

The Justice Birendra Chandra Das Memorial Scholarship

The Justice Birendra Chandra Das Memorial Scholarship has been instituted by his daughter, Sulekha Patnaik, to provide deserving law students a full scholarship to cover tuition fees for an entire academic year. This scholarship will be awarded to one student each year and is only tenable at National University of Law Odisha (NLUO). The scholarship will be awarded based on a student's economic need and academic merit. All eligible candidates can apply to the Justice Birendra Chandra Das Memorial Scholarship for a full funding of tuition fees for a year at NLUO (see the scholarship details).

About Justice Birendra Chandra Das:

Born on 17-January-1910 to Bishnupriya and Rai Bahadur Radha Charan Das of Cuttack, Behar and Orissa, Hon'ble Justice Birendra Chandra Das had his early education in Peary Mohan Academy and then Ravenshaw College in Cuttack. He then studied at Patna College in Patna, from where he received his Bachelor of Arts (honours) degree in Mathematics. At 19 years, Justice Das enrolled in Middle Temple to study Law in the Inns of Court in London. He was called to the bar on 13-June-1934 when he was 24 years old.



While in London, Justice Das also received his B.A. (Hons.) degree in Mathematics from the University College in London, United Kingdom. After some experience as a barrister-at-law from the Hon'ble Society of Middle Temple, he returned to practice as an advocate in the Patna High Court in February 1935.

He was recruited to the Superior Judicial Service in the year 1949. While in the Superior Judicial Service, Shri Das had the varied experience of being a District Judge, Legal Remembrancer, Deputy Secretary and then as the Secretary of Law Department, Government of Odisha. After a brief stint as the Vigilance Commissioner in Odisha in 1967, Shri Das was sworn in as judge in the Odisha High Court on 31-August-1970.



He served as the Judge of Orissa High Court from 31-August-1970 to 02-August-1972.

At a personal level, Justice Das retained a keen interest in jurisprudence, mathematics, sciences, and furthering education. The lack of schools in the Bhubaneswar Aerodrome area, led him to donate a portion of his residential land to enable the building of a school in 1977-1978. Not wanting to be mentioned as a donor, the school is called the Aerodrome UGME School. As a judge, he remained committed to integrity, fairness, and holistic logical analysis. He strongly felt that for the legal profession, the following were imperative:

- Understanding law and society - Recognise how the law in books operates differently from law in action.
- Cultural sensitivity - Consider how legal norms vary according to religion, gender, and other social contexts.
- Political neutrality - Maintain a degree of aloofness consistent with the practice of law.

His daughter, Sulekha Patnaik, created this scholarship to honour the unique law professional and human being that Justice Birendra Chandra Das was. She and her family hope that his example and the scholarship will inspire law students at NLUO to pursue a legal career with integrity, empathy, and a fearless commitment to justice.