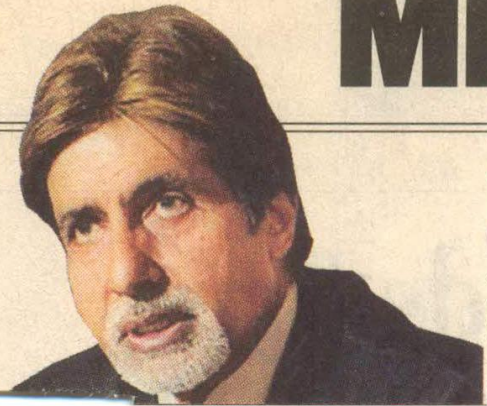


More on the Web
www.hindustantimes.com

Dr Big B

Amitabh Bachchan's friends
 in Delhi University talk about the man
 who loved acting P5



Big day for Big B at Delhi University

Anuradha Mukherjee
 New Delhi, November 3

ON SATURDAY, 'Bachh' will be conferred an honorary Doctor of Letters (D Litt) degree by Delhi University at a special convocation. For the uninitiated, 'Bachh' was how Amitabh Bachchan's batchmate referred to him at Kirori Mal College where he was a student pursuing BSc general which friends his heart was not really in.

"His heart was really in acting. And he was one of the lead actors of the college theatre group Player's which was an extremely acclaimed group in those days. When I joined in 1961, he was on his way out but was still around as he had secured a compartment in the final year exams," said Sydney Ribeiro, batchmate and the first dean alumni of Delhi University.

His friends from college days remember how Bachchan impressed with his first foray on the stage in the university as a member of Player's. Players was started by Frank Thakur Dass in K M College and had produced many well known actors like Bachchan, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Satish Kaushik and Shakti Kapoor who was then known as Sunil Kapoor.

"Bachchan got the second lead, a negative role, in a production called 'Winter Set'. These were the days of the Chinese aggression and there were frequent blackouts during rehearsals. Once the lights went out as Amitabh delivered his lines. But he continued, in the darkness his voice stood out in sharp relief. He stopped only when Prof Thakur Dass said Amitabh it was brilliant," remembers Ribeiro. But the actor was just another student in the college and the high point as far as success with women was concerned came only when he was invited to participate in a production at Miranda House. "In those days, Miranda students invited boys only from the Shakespeare Society of St Stephen's for acting out roles meant for men. Amitabh was the first student to be invited from KMC," says Ribeiro. Although Bachchan was said to be somewhat a "misfit because of his public school background, he soon adjusted and friends remember him as a courteous, well mannered and easygoing person. "He was a very sweet guy and I remember spending hours talking to him," says Raghu Sudan, another friend.

anuradha.mukherjee@hindustantimes.com