

GOPIO-CT to honor Natarajan, Mayor Dan Malloy

STAFF REPORTER

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WHEN GOPIO-Connecticut celebrates its third anniversary at the Italian Center of Stamford, CT, two Indian Americans and the Mayor of Stamford will be honored by the organization for their outstanding achievements and contributions at an Awards Banquet on Sunday, April 26. The honorees are Dr Priyamvada Natarajan, Associate Professor at Yale University, for her accomplishments and contributions to astrophysics, Dr Ajay Kapur, Director of Music Technology at California Institute of the Arts for his accomplishment as "Young Person of the Year" and Mayor Dan Malloy of Stamford, who will be inducted by the organization as "Friend of GOPIO".

Over the last three years, GOPIO-CT has become an active and dynamic organization, hosting interactive sessions with policy makers and academicians, community events, youth mentoring and networking workshops, as well as health awareness workshops. Sangeeta Ahuja, the chapter's president, said, "We at GOPIO-CT salute the awardees of 2009. They have enriched our lives and the community we live in with their dedication, contributions and the passion for what they do and have accomplished." GOPIO International Chairman Thomas Abraham said that GOPIO-CT has become one of the most active chapters in the GOPIO family. "By honoring those who have excelled in various fields, it has been providing great exposure of such role models to the next



Dr Priyamvada Natarajan, Associate Professor at Yale University, and Dannel P. Malloy, longest serving mayor in the history of Stamford, Connecticut

generation and it also motivates them to further excel themselves," he added.

INDIAN AMERICAN ACHIEVER AWARD: Priya Natarajan is an Associate Professor in the Departments of Astronomy and Physics at Yale University. Her recent discovery with a collaborator of the existence of an upper mass limit for black holes in the Universe has opened up new ways to constrain the mass growth history of black holes and has important consequences for galaxy formation. While dark matter constitutes about 90 per cent of the matter content of the Universe, its intrinsic properties as well as its coupling to ordinary atoms or baryons is poorly understood at present.

Natarajan completed her undergraduate education at MIT and was also a graduate student there in the Program in Science, Technology and Society. She received her PhD from the University of Cambridge

(England) in theoretical astrophysics, where she was on an Isaac Newton Studentship and was elected to a Title A research fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge. She was elected a fellow of the Whitney Humanities Center at Yale in 2006-2007 and was recently admitted a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. She is very invested in the public dissemination of science and mathematics, has written several popular articles and writes a monthly newspaper column on astronomy. She currently serves on the Science Advisory Board of NOVA (WGBH).

FRIEND OF GOPIO AWARD: In 2005, Dannel P. Malloy was elected to his fourth term as Mayor of Stamford, Connecticut. He is the longest serving mayor in the history of Stamford. Throughout his tenure, he has earned people's respect for his genuine commitment to managing a city government that takes great pride in the citizens it serves and protects. Malloy's leadership boasts vast reductions in crime, new affordable housing, transformative economic development and many improvements to an educational system that competes with the nation's most prestigious public schools. Before he was elected Mayor, Malloy served as

Assistant District Attorney in Brooklyn, New York, and was subsequently a partner in the Stamford firm of Abate and Fox before committing himself to public service. Born and raised in Stamford, CT Dan is the youngest of eight children. He met his wife Cathy while both were attending Boston College.

YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD: Ajay Kapur is the Director of Music Technology at California Institute of the Arts as well as a Professor of Sonic Arts at the New Zealand School of Music. While juggling two academic positions, he also finds time to lead his Multimedia Consulting Company, KarmetiK, designing custom technology solutions for the entertainment industry. He received an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in 2007 from University of Victoria combining Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Music and Psychology with a focus on Intelligent Music and Media Technology. Ajay graduated with a Bachelor in Science and Engineering Computer Science degree from Princeton University in 2002.

While growing up in New Canaan, CT, Ajay was always a musician at heart. His work revolves around one question: "How do you make a computer improvise with a human?" Using the rules set forth by Indian classical tradition, Ajay has strived to build new interfaces for musical expression by modifying the tabla, dholak and sitar with added micro chips and sensor systems, while building robotic musical instruments which can be programmed to perform along with the human performer.