

KEEPING THE FAITH: MEMOIRS OF A PARLIAMENTARIAN



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Reviews

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(Madelyn Douglas)

KEEPING THE FAITH: MEMOIRS OF A PARLIAMENTARIAN



Harper Collins, India Today Group, New Delhi, 2010. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. 408 pp. Elected to the Lok Sabha for the first time in 1971, Somnath Chatterjee has served as a Member of Parliament in all successive Lok Sabhas till 2004, making him one of the longest-serving members of the Lok Sabha in the history of independent India. He became its Speaker in 2004 and remained so till 2009, when he retired from active political life. In this candid, heartfelt memoir, Chatterjee looks back on his eventful four decades in the Indian Parliament, capturing all the highs and lows as a nation's history was shaped, and revealing many behind-the-scenes stories for the first time. Among other things, Chatterjee discusses how he came to enter politics in the first place as an independent candidate supported by the CPI(M), the dark days of the Emergency, the landmark legislations enacted during his tenure as an MP, and the emergence of communal and coalition politics in the country. He also provides a riveting account of one of the most tumultuous periods in the history of the Lok Sabha, 2004-09. He discusses why he chose not to resign as Speaker when his party, the CPI(M), withdrew support from the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government in 2008 over the Indo-US nuclear deal. He also gives a comprehensive account of the subsequent confidence vote that he presided over and how he was treated by the party for which he had worked all his life. Keeping the Faith is not only a personal journey of one of India's most respected parliamentarians, but also a gripping saga of a vibrant parliamentary democracy at work.



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