

Promoting Diversity in the Courts: Hon. Sarika Kapoor

(Note: This interview was recorded in October 2024)

John Caher:

In this episode of Diversity Dialogues, a production of the New York State Unified Court System's Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Amici podcast program, we are going to meet a judge in Nassau County who is unlike any other judge, possibly in the entire history of the state court system. The Honorable Sarika Kapoor carries a recessive gene that results in dwarfism. She stands all of three foot, eight inches tall, a little bit more than a yardstick. A native of India who came here as a child, Judge Kapoor had a long career as a court attorney before she was appointed by Governor Hochul to the Court of Claims in 2022. She is now an Acting Supreme Court Justice.

Today we're going to pull back the curtain and try to see the world from a different set of eyes. We are going to explore how this world looks from the perspective of a little person, learn a little bit about the condition called "dwarfism," and have a frank discussion on the challenges those with that condition encounter every day in our society, and, I'm sorry to say, in our courts. Our goal today, as always, is to raise awareness and maybe even help make things a little bit better in both our own shop and the greater community.

I'm John Caher, host of the Court System's podcast program.

Judge Kapoor, thank you for coming on the program. I'm very excited to have you here and really very, very eager to learn about something I confess to knowing next to nothing about: dwarfism, and I'm hoping you can educate me and our listeners. Let's start with some basics, if we could. So you were born in India and your parents emigrated when you were very young, is that right?

Judge Kapoor:

Yes. Let me start by thanking you, John, for having me on this program. I'm really excited to be a part of this wonderful series of interviews with the Unified Court System leaders and staff from diverse backgrounds who play a vital role in helping the court system achieve its goals and missions.

So to answer your question, yes, I was born in New Delhi, India, and emigrated to the States with my parents and my sister when I was seven years old.

John Caher:

Were your parents little people?

Judge Kapoor: No, my parents are average sized folks, as is my sister. She's four years older than I am.

So just by way of a little bit of a background, achondroplasia is caused by a spontaneous mutation, and I had to look this up because I always get this wrong, but it's a mutation in the FGFR3 gene and the mutation obviously happens before birth and most children, around 80%, again, I had to look that up, are born to parents where neither parent has the condition. Indeed, it's also rare for people of normal height who have a child with achondroplasia to have another child with that disorder, and that's the story in my case. My parents are average sized folks, as is my sister. But the thing to take away is that anyone can be born with achondroplasia. After all, it is a spontaneous mutation.

John Caher: Was that evident prenatal, at birth? Is it immediately obvious?

Judge Kapoor: Truthfully, I don't know the answer to that. Believe it or not, I never asked my parents when it was apparent that I had dwarfism, but having seen my baby photos, I'd say that it was as early as when I was a few months old.

Achondroplasia is a bone growth disorder that I had from birth. So while I was born with it, your question—When was it apparent that I had dwarfism?— the answer to that is likely when I was a few months old.

John Caher: Okay, thank you. How did your family deal with your condition?

Judge Kapoor: As best as I know, and unless my parents really succeeded in censoring the bad stuff, which I don't think they're especially good at, to them there was nothing to deal with. It was just what was. I was treated the same as my sister.

There may have been things that I had that my sister didn't have. For instance, I was more prone to getting ear infections. Most little people are. But then again, there were things that my sister struggled with as a child that I didn't, like asthma, so my parents just rolled with it. And as in other, and likely in all families, one child has one set of issues, the other has a different set. So there was nothing really to "deal with." It was just what was. They tackled the day-to-day as it came to them, and I'll be honest, my parents were more concerned about putting food on the table and giving us a good launching pad for life.

So there was nothing, as far as my parents are concerned, to deal with. If anyone was visibly affected with me being a dwarf, it was my sister. So I'll

just share just a little bit. When we were younger, my protective, loving and older sister would get into verbal arguments with anyone that she caught staring at me or making fun of me. She would ensure that people who dared to pick on me would not leave the encounter without being sorry for having done so. Thankfully, we both have found a healthier way to dealing with things. That said, my sister, a cardiologist today, is to this day my fiercest protector and ally. So if anyone had anything to deal with, certainly in my childhood, it was my sister. But as I said, we've now grown up to be well-adjusted human beings, adults.

John Caher: That's wonderful that you had such a guardian angel and continue to have that guardian angel, really.

Judge Kapoor: Absolutely. She's my rock and my foundation.

John Caher: Offline you said something that really has stuck in my head for a while and I quote, "I can't hide, and trust me, I have tried." *Trust me, I have tried.* What are you saying?

Judge Kapoor: Well, I'd be lying if I said I never wanted to be "normal." So especially in my teenage years, there were times when I was sorely jealous of people that were afforded a veil of anonymity and plainness so they could hide in the safety of a crowd or mob. When people would say things like, "Everyone has something they're dealing with," a part of me, certainly in my teenage years, would always think, "Well, at least they have the luxury of dealing with their something, whatever their something was, privately." I never had privacy when dealing with this because I could never hide it. So that's what I really meant.

I tried to see if I could tuck it away, especially growing up, but obviously that didn't get me far. I can't tuck this away.

But I have to say, John, eventually I realized that this condition could also afford me a coupon in life that others did not have, and that is being memorable. When you can't blend in, you end up being more memorable and I decided to be really grateful for that coupon in life.

John Caher: That is a wonderful attitude and very, very inspiring. Thank you for that. Now, where did you go to college?

Judge Kapoor: I went to the City University of New York, Queens College.

John Caher: And at some point along the way you decided you wanted to become a lawyer. When and why?

Judge Kapoor: It's really difficult to identify a specific moment or an episode in life when I determined that I wanted to pursue law. To some extent the answer relates, albeit abstractly in my case, to being of Asian descent where, dare I say, the expectation is that you either grow up to become a doctor or a lawyer.

But for me the answer also ties to having a very difficult time accepting and tolerating inequities. I have never been shy to argue for the underdog because I was and remain to this day, I feel, the underdog. But whether that underdog was me or others, I have always just had a very hard time seeing people slighted or being deprived of a fair shot or a level playing field. So I wanted to be a part of a service profession that is committed to administering justice, and here I am in the legal field.

John Caher: That's a wonderful story. So at Hofstra Law, what was your plan? Did you know what kind of law you wanted to practice?

Judge Kapoor: I expected to practice bankruptcy law. Again, I saw it as giving the underdog, someone who's had a setback in life, or even a corporation or a business which was the source of income for many of their employees and their families, a fresh slate. My note for my journal was in bankruptcy law, I was all guns blazing on bankruptcy law, but here we are, and nowadays, I only deal with bankruptcy law in the context of foreclosure actions that come across my desk.

John Caher: Bankruptcy makes sense in the context of why you became a lawyer. I mean, the whole premise of bankruptcy is a fresh start, right?

Judge Kapoor: That's the premise, sure. And that's really what I wanted to try to pursue, but as with most law students, where you think you want to go is not usually where you end up, I find.

John Caher: I have found that as well. I know that after your first year you had an opportunity to intern with the Honorable A. Gail Prudenti, then Presiding Justice to the Appellate Division, Second Department, and later our Chief Administrative Judge, and later still Dean of Hofstra Law School, after you left, I think. How did Judge Prudenti influence you?

Judge Kapoor: Judge Prudenti was my first professional mentor. She was a part of every big professional move that I made. She was a great friend and I have been extraordinarily lucky to have had her counsel in my early professional life.

John Caher: Now shortly after your graduation, I believe in 2004, you got a job as a court attorney and I think you've been with the court system your entire career. What brought you to the court system and what has kept you in the court system?

Judge Kapoor: I was working at a large Long Island law firm at the end of my 2L year, and during my 3L year. I was really hoping that I would be extended an offer to work there post-graduation. That offer never came. Graduation and the bar exam were fast approaching. So I decided to cast a wider net and at that time I learned that there was a job opening in the Law Department at Nassau Supreme. So I applied. While I never wanted to work in the courts, I ended up loving it. The job being a court attorney in the Law Department spoke to my skill sets, researching and writing, and I absolutely loved, "being behind the bench."

And in those days, the attorneys in the Law Department could freely interact with others in the courthouse, including the judges for whom we were drafting decisions. So I thrived in the early days. The collegial atmosphere that once existed in the halls of Nassau Supreme permitted so many of us to foster such meaningful relationships. So I ended up staying.

John Caher: So you loved being behind the bench and at some point, you decided to make being there permanently a goal. Was it an early goal to become a judge?

Judge Kapoor: Honestly, no. After I started working in the Law Department, I quickly realized that one of the prerequisites to becoming a judge, and even to some extent a law clerk to a judge, was political involvement and backing. I didn't have anything resembling that, but eventually people, including some judges, started saying things like I would be great on the bench or that they looked forward to calling me Judge Kapoor. And so slowly I started to dream that dream for myself, and while that was not my goal early on, it eventually became a dream because others had planted that seed in me.

John Caher: Now, the pursuit of that dream is, as you mentioned, a political process and even though the judgeship you hold, the Court of Claims, isn't an elective position, the path is political. You got to go to political functions, you have to be involved in political activities, you have to meet and socialize with the "right" people, you need a mentor. How did you nurture all those connections?

Judge Kapoor:

The truth is, I didn't. I applied to the Court of Claims because I didn't think I needed to have political backing or an endorsement. I'll be honest with you, John, had that been a requirement, I don't think I would be on the bench today.

Whether that was a realistic thought at the time, the truth is it was my starting point and all I knew was that the only thing I needed to seek a position on the Court of Claims bench was a printer to print the application. That said, I mean, although I knew that I didn't need to pay a political fee at the door, so to speak, I also knew that the time I was applying had to be the right time.

So it was the fall of 2019 and I was watching the national Democratic primary debates and the pundits on TV were saying that Governor Cuomo would not be putting his name in the ring so as to permit Joe Biden have his chance at the nomination.

So I sat there and concluded that the Executive Branch in New York State is blue, the Legislature is blue, so this might be a good time to fill out the Court of Claims application, and that's exactly what I did. I printed the application and filled it out. The reality is, I never had a political mentor and the, quote, unquote, "right" people never socialized with me. So being invited to political functions was never a thing. I didn't even know how to even get on the guest list.

One thing you have to keep in mind, my reality is the thought of attending political functions was a non-starter for me. These functions are not designed or welcoming for those standing only three feet, eight inches tall. They're not accommodating at all. The meet and mingles are horrible. The conversations are all happening at bar stool height, and that's assuming I even know what to say at these things.

So the grip of local political parties is, quite honestly, just alarming to me, and the truth is that there's no easy entry point for those like me who have no political ally. And so I did what I could. I looked for an alternative route and I applied to the Court of Claims.

I remember an attorney saying to me immediately after my installation, he said that was the first speech he heard in his 40 years of practicing in Nassau County that a judge did not thank a political party leader. And I'll be honest, John, I wear that comment as a badge of honor to this day.

John Caher:

Well, that's great. So you were able to somehow get the attention of Governor Kathy Hochul and get her to appoint someone who did not

have any political connections. It wasn't like her party chair whispered in her ear or anything of that sort.

Judge Kapoor: The reality is, and I wish I had a more salacious story to tell, but it's really nothing more than I applied and I got a call.

I had actually interviewed with Governor Cuomo's committee back on March 4, 2020, and then the pandemic struck. So judicial appointments obviously came to a standstill until March of 2021 when I was invited to interview again with then Governor Cuomo's committee, this time via Zoom. After that, Governor Cuomo stepped down and Governor Hochul stepped in. I was very pleasantly surprised that Governor Hochul did not disband the Judicial Screening Committee and that her committee decided to revisit my application. Again, I had no political bigwigs to back my application, and so I'm sitting here today convinced that the reason I am here is because of the grace of God, divine intervention. It certainly wasn't political intervention, that I can tell you.

John Caher: You didn't know Kathy Hochul, right?

Judge Kapoor: Not at all.

John Caher: And she went on basically your application, your recommendations, your credentials?

Judge Kapoor: I believe that's the case. Yes.

John Caher: That's good to hear.

As far as we can tell, you were the very first and only little person to climb the bench, literally and figuratively, in New York State. The court system had never had to accommodate someone like you before, at least not on that side of the bench. Was the court system equipped or eager to accommodate your special needs?

Judge Kapoor: The short answer is, no. Now, keep in mind that at the time that I was appointed to the bench, I had already been working in Nassau County Supreme Court for almost 20 years. So everyone knew me, and again, this goes to memorable, because I stick out. My condition being little was not a secret. Despite this, the administration was very slow to make accommodations, and while I have many stories I can share with you, I'll share one by way of example, if I may.

After initially being pressured to take a makeshift chambers without a bathroom in a non ADA compliant building, I was eventually assigned to a chambers in the main building, the Supreme Court where I'm seated today. There, I was given a standard judge's chair for both the chambers and the bench.

Now, chairs have always been very challenging for me. Unlike everyone else, I don't sit *down* into a chair. Instead, I climb *up* onto a chair. Now we add the fact that it's a judge's chair. They are, as you know, ridiculously bulky and cumbersome. So I requested that I be given a different chair. I was told that I couldn't use a different chair and I had to use the same chair that all other judges use. That was, of course, unacceptable to me. I just couldn't do that.

Believe it or not, this became a huge issue. I volunteered to buy my own chair; I was told I couldn't do that. I proposed taking my chair from the Law Department that I had sat in for years; I was told that that was not acceptable either. I was told that my chair had to have the, quote, unquote, "majesty" of a judge's chair.

Now, this, I'll be honest, made me feel very hurt and unwelcome. I am not comfortable in a standard judge's chair, and aside from the fact that I have the challenge of climbing up onto a chair, I need a chair with adjustable armrests to accommodate my little arms and a chair that I can maneuver without my feet touching the ground.

So ultimately, the way the story ends is Judge [First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman] St. George had to get involved to get me an acceptable chair for my chambers.

But I think this example—and yes, unfortunately, it's just one example of many incidents—illustrates how ill-prepared or less than eager my administration was to accommodate my needs. It should never take the DCAJ, the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge, to step in, but it did. I will add a footnote here. The chair on my bench in the courtroom remains the bulky judge's chair. I was never given a suitable chair for the bench. Thus, the attorneys and litigants all see me climbing up onto the chair in my robe day in and day out. Now, let me assure you, there is no grace in the act of climbing onto a chair. Just imagine doing that yourself. There is no dignity. I can never wear a dress or a skirt for obvious reasons.

However, in the administration's defense, I will tell you I never made the ask either to get me a suitable chair for the bench. Apart from the fact that I'm disappointed that they didn't put two and two together to say,

"Hey, we should look into getting a different chair for Judge Kapoor's bench, too." The fact is that I just did not have the bandwidth to fight the system on so many things at once. I was tired and lonely, and unfortunately that was my reality in the early days, which were only two years ago. But the good news is that come January 2025, I'll be in a wheelchair full time. So the chair of the bench will no longer be an issue as I will just remain seated in my wheelchair and go up a ramp, ideally, onto the bench. That really, I think, illustrates how ill-prepared and slow the administration was to make accommodations for the first little person judge in the state.

John Caher: That is very, very, very sad.

And I think you were the first person I ever heard say the good news is I'll be in a wheelchair come January!

Judge Kapoor: Well, it moots out the issue of chairs and, God willing, it'll liberate me. It sounds counterintuitive, but it'll actually be more helpful.

John Caher: You had to go through an awful lot to get a chair and you're a judge, and I can't imagine how much more difficult it would've been with someone who did not have your gravitas.

Judge Kapoor: It unnerves me to think that if this is how they treat a little person judge, how they would treat a differently abled juror or attorney or litigant? Accessibility is such an important issue, and we're in an arm of government that is committed to administering justice. So if they can do that or offer so much resistance and so many obstacles to a sitting judge, as I said, it unnerves me to think of the huffing and puffing that a litigant or a juror or an attorney might face. I have the will and, by the grace of God, I also have a platform. I remain committed to using my platform to build a path for those who will come after me and improve accessibility for all.

John Caher: Well, that is not only your goal, but also the goal of this podcast. I understand that with the bench chair, it was kind of a pick your battles scenario.

Offline you used a term I'd like to recall now: "Difficult customer." You said you often felt like a, quote, "difficult customer." Can you explain that?

Judge Kapoor: Well, all of my asks left me with the label of being a "difficult customer."

I need accommodation and my requests for accommodations have been met with a lot of sighs and expressions of exhaustion, and honestly, you would think I was asking for a marble corner suite. I never did. I asked for a chair with adjustable arms and elevators that function on a reliable basis, but each ask that you make, big or small, it left me known as a difficult customer because I had asks. And for this, again, to happen in an arm of government in 2024 is shocking. And quite frankly, I just never expected this.

John Caher: I wouldn't have either. I'm disappointed as well. Now, is that something that's just systemic in our society? I mean, did you encounter the same "difficult customer" attitude at Hofstra Law or the Long Island law firm where you worked as a student?

Judge Kapoor: No, the law school and the law firm were all seamlessly accommodating. And indeed, they anticipated my needs before I even had to make the ask.

For instance, a step stool was placed near the coffee counter at the firm. They also placed a step stool in the ladies' room, and I was given an adjustable chair. I am struggling, in fact, to recall a single example either in law school or at the firm where I was ever made to feel that I was difficult. On the contrary, I was made to feel very comfortable and welcome and part of the team.

John Caher: So, where there's a will, there's a way?

Judge Kapoor: Absolutely. There absolutely is a way. And I'm not convinced, sadly, that there is a will. I'm hopeful that that can change.

John Caher: What about the physical structure of the courthouse and other buildings—elevators, doors? In your experience, are those accessible or could we be doing a better job there?

Judge Kapoor: I'll start off by saying that the biggest problem that I've noticed, that I've been able to diagnose, is that there seems to be very little commitment to addressing needs of the differently abled or ADA needs. And I think it goes hand-in-hand with the difficult customer sentiment that I spoke about before. Accessibility doesn't seem to be a priority with my administration.

Now, as for specifics, I can speak to my building, at least. At any given point in time, there is at least one elevator that is out of order and frequently many more. And unfortunately, the public areas of the

courthouse do not have, for instance, automatic doors for the wheelchair bound. At this time, there is no courtroom in this building that can accommodate a wheelchair bound litigant in a witness box. While there is one courtroom with a hydraulic lift to the witness box, that lift has not worked or been serviced in 20 years.

So, like I said, accessibility doesn't seem to be a priority in Nassau. But I am confident that these deficiencies can be cured.

John Caher: The listener cannot see you as I am, but I'm looking around your chambers, just seeing what I can see, and one of the things I notice is an unusual size desk blotter, blue desk blotter, right behind you. What's the story behind that?

Judge Kapoor: I have an L-shaped desk. I don't have a standard judge's desk. The L-shaped desk permits me to navigate my chair. Again, my feet don't touch the ground, so it permits me to navigate the entire desk. As you can likely imagine, the computer is obviously set up on one side of the L, and then I have the other side of the L for papers and whatnot. The desk blotter to an ordinary person, just appears to be a blotter.

But what it is, is a visible cue for my staff, because that blotter is the size of my reach. My staff has learned that if they need me to see something or read something, they need to put it on the blotter because my reach can't go beyond that blotter. A similar blotter is placed on my bench. My court clerk or the court officer, whenever they're handing me items, is already aware that if the judge needs to see this, it needs to be on the blotter. If it's less important or it doesn't need to be prioritized, I will take it off of the blotter. The blotter is my actual workable workspace.

John Caher: That's fascinating. I imagine most people, including myself, would not have thought about that. Obviously, you cannot get books off a top shelf, but I wouldn't have thought about reaching horizontally.

Judge Kapoor: Yeah, my arms are little. Achondroplasia is the type of dwarfism I have. The broad term is called "skeletal dysplasia," and is the broad term for conditions that cause problems with the way bones and cartilage grow. Achondroplasia dwarfism, which is the condition that I have, is the most common type of skeletal dysplasia. There are other types.

Now, achondroplasia is short-limbed dwarfism. The condition occurs in one in 15,000 to 40,000 newborns. So it's caused, as I said earlier, by a change, a mutation in a specific gene which prevents bone growth and mainly affects the long bones in the arms and legs.

I have an average-sized torso. Most achondroplasia folks have an average-sized torso. But the long arms of the bones and legs are stunted, so the growth is stunted there. People with achondroplasia have a short stature with an average height under four feet, six inches. As you identified in your introduction, I stand at three feet, eight inches tall, or 44 inches. My arms are little and my legs are little, which is why they don't touch the ground.

John Caher: Thank you. In the courtroom, are you ever concerned that attorneys, jurors, etc., are treating you differently than they would a judge a more typical height?

Judge Kapoor: No. No, I never think that. I've never been made to feel that way. Attorneys, litigants, jurors, no one has ever treated me differently than they would a judge of more typical height.

So I'll give you an example. My nephew and niece are the center of my universe. They are my heart and soul. By the time they turned four or so, they were already starting to grow taller than me. Now they are 17 and 14 respectively. But during this time, despite the fact that they towered above me, they always knew that I was a grown-up, and that is an important distinction. Although I was shorter than them by the time they stepped into elementary school, they never forgot that I was a grown-up. And blessedly, it's that same feeling that takes place in my day-to-day living while I interface with the folks on the other side of the bench.

The attorneys, the jurors, the litigants, the staff have never once questioned my authority. So for instance, while they see me climbing up onto my bench chair, they know I'm the one in command. And that serves, honestly, to reassure me of my faith in humanity. And frankly, that speaks to the power of diversity as well.

Being little, I am less intimidating than my colleagues on the bench, yet all the while I retain the full command and authority to make meaningful legal and, where necessary, equitable decisions.

And I can tell you, John, while I have no evidence to support this, I know in my core that the litigants leave my courtroom feeling heard and seen, even if they don't walk out with the exact outcome that they might have hoped for. So for instance, even when I have settlement conferences, many litigants sit at my chambers with their attorneys and share their grievances inside of the story. So now my chambers, as you can see somewhat in Teams right now, is, I think, a welcoming, safe space where they leave feeling like they've had their day in court and having spoken to

the judge, leading to the temperature being lowered and facilitating a settlement. So the proverbial welcome mat is a great tool and it helps the attorneys take note that Kapoor has command over the law and a heart to facilitate the resolution, either by going to trial or by facilitating a settlement. So I can't say that the attorneys and the litigants or the jurors ever feel, or at least I have never been made to feel, that I am not the one in command as compared to a judge of more typical height.

John Caher: That is good to hear, and it does seem to say something good about humanity.

One of the reasons we do these podcasts is to raise awareness, and I'm sure we all need to be more aware, and you yourself mentioned an incident with a little friend at a curb, and I'd like you to share that with our listeners, if you would.

Judge Kapoor: My dear friend, who's a little person, is much shorter than I am. I don't know his actual height, but I can try to paint a visual, if you will. If he were standing next to a standard desk or table, he wouldn't be able to see the top of that table. He's that short. Now, keep that visual in mind while I share this anecdote to illustrate the point of how I also take things for granted and need my own awareness to be broadened and challenged periodically.

We went out to eat at a restaurant and decided to meet at the restaurant rather than driving together. At the end of the dinner, as we were leaving the premises and I went to my car, I saw my friend walking to the end of the sidewalk to the curb cut, only to come back to his car, which was close to the door of the restaurant. I realized then that he did not have the ability like I did to simply step off the curb. I do it all the time without thinking, just step off the curb, but he couldn't do that because he's that short. So yeah, in that moment, I too became more aware, and that is a wonderful thing. My own notions and sensitivities were broadened at that time, and that's just amazing. That's great.

John Caher: Obviously, we all see the world through our own eyes, and one of the purposes of this podcast is to help people see the world through other people's eyes. So I appreciate that story.

In closing, I'm going to ask you for some advice for me and others who want to be sensitive, because it can be confusing. For instance, I think most people know better than to stare, which is obviously rude, and your sister beats the heck out of them, but it seems equally rude to ignore or turn away, and I think most people would like to be helping, but we don't

want to imply that you can't open a door or you can't walk up the stairs and we want to carry you, and sometimes it's unclear how to refer to people with dwarfism. So tell me, please.

Judge Kapoor: Sure. Let's start, if I may, with one of the biggest movements that's taking place in the LPA community. LPA is Little People of America. It's the national organization. One of the biggest movements taking place as we speak is eliminating, and that is the word, *eliminating*, the use of the term "midget." Now, I have a really hard time saying that word out loud, so let me, if I may, be as plain and clear as possible: That term is grossly inappropriate and highly offensive. Indeed, the LPA community has reached out to media outlets, schools, all sectors of the community with the goal of having them remove that word from the lexicon. So to everyone who is listening, please reach out to your circles and explain that there is no place for the "M word."

Now, "dwarf" is acceptable, "short" is descriptive, but it's not entirely accurate. The term "little" is fine. But I'll tell you, John, a very simple and easy way to combat all of these issues is, just call the individual by their name, period, done, end of story, and that is the best way to honor someone. Just call me Sarika or Judge Kapoor. Call me by my name. Call everybody by their name, and you'll honor them without ever disrespecting them.

John Caher: That is good advice and very, very simple. Kind of an Occam's Razor advice, right?

Judge Kapoor: Indeed. Indeed, it's Occam's Razor!

John Caher: Judge, thank you so much for your time and your insight and for broadening my knowledge and my horizons. As I said, and I think it's true of many people, I have no exposure to dwarfism. So 45 minutes ago, I knew almost nothing about it, and I know there's a lot more to learn, but I want to thank you for putting me on that road.

Judge Kapoor: John, thank you so much for having me. It means so much to me that you would honor me by having my voice be a part of this movement of raising awareness and increasing diversity and sensitivities of everyone listening.

John Caher: We are the ones who are honored, but thank you.