

251 S. 22nd Street
Philadelphia PA 19103
September 27, 1999

To: Pashtun Cultural Institute

On this occasion of the NWFP's Chief Minister's visit, I would like to express my hope that he feels as welcome in New York City as I and my academic friends have felt when we have visited the NWFP.

My first professional acquaintance with the NWFP was in 1982 when I began a collaboration with Pakistan's National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage, Lok Virsa. Accompanied by a Lok Virsa staff member, I traveled from Swat to D. I. Khan, collecting tapes and chapbooks of folk narratives. Pashtuns were constantly courteous and invariably helpful as I sought materials for the eventual book, *Bazaar of the Storytellers*, and for related articles about the folk poets whose verses may be little known beyond their villages but nevertheless carry the oral traditions of past centuries.

Later visits to the NWFP confirmed my initial impressions of the generosity of Pashtun hospitality. The whole region has a richness of customs and oral traditions that has been too little studied by western scholars and too often ignored by students in the NWFP. I hope that in the coming millennium, more joint projects of Pashtuns and foreign scholars will make major studies of NWFP culture available to the international scholarly community as well as more general audiences worldwide.

Sincerely,



Wilma Heston

Nisar Khan
Director
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Message

It gives me great pleasure to wish good luck to Nisar Khan and his associates who have launched this important initiative to project Pathan culture in the USA. The culture itself represents one of the most sophisticated with the entire range of poetry, literature, proverbs and folk lore. With the onslaught of globalization local cultures are in danger of becoming extinct. It would be a tragedy if Pathan culture were to meet such a fate. The world would be a poorer place.

Over almost three decades ago I had discovered the wisdom of the Pushto proverb. The proverbs contained centuries of practical advice and wisdom. I wrote them up with the nearest English translation from English literature in a small book called Mataloona: Pukhto Proverbs (Oxford University Press, 1975). Sir Olaf Caroe, the British administrator/scholar who had done so much to put the Pathans on the map with his classic work The Pathans, wrote the Foreword, probably the last piece of his life.

I request all those who love this culture, its language and its wisdom to encourage its preservation through archives, libraries and its perpetuation through lectures, seminars and supporters. It is therefore important that the efforts of Nisar Khan and his brave compatriots are encouraged.

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