

In Memoriam: Nozer D. Singpurwalla (1939-2022)

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Editorial

Nozer D. Singpurwalla died on July 22, 2022 at his home in Washington, DC, surrounded by family. We, the Advisory Board of the Gnedenko Forum, were astonished, deeply sad and broken from the news about the loss of our dear colleague and friend Nozer Singpurwalla. And we are sure, the same feelings share the entire world of probability specialists, statisticians, applied statisticians, Bayesians, reliability researchers, and everyone who new him, ever met or read his works.

Nozer was born in Hubli, India. As a young man, he immigrated to the United States, where he obtained a M.S. in Engineering from Rutgers University, and a Ph.D. in Engineering from New York University. He met Norah Jackson, who had recently immigrated from England, at a dance at Disneyland, and they married in 1969. Nozer and Norah lived most of their married life in Arlington, Virginia, where they raised their two children, Rachel and Darius. Nozer had a curious and creative mind and took much pleasure in his long and happy career as an academic. He spent most of his career at The George Washington University, where he was Distinguished Research Professor and Professor of Statistics. He published a wide variety of books and articles focusing on reliability theory, Bayesian statistics, and risk analysis. He supervised many PhD students and received numerous professional awards, including recognitions as a Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, the American Statistical Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and an Elected Member of the International Statistical Institute. Nozer had a way with words and always enjoyed a spirited debate. He loved classical music, history and politics, and world travel with his family. He is survived by his wife, Norah (née Jackson), his sister, Khorshed Tantra, and her family, his children, Rachel (Peter) and Darius (Jennifer), and his beloved grandchildren, Veronika and Cyrus. There will be a private family memorial in his honor.

Nozer Singpurwalla has been the President of the Gnedenko Forum from 2011 to 2012. During his tenure here, Nozer expressed himself as a delightful person. He showed his wide range of interests, a great sense of humor, and wonderful interpersonal skills. It was always a joy for us to get together with him, discuss and collaborate. Nozer has been very active in the Gnedenko Forum and our academic journal RTA. With his direct participation, meetings were organized with the leadership of the City University of Hong Kong, the president of Way Kuo. The meetings were held in Moscow. We discussed the journal's development strategy, the expansion of contacts among the Gnedenko Forum participants, and the attraction of new participants. Nozer's position has always been distinguished by now Secretary A. Bochkov: "...met him, I was always amazed at his erudition. I do not agree with everything about the concept of risk he developed, but his conversations and





correspondence on this subject made me think about a lot and certainly enriched me”.

Every one of us at Cnedenko Forum has great memories about Nozer. Here are the memories shared by the current president of the Gnedenko Forum Dimitrov Boyan: “...me cannot resist to share some if my memories about Nozer. I knew about him long before we met, from Richard Barlow at a meeting in Germany in 1978. We talked about Bayesian approach in statistics, and Barlow then recommended me to talk about this with Noser Singpurwalla. And I met Noser first time ay another ASA International Conference at

Oakland University in Michigan. At the end we were seating (12 participant’s) on a round table. Nozer was impressive, center of the discussion, making fun of every situation. During his tenure as a Gnedenko Forum Presidency we started a discretion about probability distributions in reliability with periodic failure rates. He said that “such animal” in reliability does not exist. I was well prepared and showed him some examples. He understood and agreed. I believe, since then he started respect me and we started regular communications. These distributions are named Almost Lack of Memory distributions and are used in many applications.

Maybe for this reason Nozer took part in our Flint International Conference (FISC) at Kettering University in the Year of Statistics 2014. I remember his immediate and natural reactions. For instance, when our former colleague Ernest Fokoue (professor of RIT) finished his expiration talk, Nozer exploded: “How you could lose such igniting teacher? If I was you, I immediately would try to bring him back with double the wage he has now there.”

At the end we organized a party in our backyard (49 participants from US, Canada, UK, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, South Africa, Bulgaria, Moldova). Nozer was here, with us, and we all enjoyed his attendance. I cannot ever forget that event. We periodically shared news between us. Last our correspondence dates December 26, 2-21. I miss him a lot”.

Everybody, who knew Nozer Singpurwalla in live may write interesting things from these meetings. We excerpt just some of thoughts written about Nozer, without showing the authors:

“...I knew Nozer more than 30 years. He was a hilarious, smart, cooperative, sincere friend. We exchanged ideas and results all the time. I cannot believe, Nozer is not with us anymore”.

“...I was very saddened to read the news that Nozer had passed away. I met Nozer in the 1990's and I have always treasured the two-day visit that he made to my department. I remember him as energetic, supportive, optimistic, full of zeal and energy, simply a wonderful guy, and I wish I had kept in touch with him more often. I learnt much from him”.



“...Nozer and I crossed swords in intellectual discussion more than once and ask one point he indicated that he wasn't sure what I thought of him. I replied, "When I signed up for a second

doctoral seminar with you, that should have answered the question." As often happens, we found a basis for friendship in acquiring a few enemies in common. A great and good man".

"...I just got the news and am deeply saddened. Nozer was a prolific scholar and a great mentor to his students. He put me on the right academic path and remained a friend who was always ready to meet over a glass of wine. In later years his energy and enthusiasm were an inspiration".



MSU, conference dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of B.V. Gnedenko (26-30.06.2012).

"...We met in one of Nozer's reliability classes and were reconnected with each other when both of us were working on our dissertations with Nozer. He never claimed credit for being our matchmaker, but we are grateful for his efforts 32 years ago and for his guidance in our academic careers. It is sad to hear that our friend Nozer Singpurwalla has passed away. I pray that his soul will rest in the eternal peace of God".

We of Gnedenko Forum Advisory Board share all the feelings of our colleagues who knew our remarkable star Professor Nozer Singpurwalla. Let his flight among the stars be peaceful and bright as his life on the Earth. We miss him and will never forget. Our hearts, prayers and thoughts are with your family and friends. Our world is impoverished not only by the loss of a young man but also by all that he would have done if he had remained alive a little longer, if he had been among us. ideas, resolutions, students we can't even imagine.

Rest in peace our dear friend.

