K. R. P. SHROFF
"It has always to be remembered that the fortunes of institutions are made by persons of outstanding ability, character and faith. Institutions may make men; but more than that, it is men that make institutions and feed their growing lives. If you have men of faith, character and ability always coming in to guide your affairs as occasion demands, the institution you serve prospers and grows in influence. It is by faith that business, steadily pursued, is bound to come into its own; it is the character that is the stay behind the faith; and lastly, it is the ability inspiring confidence in others that preserves the institution from harm in bad times and prospers it on the tide of good fortune.

As I gather it, these were the traits of character of those who have risen among you, from time to time, to shape your policy and mould and maintain your traditions along right lines......

In your President, you have today a guide, friend and philosopher who is full of the spirit implied in the principle of all sound business, namely — ability, which includes insight and foresight; character and industry that will take no defeat and know no slackness; and alertness to wait upon opportunities, profit by them and use them to go ahead with courage. You trust him and he trusts you; you love him and he gives his all in your service; you raise him and he in turn raises you. The portrait you have voted to him on the present occasion of your Diamond Jubilee is a clear indication how high he is in your esteem, trust and affection. He maintains your ancient traditions; he not only maintains them but knows how to improve and add to them and ennoble them. The manner in which he has handled the many crises in your recent past—at the same time he has stood firm on principles —, the way in which he has helped to give your Association its new constitution, the spirit in which he has stood for you facing all attacks and misrepresentations, point out one thing more than another that leadership of the right kind is a much needed ingredient in the healthy, expansive and solid activity of any institution. You are fortunate in such leadership and you signalise your good fortune by adorning your wall with a portrait of one who should be an example for all to emulate. Not riches alone constitute the glory of a community but riches combined with wisdom and charity."

—The Hon’ble Sir Dhunjishaw B. Cooper, Revenue and Finance Member, Government of Bombay, speaking on the occasion of the unveiling of Shri K. R. P. Shroff’s portrait on the 24th of April, 1936, during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of The Stock Exchange.
K. R. P. SHROFF

Patriarch of The Stock Exchange
and
The Father of The Stock Market in India

Enshrined for all time in the history of India’s Stock Exchanges will be the solid contribution of Shri K. R. P. Shroff to the growth of investment markets in the country. It is rare that in an under-developed economy there should be a well-developed capital market such as we have in India today. The credit for this achievement undoubtedly belongs to Shri K. R. P. Shroff who presided over the destinies of The Stock Exchange at Bombay for an unbroken period of 43 years — from 1923 to 1966 — a record unparalleled anywhere. During this extraordinary term of office, Shri Shroff identified himself as one with the Exchange by his complete devotion to the cause of the stock market, his indefatigable energy, his deep understanding of the intricate mechanics of market activity, his power of lucid exposition of complex market situations, his deft handling of the market whenever it ran into difficulties, his vision, foresight and shrewdness, and the courage of his convictions. Shri Shroff’s courage was not confined to the market place. Occasion arising, he had the courage to speak fearlessly to Government and to men holding the highest public office. If the Bombay Exchange enjoys pride of place and is so well organised and disciplined as to be the
only one deemed worthy of permanent Government recognition, that is because Shri Shroff has dedicated his life to its development. Shri Shroff is the Patriarch of the Exchange and as such he is widely honoured as 'The Father of the Stock Market in India'.

Shri Shroff belongs to a generation that has passed away. Born in 1878 and educated at the New High School and the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy College of Commerce, Shri Shroff first became a school teacher by profession. During these formative years, he produced a treatise on the construction of perpetual calendars — an exercise in skill, ingenuity and original thinking which were demonstrated in ample measure in later years. Out of a sense of filial duty, Shri Shroff abandoned the chosen profession in 1902 and joined his father in his business as a share, stock, finance and exchange broker. After the death of his father in 1916, he became a member of the Exchange; in 1920, he was elected as a director; in 1921, he became Joint Hon. Secretary and Treasurer; and finally, he was elected President of the Exchange on the 26th of May, 1923.

Shri Shroff's long term of office as President from 1923 to 1966 was crowded with events. 1920 to 1930 was a decade of recurring corners and emergencies. Corners in Finlay, Nagpur, Swadeshi, Currim, Broacha, Kohinoor and New Great shares were in full spate one after another. Then came several crises — the Great Depression in 1929, the Currimbhoy Ebrahim Group Crash in 1933, the Indian Iron crisis in 1937-38, the Japanese crisis in 1942, the
Liaquat Ali Khan Budget crisis in 1947, the commercial markets crisis in 1951 and the Chinese crisis in 1962. Shri Shroff steered the course of the market through these troubles and difficulties with remarkable success. Under his able and sagacious guidance, the Exchange invariably met its obligations in full and came out of each crisis not only stronger but with its honour un tarnished. The members of the Exchange reposed their trust in Shri Shroff implicitly and he inspired confidence and respect in Government and the public at large.

Shri Shroff’s creative ability and genius for constructive work found expression in several directions. He collaborated with the Atlay and Morison Stock Exchange Enquiry Committees appointed by Government in 1923 and 1936 and his help and assistance were gratefully appreciated by these Committees. In the field of stock market legislation also, he pioneered new ideas and laid the foundation of the present system of Government control and regulation. The basic provisions suggested by Shri Shroff were incorporated in the Bombay Forward Contracts Control Act, 1947, as well as in the subsequent Central legislation when the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act was passed in 1956. The Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules promulgated by Government in 1957 were almost wholly in accordance with his recommendations and so were the uniform Bye-laws and Regulations sanctioned by Government for all the recognised Stock Exchanges. The handsomest tribute to the contribution made by Shri Shroff was paid by the Chairman and the Secretary of the Gorwala Committee on
Stock Exchange Legislation when they remarked that "there is no better authority than him on the subject of the stock exchanges". Shri Shroff gave the market a code of rules, bye-laws and regulations, standardised its usages and trading practices, revolutionised the settlement procedures, established a clearing house for the safety of members and the investing public, and gradually built up the Exchange to its pre-eminent position as the best organised trade association in India.

In the course of the last half a century when Shri Shroff was at the helm of affairs, the Bombay Exchange underwent a remarkable transformation. The stock market now is no more what it was during the inter-war years and in the post-war and post-Independence periods until the 'fifties. In response to a series of structural changes in the economy and self-imposed regulations, the Exchange imperceptibly assumed a new character and outlook as it adapted itself to the changing circumstances. Shri Shroff piloted the Exchange in this transitional period with consummate skill. He evolved high standards of self-discipline and extended constructive co-operation to Government authorities. He jealously guarded the interest of the Exchange and its members, but only by reconciling it with public interest which he always respected as of paramount importance. If the market gained considerably in strength, stability and reputation, the credit in no small measure was due to the genius of Shri Shroff.

For more than a generation, Shri Shroff was a highly respected figure in business and financial circles. The high
standards maintained by the Exchange in listing securities showed that Shri Shroff was no respecter of persons. He refused to be brow-beaten by even the biggest industrial houses and successfully withstood all pressures when the interest of the Exchange demanded strict and impartial enforcement. He graced the boards of some well-established banking, insurance, shipping and other joint stock companies. His moderation at the conference table was no less valued than his wise counsel and mature judgment by his colleagues. Shri Shroff commanded universal respect throughout the business world and in each case his association lengthened into a lifetime of service and abiding loyalty.

The secret of Shri Shroff's successful career was in his many qualities of head and heart. His outstanding simplicity and kindly disposition endeared him to the stock exchange community and made him a popular figure in the business and official world. His good nature was proverbial. His doors were always wide open and he was easily accessible to one and all. Rarely was he seen not surrounded by a friendly crowd in which brokers, assistants and clerks mingled freely on equal terms. Under Shri Shroff's benign care, the Exchange presented the picture of one large family. He showed in ample measure his patriarchal qualities when dealing with the day-to-day problems on the Exchange throughout his long years of office. A staunch disciplinarian, he displayed a profound sense of justice, but always tempered justice with mercy.
His kindly and sympathetic disposition evoked for him respect and affection from one and all.

Conservative in character, Shri Shroff was nevertheless progressive in his outlook. He constantly took active steps to keep the Bombay Exchange abreast of the developments of the modern age. He initiated an up-to-date investment information service through the publication of investment analysis of joint stock companies and silently prepared the ground for inaugurating a new era in the public relations of the Stock Exchange. With the construction of its new edifice having up-to-date equipment and facilities, the Exchange will be able to modernise the various services for its members' and the general public. In this sense, the new building itself will be a permanent monument to Shri Shroff's contribution to the advancement of the Stock Exchange and his identification with the welfare and progress of the stock market in India. The groundwork of continuing progress and improvement has been laid down by Shri Shroff during the concluding years of his Presidentship and it can be justifiably claimed that he has been instrumental in ushering in a revolution in the working of the Bombay Exchange.

Shri Shroff mellowed with age. As years passed by and Shri Shroff neared the end of his term of office, the respect for this patriarch grew in proportion; and it was respect combined with admiration for the extraordinary alertness, mental vigour and clarity of thought he displayed notwithstanding his advanced years. The Bombay
Exchange, as it has developed, was so much his creation, and he was so much an integral part of the Exchange, that it was difficult for the members to imagine the Stock Exchange without the towering personality of Shri Shroff as its guiding spirit. They were reluctant to part with his stewardship. When, therefore, he expressed his desire to be relieved of his onerous responsibilities in view of failing health, he was appointed Patron of the Exchange in which capacity he was also designated as its principal adviser. The retirement of Shri Shroff in April 1966 as President of the Exchange at the incredible age of 88 — after holding that office for 43 years — marked not only the fruitful completion of a most eminent Presidentship but also the end of an epoch in the history of the stock market in India.

As Patron and principal adviser of the Bombay Exchange, Shri Shroff continues to make available his wise counsel and mature experience gained over a period of 66 years in the business world. His long vigil is not yet over. Shri Shroff has taken infinite pains on the Stock Exchange, served it with a rare tenacity of purpose, patience and devotion, and worked his way into the heart of one and all connected with the Exchange. There can be therefore no more fitting honour than to have a permanent monument enshrining his distinguished and dedicated services not only to the Stock Exchange but to the financial and business community at large. His bust to be unveiled on the 16th of May, 1968, by Shri Morarji Desai, the Hon'ble the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Finance of the Government of India, is a deeply
cherished gift from members and it will be a perpetual reminder to the coming generations of the eminence of Shri K. R. P. Shroff as a benefactor of the Exchange and a multifarious genius whose outstanding contribution as a master builder will be written in golden letters in the history of Stock Exchanges in India.
K. R. P. Shroff

Patron of the Stock Exchange
President from 1923 to 1966
Revered and Respected by
The Stock Exchange Community
and honoured as
The Father of the Stock Market
in India