

Rest in Peace, Professor Zadeh!

We all have read books and seen movies about geniuses. I have been honored to personally know one, and his name was Lotfi Zadeh. He wasn't really a nutty professor as the movies would have us believe, just a mildly eccentric science prodigy, who invented Fuzzy Logic. In fact, by Berkeley standards, where he lived and worked, I would not call him eccentric at all.

By the time I met him in person, I was serving as Consul General of Azerbaijan in California and he was very clearly, without any doubt a world-renowned genius. I cannot say Lotfi did not enjoy his global recognition, but he was an easy-going, humble man, who clearly knew more about everything that just about anybody around him. He patiently tried to explain Fuzzy Logic to me, which was one of very few unsuccessful endeavors in his life. At every meeting with Lotfi, I'd learn something new and would leave his house better educated than I came in.

Lotfi was in love with his amazing wife Faye and they both loved life to the fullest. Next to the modest, often fragile Professor, one was always dazed by the power and depth of his mind. And next to Faye, one was always in the presence of kindness and grace.

Of course, Professor Zadeh was a man of the world, a unique personality in global science. Yet, he also enthusiastically, passionately embraced the Azerbaijani part of his identity. In so doing, he forever enriched the Azerbaijani society by his involvement and wisdom.

I never knew young Faye and Lotfi but they remained youthful, almost child-like, eager and caring in the late years of their lives. They will be missed and I can only say that I am happy to have met them.

E.S.