



MILESTONES...

- February 14, 1948 - Born in Pune
- 1967 - Completes high-secondary from Ferguson College, Poona University
- 1969 - Completes BE from the College of Engineering, Pune,
- 1974 - Completes PhD from IIT Kanpur with CPI of 9.76/10.0
- 1996 - Visiting professor and scientist at many foreign universities
- 2001 - Becomes director of IIT Kanpur. Also part-time member of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)
- 2005 - Chairman, HRD sub-committee for IT and member of the scientific advisory council to the PM. Also appointed acting director, PDPM-IIITDM, Jabalpur.

"IT would be unfair for me to pick one teacher. For me, three different individuals at different stages in my student life have helped to shape my personality and my career as an academic. In elementary school in Pune, my teacher Mr Kulkarni, taught me early on in life that a teacher does more than just preach. Even as small children, he made us participate in every activity, a form of pedagogy that I now call, 'immersive learning'. I remember that he had to take a lesson on hygiene and he patiently clipped each of our nails to show how it is to be done. He also emphasised on good handwriting and how one's handwriting reflects one's personality. He always seemed so learned and knowledgeable, it was no surprise when he became an ascetic, a few years later.

"In class X, when I was studying in Modern High School in Pune, my science teacher Mr Panchnavikar introduced me to the fascinating world of science. His way of teaching science was most interesting and unique. He

would explain complex mathematical and scientific concepts by weaving them into an interesting story. The light and object principle in school was taught to us through a love story, where the man was the object

my best teacher

Sanjay G Dhande

and the woman was the image. As a result, no one ever forgot or confused the concepts. In a similar manner, he made weighty topics light by weaving fictional stories around them. He would also take the class for small picnics and teach us in the open air. Panchnavikar also taught us to stand up for ourselves, and never be afraid. He was more than just a teacher, he was our hero, someone we looked up to.

"Finally, It was Professor Suhas Patankar, a famous name in the world of Mechanical Engineering who inspired me to become an aca-

demician. Patankar's unique quality was that besides following textbooks, he incorporated new research and development into his teaching. He wanted his students to know about the latest in the field. It was this enthusiasm that I associated with research. I realised how exciting research and discovering new things could be. A well-known magician, he was also very interested in theatre. Since I was also very involved in theatre in college, I could relate to him more and always wanted to be like him."

(Sanjay G Dhande, scientist and director, IIT Kanpur, was talking to Pallavi Bali)