

Adil Noshirwan Godrej

March 6, 1957 - April 10, 2022

Adil was a gorgeous man who lit up the lives of those he cherished with kindness, an impish sense of fun, great generosity of spirit and love expressed not just in words but in deeds.

Highly intelligent, in his childhood he drove his proud parents, Phyllis and Noshirwan, up the wall with his mischief. At boarding school, he often amazed classmates by sailing through exams, while seemingly spending much of his time doing puzzles rather than revision. The love for puzzles and brain teasers stayed with him. After a distinguished academic path in India and the US, he was, when he passed, Research Associate Professor at Virginia Tech and Co-Director of the Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory.

His great zest for life expressed itself in many ways. Through a voracious appetite for books and knowledge – you couldn't move in parts of his house for the stacks he had accumulated. Through an equally voracious appetite for all the delicacies he loved. Through his passion for music, film, dancing and much more besides; through continual exploration and stretching of the frontiers of his taste and knowledge.

He was a great talker, often making a phone call in the middle of the night when he had woken from his sleep just to catch up with loved ones in different time zones. He could make you groan with his puns and jokes, bore you by insisting on giving the fullest of answers to a question you had asked, but he genuinely cared, reaching out to so many people and showing a real interest in the issues in their lives, and surprising you with unexpected gestures or

gifts that demonstrated he was thinking of you. If you were in a tight spot, Adil would help unasked. And he gave the best hugs.

While Adil did not have a partner to share his life, he created a vast family beyond his blood relatives – of friends he nurtured and who cherished him, PhD students he guided and whose problems had his ear, colleagues, and latterly, as his health declined, carers. Indeed, his last message to those who were closest to him, sent via text, was about caring better for our friends.

Oh questing soul, oh twinkliest of stars, what happens now? May all burdens lift and may there be joy. That is the fervent wish of those who love you.

Now, as ever, in the hearts of his family and of his family of friends.

A celebration of Adil's life will be planned at a future date. Please check back here as details of the celebration will be added to this obituary once they have been finalized. Alternatively, please email celebrateadil@gmail.com to be kept informed and you will be updated by email when details are available.

Tribute Wall

SS

“ Condolences to Adil’s family and loved ones. I had the pleasure of working with Adil on several water resources projects over the years and we also taught together at Virginia Tech (I was adjunct faculty). He was brilliant, funny, and humble – truly a joy to work with! A quick memory... I remember sitting on a PhD defense committee with him. Adil asked the poor soul a question about heavy metals - a trick question that had no good answer. When the flummoxed student couldn’t put together a coherent response, Adil laughed and came clean with his little joke. It was a case of pain followed by pleasure as Adil awarded the student a PhD. I laugh just thinking about Adil’s glee in his little prank. He was one of a kind and he’ll be missed!

Stuart Stein - September 15, 2022 at 01:44 PM

DM

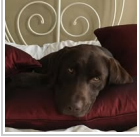
“ I’m so sorry to hear of Adil’s passing. He bought his home in Manassas from me. We became instant friends and spent so much time talking about various subjects. Adil was one of the brightest and sweetest people I have ever come across. I have been trying to call him lately and finally searched for this type of news. The planet has lost a great person. Rest in peace my friend

Dan Martin - August 10, 2022 at 12:12 AM

NO

“ Sending heartfelt condolences from the Merchant family (Salim, Zaffer & Neilofer). We have fond memories of Adil and family from our childhood days in Indore and his visit to see us in 1981. Rest In Peace Adil!!

neilofer Osterman - June 22, 2022 at 02:04 PM



“ Adil was a thoroughly lovely and gracious person. I enjoyed working with him at NVC, visiting the OWML, and his long-winded visits in my office or his. The man could talk! About anything and everything—such a pleasure to keep up with his conversations, and all their twists and turns. My especially fond memories are of Adil, Tom Grizzard, and Glenn Moglen, the EWR faculty of VT-NCR, and being part of all manner of conversations mostly about water-related issues, but also banter and quips and slights about whatever topic-of-mind came up among the three. The trio were my inspiration to pursue graduate school, and gave me lots of suggestions for reading material to feed my inquisitive-bordering-on-nagging-kid interest in EWR-related topics. Adil's love of music was, gently put, eclectic, and I remember well the CD he gave me of Scottish headdress-wearing, drum-beating, wish-I could-describe-it music the likes of which I had never heard before and haven't heard since. And as John Little mentioned: his legendary love of fine chocolate and sharing the confections with others. He carried with him encyclopedic knowledge of different brands, the pro's and con's of each type (I think there were moods attached to some) . . . just extraordinary. Chocophile is the more refined term to express Adil's love for and knowledge of peerless chocolate.

Jeny Beausoliel - May 25, 2022 at 02:42 PM

GS

“ Dear Adil was a very close buddy in Sherwood College Nainital- when we first met 04 March 1968 - just around 11 years old then at a tough boarding school!

We just clicked - as he was a genius and myself no where as good as him- so hung around his desk for all the academic support. 5 years till ISC passing out- were wonderful years with this fun loving buddy - who somehow without studies still topped in class!

Then after 4 decades and we on different paths in life - I did make attempts to ring him. I wish that had persisted - as just a month later - Adil left for the Heavens!

Yes - dear friend Adil - will always be warmly remembered.

Colonel Gobi
London

Gobi Singh - May 20, 2022 at 12:09 PM

MH

“ I am deeply saddened by Adil’s passing. I have been lucky enough to work with Adil at the Occoquan Lab for over a decade. Luckier yet, during some of those years, I sat in the office immediately across from his. It was always “Hey Meghan, come look at this!” Or, “Have you ever heard of this band called (insert any obscure band or singer name here)” and then he would play (loudly) some of their music, which I had never heard, but always enjoyed. Adil was also a proprietor of interesting treats and sweets from around the world, and I was always up for that adventure! He always had something new to share. At Christmas, he purchased gourmet chocolates for everyone at the lab. Around Earth Day, he would purchase shirts for everyone at the lab, plus their families. Adil had a kind and generous heart. He was also incredibly smart. I truly think Adil would have been an ideal contestant on Jeopardy, as he possessed a wealth of information. Whatever the topic, Adil always seemed to have something to share. I always felt more “cultured” after a day at the lab when Adil was there. Added to his adventurous side, I also witnessed Adil’s great attention to detail, knowledge, and how serious he took his work as we worked on research proposals. Adil was one of my favorite researchers to work with. Added to that, he went above and beyond by volunteering to test out new systems and provided helpful input to our department. We could always count on Adil. Adil’s generous, kind, caring and adventurous spirit will not soon be forgotten. I will truly miss him and will always remember him.

Meghan Huber - May 09, 2022 at 02:28 PM

SW

“ So heartbroken to hear of Adil’s passing.

Back in the late summer of 1980 we both entered Tech as graduate students studying air resource engineering. My first encounter with him was when I was dispatched by our major professor with orders to “meet and pick him up at the Blacksburg bus station, as he just arrived in town from India and to get him settled.” Little did I know that for two years we would be sharing an office the size of a shoebox, as well as the backseat of a cramped, tiny air quality monitoring airplane that conducted research throughout the Smokies and Shenandoah National Parks!

Adil was a kind, giving and generous person, with a great sense of humor and sophistication. I never would have thought that a kid from the Bronx and an intellectual from Indore would hit it off so well.

May his memory be for a blessing and his family and friends take comfort in knowing that he made the world a better and brighter place.

Stu Widom

Stu Widom - May 05, 2022 at 02:22 PM

RB

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Rahul Bhatnagar - April 30, 2022 at 05:23 PM

DG

“ Thank you so much everyone for your memories of Adil and your words of comfort. They mean so much to my sister Zarina and to me, his brother Dinyar.

Dinyar Godrej - April 24, 2022 at 01:03 PM

TU

Hi i need to speak to you can you please share your email adress or contact no.?

trishha upadhyay - June 14, 2025 at 04:14 AM

TU

Thankyou !!

trishha upadhyay - June 14, 2025 at 04:14 AM

JL

“ In my experience, Adil was a highly intelligent, incredibly well-read, and very sweet guy. I recall many interesting discussions, but perhaps most of all, I remember his passion for chocolate! In December 2016 I was lucky enough to come out of our annual EWR white elephant gift exchange with some Belgian chocolates, and I suspected that they had originated from Adil. I sent him a note and received an impressive reply - what an authority he was!

So, the next time you are enjoying some high-quality chocolate, take a moment to think of Adil and all the good things he brought into our lives!

-----Original Message-----

From: Adil Godrej [mailto:agodrej@vt.edu]

Sent: Friday, December 16, 2016 12:35 PM

To: John Little <jcl@vt.edu>

Subject: Re: white elephants

Yes, I was the originator of the Belgian chocolates up here. My brother lives in Rotterdam, just across from Belgium, so I am quite familiar with the chocolates. Far, far better than Swiss, even the ordinary Belgium chocos such as Leonidas (Greek family name, but established in Belgium for over a century). The last couple of years I've given everybody at the Occoquan Lab a small box of Leonidas for

Christmas. The one-off choco shops in places like Antwerp or Brussels

are amongst the best, but one has to visit them to get the chocos.

Leonidas can be had from <http://www.leonidas-chocolate.com/> in New

York, where they get a fresh shipment weekly and they are easily shipped in winter. Leonidas has a store in Richmond, but I find the New York store's inventory fresher.

The Godiva brand you get here is made in the US and sweeter for

US

palates. Neuhaus is the widely-available heavy hitter in Belgian chocolates. More expensive than most branded ones, they are now available in the US from www.neuhauschocolate.com and they also have

a store at Union Station in DC (which I have never visited). Their dark chocolates are to die for.

I find that, overall, Leonidas is second to Neuhaus in taste but not by much, and it is the best bang for one's buck. Godiva in the US is a faint copy of that in Belgium.

Goossens has now opened up mail order in the US (<https://goossensbelgianchocolates.com/>). They are a smaller chocolatier from Antwerp, but \$\$\$\$!

However, the US has some good chocolates, too. L.A. Burdick (<http://www.burdickchocolate.com/>) is quite good. I sometimes give out a Burdick mix to Occoquan Lab people for Christmas.

I used to (over 10 years ago) hand out John & Kira's chocolates (www.johnandkiras.com), but they have become too expensive to buy for

so many. I still get some for myself occasionally. They are the best I've found here, and easily beat out the standard Belgian ones like Godiva and Leonidas, while competing with Neuhaus, but not as good as

Goossens. Try one of their Every Flavor assortment, either the 28 piece or the 56 piece one. Their chocolate flavors

(<http://www.johnandkiras.com/Flavors>) are simply divine! My favorite flavors are Garden Mint, Lavender Honey, and Papohaku Farm Ginger,

but all the flavors are intense and wonderful.

Sorry for the discourse on chocolate..... Now that I have drooled all over myself, I'm craving a piece or two. Fortunately, the Belgian assortment white elephant has already been shipped to Blacksburg,

so
no worries!

Adil

At 11:55 AM 12/16/2016 -0500, you wrote:

>Hi Adil

>

*>Were you the originator of the Belgian chocolates? It would make
>sense because I always knew you had excellent taste! We were at
a*

*>conference in Ghent last summer it was then that I realized for the
>first time that Belgian chocolates are the best - better than Swiss
>chocolates!*

>

>Thanks

>John

John Little - April 24, 2022 at 09:58 AM

SR

“ *We studied together, then lived apart until I ran into you a dozen years ago. You were a sweet chap. It saddens me that you are gone forever. May your loved ones find peace and strength in your memories. - Sunit Rikhi*

Sunit Rikhi - April 23, 2022 at 08:31 PM

RB

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Rahul Bhatnagar - April 20, 2022 at 07:07 PM

RB

What does one say when a 45-year, shared journey with an incredible person and friend comes to an end? The millions of memories will live on forever.

Rahul Bhatnagar - April 20, 2022 at 07:13 PM

RB

One year, after much discussion and persuasion, Adil agreed to visit us in Minneapolis and chose to do so in the middle of a Minnesota winter. It was quite warm at Dulles Airport, and he packed his jacket in his suitcase so that he would not have to lug it around in the airport. Well, he definitely got the attention of those hardy Minnesotans when he disembarked in his short sleeve polo while it was -20 degrees outside.

Rahul Bhatnagar - April 20, 2022 at 07:39 PM

JL

“ I was shocked to know that dear Dr. Godrej left us! Dr. Godrej was in my PhD advisor committee. He gave me quite many insightful comments on my research. Without his wise and knowledgeable advisory, I could not have completed my study smoothly. He is also a person with charming characteristics. Sometimes he played jokes with students. Dr. Godrej is a magician who can not only educate students well but also light up the lab. Although I have not been able to see him for many years after graduation, his sunshine smile and humorous words are still in my memory with me.

May Adil, my doctoral advisor and elder friend, rest in peace...

Jia Liu - April 20, 2022 at 04:03 PM

DS

“ Deeply saddened to hear of Adil’s passing. Intelligent, learned, productive, humble, thoughtful, ethical, wise, and caring. The twinkle in his eye, huge smile, sense of humor, and fun were also strong parts of his character making him so well-rounded as a person. I liked him instantly when I met him at Tech and was ecstatic when he became a colleague at OWML. Such a unique individual; while people come and go throughout your life some are etched into your memory. Adil was amazing and delightful to have as a friend. May he rest in peace; he will be strongly missed by so many who knew him.

David Sirois - April 20, 2022 at 03:18 PM

SA

“ Dr. Adil was my favorite teacher during graduate program from VA Tech, in 1997. He always smiled and dedicated his students by heart and soul all the time. His funny talks and valuable inputs during my academic period will always remain with me. He was super intelligent professor who accomplished his achievements at his very young stage of life. Dr. Adil, You were a great professor and will remain in our good memories.

May God keep his soul in the highest level of paradise and reward him for his very valuable services to UOSA, VA Tech and N.VA community.

Shakil Ahmed

Shakil Ahmed - April 20, 2022 at 01:54 PM

BA

“ I'm grateful for having Adil as a blessing in my life, for the time we shared here. He was first a teacher, intelligent guru, which grew to respected colleague, dear friend and our "brother from another mother" - Uncle Adil to my kids. I will miss all that he was and the precious times we shared. A vision that came to me of a healthy Adil dancing in paradise, somewhere over the rainbow, enjoying lemon drops to ukulele music brings me solace that his earthly struggle is now done and he has reached a place filled with joy and peace.

We'll miss you Bro!

Bob Angelotti - April 20, 2022 at 01:04 PM

KH

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Kitty Hancock - April 20, 2022 at 10:09 AM

JC

“ The tribute to Adil is wonderfully written\expressed, it captures his essence. Thank you for sharing some insights about his childhood! Yes, Adil was a great listener and mentor @ OWML. His imprint on the organization is indelible. What a mind!

Joanne Carpenter

Joanne Carpenter - April 19, 2022 at 05:30 PM