



KAREN MANCINELLI / DAILY RECORD

Kurus Elavia, in his living room in Chester Township, recently was named CEO of Gateway Security in Newark. When he arrived in the U.S. from India, Elavia, who has a black belt in karate, planned to teach martial arts.

# Chester Twp. resident rises from security officer to company's CEO

**The job:** The American dream has become a reality for Kurus Elavia of Chester Township.

He joined Gateway Security in 1988 as a security officer and recently was named CEO of the \$70 million Newark company.

Elavia is credited with the strategic planning that helped Gateway grow from an \$11 million company to its current size with 4,000 employees.

**The company:** Gateway delivers premium security and customer relationship services to the region's three major airports, health-care facilities and many Fortune 50 companies.

**Secret of success:** "In the service business, it's important to recognize the people who work with you as part of a team. First and foremost, it's a team.

"Also, without a strong family and values, success is not possible. When you realize your dreams, that's success."

**Born:** March 12, 1965, in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), India.

The original name was given by the East India Co. and was one of the legacies of British rule, Elavia said.

**Education:** Graduate degrees in business from Bombay University.

**Coming to America:** Elavia came to the United States in 1987, intending to teach martial arts.

## DOSSIER

### Kurus Elavia, chief executive, Gateway Security, Newark

He landed at JFK, one of the airports that his company serves.

His first impression of the U.S. was of a great deal of space and many fast cars.

"Bombay is like Manhattan, but I'm still getting used to suburbia. My life has not followed a path, I created one," he said.

**Karate black belt:** "I was involved in track and field, but in India, it's seasonal," he said. "So to stay flexible, I tried martial arts and it became a passion."

Elavia considered making martial arts a career before joining Gateway.

**Leisure:** "I enjoy my quiet time and spending time with my family," he said.

Elavia and his wife, Purba, have a daughter, Anushka.

"We're eclectic and enjoy everything from picking apples at a farm to going to New York."

**Travel:** "I love to go home to India and have visited the entire

Far East," he said.

"I especially like Zurich, but it's a little slow. People really do go out for lunch there, but I like a faster pace."

**Role models:** Father, who is a business owner in India; Louis Dell'Ermo, who founded Gateway and established its legacy of superior customer service, expert recruitment, security training and retention of employees; and Mahatma Gandhi, who led the struggle to free India from British rule. "He taught us how to live life every day."

**Favorite restaurant:** My wife's cooking. "If she's cooking, I have an appetite, especially a chicken lentil dish that she learned from my mother."

**Recognition:** Elavia was named one of NJBiz's 40 under 40 in 2004.

In 2006, he was awarded the Asian American Leadership Award by the Asian American Association for Human Services.

He is a member of the advisory board of the Rothman Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Florham Park and of the American Association of Airport Executives Training and Diversity Board.

*Dossier was reported by Sally Silverman, a freelance writer.*