

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Riddhi Pankaj Desai**

Dr. Desai grew up in India, moved to Toronto, Canada, to live with her uncle and had an arranged marriage. Her husband lives in Houston where she moved after their marriage in Chicago. She earned a Ph. D. and a J. D. from the University of Houston. She, her husband, and grown daughter now reside in Sugar Land. She still practices law in Houston.

Riddhi shares numerous stories about her idyllic childhood in India and the cultural differences in customs, religion, food and dress between India and America.

18 Pages

⇓ *Scroll down for Key Words from the Interview.* ⇓

Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)

Kaka Desai – Uncle
 Pankaj Desai – spouse
 Shilpi Desai – daughter
 Mayor Lee Brown – Houston
 Mahaveer – founded Jainism
 Himatlal Desai – father in law

Places / Businesses

Houston, Texas
 Fort Bend County
 Sugar Land
 India
 America
 Dallas, Texas
 Toronto, Canada
 Chicago, Illinois
 University of Houston

California
 Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
 Sugar Land, Texas
 Jainism – non-violent Indian religion
 Hinduism
 Pasadena, Texas
 Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India - birthplace
 Gulf of Khambhat, India
 Kelsey-Seybold Clinic
 Kanpur, India
 McDonald's
 Afghanistan
 Japan
 Alief, Texas
 Jain Society of Houston
 Jain Center
 St. Thomas Episcopal School
 Clear Lake, Houston, Texas

Events

Riddhi grew up in Ahmedabad, India in a joint family of several generations. Her native tongue is Gujarati.

Growing up in the Indian state of Gujarat, she has been a vegetarian since birth and maintains that status today.

She earned her M. B. A. in India, and a Ph. D. and J. D. at the University of Houston. Happily married since 1980, she, her husband, Pankaj, and daughter Shilpi, reside in Sugar Land.