

LAUNCH &
DISCUSSION ON

THE GROUND BREAKER

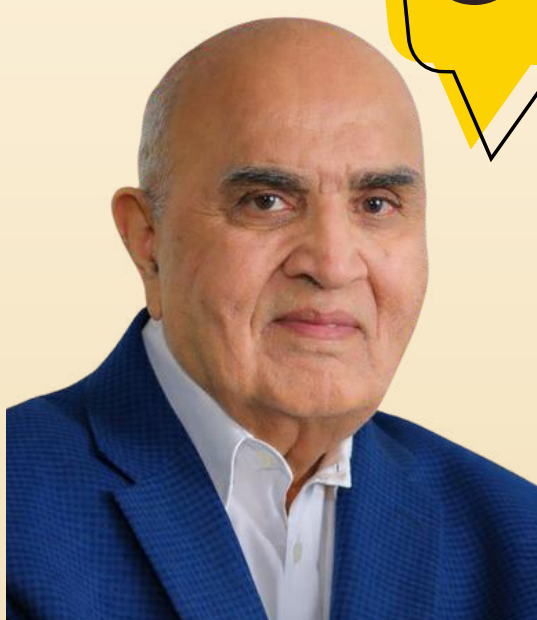
Risks, Rewards, and
Lessons from a
Legendary Entrepreneur

**JAN
12
2026**

MONDAY

6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

MMA Management Center



KANWAL REKHI



R RAMRAJ

SYNOPSIS

"We don't do that in this country," my professor said.

I told him that I didn't cheat. I found the test easy. The next time he gave a test, he stood directly behind me the entire time. When I scored even better on this one, the professor summoned me to his office again and said, If you're cheating, you're very good at it.' Rather than get upset by his insult, I enjoyed knowing I had done well on the test. It was not my problem if the professor did not believe his own eyes."

On a freezing cold night in 1967, Kanwal Rekhi arrived at the Michigan Tech campus as a student. He was part of the first wave of Indian émigrés, known as the \$8 Men, a moniker stemming from India's effort to stem the loss of brainpower from the country by allowing those who were leaving to take only \$8 of currency. In the decades that followed, Rekhi went on to create history in the global technology and entrepreneurship space.

Dubbed the "Godfather of the Silicon Valley's Indian Mafia" by *Fortune* magazine, Rekhi rubbed shoulders with luminaries such as Bill Gates. Steve Jobs. and Larry Ellison on his meteoric ascent in the tech industry. He went on to advise Presidents and Prime Ministers on culture-shifting policies, and is perhaps best known for his work inspiring and launching the careers of thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs, many of whom have become millionaires and even billionaires.

In *The Groundbreaker*, Rekhi shares a firsthand account of what it meant to be an American at the dawn of the digital age, what it means to be an American now amid massive change and uncertainty, and why democracy is crucial to the role entrepreneurs play in moving the world toward a better tomorrow.

More than a memoir, this book is a call to action—for dreamers, doers, and those brave enough to bet on themselves. With lessons on resilience, leadership innovation, and purpose, it's at once a deeply personal story of overcoming adversity and an urgent rallying cry for the next generation of changemakers.

PROGRAMME

5:15 PM Registration & Hi-Tea

6:00 PM Welcome & Opening Remarks

Mr K Mahalingam

Immediate Past President, MMA

Partner/Director, TSM Group of Companies

Introductory Remarks

TiE Chennai

Launch of the book *“The Groundbreaker: Risks, Rewards, and Lessons from a Legendary Entrepreneur”*– By the dignitaries

Address by the Author

Mr Kanwal Rekhi

Entrepreneur, Investor, Mentor, Thought Leader,

Co-founder of TiE & Author of *The Groundbreaker*

Author in conversation with

Mr R Ramraj

Past President, TiE Chennai

Senior Advisor, Elevar Equity

Co- Founder and Former CEO, Sify

Q&A

7:30 PM Vote of Thanks

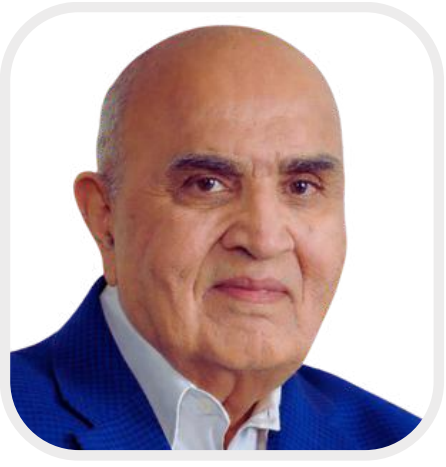
Gp Capt R Vijayakumar (Retd), VSM

Executive Director

Madras Management Association

7:35 PM End of the Program

PROFILE



Mr Kanwal Rekhi

Entrepreneur, Investor, Mentor, Thought Leader &
Author of *The Groundbreaker*

Mr Kanwal Rekhi was the first Indo-American founder and CEO to take a venture-backed company public on the NASDAQ. He has founded and built The IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE) into the largest global network of Indian entrepreneurs, and co-founded Inventus Capital Partners, where he applies his time, energy, and attention for building the venture franchise into a catalyst for India's tech revolution. He came to the United States from India for graduate studies, advanced through the engineering ranks in a number of technology companies, and then co-founded Excelan in Silicon Valley to commercialize Ethernet and TCP/IP-standards that became the basis of the internet as we know it today.

PROFILE



Mr R. Ramraj

Past President, TiE Chennai

Senior Advisor, Elevar Equity

Co-Founder and Former CEO, Sify

Mr Ramaraj is a serial entrepreneur who has been involved in ventures in IT, cellular technology and the Internet. His last venture was Sify, where he was the Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer. Sify was the first Indian Internet Company to list on NASDAQ National Market in the US (NASDAQ -SIFY). He was recognized as the 'Evangelist of the Year' at the India Internet World Convention in September 2000 and was also voted the IT Person of the year (2000 and 2001), in a CNET.com poll in India. In 2010, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) recognized him with a Lifetime Achievement Award for nurturing the Spirit of Entrepreneurship and inspiring and mentoring numerous entrepreneurs. Prior to Elevar, he was the Senior Advisor at Sequoia Capital. He is a Member of the Board of Governors of the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta.

Mr Ramaraj is on the board of Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ), a Not-for-Profit organization. OGQ is committed to bridging the gap between the best athletes in India and the best athletes in the world thus helping Indian athletes to win Olympic Gold medals. He is the first Indian to be invited to the Board of Directors of ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) where he served for six years as an Independent Director. He was a member of the Global Board of Trustees of TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs).

Mr R Ramaraj holds a B.Tech in Chemical Engineering from the University of Madras and an M.B.A. from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. He enjoys spending time studying the Vedanta philosophy with a desire

CONNECT WITH US



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MADRAS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



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