwa
With over 46 years in Architecture profession, Mr. Wadhwa started his career by working as a draftsman in the PWD of government of India. He has a BS in Architecture (1966). He moved to Houston in 1980 but was never satisfied working in a company and started his own consulting in Architecture in 1982 after working at an Engineering firm Procon. He worked out of the home office in Garage for couple of years and soon it was time in 1984 to move into an office building as business grew. Currently, President of Wadhwa and Associates an Architect/Engineering firm and recently celebrated 30 years of business. He has been providing Architect/Engineering services to developers and corporations. Mr. Wadhwa enjoys giving back to the community, always been a supporter of ASIE, the professional group of engineers and have suggested to expand the membership to a wider group of professionals that include Architects. Life member with ASIE, Judge for High School student competition in debates, Judge at Science Fair thru ASIE, supports and provides services to religious and cultural organizations including Hindu Worship Society, Sikh Center, India Culture Center, and VPSS.

Rao Ratnala
Mr. Ratnala immigrated to the U.S. in 1962 to continue his education and received BSCE (Hon.) from MSU in 1964 and MCE from VVA in 1966. In 1985 Mr. Ratnala started his own company, Ratnala Engineering, Inc., which was changed to Ratnala & Bahl, Inc. in 1993. Mr. Ratnala has provided professional engineering services to the Industrial, Commercial, and Governmental market segments for more than forty years. He has performed civil and structural engineering designs and managed many types of projects, including high-rise buildings, city and county roads and bridges, oil/gas and petrochemical production facilities (national and international), storm and sanitary sewers, and waterlines. Through application of his business expertise and his education Mr. Ratnala has been a key member of a successfully managed private business enterprise in a highly competitive business environment for the last 28 years. Convinced City of Houston’s Mayor Lee Brown, to install Gandhi Statue in Herman Park. Supported ASIE since 1990’s and helped move into corporate world and the mainstream organization.

Chad Patel
Mr. Patel has a Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering from M.S. University, Baroda, India and a Master’s degree from University of Houston. He is a Professional Engineer in the state of Texas. He has been working for KBR for the past 28 years. His current position is Chief Technical Advisor – Mechanical. He is currently in-charge of Metallurgy Group within the Office of the Chief Engineer at KBR. Mr. Patel has traveled around the world to more than 25 countries including China, Russia and countries in Europe, Middle East and Americas during his extensive career with KBR working on multimillion dollar projects. He is a recognized expert in Furnace Mechanical Design and subject matter expert on metallurgy. Mr. Patel joined ASIE in 1996 and held various board positions including the Presidency. He is also a community volunteer. Chad currently serves as Vice President of GOPIO - Global Organization for People of Indian Origin - Houston Chapter.

All these above are hidden jewels of ASIE and Indian Community, who has made a difference.