

BITS Pilani Alumnus George Jacob does it for NMAH Smithsonian Star Spangled Banner Gallery

By Dr BR Natarajan

Dated: Nov 20, 2008

By now everybody knows that President George W. Bush gave a clarion call to all Americans to come and visit the newly renovated Smithsonian, which he called a "fantastic place of learning."

The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History (NMAH) is the home of an American treasure - the Star - Spangled Banner, the flag that inspired the national anthem of the United States of America (USA). The Museum closed on September 5, 2006 for major architectural renovations to the tune of \$85 million. The Star Spangled Banner exhibit went on display in a monumental, inspiring new gallery on Tuesday 18 November 2008 evening at a Gala Reception at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian.

Proud to be a BITSian George Jacob who graduated from one among the top ranking universities in India today Birla Institute of Technology and Science - BITS Pilani Rajasthan was Project Director to produce exhibits for America's most treasured national icon -the STAR SPANGLED BANNER gallery at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC. Incidentally, Pilani has one of the first and finest science and technology museums in India.

He has impressive credentials for job. He got his MSc(Tech) Museum Studies from BITS Pilani and then an Industrial Design Masters from University of Toronto where he was a Commonwealth Fellow. He became the B M Birla planetarium Jaipur director when he was just 25 years old.

At the 230, 000 Sq Ft. Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) which is a large operation, featuring exhibits, digital planetarium and the USS Blueback submarine among others) he was the Vice President of Exhibits & Design. He was the founding Director of the \$29 million primarily NASA funded astronomy center and spear headed the Mauna Kea Astronomy Education Center, Hawaii.

In his opinion, Designing and building technical exhibits is quite complex as they are a composite of electrical, mechanical and electronic components, with many moving parts that need rapid prototyping, testing and must be visually appealing to a cross section of diverse audiences. He has no hesitation to say that an analytically strong broad based science and technology focused interdisciplinary curriculum like the one he underwent at BITS Pilani gave him the right start for achieving his dreams.

With leadership training and internships at the Yale School of Management and at the NMAH Smithsonian, George Jacob's international work includes museum assignments in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, India, Taiwan ROC, France, United Kingdom, United States, Egypt, UAE and Canada. He has served on various professional boards and has been an adjunct faculty for Museum Studies and Business Administration at various universities. With a successful track record of over \$160 million in completed museum projects, he is also the founder and publisher of MUSEUM DESIGN the only global professional magazine on museum exhibit design, production and architecture.

Proud to be BITSian George Jacob Email: designfunc (at) yahoo (dot) com has undoubtedly integrated himself into the excellence circuit and he is indeed a torch bearer for Brand BITS Pilani.

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Birla Institute of Technology and Science - BITS Pilani Rajasthan which has the reputation of pioneering

the online examinations for admissions through the path breaking BITSAT and setting a bench mark in industry university collaborations is one among the top ranking universities towering above the rest in various best college surveys in India today. BITS offers degrees in various disciplines presently at Pilani, Dubai, Goa and Hyderabad campuses apart from an array of work integrated learning programmes for HRD of a vast spectrum of Indian corporates. The alumni of the Institute who are Proud to be BITSians peaking with Passion Quotient for Alma mater and spread across the globe from Australia to America are the true ambassadors of Brand BITS Pilani.

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