



In Memoriam Usamah Ansari

The Interfaith Summer Institute for Justice, Peace and Social Movements has created a student bursary program in honor of Usamah Ansari, the coordinator of the 2007 Institute. In the years when the Interfaith Summer Institute is not running a summer program, contributions to the bursary will automatically go to the Usamah Ansari Bursary in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Simon Fraser University. Usamah was deeply committed to the vision of the Institute and he put much effort and time in to ensure that ISI 2007 went smoothly and successfully. As well, he left in place systems of operation that the ISI is continuing to use.

Usamah passed away on April 13th 2008 while on his way home after a fundraiser in Toronto. He was struck by a car.

Usamah's life reflected so much of what the Interfaith Summer Institute for Justice, Peace and Social Movements stands for. He was a person of deep faith, a Muslim. He was a scholar, excelling as a student in the field of sociology at SFU and had just completed his MA at York University. Usamah was about to begin a PHD in Religious Studies at the University of Toronto. Much of his academic work has been published, including an article which will come out in the fall of 2008 in the Journal of South Asia. He was an activist, committed to an anti-racist, anti-colonial politics which played out in his involvement in a range of groups, in both Vancouver and Toronto, as well as on campus at SFU and York University. Usamah was a poet, writing poetry in both Urdu and English. Lastly, but not least, Usamah was caring and respectful in his interpersonal interactions, able to offer constructive criticism without harsh judgment and always honouring the dignity of all with whom he worked.

Both the academic and activist circles can be unwelcoming environments to people of faith; Usamah was unwilling to compromise or hide his identity in both circles. His faith motivated, guided and inspired the many ways in which he engaged with the world. As such he has been a model for us at the Interfaith Summer Institute, showing us that bringing together faith and work for justice and peace is not only a viable but a vital combination in today's world.

Applicants are invited to write a short statement as to how they personally relate to the objectives of the Interfaith Summer Institute and why they want to attend.

Donations to the Usamah Ansari Bursary can be made by making cheques payable to Simon Fraser University, stipulating that funds are for the Usamah Ansari Bursary, c/o the Interfaith Summer Institute. Please send contributions with your return address to:

**SFU Advancement,
c/o Ms Susan McAlevy
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