

GNSS Industry Pioneer Javad Ashjaee Dies from Coronavirus

MARC CHEVES, PS // 05.31.2020

It is with great sadness to report that Dr. Javad Ashjaee has succumbed to the virus sweeping the globe. The surveying community owes a debt of gratitude to Javad. He could have turned his brilliance toward anything electronic, but instead he chose to focus on the precise use of GNSS. At a time when the rest of the industry was dismissing GLONASS, he tirelessly worked with Russian colleagues to make its use a reality. He went on to innovate many features that are now common-place.



I first met Javad in the mid-90s and wrote his life story here:

https://archive.amerisurv.com/PDF/Professional_Surveyor_Magazine_Javad_Interview.pdf

In 2008 I attended a Javad user conference in Moscow and wrote about it here: https://archive.amerisurv.com/PDF/TheAmericanSurveyor_Cheves-JavadGNSSUserConf_January2009.pdf

At times, Javad was a controversial figure, but through it all, what he did directly

benefited surveyors, and he will be sorely missed.

The JAVAD GNSS announcement can be found here: <https://javad.com/jgnss/>

Javad's nephew had this to say:

Today, I lost my uncle (my mum's brother), Dr. Javad Ashjaee, one of the pioneers in the Global Positioning System (GPS), an entrepreneur and a great inventor. He died after 3 weeks of battle with coronavirus. Javad's life was an inspiration to me and many others. He was another brilliant "brain" which was sadly "drained" from Iran after the 1979 revolution. He died on the exact same day that SpaceX spacecraft was launched and carried his 'JAVAD GNSS' satellites to be placed on the International Space Station, something that he was so excited about for some time.

Javad's nephew goes on to provide a short history of Javad's career:

Javad was born in 1949 in Qom, Iran. After finishing his bachelor's degree in electronic physics from the University of Teheran in Iran, he left Iran in 1972 to continue his education at the University of Iowa and got his graduate degrees, a doctorate in 1976. He went back to his native country Iran to teach at the university. He became the chairman of the Department of Computer Engineering at the Aryamehr University of Technology where he founded and managed a UNIVAC-100 computer centre. There, he created the first Iranian microprocessor lab. In 1978 he created one of the earliest student online and interactive registration systems in the world. In a few years and after the 1978 revolution and the political turmoil, things happened and he had to flee the country in 1981.

He went straight back to the US and started the next chapter of his journey in life which led to the pioneering of GPS. He spent the rest of his life designing and manufacturing of many generations of his GPS and GPS products at JAVAD GNSS, JAVAD ArWest and JAVAD EMS in the Silicon Valley. Javad Ashjaee is listed as the primary inventor in 102 granted patents, the very last one in April 2020.

Products: <https://javad.com/jgnss/javad/news/pr20111228.html>

Inventions: <https://patents.justia.com/inventor/javad-ashjaee?page=5>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Marc Cheves is editor emeritus of the magazine. He has been a surveyor since 1963 and is licensed in five states. Since 1995 he has been a surveying magazine editor.