

REST IN SPACE

GPS Pioneer Javad Ashjaee Remembered



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Joy, Aggravation & Persistence

There is so much that can be said about a man like Javad. Anyone who has ever met him could give a vastly different depiction of how they feel about him, how he made them feel

about themselves, and who he was at his core.

And yet, I feel I am one of the lucky ones because I was able to break past his sometimes “gruff” demeanor and see him for who he truly was: a man of great passion, conviction and vision.

Joy, aggravation and persistence, Javad was a man who brought out the best, and worst, in me. His need to have you realize his “creative genius” could be overwhelming at times, and he was never one to mince words or hold back.

“I never met Dr. Ashjaee in person, but he is a legend for our industry and founded many of the GNSS technologies we use today. We at Woolpert appreciate his outstanding contributions to the advancement of GPS, which is the backbone of the mapping and surveying industry.”

– Qassim Abdullah, Woolpert Vice President and Chief Scientist

In business, negotiating with Javad was like wrestling a freight train. Pitch meetings gave me anxiety, but as time passed, I got used to the ebb and flow of our interactions.

Javad overcame great obstacles for his success, and I had tremendous respect for that. He brought vision and passion into everything he did. “Bull in a china shop” is a phrase that I often used to describe his style, but it worked for him. Like it or not, he wanted things a certain way, and he was ready to defend his opinion. But it was these moments that I wholeheartedly agree brought us closer.

If InterGeo does indeed happen this year, it will not be the same. Javad was an integral part of that experience for me, and I will truly miss him and cherish the impact he has had on my life. No matter what the future holds, I can only hope that anyone who has been fortunate enough to know Javad will carry on his passion and vigor, in their own lives, and in honor of his memory. — Daniel Gomez, National Business Development Manager

Javad Ashjaee: A Great Loss & Gain

The geospatial community suffered a great loss when Dr. Javad Ashjaee passed away this summer due to complications from the coronavirus. Described as an innovator, inventor, entrepreneur, and a visionary — he was all of those things and more.

As an engineer, inventor and innovator, he directed his defiant attitude at solving technical problems and breaking down barriers. He drove himself and his organization to develop, innovate, and improve its technologies and products. He pushed his way into a crowded market to establish his position, and he fought to have his ideas and innovations recognized.

“A true pioneer in both mind and spirit, Javad interviewed for an electrical engineer position at Trimble in 1981 and began work that same afternoon. Trimble’s founder, Charlie Trimble, saw in Javad what the world eventually came to recognize: his intellect, drive, inventiveness and dedication. All of those qualities propelled Javad to create his own successful positioning companies and to live his life as an inventor. In April 2020, one month prior to his death, he was granted his 102nd patent. Perhaps nowhere was Javad’s creativity, imagination and presence felt more than in the GNSS arena. Designing and manufacturing GNSS products was his focus and life’s work.”

– Bryn Fosburgh, Senior Vice President, Trimble

All of that drive and spirit spilled over in our conversations. Javad had a strong personality, sure, but he loved nothing more than to engage with other minds.

One question facing the future of Javad, the company, is how much Javad, the man, infused it with his drive and personality. As with many other companies led by strong personalities, the question becomes: “What happens next?”

As the company carries forward, his name will continue to be synonymous with thought-leadership and innovation. All of this to say the story of Javad’s legacy is far from over.

Just as Javad lost his battle with COVID-19, Elon Musk's SpaceX rocket was carrying Javad GNSS satellites into space, continuing his work and positioning the company for future developments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has robbed us all of something, and it has taken all from some of us. But nothing can erase Javad's imprint on the geospatial world. We will miss him dearly, and we are forever grateful. — Perry Trunick, former editor of POB Magazine.



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Perry Trunick is a former editor of POB magazine.

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