

Fresno attorney focuses on ‘being the best I can be’



By Brian Cox

The inspiration – and expectations – of two men are at the forefront of attorney Herman Chatrath’s mind as he begins the early stage of his legal practice: his father and his grandfather.

“My father is actually one of the most educated people I know,” says Chatrath, who is an associate in the litigation department at the Fresno, Calif. law firm of Coleman & Horowitz, LLP. “He instilled me in a huge work ethic and the importance of having a professional degree.”

His father, Dr. Bhupinder Chatrath, is board certified in six specialties: oncology, hematology, pediatrics, pathology, palliative care, and internal medicine. Dr. Chatrath and his wife, Amrit, immigrated to the U.S. from Punjab, India, in 1982, and settled for a short time in New York before making their way west via Michigan and Kentucky to Visalia, Calif. – which Dr. Chatrath would always say reminded him of home.

“He was driven when he came here,” says Chatrath of his father. “We were born at whatever hospital my dad was doing his rotations or residencies at. He would be making rounds on one floor while my mom was in labor and he would come down and check on her.”

Chatrath’s mother had a master’s degree in political science from India and given the opportunity he believes she may have



Herman and Katie planned a large, traditional Indian wedding, but had to cancel the affair because of the pandemic. Instead, they held a small wedding ceremony at his parents’ home. Among those in attendance were (l-r) Som Sharma (baby nephew), Preeti Sharma (sister), Jasmeet Chatrath (sister), Bhupinder and Amrit Chatrath, Herman, Katie, Terry Hebert (mother-in-law), Ken Hebert (father-in-law), Jack Hebert (baby nephew), Ross Hebert (brother-in-law), Ellie Hebert (sister-in-law), Claire Hebert (baby niece), and Kelsey Hebert (sister-in-law).

wanted to be an attorney. In his early teens, she got her real estate license.

Dr. Chatrath impressed upon his son the role of education in attaining financial independence and a secure future.

“My father’s line growing up was always that people can take everything away from you, but they can never take your education,” recalls Chatrath. “Often times he would tell me I had to be more successful than him. There was huge pressure to do well in school.”

From a very early age, Chatrath’s father routinely urged him to have a 5-year, 10-year, and 20-year plan.

“It was intense to hear these things as a young child,” says Chatrath, but the strong advice instilled in him a sense of entrepreneurship at an early age. It is now at the root of his longtime interest in commercial real estate investment.

Chatrath’s grandfather, Inder, was a civil engineer and a subsistence farmer in India before coming to New York City where he worked as a postman for years. When he retired, he followed his family out to California in the early 2000s.

“I shared a room with my grandpa for a long time,” says Chatrath. “Looking back, it’s some of my fondest memories of childhood.”

He spent many weekends working with his grandfather in the garden. He remembers watching “Tom and Jerry” cartoons with him in their bedroom and can still hear him laughing hysterically.

“He had such a love for life,” says Chatrath. “He taught me so much. He’d say, ‘I have a little tidbit for you, Herman.’ He had so many stories and jokes. He was really cool.”

When Chatrath’s grandfather died, they came across a joke book he had kept.

Perhaps, it’s no surprise that humor remains a key element of Chatrath’s personality. He even dipped his toe into stand-up comedy while on a student exchange program in Ireland during college.

“I love making people laugh,” he says. “I use humor in all aspects of my life. It’s just something that’s a part of me.”

Chatrath initially thought he would be a doctor and planned to double major in biology and business at California State University, Northridge. A cell biology class soon made it clear to him, however, that he wanted no part of a career in medicine. Instead, he turned

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Herman Chatrath and his wife, Katie, have been married three years. Katie is a high school counselor in Visalia, Calif.

his full attention to business and began considering a law degree.

He became intrigued with commercial real estate. The process of purchasing a property and then repositioning it for resale captivated him.

“The idea of using creativity to turn a profit is very appealing to me,” he says.

While still in college, he interned at a commercial real estate investment firm. After college, Chatrath moved to San Diego with his soon-to-be wife, Katie, and began working in various commercial real estate related jobs, ranging from investment sales to asset management. He also acquired his real estate license and became a realtor.

“It gave me the confidence that if I really put my mind on something I can get there,” says Chatrath, who for the next several years managed a portfolio of apartment and office buildings all over the U.S. This experience gave Chatrath the valuable real-world experience he sought in anticipation of attending law school.

After nearly two years, Chatrath felt ready for the next step. He initially enrolled at the University of La Verne College of Law, but transferred to Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, after placing in the top 15% of his class at La Verne. At Loyola, Chatrath participated in Moot Court and on the Transaction Negotiation team. He served as a law clerk at the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s office.

“I feel I had a huge edge on the kids who went to law school straight out of college,” says Chatrath. “I had more direction. I had a perspective through which to view some of the case law we looked at.”

After graduating and taking the California Bar, Chatrath was

a post-bar law clerk at Coleman & Horowitz, LLP where he would be offered an attorney position after he passed the July 2022 Bar exam.

Chatrath says he connects with the firm’s “vibe.” The attorneys are down-to-earth and accessible and act as excellent mentors.

“I learn so much from Darryl Horowitz and Michael Dowling and every interaction I have with them,” says Chatrath.

Chatrath and his now-wife, Katie, have been married for three years. They were friends in high school but didn’t begin dating until after reconnecting in college. Though they planned a large, traditional Indian wedding, it was canceled when the pandemic hit. So, instead, they were married in an intimate wedding ceremony at his parents’ house with only a few family members and friends in attendance.

“It was the most amazing, kind of magical thing,” recalls Chatrath. “We danced the whole night. I feel like we’ve lived lifetimes together all ready. It’s like having a best friend and a wife all built in one.”

The young couple, who are expecting their first child in July, enjoy traveling when they can, whether it’s going to the beach or exploring a small town in California.

Chatrath’s practice currently concentrates on business, real estate, construction, and estate planning matters. In the next five years, he hopes to become involved in more real estate transactional work and estate planning.

“I’m very much focused on being the best attorney I can be,” he says.



Herman Chatrath celebrates graduation from Loyola Law School with his proud parents, Bhupinder and Amrit.