A Tribute to Professor S. C. Sahasrabudhe

5th July 1942 - 28th December 2019

Transforming education with a smile
We shall build monuments not of stone, but of the spirit.

We shall build temples of learning where education is worshipped.

We shall be inspired to carry the flame of knowledge far and wide.

A tribute to an extraordinary teacher, friend and mentor
– Professor Sahasrabudhe.
A teacher to the core, Prof. Sahasrabudhe had kept strides with the changing times and performed various roles. He was instrumental in spreading teleinformatics in India. As an administrator, he was a Deputy Director, officiating Director at IIT Bombay and Director at Chitrabai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology (DA-IICT), Gandhinagar, Gujarat. He was also the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at Global Telecommunications Ltd. (GTLL), Mumbai. His contribution to the field of education was incredible. Through active participation in national Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) and National Board of Accreditation (NBA) programmes, he helped in improving the national and international ranking of educational institutes across the nation. He played a key role in getting Washington Accord - an international agreement to accept engineering accreditation by participating countries to India. Prof. Sahasrabudhe mentored several colleges and universities in India in his capacity as a governing body member. Organisations like ISRO and DRDO immensely benefitted from his deep technical expertise. His abilities to sight talent and take other members along, saw him on many expert selection committees. He travelled extensively in India and abroad for these activities. Despite shouldering so many responsibilities, Prof. Sahasrabudhe was truly a people-friendly person. His domain knowledge and teaching skills were extraordinary. Prof. Sahasrabudhe earned a very large friend circle across geographical boundaries, age and different sectors. No wonder, he found a special place in the heart of everyone who came in touch with him.

He was a recipient of many awards. He was a fellow of IEEE and IEEE, and received a life-time achievement award from the hands of his holiness Shri. Dalai Lama in 2015. Having received many rewards, usually any normal person would easily get tempted to come and stay in the limelight. Prof. Sahasrabudhe turned his back towards unwarranted publicity and kept his feet firmly on the ground. All this and numerous qualities have inspired us to bring out a memoir which we believe would work as a guiding light and become a source of inspiration for students and teachers. With this view in mind, we have restricted the scope of the memoir to Prof. Sahasrabudhe’s professional life only. We know that this is a Herculean task and it is not practically possible to gather everything within such a short time. Nevertheless, this memoir is a humble and honest attempt to capture this vast ocean of experience into our small hands. We are sure, readers would understand and appreciate it. We thank our dear students, his colleagues, friends, students and associates at IIT, GTL, DA-IICT and various professional bodies. Despite our best efforts, it is possible that we have missed some due to our limited knowledge. We sincerely apologize to all those who have been missed out. The recent pandemic has made our job a little difficult as physical meetings with these people were not possible. However, thanks to technology, we could record the memories of most of them over the phone. A few people chose to e-pen their experiences. It took us almost a year to complete this exercise. We sincerely hope that readers will get inspired to carry this memoir forward Prof. Sahasrabudhe’s legendary through future generations. This will be a true tribute to him.

Avinash Joshi,
Poovri Vora,
Apo Koticha
Having earned a doctorate from Leningrad University, USSR, Prof. Sahasrabudhe made rich contributions in technology research and education in India. He also served at IIT Bombay from 1971 to 2003 in various capacities such as Head of Electrical Department, officiating Director and Deputy Director. He was the Chief Technology Officer at Global Telesystems Limited from December, 2000 till February, 2005. He was the recipient of several awards such as SK Mitra Memorial Award from IETE, fourth IETE Prof. SVC Aiya Memorial Award for outstanding contributions in motivating research work in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering, Best Teacher Award and Lifetime Achievement Award from IIT Bombay. He was elected Fellow of IEEE “for academic leadership in creating and managing an electrical engineering education system”. He was elected Fellow of IETE and received other IETE honors. He contributed significantly in the areas of Communications, Signal & Image Processing and Microprocessor Applications. He joined DA-IICT as the Director in March 2005 and retired from there in January, 2015. Under his leadership, DA-IICT grew as one of the top technology institutes in the country. For colleagues and students, he was a teacher, mentor and friend. He immensely contributed to the Indian education system through active leadership roles in National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). His guidance, support, and advice have certainly helped many of his colleagues and students to grow as good teachers and professionals. He will always be remembered in our hearts.
My earliest memories of my dad working are when I was still in elementary school and I would find him on the balcony of our house, furiously working away on a microprocessor unit. He would spend hours there, alternating between working on the board and reading a book he had on the topic, and I would see him erupt in childlike joy every time something worked! That is how he approached his work, and also his life; always ready to take on any problem, look at all the possible solutions, and when that problem was solved, to tackle the next one with the same enthusiasm. As I got into high school, and started to study late into the night, I noticed that dad would be awake too, preparing for the lecture he had the next morning. I knew he had been teaching these courses for years now, and had mastery over the topics, and yet, he always had this drive to bring out something novel each time he taught a new class of students.

When I was in college, and my coursework started to become challenging, I began needing his help with my studies. I still remember him trying to juggle between work and home responsibilities, and rushing around so he was able to do justice to both! He would ask me to join him on his nightly walks to the Communication Systems lab, often because he had forgotten a book there that he needed to read at night, or papers that he needed to grade. But going there, also gave me a view into how he worked with his students, and how dedicated his graduate and doctoral students were to their work. Soon after, I moved to the US, and while I didn’t live with my parents anymore, I always spent the weekends talking to them. While my conversations with mom would be about if I was eating and doing well, conversations with dad were always about my studies and career. Dad retired from IIT, and so began the second innings of his work life, first as the CTO of GTL, and then as the Director of DA-I ICT. Even after DA-I ICT, and after moving to Nagpur to start his retirement, he got busier than ever. His travelling schedule went up the scale and he got involved in more consulting activities. While we all made several attempts to get him to start a proper retired life, he was not having any of it! He told me that the day he stopped working, is the day he would fall sick, and so I stopped pleading with him to quit.

As I made strides in my own professional life, I always sought his advice on every move I made. And he was always careful not to make the decisions for me, but to give me all the pros and cons that led me to the right decision. The one person whose achievements always made him beam with pride, was my daughter, and his granddaughter, Sanika. He could see himself in her, and the energy with which she approached everything she set her heart on. He always instilled in all of us the importance of hard work and perseverance, even in the face of difficulties, even when we didn’t see the results right away. He wanted all of us to stay curious, and derive pleasure from our work, as he always did. I saw that my dad was truly the happiest when he was working, that is what kept the spring in his step and the smile on his face, until the last day. And that is how I will forever remember him.
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Chapter 1: IIT Bombay
It is with great sorrow that I write this article in memory of my close friend and colleague - Professor Sudhakar Sahasrabudhe.

Sudhakar Sahasrabudhe Some Memories

PROF. S. P. SUKHATME


As many of you might know, Professor Sahasrabudhe joined IIT Bombay as a postgraduate student in the Electrical Engineering Department in 1964 and completed his M.Tech with specialization in Electronics in 1966. If my memory serves me right, he was selected as a faculty member in IIT Bombay and immediately deputed to the USSR to work for his doctoral degree. He went to the Leningrad University, one of the best in the USSR, and obtained his PhD over a period of about four years. He then returned to re-join IITB. His area of specialization was in Electrical Engineering and I was in Mechanical Engineering – two separate buildings. So, from 1971 till almost 1980, our friendship was casual. Professionally, we had nothing much to do with each other, excepting that we were together on some institute committees. Of course, we were both staying on the campus and came to know each other on that account. My wife and I would occasionally meet him, Madhuri and their children in the evening; just a casual exchange of greetings every now and then and as with so many other friends we had on the campus. His chidren and I were almost the same age and in fact, his daughter and my younger son were in the same class in the Kendriya Vidyalaya.

Somewhere during 1993 or 1994, Professor Sahasrabudhe took over as the Deputy Director of the institute when Professor Nag was the Director. It was during that period that I met Professor Sahasrabudhe a few times, sometimes alone and sometimes when Professor Nag had called on him to lay through with him any issues that we had to discuss some particular issues. Professor Nag’s term ended in September 1994 and my appointment letter as Director came in December 1994. In this interim period, it was generally expected that I would probably take over. Thus, the period was a period of three or four months, when Professor Sahasrabudhe was the Acting Director of the institute and then I took over from him formally in the first week of September. By October end, I started meeting him more often to start getting some briefings. I remember meeting him before an upcoming Board meeting. He wanted to inform me about the agenda of that meeting. As I mentioned, our interactions earlier were characterized by openness and friendliness. Now even though there were more important issues for discussion, our interactions continued in that same friendly tone. He had a light-hearted way of treating the most serious things. We had two or three fairly long meetings with hardly anyone else present, just to exchange ideas and for me to take notes for what needed to be done on certain pending issues, which I would have to handle and also the plans for the future. In one of those meetings, he said, “When you take over as the Director, I don’t necessarily have to continue as the Deputy Director if you want somebody else to take over”. And I said, “Don’t even talk about such a situation. I certainly want you to continue with me. Of course, we have to be together”. There was no more discussion on that matter.

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Our interactions began in a big way when I took over as the Director. Generally, there is a fair amount of routine paperwork which comes to the Director via the Deputy Director. I would question why these papers had to go first to the Deputy Director, then to the Director. Professor Nag had called on me to lay through with me the necessary channels and I didn’t have anything significant to contribute. I recall once sitting down with Sahasrabud and saying, “This is a waste of time. All this routine paperwork goes through the same cycle. Just because these routines procedures are being followed for years and years, doesn’t mean we have to keep on doing the same thing. I’ll simply go to the Board and request it to approve that certain powers would be dealt with by the Deputy Director and do not have to be seen by the Director”. So we did that. If you can’t hand over certain powers to the Deputy Director and Deans, you are wasting everyone’s time. Long-drawn out paperwork and processes having too many links, and hardly any delegation of powers are some of the major weaknesses of the Indian administrative system. Together, we made a sincere effort to simplify things a little.

Many sensitive issues are discussed with the Deputy Director - for instance, the appointment of Heads of Departments when the existing one’s term ends. For this, the Deputy Director usually visits the concerned department and tries to get the views of the faculty. In many cases, it is unanimous. The departments are very clear about who they want. If either of us had no real objection, it was not a problem. But very often, we found ourselves with two faculty members being suggested, both equally popular and proficient. Appointing one might hurt the feelings of the other and we wouldn’t want that to happen. These were situations which Sudhakar handled with a lot of diplomacy. Every time this happened, he would convey our decision to both the candidates one by one, and then I issued the formal order. He was very good at explaining to the concerned persons how important they were even though the situation at hand got appointed. If you have someone like Sudhakar, it really helps smoothen the process. Similarly, there are many committees we have to appoint in the institute for various purposes. Picking the right people for such committees is always very important. If you don’t do it with care, you may end up with a situation where the chairman is dominating. Then the committee does not function effectively and the institute’s work suffers. Again, these were situations in which Sudhakar excelled. He was a person who could motivate the good people for the committee under consideration and was also extremely good at persuading these people to take up the job. Such people are always in
demand, but he would always manage to convince them. There are many specific events that come to my mind, but there’s one more general issue that we both focused on, that of strengthening our ties with alumni. It began in Professor Nago’s time, and together, we gave a big boost to this initiative. Many of our alumni were in the USA. Some of them had passed away 30 years ago and were in their fifties. They had done well for themselves and were keen to help the institute. However, they feared that nothing will happen. That was something for which we both worked and managed to persuade them. Again, it’s not something that ended with our tenures. Succeeding directors have continued with this initiative over the years. It is one of our assets when compared to other IITs and universities in India which don’t get much support from their alumni, and don’t go out of their way to seek that kind of support either.

Let me now share with you a situation which arose when Sudhakar went out of his way to help me. It was the end of the September semester on a four-week visit to the United States. The purpose was to meet with our alumni across the country – Boston, Chicago, Seattle, the Bay area, Los Angeles and Pasadena – and tell them about some of the new things happening in IIT Bombay. Overall, the visit was a success. Now, as most of our alumni are aware, our Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) is conducted by IITs and is held across the country. IIT Bombay has the advantage of being in the centre of Mumbai. To this he said that he had grown up in and Mumbai had the advantage of being in the centre of things and suggested that he should plan to stay more in Mumbai than in Pune. He was 11.30 in the night. It was the rainy season and the campus was quite dark. Now, leopards are sometimes spotted on the campus and apparently a leopard jumped across his car while he was returning. Next morning, Professor Sahasrabudhe came to my home while passing by. Our conversation went something like this:

Sudhakar: You know, I had a meeting with a leopard last night.
Self: Leopard? What was it doing here?
Sudhakar: You know, I had a meeting with a leopard while passing by. Our conversation went something like this. I said to him that I had to issue an order on the next day, and he said “No problem. You were going to do it anyway, so I have no case for resigning. So just forget that. I am telling you that it’s all about. If any college or institute invited him for such an event, he would always accept. He used to say that it’s important to keep on improving the quality, particularly of the colleges which don’t know what’s required of them. Hopefully we would then have better curricula and better ways in which students get their degrees. It’s all about. If any college or institute invited him for such an event, he would always accept. He used to say that it’s important to keep on improving the quality, particularly of the colleges which don’t know what’s required of them. Hopefully we would then have better curricula and better ways in which students get their degrees. If any college or institute invited him for such an event, he would always accept. He used to say that it’s important to keep on improving the quality, particularly of the colleges which don’t know what’s required of them. Hopefully we would then have better curricula and better ways in which students get their degrees. It’s all about. If any college or institute invited him for such an event, he would always accept. He used to say that it’s important to keep on improving the quality, particularly of the colleges which don’t know what’s required of them. Hopefully we would then have better curricula and better ways in which students get their degrees. It’s all about. If any college or institute invited him for such an event, he would always accept. He used to say that it’s important to keep on improving the quality, particularly of the colleges which don’t know what’s required of them. Hopefully we would then have better curricula and better ways in which students get their degrees. It’s all about. If any college or institute invited him for such an event, he would always accept. He used to say that it’s important to keep on improving the quality, particularly of the colleges which don’t know what’s required of them. Hopefully we would then have better curricula and better ways in which students get their degrees. It’s all about. If any college or institute invited him for such an event, he would always accept. He used to say that it’s important to keep on improving the quality, particularly of the colleges which don’t know what’s required of them. Hopefully we would then have better curricula and better ways in which students get their degrees. It’s all about. If any college or institute invited him for such an event, he would always accept. He used to say that it’s important to keep on improving the quality, particularly of the colleges which don’t know what’s required of them. Hopefully we would then have better curricula and better ways in which students get their degrees. It’s all about. If any college or institute invited him for such an event, he would always accept. He used to say that it’s important to keep on improving the quality, particularly of the colleges which don’t know what’s required of them. Hopefully we would then have better curricula and better ways in which students get their degrees.
IIT Bombay Lifetime Achievement Award, 46th Foundation Day Celebration, 2005

Receiving lifetime achievement from TCS Vice Chairman, S. Ramadorai
Let me begin by saying that there aren't enough adjectives for me to adequately describe Prof. Sahasrabudhe. Knowing him for close to five decades and being counted among his friends is truly a great privilege which I will always cherish.

I first met him when I shifted to the campus in 1973. 74. Several faculty colleagues had gone to Russia to work on their PhDs. It was a common practice in those days as our institute was supported by the then USSR. In the staff hostel where we lived for the first couple of years, I got to know many of them. Most used to flaunt their prowess in Chess, and their fluency in Russian, which they could speak with ease. Prof. Sudhakar Sahasrabudhe was the only one who talked about his research. A small thing, but it spoke volumes about his priorities in life. He went on to excel in his chosen field of communication technologies. Later, I had an occasion to work more closely with him and being counted among his friends is truly a great privilege which I will always cherish.

Although I was a few years his junior, some of his contemporaries like Prof. M. P. (Nana) Dixit, and Prof. Guruji had become my close friends, and this helped in further developing our friendship too. Since we lived on the campus, our children grew up as friends. Whenever he spent time with family and friends, his great human character used to be so visible – jovial, friendly, and caring. The teacher and administrator in him would disappear on such occasions. When it came to discharging his responsibilities as administrator, he never let his friendships come in the way. I recall an incident when he was the deputy director, which amply illustrates his style of functioning in official matters. He was keeping an eye on the institute PC-LAN infrastructure. Prof. Sahasrabudhe cut him short saying, “No one can hold a gun to the director of an institute, and expect a quick decision.” He further added that if nothing happened soon then he would resign from IIT and join some industry. We knew that he was in demand. Prof. Sahasrabudhe had a couple of times urging him to act expeditiously on the pending proposal. This was taking time as the process of approvals needed was complex and needed the concurrence of the Board for positions at that level. The engineer had started exploring possibilities for an industry position. Being very talented, he had some preliminary job discussions, although he really liked his position at IIT. Finally, the engineer got impatient with the delay and handed in his resignation letter to Prof Rao. Now, Prof. Rao had thought that the possibility of the institute services being disrupted might encourage Prof. Sahasrabudhe to consider some immediate measures, even if these were of a temporary nature. So, he once again set up a meeting with Prof. Sahasrabudhe and took me along to support the anticipated arguments. On entering Prof. Sahasrabudhe’s office along with the engineer, Prof. Rao handed over the resignation letter and explained his concerns about the health of the institute PC-LAN infrastructure. Prof. Sahasrabudhe frowned after reading the letter. He did not initiate any discussion but simply looked up at the engineer and asked him when he would like to be relieved. “Tomorrow itself”, was the haughty reply he received. “I see”, Prof. Sahasrabudhe said, and scribbled a note on the resignation letter, and gave it back to Prof. Rao. All of us were surprised to read what he had written. “May be relieved today itself, if the officer so wishes”, his signature stated. Prof. Rao was simply stunned as he was not prepared for such a sharp and quick decision.

Prof. Rao tried a last ditch attempt to convince Prof. Sahasrabudhe on his order, but Prof. Sahasrabudhe cut him short saying, “No one can hold a gun to the director of an institute, and expect a favourable consideration”. He further added that the institute was functioning well when none of us were working here. If there is a problem for some time, we will figure out a way to solve it. But since this gentleman is in a hurry, let him
go immediately so that the institute does not come in
the way of his personal progress. The ‘gentleman’ was
thoroughly disheartened. He confessed later that he
still did not have any confirmed appointment, and that
if he was relieved now, he would have to vacate his
hostel accommodation immediately. The next day Prof.
Rao pleaded on his behalf with Prof. Sahasrabudhe
asking for some time. Prof. Sahasrabudhe smiled and
asked him to read his order again, which had said, ‘if
the officer so wishes’. He further told Prof. Rao that
the letter of resignation could be treated as an official
one-month notice, and that the engineer may leave
thereafter. Incidentally, the officer did stay for a month
and has subsequently earned a good reputation in the
industry. I might add that Prof. Rao too had no trouble
in making alternate arrangements within the month.
In the end, absolutely nothing disturbed the well-being
of our PC-LAN infrastructure.

In the year 2000, when Prof. Sahasrabudhe was the
acting director of the institute, he issued the letter
appointing me to the Subrao M. Nilekani Chair in
School of IT. The appointment was approved by the
Board sometime earlier, but Prof. Sukhatme, the then
director, had finished his term. It was thus my privilege
to receive this letter signed by Prof. Sahasrabudhe. I
still recall his profound advice when I met him and told
him that I have grown with the CSE department all my
professional life, and the thought of leaving it is very
painful. He said, “Come on, we will all have to leave
even this world itself one day”. When I looked up to him
in some shock, he smiled and added saying, “Deepak,
we all have to keep and cherish old memories, one cannot
keep such old hangovers in mind as these would
become impediments in doing your new job, in a new
environment, with full commitment and dedication”.
This was advice which proved very valuable in my later
years. He himself always walked the talk. After he left
IT Bombay, he first excelled in taking a company to
greater heights as its Chief Technology Officer. He then
became the director of Dhirubhai Ambani Institute in
Gandhinagar, and led that institute to a much higher
recognition in the Indian academic landscape. I visited
this institute on several occasions during that period,
and have witnessed first-hand the respect and love he
commanded among the students and faculty.
A few years back, my wife Pratibha and I had an
occasion to be in Nagpur. We took that opportunity to
visit Prof. Sahasrabudhe and his wife Madhuri, at their
ancestral home. What a pleasure it was to meet them
and see their grand old house. We felt it was like a
small palace. We wondered why they still maintained
the flat in our society in Mumbai, which actually is
tiny in comparison to their abode in Nagpur. But then,
I realised that his activities would often bring him to
Mumbai. I can say that we have greatly enjoyed
their company at our Anjaneya CHS in Powai, on the
occasions when he and his family visited us.

After Prof. Sahasrabudhe retired, he continued
to contribute to the work of Indian academic
organisations. He was called upon to join many
important committees in India. His work was most
notable for the National Bureau of Accreditation.
He greatly helped in meticulously defining various
accreditation processes. I have witnessed his
passionate commitment to education and the endless
number of journeys he took to visit a large number of
institutions. When he interacted with an institution, in
his role of the chairman of that committee, he would
critically examine all aspects and would arrive at a
verdict which was just and fair, whether it was positive
or not for the concerned institute. Yet, he always added
his own ‘touch’ to the proceedings. He would spend
time in advising the faculty and administration on how
to do things differently so that any lacunae discovered
could be properly addressed. I know many faculty
members in these institutions. Several of them have
confirmed that a committee visit with him in the chair
was always a great learning experience, irrespective
of the outcome of the recommendation. Alas, it was
during one such visit to Pune that we lost him. I had
met him in our society just the day before he went to
Pune. I had returned from Delhi and he had come from
Nagpur, when we met near the lift of our building.
Energetic as usual, even in that late hour of the day, he
talked passionately on what he proposed to do in Pune.
We chatted briefly and went our way. The disastrous
news came just two days later. I will miss him till the
end of my life. God bless his soul.

Every discussion with Prof.
Sahasrabudhe used to be a treat
in logical reasoning and displayed
his immense depth of study. He was
mindful of how students thought
and learnt, and always came up
with the right set of examples with
increasing level of complexity;
being sure to add some challenging
problems at the end of a topic.

- PROF. DEEPAK B. PHATAK
I joined the institute sometime around August 1974, so I cannot remember if the first meeting with Professor Sahasrabudhe was in the late ‘70s, after he got back from Gorkh and Tibet. However, I can tell you what brought us together.

Being in Physics, initially I did not have any direct interaction with the professor. At that time, there was a small social circle with Professor Bedford and Professor Shankar from Electrical Engineering and Professor J. S. Murthy from the Physics department. They were very close friends. I knew Shankar very well and Professor Patni, who later became the Dean of Student Affairs, IIT Bombay. Professor Bedford and Professor Shankar also happened to know Professor Sahasrabudhe, though he may have not been part of their social group. It is through this informal contact that I first got to meet Professor Sahasrabudhe. I liked him from the start because from day one, he had a warm smile for me, and he began pulling my leg within two minutes through our interaction. On our first meeting in a ‘sotto voce’ told me, “Look, these people don’t agree but I am basically a Physics man”. He then launched into an impassioned speech about his love for Physics. After this interesting start, though I cannot put a date to it, we became friends and I worked with him in various capacities.

Somewhere in the early ‘80s, the Department Of Physics started what is known as Engineering Physics Programme, which piggy-backed on the Electric Engineering Department. This happened when the Government of India changed its 5-year B.Tech programme into a 4-year programme. However, they did not change the duration of 5-year M.Sc programme, which was the only IIT Bombay programmes in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. The Physics people thought that the societal value of an M.Sc programme was less than that of the B.Tech programme, and if the B.Tech degree was just 4 years while it took 1 extra year for an M.Sc degree, there would be a lack of interest in the sciences. IIT Bombay was 5-year B.Tech programme only because we got a lot of support from the Electrical Engineering Department – especially from Professor Bedford and Professor R. C. Mukherjee. This went to the IIT Bombay Senate in 1983. I was an assistant professor and Professor A. K. Dev was the director and so our department managed to get the Engineering Physics programme through.

Our greatest support came from the Electrical Engineering Department because many of our students used to take courses in Electrical Engineering and Physics. In that context, Professor Sahasrabudhe and I used to have a lot of discussion. I must also tell you that our familiarity was such that when he spoke to me in Hindi, he would often switch to ‘Tu’. Now, this comes very well in Marathi but it is not easy in Bengali. We do not use ‘Tu’ in colloquial conversations, unless you are a very close friend or your parents are talking to you. So, he said, “Arey Dipan, tu yeh kya kar raha hain…Khali tum log help loge Electronic Engineering department se and you will not help back”. A bit taken aback, I asked him, “Tell me in what way do you want my help?” He said, “Listen… I want two things… Professor Mukherjee is taking time off from teaching so I want you to teach the Electromagnetic Fields course in his absence….”

For a better understanding, Electric Engineering had two courses - Electromagnetic Fields and Electromagnetic Fields 2, which basically involved radiation and antenna - the lectures were from pure Electrical Engineering oriented books like Jordan and Balmain. The Physics part of it which was electro-magnetic fields was essentially from the Physics books. I could be wrong, but the second course was usually taken by Professor Subbharao. Eventually, I ended up teaching both the courses for the Electrical Engineering Department on the prodding of Professor Sahasrabudhe. This was my first academic interaction with him.

Then there was another time, we were discussing the way the Physics programme stood. He told me, “One thing I want to tell you for future generations, particularly if your people are going to learn Electrical Engineering, knowing about micro-controllers is going to be very useful. I suggest that you people start a programme on microprocessors.” I had absolutely no idea what he was talking about because I am a theoretical person and I had little to do with the field he was in. So, I asked him to explain. To my enquiry he said, “What kind of a physicist are you who does not know microprocessors?” I further said that there was only one way to learn more, by attending Professor Revenkar’s course. Now I was a faculty and they could not just take me as a student, but Professor Sahasrabudhe just brushed these doubts aside and told me that I would be given an honorary title as “TA” to Professor Revenkar and I was going to be his student. So off I went to Professor Revenkar's course. Being a physicist, I was good in programming. However, as the microprocessor programme was more of a software course than a hardware one, this became yet another reason for me to keep interacting with Professor Sahasrabudhe.

This interaction brought me into common cause with the Electrical Engineering Department through 80s and 90s. Later on, when they had a problem in teaching the Numerical Methods course, it was easy for me to step up and help as they were having difficulty in finding
a teacher. It is interesting to note that later, Professor Sahasrabudhe took a course in Mahape and I also attended as a tutor; as by then I had qualified myself.

My interactions with him increased after I became the Dean of Student Affairs, especially when we had mess problems, strikes, which would often happen close to the examination period. A great aspect about him as an administrator is that he never got angry and he would rarely try to solve the problem. Like for the mess strike, he thought that if it goes out of control, we could simply bring ‘ghar ka khana’ for the students. This kind of attitude could win over anybody, and I found that he treated everyone as equals no matter what their stature in life.

As he was the administrator, I would often approach him on many issues. My Bengali blood used to boil at small irritations - despite me living in Maharashtra all my life. So if I would go to him irritated, he would say, “Thanda ho ja, chai pee le, phir baat karte hai…” all my life. So if I would go to him irritated, he would see, I just could not say no to Professor Sahasrabudhe. You will rarely find a person like him; always available for advice, always smiling, with compassionate attitude towards people and penchant for jokes.

After my retirement, I settled in Anjanya Housing Society in Hiranandani, which is home to a large number of retired IIT people. As luck would have it, Professor Sahasrabudhe had a flat on the same floor but he rarely stayed there as he was always travelling. He would suddenly appear some nights and stop by for brief personal time with his family, and be travelling again the next night.

In that time, he became a good family friend, especially of my younger daughter who, in typical Bengali fashion, we had nicknamed ‘Bacchi’. This was a favourite source of merriment for Professor Sahasrabudhe as he would tease her claiming that I loved her elder sister more. My ‘Bacchi’ was a grown up girl and knew that he was actually pulling my leg and so she would play along. She would say, “Yes Uncle, I have been telling him that he likes Didi more than me.” Subsequently, my younger daughter went abroad for a year but whenever Professor Sahasrabudhe met me, he would joke and say, “I miss Bacchi too much…” when she is there, the two of us can gang up on you.”

Even after he retired, Prof. Sahasrabudhe continued to have a deep bond with IIT. He had many friends, especially Professor Subhasis. I recall that soon after Professor Subhasis had become the director, he fell very ill with food poisoning and had to be hospitalised. Professor Sahasrabudhe came over and asked me to accompany him in paying a visit to Professor Subhasis, who by then was recovering back home. If anybody was in distress, Professor Sahasrabudhe would always be there.

He was very open-hearted. I once received an SMS from him on 13th December, 2019 saying, “Dipan, today is International Tea Day, have you had tea together?” So, of course, I went over to his place and we had tea together. Another tea incident sprang to my mind, which will stay with me for a very long time. He had possibly just come back from Dharamshala, a place he frequently visited. He brought out a tin of Himalayan tea and, claiming that the day was International Tea Day, he had to do justice to his tea-loving friend with this gift. So, he gifted me the tin of tea. In a couple of days, I had to visit my hometown in Odisha from where I had taken this tea. Everybody back home, including my 93-year old mother, loved it. I immediately contacted Professor Sahasrabudhe and told him, “Remember your gift of Himalayan tea? My mother loved it so much that I have given it to her.” He replied, “Look there could be no greater joy to me than that and the next time I go to the Himalayas I will get you another tin”. Unfortunately, that was never to be and it remained my last and fondest memory of him.

Another incident I remember about Professor Sahasrabudhe is when he was GTL Head and thereafter the Director of Dhirubhai Ambani Institute, Ahmedabad. Though I had retired in 2010, I continued on extension till 2015. Somewhere in 2011, I called and asked him, “Array kya hai raha hai? What is the point in continuing to be in the same place after having retired formally?” He said, “Kuch dusaron ke liye karao…” So I asked, “Bolo kya karna hain?”. It seems there was a private university in Baroda that was looking for a Vice Chancellor. Now, I was not comfortable moving out of Mumbai, but he convinced me to try it and explore the life beyond IIT. So I went to Baroda, and discovered, in retrospect, that he had already made up his mind as he was the chairman of the selection committee. His personality was such that they gave him the liberty of hiring whoever he felt was most deserving of the Vice Chancellor position. So, I was hired with the committee giving me an offer I could not refuse. I joined the Navrachana University in Baroda on a 3-year contract but left it in a year because we could not adjust to the local culture after living in a cosmopolitan city like Mumbai. Although I was reluctant to leave, my heart was there. Just as I mentioned, Professor Sahasrabudhe was blessed with such an influential personality that I could just never say ‘no’ to him.

If there is one thing that young aspiring educators can learn from his life it is that teachers should not give up on the mission of remaining lifelong students because that was the only way to remain a good teacher - by continuing to learn. These days, everyone knows this truth but I think that it was a philosophy he actually lived. When I say continue to learn, I don't mean master your subject only. Knowledge has no boundaries; one should learn all the things that interest them. What I have learnt as a teacher is that there are a lot of teachers, is when you are answering students in class, if you can relate not only technically to the subject matter at hand, but also to other areas, with similes and metaphors, it helps and interests students.
Convocation ceremony, 1996

Prof. Sahasrabudhe during a lab visit in 1993
When I look back, I distinctly recall my first meeting with Prof. Sahasrabudhe, in 1981. At that time, I used to work in Raman Research Institute, Bangalore, and wanted to register in IIT Bombay for my Ph.D. as an external candidate. Prof. Sahasrabudhe was the head of the department, and happened to be in the committee that was interviewing Ph.D. candidates. I felt so exuberant after the interview that when other students and friends asked me how it went, I simply said that it did not matter whether I got selected or not but the interview was very enjoyable. I was far more carried away through years, I did not have any direct interaction with him. After I joined IIT Bombay, I could meet him and worked in the area of communication. However, there was not much interaction with him as I was doing my Ph.D. with Prof. S. Mahapatra as my guide and Prof. B.V. Rao as my examiner. During this time, I was repeatedly asked why I had not considered Prof. Sahasrabudhe as my guide as I was working on image processing! The reality is that my focus was on radio astronomy, which involved antenna arrays, and so I used to interact with Prof. Mahapatra and Prof. Rao who were the key people in that field. I guess, this kept me from interacting with Prof. Sahasrabudhe initially. After I joined IIT Bombay, I could meet him and worked with him more closely. However, for the first couple of years, I did not have any direct interaction with him because though he was in the field of communications, he used to work more in microprocessors, running the programme with Prof. Revenkar. I can say that I heard more about him from colleagues and students who used to give glowing reviews of his teaching methodology and stimulating exchanges. I can therefore say that before I even had the opportunity to interact with him, I had already formed an image of him as a much loved and respected professor whose classes were very exciting. My first direct interaction with him started as a co-supervisor for some of the students. One of these was Rajeev Agrawal - a B.Tech. from IIT Bombay, who had taken direct admission for Ph.D., and was working on a topic related to digitization of images. By then, Prof. Sahasrabudhe had moved to a demanding position of Deputy Director and had very little available time. Once in a while, we would all meet and exchange ideas. This is how our academic relationship began that deepened over time. Much of the discussions we had, were related to the Telematics project where SCS was the coordinator. There were periodic meetings in different ILs, as it was a national project.

When I joined IIT Bombay as a faculty, Prof. Sahasrabudhe became my senior colleague in the department, but the student-teacher relation from my Ph.D days always stayed in the background. Usually, the interactions with colleagues are casual and the conversations with them are informal. But with SCS, I could never bring myself to address him casually. I always considered him as my teacher and spoke to him deferentially. SCS was known for his humour and he could come up with a quip at the drop of a hat. I always enjoyed his hilarious wit but could never bring myself to initiate jokes with him. One thing I remember about SCS is that he used his quick wit to sow confusion among people in vivas or presentations and test them. So, if a student made a particular statement with confidence, SCS would make a diametrically opposing statement and challenge the student to repudiate it. His statement would be invariably invalid but he would logically convince the student that he was right. When the student is almost convinced, SCS would once again switch back and claim that the student’s initial hypothesis was correct. This funny academic cat and mouse game really amused us at such serious times. He would give me glowing reviews of his teaching and be quick to applaud my success and achievements. I remember, I was a little disconcerted at some point of time, and wanted to step down from the Deputy Director’s position. SCS called me and asked why I was taking that drastic step. I said, I wanted to send a message. His response was very succinct; he asked me to think of where exactly I wanted to send a message, and if there was anybody on the other side to receive my message! He advised me then, ‘as you rise higher, learn to remain calm and avoid impulsive decisions’. It was a great advice that helped me in my later life when I became Vice Chancellor and Director of IIT.

SCS was an extremely able administrator. He was Deputy Director of IIT Bombay, Director of DA-IICT as well as CTO of GSL. As an administrator, he used to take the responsibility of his chair very seriously. Often he would take tough decisions and once he decided to execute those, he would steadfastly see that they were followed to their conclusion. He came down ruthlessly on unethical behaviour and would ask for on-the-spot follow up to those who thought that he would not take tough decisions! Another good trait he had as a leader was that he never micro-managed. He would always consider him as my teacher and spoke to him deferentially. SCS was known for his humour and he could come up with a quip at the drop of a hat. I always enjoyed his hilarious wit but could never bring myself to initiate jokes with him. One thing I remember about SCS is that he used his quick wit to sow confusion among people in vivas or presentations and test them. So, if a student made a particular statement with confidence, SCS would make a diametrically opposing statement and challenge the student to repudiate it. His statement would be invariably invalid but he would logically convince the student that he was right. When the student is almost convinced, SCS would once again switch back and claim that the student’s initial hypothesis was correct. This funny academic cat and mouse game really amused us at such serious times. His ability to make a logical and convincing counter argument to what was proposed, was actually a well-designed plot to test the solidity of a student’s thinking. His objective was to check if a person’s thinking could be influenced and deflected from what was right. As you can imagine, this was quite useful during vivas, interviews and faculty selections. SCS had a remarkable quality of being able to guide and correct someone without offending the person.

One thing everyone should learn from SCS is that even if you are under stress, you should not let stress affect your behaviour. No matter how much strain you were under, you would always try to keep your head cool and not expressing your mind every time, is a great art not everyone can develop. I remember, I was a little disconcerted at some point of time, and wanted to step down from the Deputy Director’s position. SCS called me and asked why I was taking that drastic step. I said, I wanted to send a message. His response was very succinct; he asked me to think of where exactly I wanted to send a message, and if there was anybody on the other side to receive my message! He advised me then, ‘as you rise higher, learn to remain calm and avoid impulsive decisions’. It was a great advice that helped me in my later life when I became Vice Chancellor and Director of IIT.

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Whenever he met people, he would always inquire about them and their family’s wellbeing. Where others might generally ask casual questions and be happy with standard answers, he would be warmly involved on a more personal level. He would ask about whereabouts, school, progress, careers and the like. He truly cared about people. For him, friendship was black and white; if he liked a person, he truly liked him, but if he did not like a person, he would keep his counsel or withdraw. When he liked someone, he would be a friend irrespective of his/her status. He really did not bother about social mores, and would accept the persons as they were. Invariably, when people rise in their career, they dilute contact with those below their level. However, this was not the case with SCS.

I did not attend any of his classes, but I did attend his seminars either for Telecom or Telematics project. I noticed that his presentations would be balanced – partly humour and partly serious thinking material. So, if you happened to have attended his seminars, you would notice that thought provoking concepts, ideas and conversations were the order of the day. Of course, his humour and wit would always be to the fore. I have never seen a presentation of his which was completely serious - like a pure technical presentation. He would take an anecdote from somewhere, put a humorous spin on it and make it a part of his presentation. It is no wonder that he was regarded as a great teacher! In fact, my wife happened to attend one of his courses and she really admired his style of teaching. He would mostly not have a prepared lecture format, especially if it was a topic that he had taught a couple of times before. I have never noticed him making preparatory notes or even reading a report with him for student vivas. However, I am sure he must have read the report before starting because his questions were always focused. Even if he had not read up on a topic, he had an uncanny ability to pick a critical line of thought or question, during a presentation, and probe a person in depth.

He was a very controlled and balanced person. He would never pass a loose comment or talk about anybody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulging in a bit of light-hearted banter, it would be inclusive of the person anybbody in a bad light. If he was indulge
People can meet in a twist of fate and then be connected by a cord for life. It was just such a fortuitous meeting that marked the beginning of my personal history with Professor Sahasrabudhe. It would be interesting to note that my narrative begins long before my association with IIT Bombay and far from the shores of India. As I recall, Professor Sahasrabudhe was visiting San Diego, California, for a conference around late 1989 or early 1990. It was a fateful chance visit to catch up with my friend Tarun Soni – an IIT Bombay alumnus. Tarun knew that I had set my sights on joining IIT Bombay, so tactfully he called me over to meet Professor Sahasrabudhe. I can tell you, without any embellishment, that I was thoroughly impressed to meet Professor Sahasrabudhe. I can tell you, without any embellishment, that I was thoroughly impressed with the very gentle looking and smiling demeanour of Professor Sahasrabudhe. I still remember the keen interest he showed in what I was working on and my future course of action. If I remember correctly, when I joined, there was either Dr. Krishna Prasad or Sengupta who was working in the lab. These were the PhD students which we did not have overlapping interests as he was exploring the field of Image Processing too, in India.

Communication Engineering and Microprocessors, the other was Image Processing. In those days, my field of interest was Information Technology. On the other hand, I was still quite a new faculty member and naturally this was an interesting experience for me. In fact, I recall the time when Professor Sahasrabudhe and I co-mentored a PhD student named Asim Banerjee. Now, I hadn’t actually nurtured a PhD student before, whereas Professor Sahasrabudhe had a wealth of experience in how you spoke with, encouraged and mentored PhD students. He would gently tell me to try this or do that and it worked. So, you could say that I was in the unique position of being both a mentor and a student as I learnt this art from the professor. My learning experience continued when I had the opportunity to work with Professor Sahasrabudhe when he was heading a project called SCN - Scene Correlation Area Navigation, as part of a Defence Department project. It was basically a guidance system for re-entry vehicles that identified the location of re-entry vehicles on the terrain by capturing the side looking images from the vehicle. Although navigation assistance has become commonplace these days, for us, this project came well before the advent of GPS systems. While we continued the discussions during project meetings, I learned how to execute a complex project of this magnitude.

From what I remember of those early years, Professor Sahasrabudhe was in charge of the Communications Lab, which I took over on his retirement. It has since evolved into the Vision and Image Processing Lab. Our connection remained intact and he continued to come around to the lab later in life, even after retirement, when he was a consultant with certain companies and academic bodies. He was concentrating on two different aspects of research - one was his pet field of Communication Engineering and Microprocessors, the other was Image Processing. In those days, my field was more to do with 3D Computer Vision – though I also did work in 2D Image Processing.

If I remember correctly, when I joined, there was either Dr. Krishna Prasad or Sengupta who was working in the lab. These were the PhD students which we did not have too many back in 1989. Professor Sahasrabudhe used to invite me to join in many of the discussions, which was always an educative experience because he had mastered over such a wide repertoire of topics from communication, microprocessors to image processing. On the other hand, I was still quite a young faculty member and naturally this was an important subject for the future. Some colleges, especially in the interiors, didn’t see the value in holding these exams. However, Professor Sahasrabudhe convinced them of the importance of having communications as an important subject for the future.

Somewhere around 1992 and 1993, there was a realisation that the Joint Telematics Project needs to be popularized even more and a regular conference on Communication Systems was required. This became the National Communication Conference (NCC). It is still a matter of great pride to see the bugle call of Professor Sahasrabudhe, which I had the privilege to be a part of, continue to echo down the years.

Another one of his achievements was the integration of students from the erstwhile VSNL enterprise, which was handling overseas communication technology and had its main training institute at Dighi in Pune. Based on a presentation by Professor Sahasrabudhe, they agreed to induct their fresh recruits with an intensive 3-week training in signal processing, echo cancellation, DSL and other aspects; which was trimmed down to 2 weeks. Each year, there were around 3-4 course batches and an exam was held at the end of the course. Initially, VSNL did not see the value in holding these exams. However, Professor Sahasrabudhe convinced them that these fresh college recruits needed this knowledge and VSNL, listened to him. He brilliantly suggested using the exam as a means of performance-evaluation tied into the all India cadre posting based on rank. With this incentive, everyone was motivated and this course became phenomenally attractive and competitive over the last 5-6 years that this programme ran. For him educating people came before one’s own personal comfort.
I was really thankful for his help during the transition and can tell you it was quite a challenge to fill his boots and who would teach this course. The mantle fell on me. I he once took a sabbatical, we were in a quandary as to other related fields. He was so good at this that when he probably be more like 'Probability and Random called 'Communication System Theory' and would mathematical course. In those times, it used to be teachers we had in the department, especially in the voice".

with him, he would drily say, "Sorry, I really can't talk be so exhausted on the train ride back from Pune, that drove himself for his students. Sometimes he would evening and speaking for 12 hours at a stretch on the meant reaching early in the morning or the previous single handedly over a two-day period. Often that each one of us took turns travelling to Pune, to teach me had the good fortune of meeting. He exhibited a calm and smiling demeanour and I cannot recall him ever displaying any overt signs of worry or anxiety. Always respectful and polite, his eyes still hid a hint of mischief that those who were close to him saw in his good humour, light banter and laughter. Initially, as juniors, we were at a loss how to respond to his good-natured ribbing and I quickly understood that this was just his way of putting us at ease.

I remember just a year ago that he called me and asked, "Subhas, do you know where I am and what I am doing?" Knowing him I instantly guessed that he was in Kolkata eating a rosogulla or something. He laughed and replied, "Yes, I am in Kolkata having Naram Pak Sondesh and I wanted you to feel that you are missing out!" He knew how much I loved Bengali sweets and this was his way of teasing me. Even as recounted by me in my recent book "How to structure my teaching" in May 2019, I had been quite ill and was in hospital. Professor Sahasrabudhe, concerned about my health, visited me with his wife and Professor Dipan Ghosh, where he immediately alleviated my mood by slipping into his typical light banter and teasing. An incident just six months before he expired. There are many other instances of his caring side. He knew that my daughter was nicknamed 'Kulkuli'. Wherever he was, he would always ask, "What is Kulkuli doing?" Sometimes when he came back from an international trip, he would bring back pictures of plates for her and he would warn me saying, "Look don't touch the chocolates, these are for Kulkuli and you are not supposed to take a single one!" I would reply, "Because you are telling me this, I am saying that unless the father eats one, the daughter doesn't get any. So I am taking one right in front of you". I remember another instance when I visited him in Gandhinagar and my daughter was maybe 6 or 7 years old; she drew a figure and insisted that I give it to him. Two years later when we had a dinner at his place in Gandhinagar, he called me and asked, "What is Kulkuli's drawing still hanging carefully on the back of his door. Years later when he was in Kharagpur, at the same time that my daughter was doing her masters, I got a call from him saying, "Subhas, I know Kulkuli is studying somewhere in Kharagpur, give me her number I want to call her". It was a very sweet and touching gesture from him and my daughter appreciated meeting him.

His empathy and ability to put us juniors at ease endeared him to many. More so because he genuinely cared for us and was happy when we succeeded. I remember when, to my utter shock, they informed me that I had missed my flight! However, my ticket was good on morphology but I quickly picked it up. He said, "Here is your flight ticket. 'ADRIN' will meet you at the airport. Not being familiar with it, I asked "What is this place?" In James Bond style he said, "You don't need to worry about details... there will be a car at Hyderabad Airport. They will pick you up." So, mission accepted, I reached the airport and presented my ticket when, to my utter shock, they informed me that I had missed my flight! However, my ticket was showing I was well in time for my flight. The airline representatives tracked down the 'foul play' to my agent, who squeezed me onto another flight that was meant for my destination. Vaguely, I recalled the name 'ADRIN' in my conversation with the professor, but nobody seemed to have heard of it and I was readily agreeing to all sorts of location suggestions of it being in Secunderabad, Hyderabad and the like just to get going. Finally, they got tired of this unfurling game and left me to my own fate. I think it may have been the first time in India that a 'bakra' couldn't be taken for a ride as no one knew where I was to be dumped! This mission was fast looking like a washout, so I called the IIT number to connect to Professor Sahasrabudhe at his residence. I informed him of the situation and asked what I was to do as it was 10.30 p.m. and the place was absolutely deserted. Professor with his usual cool attitude calmly said down saying, "Subhas, don't worry... somebody will come". Wondering whether he had heard my situation correctly, I once again asked him that perhaps the person had come earlier and was not aware that I had boarded a flight 4 hours later. Professor Sahasrabudhe told me not to worry.
and then he hung up. Remember in those times, we did not have mobile phones and I started getting rather anxious. Pacing around, I suddenly spotted a lone white Ambassador car in the far corner of the parking lot. Taking a chance and this being the only car visible, I stood beside it for 10-15 minutes till a person came up to me and asked, “Sir, kya aap ka naam Chaudhuri hai?” Almost like a stranded person rescued from a deserted island, I said, “Haan! Haan!”. The person who I now took to be my driver said, “Baith baith ke main thak gaya toh abhi main ghar return hone wala tha...” So that tells you how bindass a character Professor Sahasrabudhe was. He was totally unperturbed that I was stuck in the middle of nowhere with no idea where to go, whom to meet and not even a credit card in my wallet. You can imagine the scenario that played out when I got back. But again Professor Sahasrabudhe in his unruffled style said “Subhasis, it was my responsibility that you go and come back properly. You have returned safe so now my responsibility is done”.

As to the mystery of the place called ‘ADRIN’, well it was none other than the Advanced Data Processing Research Institute (ADRIN), Hyderabad.

I have rarely, if ever, seen him shaken or stirred. He had a core of steel even though he wore his smile like a velvet glove. I discovered this once when I found him a little disturbed but still quite composed. I asked him what had happened. At first he would not reveal anything. Later that afternoon he suddenly said, “Subhasis, I had to kick somebody out of IIT”. Surprised, I asked him what he meant as I had heard nothing of this. Basically, without revealing any details, he told me that there was a gender-related incident with serious repercussions and as the Deputy Director, he took a stern decision to ask the offending party to leave. Even if he seemed soft and always smiling, there was a toughness that he reserved for occasions that deserved it. I look back on those moments with him fondly and even to the last time I met him, when I had snatched myself back from a serious illness and he was there to playfully wish me a speedy recovery. Little did I know then that the friend who came to put me back on my feet would soon find his eternal rest. He was my friend and I will miss his geniality and joy.

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Professor Sahasrabudhe deserves a great deal of credit in building the foundation of Communication Technology in academia in India. He was the captain and helmsman of this great enterprise.

- PROF. SUBHASIS CHAUDHURI
I have fond memories of Professor Sahasrabudhe that go back to our first meeting at the National Conference on Communication (NCC) held in 1996, when I had just finished my PhD from IIT Kanpur and had come to IIT Bombay. Professor Sahasrabudhe was instrumental in hiring me at a time when the IIT Bombay Electrical Engineering Department did not have any faculty in Communications Networking. From the moment I joined, he took me into his fold. We built a strong personal and professional bond, that I often felt like I had known him for a very long time.

One of the most personal memories I have of Professor Sahasrabudhe is that whenever we spoke, whether it was over the phone, down the corridors or when we crossed paths during his walks around the campus, he had a very unique way of greeting me. "Karandi!" ... Some mornings he would call out to me and say "Karandi, arrey...kuch kaam kiya ki nahi?" From the moment I joined in 1997, I began working closely with him on a number of projects. He involved me in every one of his projects, whether it was sponsored or Consultancy Projects, guiding students or being an examiner of his students. Professor Sahasrabudhe along with Professor Fanuqui, Professor Ashok Jhunjhunwala, Professor Anurag Kumar (IISc) and Professor V. Sinha, were instrumental in setting up the Telematics Group for the advancement of telecommunications in India. This group went on to set up the Annual National Conference on Communication. Another project that I clearly remember when I first joined was a training programme for VSNL engineers in Pune. This used to be a 3-week programme and Professor Sahasrabudhe, a few other professors and I, used to travel to Pune to teach. I attended many of his lectures, the remarkable way in which he could articulate and communicate left a deep impression on me. He had a very compassionate side. Whether it was in the class, question-answers or in the defence, students may have felt that he was tough on them, but I can tell you that was not the case. He would expect his students to do a good job but when it came to grading, he was not harsh. I recall that after a particular MTech defence, when the subject of grading arose, I asked him "Sir, what about the grades?" He answered, "I have done my job of asking the questions, now you decide on the grading. I have no problem with whatever grade you decide on. But, if I had to say something about his personality, I always found him to be on the cheerful side - cracking jokes at every opportunity. I never saw him getting angry, shouting at people or getting depressed or anything like that. Since all the other professors were very senior, and I was the youngest in the communications group in 1997, he would pull my leg a lot.

As an academically inclined person, his mind was always preoccupied with hunches or whatever entered his mind. To my neatly ordered view of the world as an administrator, I felt that this random approach was not very systematic or organised and things could get delayed. This happened with me a couple of times and when I reminded him, he would smilingly say, "Arey haan karta hu, karta hu, karta hu...!!" Then he would immediately continue, "Ascha maine kya nahi kya? Arey tumhe mujhe remind karna tha...!"

Another thing I remember about him was his sharp insights. He had a way of bringing up significant points that made us all wonder why we did not think of these things earlier. While working on a project for TCS networking, F. C. Kohli had requested a meeting in Bombay House and so, Professor Sahasrabudhe took me along. I experienced firsthand view of the remarkable insights he could bring to the discussion. This view of mine was reinforced when I was involved in the Telematics project and the organisation of the National Conference of Communications event. Clearly, it was an eye-opening and wonderful experience working with him.

After I became the Director of IIT Kanpur, I could not meet him for two years but I had spoken to him over the phone, and of course he, in his inimitable way, would say, "Haan Karandi, arrey aas paas koi hain to nahi?" Quizzically, I would answer, "Nahi." In answer, he would say, "Arey, now you are a director and I called you Karandi!". That is how jovial and friendly a person he was.

Getting back to the last time I met him sometime last year, I had gone to IIT Delhi as the Director of IIT Kanpur and had checked in at the guest house when I saw Professor Sahasrabudhe's name written quite accurately mine in the guest house register. At this, I instantly asked the guest house manager if Professor Sahasrabudhe was in his room, and to my great delight, the reply was 'Yes'. So I spontaneously took the opportunity to knock on his door. I found out that he had come for a National Accreditation Board (NAB) meeting. We chatted for more than an hour. I was not to know that this random meeting of chance would be the last time I would see him in person.

After I had shifted to IIT Kanpur and he shifted to Nagpur, we never got to meet as frequently, so even today I catch myself thinking that I only have to travel to Mumbai to meet him. It is still difficult to believe that this is one journey that can no longer be fulfilled.

I miss him. I still hear his voice reverberate in my ears, "Karandi!"
When you needed help, he was the one person you could always depend on.

V. K. TANDON
IIT Bombay

World renowned, energetic, jovial, ever helpful and down-to-earth, Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe has been known to me since even before I started working under him in 1993, at his Communication Laboratory, in IIT Bombay. He never treated his subordinates any less than his elite group of friends. Working with him was an honour and pleasure. I noticed how he used to be involved in several activities of the institute simultaneously. We often wondered how he was able to handle it all so efficiently. We learnt many things from him. In spite of being so busy, he would always find time for us when we needed his assistance. He literally proved, that ‘a busy man can always find time’. I vividly recall an incident, during stock verification of the laboratory, when I couldn’t find an expensive component, despite searching for it a number of times in the lab. I was quite upset as I was responsible for the laboratory material. Commiserating with my situation, Prof. Sahasrabudhe took a couple of hours out from his busy schedule to actually help me find the missing component. His assistance proved to be such a huge relief and support to me.

Together, we would often run a course for officers of the Indian Railways at their IRIEEN (Indian Railway Institute for Electrical Engineering) facility in Nashik. This used to be such a wonderful experience every time. Work became so stress-free when Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe was around.

I remember that he was quite fond of playing pranks on his friends. Once, he called me in the evening for some urgent conference work. As decided, I reached the department and got busy with the work. After about an hour he called my home and told my wife that he wants to talk to me. She told him that I had gone to the department a long while back, to work with him only. He said that I was not with him and he had never called me. He told her to give me the message that he wanted to talk to me urgently and hung up. When I came home my wife asked me with an expressionless face, “Where did you go?” Innocently I said “Arrey, I told you I was going to the lab to be with Prof. Sahasrabudhe”. She very coolly replied, “He called up some time back and you were not with him. Where did you go?” I immediately realised what he was up to, so I called him back and begged him to tell my wife the truth. He laughingly confessed to his prank and only then did I get my dinner.

On a personal level, he was instrumental in convincing me to visit UK with my wife, on the invitation of my daughter who was working there. I was quite reluctant to go due to the high cost of the trip. I still remember his words “Tandon, if you don’t go now, you can never go. This is a once-in-a-life-time opportunity, since your daughter is already there.” So, we visited the UK and a couple of other European countries. He was so right, that was our first and last visit abroad. I am so thankful to him for his insistence.

Prof. Sahasrabudhe’s academic excellence is well known. He used to teach multiple courses in any semester. It was definitely a sight to watch him teach.

The students were very fond of him and his class always used to have full attendance. I, too, attended many of his lectures to learn new subjects. He also took on many industrial projects, including MHRD projects. As a by-product, many landmark publications were produced by him. He was an asset to the Institute. 

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It always stands out that he never needed reference notes to deliver a great lecture.

PROF. SUBRAMANIAN IYER
Distinguished Professor,
University of California Los Angeles, USA

I vividly recall the Communication System Theory classes that I took with Prof. Sahasrabudhe in 1977. The man would walk the corridors in Hilbert Space - so comfortable was he with the various mathematical transforms - that even today I remain amazed.

He devoted one of his classes to loudspeakers and microphones - and solved the eigen functions of a vibrating membrane on the board - without notes! In fact, I don’t remember him ever using notes. Bessel functions of various orders just rolled off his tongue - nodes, antinodes, etc. He digressed into tablas and drums. Every lecture of his was a treat.

Recently, I have started a second career in teaching and I continue to be inspired by Prof. Sahasrabudhe. May he continue to inspire all of us - even in absentia. We have been fortunate to have been taught by this great teacher and पिडत:

Sometimes a train journey becomes more than a ride.

SUDARSHAN BALA CADAMBI
GM Memory and IO Technologies,

My thoughts go back to around 1976 when a few of us petitioned for and organised a train bogie tour to Bangalore - and a bit beyond to Ooty - to further our "theoretical" education. As you can imagine, those three weeks were engaging and impressionable in very many ways. We had three faculty chaperones, and Professor Sahasrabudhe was definitely one of the most light-hearted and inspirational mentors you could have along on a field trip. I am certain that all of us would agree that having SCS with us made that time truly memorable. Today, I look back on the decades of dedication and achievement as well as the impact that Professor Sahasrabudhe had on so many lives - it is truly humbling for me to have been a small part of his life’s journey.
He inspired me to be the best teacher I could be.

PROF. VENUGOPAL VEERAVALLI
Henry Magwaki Professor,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

At the beginning of my fifth year at IIT Bombay, I knew I wanted to apply to graduate schools in the US, but was uncertain about my area of research. I happened to take SCS’s Communication Systems class that semester, and I was very impressed with his teaching. He would come to class with just a piece of chalk (no notes) and deliver such amazing lectures; each one like a part of a fascinating novel, delivered one chapter at a time. I would always eagerly await the next lecture. His enthusiasm for communication theory was so contagious that after a few weeks of his course I decided that I wanted to pursue graduate studies in communication theory.

To this day, he serves as a role model for me, and I constantly aspire to be as good a teacher as he was.

Students loved his courses.
He loved to captivate and inspire them.

PROF. B. KRISHNA MOHAN
IIT Bombay

I first got to know Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe in January 1982, when I started attending the Advanced Digital Signal Processing - a spring semester M.Tech. course. The way he introduced the subject and how he mesmerised the students in the classroom so he got their complete attention was simply amazing. Later, I got to know of his Communication System Theory course that became incredibly famous because he taught it. These are just two examples of the courses taught by Prof. Sahasrabudhe that students just loved to attend.

I was fortunate that he accepted me to do my M.Tech. thesis and later my PhD under his supervision. The many years I spent in this research phase under the mentorship of Prof. Sahasrabudhe, and the discussions on problems in Image Analysis, over casual chats and hundreds of cups of tea at our favourite Cafe haunt, stay with me forever.

Prof. Sahasrabudhe had groomed many students who became professors, scientists, and industry professionals spread across the world. It is without a doubt that everyone would recall their association with a tinge of nostalgia.

He was a friend, guide and philosopher to me and to all students who were fortunate to come in contact with him.
A man of great conviction who had the skill to handle sensitive situations with adroitness.

DR. K. S. DASGUPTA
Director, DA-IICT,
Director IIST Thiruvananthapuram, 2010-2015

Quantum mechanics is cooler than Shannon Sampling!

Professor Sahasrabudhe had a great class on Shannon’s Sampling Theorem that just blew our minds. You have a continuous function that can be represented by countable values? What?! So Bikash Sabata, a classmate of mine, and I went to Prof. Sahasrabudhe’s office to tell him how we really enjoyed the class. In classic SCS style, he told us: “We offered the Engineering Physics program the first time to your classmate. And he seemed to love it. But I didn’t think it would be popular.”

Nyquist in the West, though we can see from Wikipedia that the Russian Kotel’nikov came up with it earlier. SCs attributed it to Shannon and Kotel’nikov when he taught it; notice the apostrophe, which is not generally used by Western academia but is common among Russian citations. This was him being exacting in what he expected of himself, and us. That apostrophe just stuck in my mind.

I kept my notes from this class for a very long time and might still have them; I likely took the class in the 1984 Monsoon semester. I also recall clearly the lecture on quantization and the beautiful one on frequency modulation. He also taught part of a class on number-theoretic signal processing, which combines all my favourite topics. He had a gift when it came to lecturing. He knew the material and seemed to love it. It all came to life. Many of us chose to study or work in communication theory because of his one course in the area, required for the B. Tech degree at that time. I used to find it hard to be in class before noon, yet I made it to each of his 8:30 am classes.

SCS always treated us women as equal to the men in the class. There have been other faculty members, both in the US and at IIT, who explicitly brought up my potential role as a mother while discussing career options. But I can’t even imagine him bringing this up. In fact, when we were discussing academic careers, he asked me to think about whether it would matter if my classmates were earning more than I was. He was treating me as having the same financial ambition as any male student in the class. He would also tell us women off if we did not live up to expectations, and would push us to excel. For example, when I was planning to go to the US to study, he started quizzing me on whether I was doing everything that was necessary, and got really annoyed to find out that I had not yet learned to drive: “You are a modern woman and you don’t know how to drive? How will you be independent?” He would have known that would get my goat!

After I left IIT, I stayed in touch with SCS as I know a number of students did. He was Deputy Director for the year I spent as an Assistant Professor at IIT-Bombay right after my PhD. My husband and I went as experts for faculty interviews at DA-IICT while he was Director there. I would talk to him on the phone often when I visited India, and we met a few times too, when he would be in Bombay. Mrs. Sahasrabudhe was exceptionally warm to all of the students, and I was touched by their warmth towards my husband when they met him. Both of them have the gifts of intelligence, grace and warmth, and they are so generous with them. What a large family they have built together over the decades!
I had the privilege of being introduced to Prof. Sahasrabudhe (SCS) through the good auspices of my guide Prof. S. S. Padhye, while I was doing my Masters at VJTI in 1988. Prof. Padhye was insistent that I complete my Ph.D. with SCS. So, after I indicated my interest, Prof. SCS asked me to come fully prepared for an interview. I cleared the departmental selection process and joined him and Prof. K. Shankar in January 1989, at IIT Bombay. This is how I began my professional career. I fall far short of the effusive adjectives I would like to use while describing him.

To my mind, he has always been this supremely intelligent teacher, incredibly compassionate human being, friendly, social and always smiling. It is extremely rare to find so many qualities in a single person. During my formative years, I considered myself lucky to have had such an extraordinary guide, teacher, guru and mentor. He was, and will, remain a role model for me. Whatever my roster of achievements, it is all due to his blessings.

Another incident dates back to 2007, when I had the opportunity to attend an important conference at the IEEE Pune section, to organise a national level conference on WIMAX in October. I had no prior experience of organising a large event, but Prof. Padhye instilled in me the confidence to do so. On the day of the conference, I arrived at the hotel early to check the final arrangements. I was ushered into a room where the TIFAC officer was waiting. He immediately said that this would not be entertained and that he needed to show him a few more things and keep him engaged. On SCS’s return, the DA-IIT liaison faculty member arrived to take us for dinner, at a restaurant nearby, and to discuss the next day’s plan of action. I did not call up SCS, nor did he contact me, as this was an official visit. When the faculty liaison dropped us off after dinner, the TIFAC officer expounded on bureaucratic protocol and how well he was received and treated during another assessment at Chennai.

Around 10 a.m. the next morning, we convened at the Director’s Office for a brief meeting on the overall plan. TIFAC had provided infrastructure assessment sheets and SCS personally conducted us through the entire facility, explaining everything in detail over the next two hours. He then requested his faculty colleague to continue showing us anything else we required to see and he left for another appointment. After a short lunch break, we had finished with our agenda, so I chose to sit and wait in the Director’s Office, while our liaison faculty member went with the TIFAC officer to show him a few more things and keep him engaged. On SCS’s return, the DA-IIT liaison faculty member also entered the cabin and informed SCS that the officer to India had wanted a quick pro quo to clear the grant. SCS immediately said that this would not be entertained and directed the faculty member to communicate the same to the officer. He was of the opinion that the Institute would be better off without the TIFAC grant than indulging in malpractice. This was classic SCS. A living example of how the head of an institute can influence organisational ethics and culture by displaying personal and professional integrity.

Another incident takes us back to 2007, when I had taken on an initiative, through the IEEE Pune section, to organise an important conference on WIMAX in October. I had no prior experience of organising a large event, but Prof. Padhye instilled in me the confidence to do so. On the day of the conference, I arrived at the hotel early to check the final arrangements. I was ushered into a room where the TIFAC officer was waiting. He immediately said that this would not be entertained and that he needed to show him a few more things and keep him engaged. On SCS’s return, the DA-IIT liaison faculty member arrived to take us for dinner, at a restaurant nearby, and to discuss the next day’s plan of action. I did not call up SCS, nor did he contact me, as this was an official visit. When the faculty liaison dropped us off after dinner, the TIFAC officer expounded on bureaucratic protocol and how well he was received and treated during another assessment at Chennai.

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Another incident dates back to 2007, when I had...
That uncommon guru who had a heart of gold.

DR. APOO KOTICHA
B.Tech (EE), IIT Bombay, 1986

I got to know Prof. Sahasrabudhe from the time I took his class in my 3rd year. I found him to be a great teacher who made a difficult subject easy and intuitive to understand. I decided that I would ask him to be my BTP guide, if he agreed. Which he readily did. He was very helpful, and I was able to get a good project done and get a good grade. Most importantly, once I took him on as my guru, not only did he treat me as his shishya, which would have been the norm, but he also warmly welcomed me as a family member, which was quite uncommon. I look back fondly to my days as his student/shishya and adopted offspring of sorts.

Punctual and precisely to the point. The mark of a teacher who knew the value of both.

PROF. RANJAN BANERJEE
Dean and Professor, BITS School of Management, Mumbai

I was in Mechanical Engineering at IITB and while I had heard of SCS, I had never really had the good fortune to meet him then. As an indirect consequence of my current role as head of a management school, I served with him on the boards of two engineering colleges. He was punctual, substantive and always to the point. I found him a very nice man and a thorough professional, somebody who was very sincere to every responsibility he took on. He had a gentle way of making even strong feedback palatable. Above all, he came across as a very nice human being. In many ways, he embodied all that was great about the best teachers I have known - depth, sincerity, and a complete lack of malice.

I will remember him fondly.
A tribute to a teacher,
a tribute to a legend,
a tribute to Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe

DR. RAJEEV AGRAWAL
MD and CEO, Innoviti Payment Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

"Take a series of N real numbers and do a Discrete Fourier Transform on them, what kind of a number series do you get?" asked Prof. Sahasrabudhe, or SCS, as he was known to all of us. "In general N complex numbers" I answered. "How did you double the information, Rajeev?" said SCS with a twinkle in his eye. This was my introduction to the sparkling wit and sheer brilliance of SCS. He asked me to come back in five minutes with an answer. Well, it's not important what the answer was, but more important than the answer are the things we can learn from it.

During B.Tech, one starts attending department classes from the second year and that is when we first heard the true potential of a person and challenge them that they were not doing enough to realise it. Interactions with him were brilliant but scary, he knew more about our abilities than we believed in.

I remember this seminar of mine, in the winter of 1992, which he attended. After my presentation, he asked me a question and I gave a standard answer. It was the second year of my Ph.D. and I was thinking I had not said enough by attending classes (I had joined Ph.D. directly after my B.Tech and needed to take courses for a year). He kept probing me and I kept providing textbook answers. What was I to do? The whole format of a Ph.D. was turning out to be quite uninspiring. The Ph.D. scholars' room on the 3rd floor was gloomy, I was missing the regularity of classes, and most of all I was missing stimulating interactions with him.

He probed me further and after a few more attempts said, "I am sure you can give me a better answer, and I wonder why you aren't doing that. Your sheer insistence on not thinking much will make you pass you by. I think that, he left the room pushing the report back to me. This totally deserved rebuke hit me hard. I went back to my thinking and writing. I was not greedy. His sheer brilliance made complex things simple and his perseverance with us made each of us realise our true potential. What can one ask of a teacher? He inspired us, showed us the direction, and helped one to find the destination.

There were many interactions I had with him during my Ph.D., each now an indelible memory. Each having its own characteristic of him, he threw a surprise.

The only way to trace him was through his PAs in the Communications Lab, which is where all of us used to visit. There were no mobile phones and I was unable to call his PA. The only way to trace him was through his PAs in various offices. He was always on the run between his various meetings and it was not uncommon to call his PA only to know that we had just missed him.

I was lucky to get a bit more access to his time than usual. I wonder if he had given each of us more time how much more we could have learned from him. But that is being greedy. His sheer brilliance made complex things simple and his perseverance with us made each of us realise our true potential. What can one ask of a teacher? He inspired us, showed us the direction, and then left us to find the destination.

There were many interactions I had with him during my Ph.D., each now an indelible memory. Each having helped me find a bit more of myself. The last one, before I left the academic world for a career in industry, was when I was giving finishing touches to my thesis. I met him and Prof. Shevgaonkar to share the draft and set a date for submission. The meeting had already started. They had been discussing examiners and decided to set a date. I was about to leave, characteristic of him, he threw a surprise.

I had been inspired by the works of Dr. Klaus Voss, a German mathematician and computer scientist during my B.Tech. Several times I had discussed Voss' work with SCS. After fixing the date for submission he said, "Well, why don't we send the thesis to Dr. Voss and make him, the third examiner?" I would always greet him with his warm smile, sparkling eyes, and brilliant wit. We would chat briefly, exchange phone numbers, me promising to call him up and then some excuse of work would take over.

One day, sometime in 2015, I got a call from him. In his characteristic style he asked me, "Hey, when did you start writing books?" I was taken aback. He continued, "Come on, I have a book written and authored by Rajeev Agrawal!" We laughed about the common name, exchanged notes, and lost touch again.

Sometime in 2018, I ran into him at the Mumbai airport. I was seeking his advice after a long time, maybe 10 years. Even then the sight of him filled me with awe. He was sitting a few tables away, enjoying his having dinner. He looked old, but not tired. He looked occupied, as if not wanting anyone to disturb him. I kept looking at him, not sure whether I was seeing him or hearing him. He was thinking about him. He was eating light as always. I saw him stop and get up to go to the sweeter counter.

I decided I had to say hello to him and
greeted him. We chatted, I shared with him what I was doing, and he, curious as always, wanted to know all. He was still very busy, travelling 10-12 days a month, totally comfortable with the changing world of technology around him, and enjoying every bit of his work. We exchanged numbers once again. We got up to leave the lounge and head towards our respective gates, when there was an announcement that his flight had been delayed. "I will stay back Rajeev, you go ahead, stay in touch" he said. I left to catch my flight and half-way to the gate, my flight was also announced as being late. I could not believe my luck. I could spend some more time with him. I rushed back to the lounge but by that time he had left. I searched around but could not find him.

Not finding him left me uneasy - as if something was incomplete. This kept bothering me till, in February 2019, I decided I just had to meet him wherever he might be. He had shifted to his ancestral house in Nagpur. Since I had some work in Mumbai in the second week of March, I decided to go to Nagpur from there, over the weekend. I gave him a call and we decided to meet at his ancestral home on the 21st. He invited me over for lunch with him and his wife. We had lunch and started chatting. He was still travelling, but a bit less. His throat had suffered an ailment and he was refraining from talks. I asked him why he was not writing a book, and he said, “Maybe, one day.” He showed me around his beautiful ancestral house. We talked about many things, people, technology, old times, current times, to come. He told me about his early years at IIT when industry work used to be looked down upon, and some of which I still have with me. He asked me to take whatever I liked. I searched and picked up a book on Probability. Without blinking an eye, he told me to read so-and-so chapter that explained the concept of randomness in an entirely different way. He had stopped reading those books fifteen years back, however his memory and intellect were as sharp as ever. His wit too was intact. He told me that he had joined a gym. As I looked at him incredulously, he said, “That’s the only place I can get clean air. So I go and walk around for half an hour, much to the surprise of the gym instructor, who keeps looking for an opportunity to put me on the treadmill.”

The afternoon that I spent at his place is one of the most memorable moments of my life. I left that evening feeling blessed. Away from our responsibilities, away from the hustle and bustle of airports, this was the first time we had talked for so long and on such diverse topics. This was the first time I learnt a little more about him as a human being, an individual beyond the teacher I had always seen him as. How much he loved his family, how much he missed his daughter. His friends from IIT, many of whom had passed away. His students, each of whom he remembered fondly. His struggles and successes. I asked him why he was not writing a book, and he said, “Maybe, one day.” He showed me around his beautiful ancestral house. We talked about many things, people, technology, old times, current times, to come. He told me about his early years at IIT when industry work used to be looked down upon, and how he would fight for it. We talked and talked.

During the tour of his house, I came across a cupboard full of books. The same books that used to be in his office at IIT. Books we used to refer to, and some of which I still have with me. He asked me to take whatever I liked. I searched and picked up a book on Probability. Without blinking an eye, he told me to read so-and-so chapter that explained the concept of randomness in an entirely different way. He had stopped reading those books fifteen years back, however his memory and intellect were as sharp as ever. His wit too was intact. He told me that he had joined a gym. As I looked at him incredulously, he said, “That’s the only place I can get clean air. So I go and walk around for half an hour, much to the surprise of the gym instructor, who keeps looking for an opportunity to put me on the treadmill.”

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Dear Sir, Thank you.
Thank you for encouraging me to believe I could do more.
Thank you for showing me the direction to achieve it.
Thank you for listening to my confused thoughts.
Thank you for helping me organise them.
Thank you for allowing me to make mistakes.
Thank you for helping me to learn from them.
Thank you for appreciating my small successes.
Thank you for supporting me through my big failures.
Most of all, thank you for giving me your time.
Your student, still in awe, and still a little scared.

DR. RAJEEV AGRAWAL
My memories of Professor Sahasrabudhe go back to the year 1990 when I was pursuing a Ph.D in Electrical Engineering. I needed to earn 52 credits over three semesters, while also managing family responsibilities and raising my two little ones. It was quite a juggling act. However, when I was told that Professor Sahasrabudhe was going to take the ‘Basic Electronics’ course that semester and it would be his last, I didn’t want to miss it at any cost. It was my only chance to hear him in person. So, I decided to audit the course on top of 52 credits, family commitments and my children. Not to mention, the classes started at 8.30 in the morning. Although, he ended up taking the ‘Probability Theory’ course instead of ‘Basic Electronics’, I still decided to go ahead with it. I was a bit apprehensive about whether I would be able to understand anything, so I also bought a big book on the topic by Athanasios Papoulis. Just in case I needed to refer to it during lectures.

On the first day of the class, he entered, took the roll call, started writing from the topmost left corner of the board and continued towards the right. One could refer to the notes written on the board, if required. His neat handwriting, clear pronunciation and intelligible thoughts were a reflection of his profound knowledge on the subject. His face would radiate more and more as he went deeper into it. Fifty minutes of the lecture were quite mesmerizing. We were all so engrossed that we just kept listening to him, even forgetting to take notes at times! Needless to say, I didn’t have to open the Papoulis book! Making it to the class at 8:30 am in the morning was a challenge for me but I made sure that I never missed any of his lectures.

There is also an amusing memory from the course that I distinctly remember. While taking the roll call, Professor Sahasrabudhe would look at students over his golden rimmed spectacles and call out the names. “Saajamma??” he would read out the name. The girl always corrected him “Sajama, sir. Not Saajamma”.”

All I can say is that I was fortunate enough to learn from a teacher par excellence who also possessed a jovial personality. "Saadar Pranaam" to the wonderful teacher!

DR. SARITA SHEVGAIKNAR
Freelance Writer

As a B.Tech student, it is to my eternal good fortune that I was taught Communication Theory by Prof. Sahasrabudhe. Through every one of his lectures and interactions, SCS personified enthusiasm, energy and love for a subject that was infectious. It certainly played its part in instilling greater involvement and desire to succeed. I will always respect this great teacher of mine. May his tribe increase.

ASHUTOSSH PEWEKAR
B.Tech (EE), IIT Bombay, 1995
Nothing quite like his keen ability to quickly get to the heart of the subject and draw new perspectives.
(L to R): Prof. S K Banerjee (Electrical Engg.), Janardan (Registrar), Prof. Chandrashekhar (Aeronautical Engg.), Prof. K. Shankar (Electrical Engg.), Prof. R. E. Bedford (Electrical Engg.) and Prof. SCS

(L to R): Prof. J S Murthy (Physics), Prof. R. E. Bedford (Electrical Engg. & Director, IIT B) & Prof. SCS
I would like to start by paying my tribute to Prof. Sahasrabudhe. I can say, I was fortunate to be associated with Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe for more than three decades. I first met at IIT Kharagpur in 1980 and our marathon discussions on Telematics began with the sanction of the Ministry, we made the programme into a national IIT joint project and formed the National Joint Telematics Group. People from the communication departments of participating institutes became members. To manage and organise the project, we held two meetings every year, where we would discuss challenges, improvements and follow-up action plans. It was a dynamic process and all of us became a very coherent and close group of teachers and researchers. This is how my association with Prof. Sahasrabudhe kept on growing. Further, we introduced the National Communication Conference (NCC) for the first time in the country. This was a conference totally dedicated to communication, which would be held every year in February and in rotation among participating member institutes. I remember that the first real problem we faced was deciding on a location where we would launch the first short course. We decided on receiving this directive, he consulted me on how we would initiate three projects on the then very current fields of Telematics, Informatics and Information Technology. Fortunately, a small cell on Educational Technology would be taken up by some Education Technology cell. Fortunately, a small cell on Educational Technology existed in IIT Kharagpur, so Prof. Faruqui agreed to this suggestion. Regarding the Telematics project, after Prof. Faruqui and I had a detailed discussion, we proposed the five IITs and the IISc institutes to participate in this project and chalk out a plan of action. Accordingly, around the last half of the 1980s, representatives from these institutes visited IIT Kharagpur. Among the many that came, two were from IIT Bombay, one of them was Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe. While this was definitely our first introduction, we soon came to have mutual admiration for each other that lasted many decades. Our marathon discussions on Telematics began with defining its meaning and what we could do in this area. We realised that the Telematics revolution was happening in a big way and that the entire country was going to go digital. As far as communication was concerned, the telephones and telegrams had almost disappeared and digital transmission technology was being used by BSNL. Since most engineering colleges, and even IITs, did not teach much about digital communication like digital telephony and digital transmission in our courses, we decided to begin educational courses on digital communication. We identified various topics and created short courses every year - one in July and another during December. We started with training faculty members of various engineering institutes, so they could teach this subject in their colleges; inviting participation from various engineering colleges increased the scope for introducing new topics and more funding, so we were able to provide accommodation, travel and other incidental expenses so that the participants and even their colleges did not feel the burden of cost. We then prepared a roster of topics which could be taught at different IITs and IISe by rotation every year or semester. I was thrilled that Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe was among the leading members who immediately accepted the challenge. We decided that the Telematics projects would not be confined only to training faculty members but also include research activities. Each IIT and IISe identified a field in the area of Telematics, which included computer communication, even though the Internet had not yet gained prominence at that time. The course acceptance was overwhelming. It seemed that everybody wanted to learn this new technology and the participation in the courses was huge. In fact, we had difficulty in managing so many participants but credit should go to people like Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe, Prof. Jhunjhunwala and many others who made it possible. With Prof. Faruqui as the National Coordinator and the sanction of the Ministry, we made the programme into a national IIT joint project and formed the National Joint Telematics Group. People from the communication departments of participating institutes became members. To manage and organise the project, we held two meetings every year, where we would discuss challenges, improvements and follow-up action plans. It was a dynamic process and all of us became a very coherent and close group of teachers and researchers. This is how my association with Prof. Sahasrabudhe kept on growing. Further, we introduced the National Communication Conference (NCC) for the first time in the country. This was a conference totally dedicated to communication, which would be held every year in February and in rotation among participating member institutes. I remember that the first real problem we faced was deciding on a location where we would launch the first short course. We considered that IIT Kharagpur might be a little remote at the start, so the choices we had were Bombay, Delhi or perhaps Kanpur. I was happy that Prof. Sahasrabudhe accepted the challenge to hold the first course as well as the conference. The seed was sown and the course went on to become very popular and I got a lot of appreciation from the whole country, including the MHRD. We also began research activities by distributing projects to the B. Tech, M.Tech and PhD students. The courses went on for a long time, perhaps 15-20 years, till the Telematics project funding was available. By then, a good number of people were trained in Telematics and the programme became self-sustaining. The conference celebrated its Silver Jubilee in February 2019 at IISc Bangalore, where I met Prof. Sahasrabudhe for the last time. We were staying in adjoining rooms at the same guest house and so we made it a point to have our breakfast together daily.

I never missed a course or conference that was held in Bombay till my retirement. When we used to visit Bombay, Prof. Sahasrabudhe would often invite us over for a meal. Similarly, if there were official engagements in Kharagpur, he would make time to visit our homes there. As you can guess, we were very close, not just through our academic interactions but also our casual meetings. He would freely call me for many things. I never addressed him as Prof. Sahasrabudhe and he never called me Prof. Maskara. Whether it was a formal or informal meeting, we addressed each other as Sahasrabudhe and Maskara. I know from his students that he was a very popular teacher. He would take lectures for the two short courses every year and regularly get over 70 participants from across the country. He used to begin with the fundamentals and take them through to the latest developments in technology. He was considered to be a popular teacher because he was quite charismatic among his students. As a researcher, I know he was great because he had helped guide some of India’s best PhDs who are excelling in their fields. This includes Dr. K. S. Dagakupa who was the Director of ISRO for five or more years. Now, he is the Director of Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology, where Prof. Sahasrabudhe himself was a director for many years. Another one from this group of scholars was the late Prof. Somnath Sengupta, who joined IIT Kharagpur when I was heading the Department of Communication there.
As I have said earlier, Prof. Sahasrabudhe was always ready to take us around without hesitation; like organising the initial Telematics courses and conferences. He was a highly talented and in high demand with government groups, teaching bodies and institutions - particularly the IITs. He must have participated in numerous project evaluations of the government, NBA committees and faculty selection committees. In fact, I was a co-member in some of them, so I have enjoyed his company even there. His credibility and capacity for cooperation with everyone, while still keeping his independence of opinion, was highly valued. Despite all this fame and adulation, he was startlingly down-to-earth and you would never find him showing off his academic and research credentials or unduly flexing his administrative position. He was kind-hearted and in the three decades or more of my knowing him, I have never once seen him lose his cool. He was ready to accept challenges and every time he used to say, "Let us take things seriously but not be worried about any problem as we will be able to solve it". While he was down-to-earth in his approach and ability, he was also forward thinking in everything concerning the field of education and communication technology. He used to keep himself aware of the latest technology, trends and news. In my opinion, he was a good blend of an administrator as well as an academician, considering that he was the Deputy Director of IIT Bombay for five years and the Director of DA-IICT for at least ten years.

I was personally very close to him and whenever we used to meet - either during official engagements or personal ones at our respective homes - we would share meals and thoughts about a wide range of topics. He was very fond of Bihar and my hometown Begusarai. I don’t know why he had this deep fascination for Bihar but he wanted to know everything about the place, the people and its welfare and is a small story I can narrate about the care that he had for those close to him. Once, when he had accompanied me to Kharagpur on official work after the usual meals at my home, he spontaneously decided to walk around Kharagpur Town. I told him that Kharagpur was a small railway town with shoddy in shreds, small shops, no fancy places to eat and very few places to see. He said in his characteristic style, “I then wanted to see it even more. So that evening we walked down the small bazaar; we used to call it ‘Gol Bazar’. One can cover the entire market in ten minutes, so we took two or three rounds of the market and he asked me for suggestions on what he should buy. I told him that it wasn’t really a great place to buy anything special but if he was so keen, perhaps he could buy a saree for his wife. I’m not sure if he made any purchases but in the course of our small talk, I mentioned that I would shortly be travelling abroad on work and I didn’t have a windbreaker for cold-weather jacket. At this, he got quite concerned and asked me, how I would manage the extreme cold there. Back then, I was not aware of how extremely cold it got in winter, as it was my first visit abroad. Promptly, he decided that we should start looking for something warm to wear and that he would buy it for me. I protested saying that we could not possibly find something like that in a town with a population of 25,000. But Prof. Sahasrabudhe was insistent. So, we visited a few shops and naturally were not able to find anything close to what was needed. However, we came across a blue windcheater made of a kind of cheap synthetic material that was around Rs. 200. Making up his mind, he bought it for me, saying that it was better than nothing and that I should at least have some protection till I could buy a warm jacket when visiting a bigger town. Till date, this blue jacket is a treasured possession that I use whenever I have to visit a cold place like Delhi during the winter. I have preserved it, and despite its very cheap plastic look, it has served me well till date. It has also become something of a memento for me. Though it is not so cold here, I sometimes wear it at home.

There is another story I want to tell you about him that is very close to my heart. In the past few years, I was at Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology and after the previous Director retired, Prof. Sahasrabudhe joined as a director. The first thing he told me that he had joined only because I was there. I felt rather touched by this. Unfortunately, in little over a year I had to leave due to a prior commitment, though my term of contract was for many more years. So when I wanted to leave, Prof. Sahasrabudhe was not ready to let me go. He told me that he had joined because of me and now that I was leaving, how would he survive there without me. Generally, I never accepted any farewell celebrations in my entire life - I would just leave on the last day. I was about to do the same but Prof. Sahasrabudhe prevailed on me and because he was such a good friend, a farewell was arranged for me with all the staff and faculty of the institute. He had tears in his eyes when we made our final farewell, though he continued there for ten years. After I left, there was the occasional conference or event held there and I used to visit DA-IICT. I remember one conference in Ahmadabad, where he happened to be the session chair, he presented me with a memento and, as usual when he met me at a public forum, he would embrace me warmly like a brother in front of everybody. His vote of thanks speech moved me, as he described how close we were as associates and friends. I have so many such anecdotes and memories of Prof. Sahasrabudhe that if I list them all, it would probably take a very long time. If I had to encapsulate him in a few words, I would think he was a wonderfully skilled teacher with principles and a modest human being who was nice, yet could face every challenge with vitality. I pay my tribute to him as the great personality who was my friend and I wish that those people, whose lives he touched, will continue to keep his memory alive for a long time.

His credibility and capacity for cooperation with everyone, while still keeping his independence of opinion, was highly valued. Despite all this fame and adulation, he was startlingly down-to-earth and you would never find him showing off his academic and research credentials or unduly flexing his administrative position. He was kind-hearted and in the three decades or more of my knowing him, I have never once seen him lose his cool. He was ready to accept challenges and every time he used to say, "Let us take things seriously but not be worried about any problem as we will be able to solve it". While he was down-to-earth in his approach and ability, he was also forward thinking in everything concerning the field of education and communication technology.

- PROF. S. L. MASKARA
In 1985, some of us met at IIT Kharagpur to discuss the situation of Digital Communication in academia in the country. By ‘some of us’ I mean: Professor M. N. Faruqui – IIT Kharagpur, who was also its Deputy Director and Professor of Electronics & Communication; Professor S. L. Maskara and Professor T. S. Lamba – both from IIT Kharagpur; Professor H. M. Gupta - IIT Delhi; Professor S. C. Sahasrabudhe - IIT Bombay; Professor Ashok Jhunjhunwala – IIT Madras; and I represented IIT Kanpur.

We found that except for IIT Kharagpur and IIT Kanpur, no other IIT was offering Digital Communication as an undergraduate course. We felt that Digital Communication is a major technology course which must be promoted. After a long discussion, we came to the conclusion that a national effort must be made to encourage Digital Communication as a subject in the undergraduate curriculum in all engineering colleges. Even if we did not have across-the-board (on digital communication) expertise, faculty members from all the IITs would gather together at the designated IIT campus for seven days and teach depending on one’s expertise. For example, I would teach Satellite Communication and Error-control Coding and Prof. Suresh R. Maskara from IIT Bombay would teach Digital Communications. This is how we used to meet, and developed a relationship on a first-name basis. He would call me “Vishwanath” and I would call him ‘Sudhakar’ and that is how our interaction started around 1985 and continued till I met him last in 2019 at ISCC Bangalore during the Silver Jubilee Programme of NCC (National Conference on Communications).

I actually had a prior family commitment at the time of the Silver Jubilee, so I told him I could not come. He replied saying, “You must come because I don’t know how many of us will survive after you leave IIT Kanpur.

At that time, I did not realise how prophetic his words were but be would make it a point to reach there just for the day to attend the Silver Jubilee. Little did I know that this would be our last meeting.

When we met in Kharagpur in 1985, except for Professor Faruqui who was Professor and Deputy Director, Suresh R. Maskara, all of us were young Professors. We grew up in the system and went from being Assistant Professors to Professors to becoming Head of Department and so on. Like Sudhakar became Professor, Head of Department and Deputy Director in IIT Kanpur. A very few years before my retirement, I became the Founding Director of IIT ((IS)M), Jodhpur and Sudhakar became Director at DA-ICT. So you could say we would keep on interacting with each other even as directors. He would visit my place and I would visit his and so on; that was our interaction. During our early days on knowing each other, my daughter was studying in Pune University and she wanted to do her internship in IIT Bombay in Chemical Engineering. Even though I knew a lot of people including Sudhakar and he obliged to help her. My daughter would visit Sudhakar’s house and that is how we got to know each other even better. During one of my visits to IIT Bombay, he took me to his flat in Hiranandani and showed me how Mahatma Sahasrabudhe had decorated a wall.

As a human being, Sudhakar was an extremely warm person. No matter what mood you were in, after speaking to him for five minutes, you would warm up to him with his jovial nature. Words are not adequate to describe this aspect of him. He had his own way of tackling an issue or whatever might have concerned you, and he would be along with you. That was something great about him. He always had a twinkle in his eye and a very subtle way of recounting a joke. After finishing the Telematics Group courses during the day, we would have a lively meeting in the evening spiced with Sudhakar’s wit and humour.

After Professor Faruqui left IIT Kharagpur and became the Chancellor of IIT Roorkee, I became the National Coordinator and Sudhakar continued to be the Telematics Coordinator from IIT Bombay. I was there for the last few years of Sudhakar’s life.

Dr. Bhaskar Ramamurthy became the Co-ordinator. In 1995, after years of spreading awareness about having Digital Communication as a subject in the country, we felt that the time had come to have a meeting of researchers in the area. Across the IITs, there were graduate students, and courses were available at the graduate level. The Telematics Project gave an impetus in bringing Digital Communication to the undergraduate curriculum in all engineering colleges, across the country. Nobody would probably give us the credit for this but in our opinion, we were responsible for it. Sudhakar would push this Digital Communication agenda in Maharashtra and I would do it in other places. This is typically why even today when we hear someone who has risen in the profession say, ‘Sir, aapne padhaya tha humein!’ whether it was me, Sudhakar, Jhunjhunwala, Maskara or any one of us, we felt a sense of achievement and satisfaction that we did something. We felt a sense of achievement and satisfaction that we did something. We generally managed everything ourselves, except when we became Directors in Jaipur or Gandhinagar where we had to manage with government agencies. However, we received support from almost all bureaucrats because we always put forth our ideas, offerings and need for support. Sudhakar was a very able administrator, and you can see his imprint in Gandhinagar even today.

I believe that we were all very good teachers in the Telematics Group. Our programme succeeded because Professor Jhunjhunwala, Professor Sudhakar, Prof. Maskara and I felt that we had left an imprint on all our students who were faculty members. Any person, ministry or agency, nobody related to Digital Communication or Computer Networking would certainly ask for our opinion. We became known for our work. In fact, we are still known as JTG (Joint Telematics Group). Today, having a conference organised in a hotel is the norm but when we started the National Conference in 1995, we had decided that it would be held only in the premises of an IIT or IISc, Bangalore. Our reason is simple: we could meet everyone not only during the paper presentations, but also after the conference in the evening. This became our mode of conducting the conference because it was not the norm in the country or even abroad.

We decided to keep it simple. We would hold it at the end of January for various reasons, however in 2019, it was moved to the end of February. Even though the courses have stopped, conferences still continue, and we make it a point to meet.

It was very touching that IITs called all of us including our family members to our Silver Jubilee. As part of the Telematics Group from 1985 till 2020, I hope there will be a Golden Jubilee, and Sudhakar will be present in our hearts as the drive for better education.
When I cast my mind back in time, my very first memory of meeting Professor Sahasrabudhe goes back to 1990. This was at a time the nationally prestigious Telematics Project had just begun to take wing. As the scope and pace of the project progressed, so did our many opportunities to meet during events, courses and conferences. I did not have the opportunity to interact with him on a selection committee but definitely did so during the Telematics Projects. As I recall, the Telematics courses back then were fairly short, and I met Professor Sahasrabudhe quite regularly during this time. Perhaps there may have been the odd NCC meeting where either one, or both, of us was not present but by and large, we kept meeting at least twice a year until the Telematics courses drew to a close. As time passed and our horizons took us places, his path took him away from Mumbai. This did not stop us from meeting at various crossroads though. I had the distinct pleasure of meeting him as part of NBA Evaluation Teams for various colleges. Amongst my last personal meetings with him was when we, former colleagues, friends and collaborators, were invited to the IISc Bangalore Conference in 2019. I also did happen to have a fleeting moment with him when we met at a conference in Calcutta, as he was there for a conference or a meeting as well.

When it came to his professional persona, I understand that Professor Sahasrabudhe was a highly capable administrator. I may not be able to present an adequate perspective on his greatness as a teacher, as I did not have the good fortune to study under him. However, from what I could gather, when I attended his lectures, seminars or presentations, Professor Sahasrabudhe came across as an articulate and well-informed teacher.

To my mind, Professor Sahasrabudhe has always been one of those truly gifted and good individuals one can have the privilege of meeting in life. He had a wellspring of fine qualities, depth of knowledge and an uplifting smile that could put a person at ease in a heartbeat. He was also a very progressive person who loved to keep up with the times. I recall an incident many years ago, when we had all gone shopping, and I casually told the professor that I wouldn’t be able to do much shopping as I had not brought along much cash. Now you have to understand that this incident may seem rather trivial in today’s age of access to digital payment options, but for me, it took place in those pre-digital times; when India was still getting accustomed to new payment options. Professor Sahasrabudhe was well ahead of the curve. He turned to me and said, waving a credit card, “Look, who carries cash now? We do all our shopping on the card as it offers large purchase limits, you don’t need cash and all that. You should get yourself one too”. It still amazes me to realise how up-to-date he kept himself. This wasn’t his only stand-out quality. I respect honesty in life, and while I have been fortunate to have been acquainted with many who had candour as a character, Professor Sahasrabudhe stood out for his vividly honest nature. I recognised this quality during our interactions in the AICT evaluation teams, where we would be exposed to people from other colleges who would tend to try and bend the lines or even cross them. Professor Sahasrabudhe remained a lighthouse for what it meant to have integrity in teams. If you had to ask me how I would treasure his memory, I think this would be my enduring recollection of his ideals – a man of high principles who guided others with his light.

If ever I could point out a singular stand-out aspect, he was a model of integrity.

PROF. T. S. LAMBA
IIT Kharagpur

A visionary and supportive technologist and administrator

PROF. ANURAG KUMAR
Honorary Professor, IISc Bengaluru,
Director IISc Bengaluru 2014-2020

It was my distinct pleasure to have known and worked with Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe during an era when the Internet and telecom revolutions were yet to hit Indian shores. He was one of the architects of the Joint Telematics Group, which helped bring together the academics in the area, and which launched the NCC conference series. This NCC legacy continues to be an annual event where experts and aspiring researchers in telecommunications congregate each year. Prof. SCS also played a yeoman role in IIT Bombay’s administration during the transformative years after which IITB emerged as a top technology and science institute in India.
Even as I start to write this brief note, in the memory of a dear friend, it is still difficult to believe that he is no longer among us with his forever light-hearted, teasing banter, but invariably kindly demeanor. It is now about a year since we last met each other, but it appears that we met just a few days ago. In fact, I last met him in November 2019, in Hyderabad, where we were both speakers at a workshop attended by hundreds of teachers from different parts of the country. We shared our usual bonhomie and had discussions, some light-hearted, and some serious, interrupted by his quips that always filled one with delight. I had no idea that this encounter would be our last face-to-face interaction.

My professional journey with SCS goes back nearly 40 years, when we first became part of the so-called ‘academic council’ that helped the institute achieve a leadership position with the same combination of professionalism on one hand and light-heartedness on the other. This is a rare combination to see in such leadership roles. I had the good fortune of working with SCS who led on these qualities and inspired the team to take up difficult but achievable tasks. There was rarely a meeting in which we did not have contentious debates, as each of us had our own distinct views, teaching methodologies and subjects, about which we would argue passionately. But at the culmination of these meetings, the tradition was to spend the evening at the host’s residence. Such was the bonhomie that the group always looked forward to SCS’ cheerful and light-hearted disposition in smoothing away any residual tensions that may have manifested in such encounters.

SCS continued after his voluntary retirement from IIT Bombay, when he took over as the Director of the DA-ICT at Gandhinagar. He invited me to be on its Academic Council, which I happily accepted. It was wonderful to see him take on this leadership role with the same combination of professionalism on one hand and light-heartedness on the other. This is a rare combination to see in such leadership positions. I had the good fortune of observing him as he carried out the task of building up that institute with great care and attention. It was rare to find him speaking to anyone in an abrasive tone or a raised voice. Whether it was a faculty member or staff, he would engage with everyone as if he was a long time friend. This obviously endeared him to all, and made it easy for him to bring out the best in people – an ‘esprit de corps’ that helped the institute achieve a leadership position in a short time. It was amazing to see SCS bring together a diverse group of people, who we helped work together, - eminent retired professors from the IIT system, accomplished personalities in arts, humanities, design, and of course, in electronics, computer science and telecommunications. In fact, many of these academic council meetings became important platforms for me to learn - engaging in thoughtful and insightful discussions on teaching undergraduate and graduate students. As is common in such meetings, each member brought a unique insight and points-of-view on what works and what does not work in certain areas. Each member had a rich font of experience and knowledge to share. There were delightful sessions with the likes of Professor V. P. Sinha, Professor D. Nagchaudhary, Professor R. N. Biswas, and many other greats, with a repertoire of stories to back up their wisdom. And of course, the common thread was, in the spirit of Sahasrabudhe himself, I was constantly amazed at the administrative acumen and personal charm that SCS exercised in getting the best minds to come to the institute and contribute to its educational goals. To my good fortune, I was able to interact with a dozen of Indian linguistic heritage preservation and famous linguist, Dr. Ganesh Dev, as a visiting professor and member of the Academic Council. I was intrigued by his remarkable achievements in the fields of Indian languages and dialects and running a social organisation to sustain this legacy in a remote rural corner of Gujarat. I observed the teamwork of SCS and Ganesh in bringing grassroots level experiences to young graduates by involving them in rural social projects - creating an important interchange between information technology and rural societies. But hadn’t it been for SCS, I would probably never have met such wonderful and inspiring people. It is interesting to note that 2022 marked 20 years since SCS later, when I was the Honorary Chairman of the National Board of Accreditation. This time, it was my turn to request SCS to join me in this assignment. It so happened that both of us, almost by coincidence, were drawn into the technical education scene at the national level. Professor Sahasrabudhe got involved with the development of the accreditation system, which led to the evolution of the outcome-based accreditation system, more aligned to international practices back then. From 2012 to 2014 our paths crossed again, in fact, Professor Sahasrabudhe and I worked together again, and with the support of member secretary, NBA, Dr. Anil Nassa, we were able to successfully defend our case for the membership of the Washington Accord in countries, a matter of great pride for the country at that time. I am mentioning this here, since it also generated a new enthusiastic energy in us for making a difference to the technical education system of the country at the grassroots level. The next few years, saw all of us get deeply involved in running training workshops all over the country to educate college teachers and managers about outcome-based education and accreditation and what it takes to achieve it. For me, it was a new version of our work together in the JTG. In fact, Professor SCS was a speaker at one such workshop in Pune, when he finally breathed his last – karmyog that he was until his last breath! SCS gave the impression of being and looking every bit a young person when he passed away. In fact, many of us marvelled at his physical and mental agility even as he advanced in years. It was not that he was free of the usual trammels of the world. Who can ever be? But he took those concerns in a stride, that was truly inspiring for his colleagues and friends alike. It is still a joy to remember many good times that we had together,- in official work, and in personal interactions. Our families too developed very close relations, and we were mutually enjoy each other for many of Professor and Mrs. Sahasrabudhe several times. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather – a thorough family man. My younger son, Saurabh, is no more, enjoyed a very special and affectionate relationship with SCS the way he was always an enthusiast in his company, whenever he visited our house.

SCS was a lovable personality, and his smile, even when it was filled with mischief, was always infectious. He has made a significant contribution to the evolution of engineering education in the country that will be remembered for long, both for its quality and for its enduring transformational change. His contributions are missed greatly. The good thing is that the imprint of people like him lives on long after that final journey towards the unknown.
L to R: Dr. Anil Nassa, Mrs. Usha Prasad, Dr. Surendra Prasad, Prof. S.C. Sahasrabudhe in Alaska, June 2017
It was probably in 1987 that I met Prof. Sahasrabudhe at IIT Kharagpur. There Communication faculty of the five old IITs was meeting to explore the potential of working together to strengthen telematics R&D. I had gone with the explicit idea of opting out of such an effort as we were caught up with too many things. But there was this handsome and very pleasant professor from IIT Bombay, some ten years older to me. He figured out what I was trying to do, started addressing me like an elder brother would. It took him less than half an hour to convince me to become one of the strong votaries of the Joint Telematics Group (JTG). He became a mentor and a close friend ever since.

All of us knew a bit of Communications. None of us knew what I was trying to do and started addressing me like an elder brother would. It took him less than half an hour to convince me to become one of the strong votaries of the Joint Telematics Group (JTG). He became a mentor and a close friend ever since.

As a senior professor, he had a role to see that every student was on track. He would mentor us, figure out ways to do things and help us overcome obstacles. He was a person who contributed greatly without ever wanting an iota of credit.

Little did I know that he had his eye on me fairly early on in my career. I was an Assistant Professor at IITM since 1981. In 1990, I decided to apply for a higher post. Prof. Sahasrabudhe and Prof. Faruqui (from IIT Kharagpur) happened to be on the interview committee. I am told that after the interview they insisted that I be given professorship. When the director pointed out that I was not even an associate professor back then, Prof. Sahasrabudhe (I am told) was blunt. He said that I was far better than the five other faculty from my department, who had been interviewed for the post, and if I was not given the position, the others would not get it either. They would take me to IIT Bombay / Kharagpur. I became a professor. I talked to him later about it. He said that both he and Prof. Faruqui had noted that I was to make a significant contribution in times to come. As a senior professor, he had a role to see that every young talent is groomed to excel. He taught me that this is the only ‘Dharma’ of a teacher. I must do this for others.

Soon, he also got to be great friends with my wife and I. He would call me up and regale her with stories about their family, and could communicate with her better than with me. He and his wife, Madhuri, would spend hours with my wife, regaling her with stories about their family, upbringing, culture and home in Nagpur. They spent a whole day giving my wife and son a tour of Bombay, while I was busy in some meetings. It showed his incredibly friendly human side.

The Joint Telematics Group started the National Conference on Communications (NCC) every year by rotation at the five IITs. Later on it was extended to other IITs and to IISc Bangalore. Prof. Sahasrabudhe was part of the founding group that had conceptualised it. Last year, we celebrated 25th NCC. It has become ‘the’ academic conference in the area of communications in the country. His students are all over the industry. Every IITB student that I meet would talk about how Prof. Sahasrabudhe had helped shape their life. He soon became Deputy Director of IITB and remained in that post for a long time.

When Reliance Communications decided to build a high-quality private IT institute, he was the obvious choice as a Director of DA-IICT. He asked me to get on the Board and I saw him build this top quality institute, brick by brick. There is a story that I would like to relate. The daughter of a Personal Secretary of the CM of State, where the institute was located, was admitted to DA-IICT. Unfortunately, she did not do well and failed in almost all the subjects. She was given the opportunity to repeat the courses, but once again she failed. As per the institute’s rules, her eligibility was to be discontinued. When her well-connected father heard about it, he got wild and leveraged his position on DA-IICT. The Board met and decided to give the student another chance. Unfortunately, she failed again. Now, there was a huge crisis on our hands. On one side was the powerful Personal Secretary of the CM, on the other, Prof. Sahasrabudhe. When the next Board meeting was called, Prof. Sahasrabudhe narrated how IITs have become great institutions because they never compromised on quality. If DA-IICT was to acquire the same status, a compromise on academic matters could not be accepted. He was ready to face the consequences.

This was Prof. Sahasrabudhe, an academician, teacher, mentor, leader, and a person with the highest level of integrity. We met him at Bangalore in August 2019. My wife and I were busy in some meetings. Prof. Sahasrabudhe taught us signal processing and some aspects of Communications that we were not familiar with. He said that Communications is a huge subject and it was not adequate to remain buried in our specialisation. We needed to get acquainted with its knowledge as a whole. He took the lead in seeing that we would together offer short-term courses to college teachers. He would repeatedly emphasise that we needed to do it as a team, as each of us knew a part. Most of us attended the course along with some 30 to 40 teachers from other engineering colleges. He said that unless we upgrade these teachers’ skills, they would not be able to provide an integrated understanding of telecommunications to their students. He would make sure that our Masters and PhD students came from these colleges. Only when we were able to strengthen them, could we ourselves be strong.

At IIT Madras, we were not content with teaching and R&D; we wanted to build things and impact the industry. On one hand, we wanted telecom and later, the Internet to reach every village and person in India. We wanted to see the manufacture of telecom equipment in India, rather than just import it. We wanted to create patents, Prof. Sahasrabudhe understood it all too well. He would mentor us, figure out ways to do things and help us overcome obstacles. He was a person who contributed greatly without ever wanting an iota of credit.

Incredible human side.
He was a person of staunch integrity and filled with a youthful energy.

PROF. BHASKAR RAMAMURTHI
Director, IIT Madras

Passion for knowledge and candour created an environment where ideas were liberated

PROF. TIMOTHY GONZALVES
Professor Emeritus (Hon) IIT Mandi,
Director IIT Mandi, 2010-2020

Like a few others, I have had the opportunity to engage with Prof. SCS over several points in his career. I used to interact with him as part of the Joint Telematics Group, when he was Director at DA-IICT, when he came as a subject expert for faculty selection, and lately, as the Chairman of a Domain Expert Committee to review Uchathar Avishkar Yojana projects. I can say that I have always had pleasant memories of all my interactions with him. I found him to be eternally bubbling and youthful, even if his head had greyed. I unfortunately do not have any insightful anecdote or interaction that I can recall. All I can tell you is that Prof. Sahasrabudhe was a man of integrity – a very upright, what-you-see-is-what-you-get kind of person. No undercurrents or multiple faces for different situations. I will always remember him this way.

I had the pleasure of first meeting Prof. Sahasrabudhe in the early 1990s as part of the Joint Telematics Group. As you may be aware, this group was a collaboration of 5-6 IITs and IISc, Bangalore. At that time, I was a young Assistant Professor at IIT Madras. Thereafter, I met him at the Telematics meetings and also during the annual NCC conferences.

What struck me about his persona over the years is that he was driven by a great passion for his subject and teaching. This was leavened with a liberal sense of humour. I don’t know too much about him as an administrator, except for his serving on the Finance Committee and Board of Governors of IIT Mandi. There, he was always championing the autonomy of IITs and the importance of quality in academics – the ideals that make IITs special.

The last time I met Prof. Sahasrabudhe was on the 19th December 2019, when he attended an IIT Mandi Finance Committee meeting in Delhi. He was quite upbeat about a planned teaching visit to IIT Mandi at the start of the February 2020 semester. This was actually an existing plan which had been postponed due to his doctor’s advice on resting his voice.

He had made a few visits to IIT Mandi but had not taken part in the teaching schedule. On every visit of his, I noticed that he made it a point to spend as much personal time as possible with students and project staff working on research projects. To ensure that he could have a candid conversation, he would request me to leave him alone with the youngsters. I realised that his candour got them to open up about their work, in a way that most students generally don’t engage with senior faculty.

His passion to be there for students and his disarming charm in getting them to interact more openly with him, are some of the most poignant and lasting memories I have of Prof. Sahasrabudhe.
Projects
My association with Professor Sahasrabudhe began when I took over as the Director of the Image Processing and Analysis Group in Space Applications Centre - ISRO. At that time, Professor Sahasrabudhe was working with us to develop an image processing module - if I remember correctly it was on texture analysis in imagery. We struck a common chord and he used to invite me to IIT Bombay as a viva voce examiner for his students. To my pleasure, I discovered we shared many common interests and, as we were both active members of IEEE, we had many occasions to meet and discuss the latest trends in the world of electronics, communications and technology in general. Another common meeting place for us was in the ISRO review committees, where he would be the external expert. On these occasions, he used to say that we need to know how much candidates know and not how much they don’t know. Later, when he became the Director of DA-IICT, Gandhinagar, my interactions with him reached a whole new phase. On his persuasion, I became an adjunct faculty - teaching remote sensing and GIS. We would spend much time together ruminating over the education system and policies. I wonder what he would have thought of the new education policy. Unfortunately, I regret that his views on the subject will forever be a question unanswered. He passed away too soon in my opinion, but his memory will live on with me as a professional colleague and a friend.

Weighing candidates for the known was far more important in his eyes than probing them for the unknown.

PROF. ARUP. R. DASGUPTA
Former Deputy Director, Space Application Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad
A standout person and real leader who was greatly admired by all those who entered his orbit.

DR. AVINASH CHANDER
Scientific Advisor to Raksha Mantri
Director General DRDO & Secretary, 2013-2015

I first got to know Professor Sahasrabudhe in 1982. I recall that it was around the time that we had just begun looking at a new project for SCAN. We were exploring the use of image processing and correlation to positional fixes in space. Missile atmospheric re-entry was at a very nascent stage in the Indian context and, as such, there was very little work being conducted in this field of image processing. While searching for people who might have expertise in this field, IIT, Bombay was regarded as a leading expert. You couldn’t just someone working on a DRDO project but a key thinker who, as part of the IIT Bombay team, worked out strategies and structures on how to operationalise concepts.

As this project progressed, we kept meeting frequently every two or three months. As he used to also visit Hyderabad, we got to know each other’s families quite well. I confess that some of those visits happened so frequently that the memories are fuzzy, and I often forgot precisely which visit had happened when. It was usually up to our respective partners to keep track of all the comings and goings. So, you could say that we definitely had a very close and warm relationship as friends, which lasted for a long time. We bonded over image processing technology, and moved up through ancillary subjects like point of target and guidance, etc. When he visited our missile laboratories, he was enthused to see the commitment of government people diligently working day and night. In this way, our professional relationship continued for a while but the project of course, eventually drew to a close in the year 1998. By then, we were well ahead in achieving our technological objectives. However, with Professor Sahasrabudhe, it was quite different. I was quite relieved to finally start working on surmounting the challenges we faced. He got so deeply involved, not just in image processing but with the entire concept, right from image gathering and processing to the end product. Applying his keen and insightful mind to meticulously analyse every detail, he would come up with new ideas. From this first interaction, I was delighted to continue having the opportunity to work together. He was no longer just someone working on a DRDO project but a key thinker who, as part of the IIT Bombay team, worked out strategies and structures on how to operationalise concepts.

Today, I really miss him as a friend and a person to whom I could easily relate and communicate. In fact, we were considering him for a major role with an organisation in the Private Sector, from the ground level. Dhirubhai Ambani Institute quickly grew under his guidance and leadership, showing his expertise in the development of education. We interacted on other platforms after I became Director of the Advance Systems Laboratory, as we used to be part of various related committees. I remember an occasion at his residence when Professor Sahasrabudhe’s son mentioned how his father started out in image processing and moved to the CST domain as he was very interested in this challenging and upcoming domain.

After his tenure at the institute, we did meet on a few other occasions. The most recent one being when he visited the C. R. Rao Institute where he was leading a very important project review team, where Prof. D. N. Reddy was also participating. I am not at liberty to discuss details about those reviews but the kind of leadership and thinking that he commanded, so our efforts and thinking stood out, impressed. From the outset, it was quite a challenging endeavour, as there were so many people with expertise in this kind of totally new technology domain where things had to happen. That was the kind of diversity of interests that Professor Sahasrabudhe had and the work that he was involved with.

The last time I met him was just two or three months before his passing away. I happened to be in Nagpur and visited him at his beautiful family home. He was born and brought up there and I truly appreciated the great care that he had taken in renovating it without losing its intrinsic architectural appeal. He always loved the place and I found it to be quite charming too. We had a wonderful time over a leisurely dinner, appreciating and discussing his collection of books and other things. I remember him telling me that he still spent about 60% of his time in meetings and travelling to different places. He was also an active member of the AIEEE for a long time.

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IEEE
His legacy is a flame of great enthusiasm and knowledge that we should all keep burning, to inspire future generations.

R. MURALIDHARAN
CTO, Tata Advanced Systems, Mumbai
Past Chair – IEEE India Council & Bombay Section

Some of the tallest trees have the deepest roots. This is akin to the relationship I shared with Professor Sahasrabudhe. What you may have seen above ground in our evergreen relationship, has deep roots far back to 1977, when I first joined IIT Bombay as a student, and interacted with him from 1978, through the IEEE and Communication Program. After my student days, I was drawn back to this nurturing ground like iron to a magnet. Soon after I began my career with the Tata Group, I found myself in a position to be a part of a new IEEE Bombay section as a junior volunteer. Under the mentorship of the former Tata Chairman and close friend Prof. K. Shankar, through the IEEE Execom and other programs, I found my pace. Their guidance to a magnet. Soon after I began my career with the Tata Group, I found myself in a position to be a part of the IEEE Executive Committee and the Tata Group, I found myself in a position to be a part of the IEEE Execom and other topics. You could say we did a deep analysis on everything from telecom and indigenous technology to communication as a critical national need. As expected, there were topics and threads of discussion we could really agree on and some things we were at divergent directions. Apart from this, another thing close to his heart was ‘education’. Ever since I have known Prof. Sahasrabudhe, he always had a keen focus on technology and education. Without doubt, he had the finest combination of a computer person who evolved into a communications person with software-defined concepts, software-defined networking, software-defined architecture and all the software-defined. I was also the examiner for many of the MTech students and used to be in his lab guiding them on their ideas. During the course of this time, I used to often tell him about how I believed computer and microprocessors would soon revolutionise communication. Prof. Sahasrabudhe was skeptical, as he believed that the future lay in software itself. We have used intense arguments about software design papers and little did either of us know that I would eventually become the Software Defined Radio Forum or WinnF Board of Directors, known as the Wireless Innovation Forum today. When Prof. Sahasrabudhe discovered my work in this environment, I proudly and happily recalled our discussions in those early days while congratulating me. I couldn’t resist telling him that I saw this coming. I worked on it and now I am on that Board of Directors for nearly ten years.

The two of us were a rare combination. Though I did not have a direct connection because I was in the computer science department, I used to attend his communication class in order to understand new things because of the IEEE connection. I was a computer person who evolved into a communications person and I found myself in a position to be a part of the IEEE Executive Committee and the Tata Group, I found myself in a position to be a part of the IEEE Execom and other topics. You could say we did a deep analysis on everything from telecom and indigenous technology to communication as a critical national need. As expected, there were topics and threads of discussion we could really agree on and some things we were at divergent directions. Apart from this, another thing close to his heart was ‘education’. Ever since I have known Prof. Sahasrabudhe, he always had a keen focus on technology and education. Without doubt, he had the finest combination of a computer person who evolved into a communications person with software-defined concepts, software-defined networking, software-defined architecture and all the software-defined. I was also the examiner for many of the MTech students and used to be in his lab guiding them on their ideas. During the course of this time, I used to often tell him about how I believed computer and microprocessors would soon revolutionise communication. Prof. Sahasrabudhe was skeptical, as he believed that the future lay in software itself. We have used intense arguments about software design papers and little did either of us know that I would eventually become the Software Defined Radio Forum or WinnF Board of Directors, known as the Wireless Innovation Forum today. When Prof. Sahasrabudhe discovered my work in this environment, I proudly and happily recalled our discussions in those early days while congratulating me. I couldn’t resist telling him that I saw this coming. I worked on it and now I am on that Board of Directors for nearly ten years.

I also have many memories of our association with IEEE. In 2000, Professor Sahasrabudhe received the...
IEEE Fellow and Millennium Award. Now, I was the Chairman of IEEE Bombay at that time and he used to keep telling me that I should take the award. I told him that I could not possibly get it but he could. I kept motivating him to apply for the fellowship and he would ask me why. Finally, I convinced him by telling him that unless he became a fellow, he could not recommend me. That was the pivotal moment. He was considering recommending me either this year or the next for the award but destiny had other plans.

A hilarious incident I recall occurred somewhere between 1986 and 1988. We both used to make the local arrangements for speakers who came from abroad. So there was this IEEE President who travelled to Bombay to give a talk at the EE seminar hall, which was on the ground floor. During the course of his talk, a cow wandered right into the hall and complete pandemonium ensued. In those days, and even now, a cow can walk around freely with complete authority. But we still took photographs of this epic experience. The standing joke was that the cow was totally captivated by the speaker and had come to join the audience.

I maintained a close relationship with Professor Sahasrabudhe across his positions at IIT, Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology (DA-IICT) - Gandhinagar and at GTL. Anything he wanted done, he would turn to me. I would be a member on his committees, be invited to give talks, conduct interviews, be on the expert advisory panel. If he had a tough problem to solve, he would turn to me and consider it done. You could say he was my friend, philosopher, guide, mentor and so much more right from my first interaction with him in 1978 till just a month before he left us with his unparalleled legacy.

I aim to keep his memory and enthusiasm alive in a way that would make him proud. As always, I want to step forward for him and volunteer to the support of the community as a whole, right from bringing new students into the realm and training them to achieve more beyond just graduation. You can say that this is my way of honouring him for life.

Without doubt, he had the finest combination of a thought leader, fine technologist and phenomenal educator. He was always thinking of future generations; how he could attract the best engineering students, create the most effective syllabus, put in place an advanced curriculum and implement it all seamlessly. I really salute his capability of wearing so many hats and being good at everything he did.

- R. MURALIDHARAN

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time..

From a ‘A Psalm of Life’ by H. W. Longfellow
A leader with passion and purpose

Chapter II : Global Telesystems Limited
It was sometime in 2002, during a Global Telesystems Ltd. (GTL) conference that I was introduced to enthusiastic and smiling Prof. Sahasrabudhe, who radiated youthful vigour and happiness despite his head of gray hair. Mr. G. V. Desai, then a senior board member, introduced me, saying that I would be interacting with him more often as he was joining our Board. To my surprise, Prof. Sahasrabudhe greeted me very warmly, as if I was the newcomer and he was already a long-time veteran of the organisation. This was just the beginning of our friendship.

Soon, I was transferred from the Ballard Estate office to the Mahape, Navi Mumbai office, where all operations were located. This was a consequence of my taking over as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the Company. Although Prof. Sahasrabudhe was a Non-executive Director, he was allotted a spacious cabin in Mahape, as he was to be instrumental in guiding the company's way forward. While I was in the US when he passed away, and I still feel upset that despite being a Pune resident, I could not offer him the welcome relaxation.

Speaking of food and wine, Prof. Sahasrabudhe was fond of food, but was a poor eater. He would prefer bland food, which was low in spices and sometimes indulge in a glass of red wine. Food for him was more of an occasion for interesting social interactions and getting to know people.

After GTL, he joined DA-IICT in Gandhinagar as the Dean. Once again, he was traveling regularly and, at times, living out of his suitcase. This new location greatly impacted the frequency of our meetings. I did, however, visit him at the institute in Gandhinagar. He had great pride in the institute and insisted that his faculty members invest a significant amount of their time reading and in study. To ensure that they were able to keep to this standard, he gave them just 4 to 6 lectures a week.

He was an extremely energetic and active person, who seemed indefatigable. Through his tenure at GTL, and well after too, he had an unending travel itinerary; seamlessly giving lectures on different platforms.

A legend of a man whose legacy will remain for all time.

RAVI PANDIT
CFO, GTL Limited, 2002-2010
If I remember correctly, Prof. Sahasrabudhe was with GTL as the full-time Director from 1998 until 2004 when he left to join DA-IICT. We rarely worked together as our areas of expertise were different, however we would meet each other quite frequently. He would sometimes call me for work – to understand the agenda or minutes of a document I shared with him or to get help with accounting related issues. I always found him to be an active and cheerful person, and I never heard anything negative from him.

Although he had joined GTL after IIT Bombay, he never felt out of place in the new environment. It can be difficult to strike a balance between being an educator who's dedicated to sharing knowledge and being a professional who's committed to profitability of a business. Professor Sudhakar played both the roles quite effortlessly.

As the Company Secretary of GTL, I have nothing to do with technology. So I never understood technical conversations in our board meetings. But I have seen Prof. Sahasrabudhe participate in those conversations with ardour and eagerness. Always inquisitive and exuberant, he would ask questions and make relevant suggestions in these meetings.

Even though Prof. Sahasrabudhe was elder to us, his enthusiasm was unmatched. I don't remember ever seeing him lethargic or listless. There was another Director's cabin next to his. Whenever I used to go to him for work and Prof. Sahasrabudhe's office was open, I always noticed him in the middle of a conversation with his secretary, business executives or occupied in some work. He would always have visitors meeting him. Sahasrabudhe was a man of action, even when he was alone in his cabin! He would be reading, ideating or thinking something. He was forever a student and passionate about education. For instance, law was an unfamiliar subject to him; he would still want to know everything about it. He was so curious, he would keep asking me questions – ‘why this, why that?’ He had that kind of thirst for knowledge. If I wanted something from him, I just had to explain once.

I never had to follow up with him or repeat anything. Even after he joined DA-IICT board as the Director, he would call me for help whenever he had any legal doubts or questions. In the end, he would always say "If you are saying this, Apte, it must be right. I am going to implement your solution."

Sahasrabudhe was also quite witty. He would constantly pull everyone's leg. Whenever I went to him for work, he would tease me, 'Apte is troubling me’, ‘Apte is doing this… and that…’ Whenever he saw me having lunch with my regular group of 2-3 colleagues, he would ask, ‘Tell me, Apte. Why won’t you have lunch with me?’ Interacting with him has always been a pleasant experience. He was our senior in knowledge, age and in many other ways. So we used to like whenever he teased us, but he never tried to throw his weight around as the Director of the company. He was an expert in his own field but he would never make a fuss about a small mistake or issue in someone’s work. He never misused his power and position like many might. He was so simple and sweet. I would call a man like him - ‘Ajatshatrur, a man with no enemies.

Even after he left GTL, I stayed in touch with him. I used to call him on every 5th of July, with a little bit of hesitance though. I knew he used to visit the states every now and then, so I didn’t want to bother him or disturb him. But the moment he would answer my call, he used to sound his witty and mischievous self, even after all those years. ‘I knew you would be calling me today. You never miss it’ he would say gleefully.

When I came to know about his passing, I was shocked. His former secretary Shilpa was transferred to our department. She wrote in our group that he was no more and I just couldn’t believe it. I immediately called up Sahasrabudhe’s number which was answered by Mrs. Sahasrabudhe. I spoke with her and expressed my sorrow.

There is a song in Marathi - ‘ our life in this world is controlled by the higher forces. But the heart still aches when such wonderful people leave.

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I would call a man like him - ‘Ajatshatrur, a man with no enemies.

CS Vidyadhar Apte
Company Secretary - GTL Limited, 1992-2018

He was so curious, he would keep asking me questions – ‘why this, why that?’ He had that kind of thirst for knowledge.

- CS Vidyadhar Apte
He had this one objective in his life – to share the immense wealth of knowledge he possessed, to dedicate his life towards education.

I noticed that his working style was quite different from that of others. He never used to pressure anyone. Even meetings with him were quite smooth and easy. Although he was the full-time Director, he also created a new job role – Chief Technology Officer and started working on Artificial Intelligence. He had a Herculean task for me – not to disappoint anyone yet, at the same time, share his time among so many people. I believe I spent five years working with him; as long as he worked with GTL. After that, he joined DA-IICT in Gandhinagar. I recall an interesting incident from the time he had just taken on his new role at DA-ICT.

He then appointed secretary – Venugopalan from DA-IICT used to call me and ask me how I used to manage his travel schedule. Also, he used to mention Sir always had a separate team under him. His schedule used to be so busy that on one side he had this big company with its overwhelming responsibilities and on the other, he was a panellist for IIT, MIT and many such other colleges. I was constantly on my toes scheduling his meetings. Most of the time, he used to be travelling on work. Most of us are already aware of his penchant of giving nicknames to others and he had one for me too - ‘Thake’. So, while scheduling his calls, he would say to me ‘Thake, don’t try to make time for me by upsetting someone. Schedule my meetings in such a way that I can give my time to everyone. I don’t know how you are going to manage it’. He would call me a day prior to wish me happy birthday. He would wish me and say, ‘If I don’t get time to call you tomorrow, I don’t want you to get angriy with me. Which is why I am calling you today itself.’ I reciprocated this with heartfelt sentiment on his birthday every 5th July. This year, I really missed him on both his birthday and mine. His absence has left us with an immense sense of loss.

I remember that he would also ask about my family and children- what they are studying, what their interests were, and more. He would tell me that I should never pressure them and let them choose their own career paths. He always said this about the future generation, ‘You should never tell them what to do. They grow on their own.’ It’s only because of his advice that I never pressured my kids. Today, my daughter is a Chartered Accountant and my son is doing his LLB. They chose their own careers and are making progress in their respective fields. Often during their exams, he would stop me from taking leave saying, ‘You sit here in office. Don’t take leaves to bother your kids at home.’

I am perfectly fine! Not at all old.” Even in office, if someone came to meet him, he would say, ‘Sir, first you eat something and then meet.’ He would decline my offers of tea and then say, ‘Sir, look at your age now. You will get tired’, he would quickly reply, ‘What? I’ll take a quick nap at the airport’. If I asked him out of care, ‘Sir, look at your age now. Don’t take leaves to bother your kids at home.’ He would say, ‘Don’t take leaves to bother your kids at home.’

There were many management decisions that were taken only after discussing it with him. Ours is a telecommunication company, with technology at its heart, and which was also his expertise. So, he used to be present for each and every management meeting. Therefore, his opinion was important in everything and he would be there for every internal panel meeting. He also played an integral role in the development of new technologies. He would have a ton of ideas even before they would be released or implemented. Back where his travel dates would preclude his ability to call me, I would say, ‘Stay with her for a month or two. On such occasions, his then appointed secretary – Venugopalan from DA-IICT used to call me and ask me how I used to manage his travel schedule. Also, he used to mention Sir always had a separate team under him. His schedule used to be so busy that on one side he had this big company with its overwhelming responsibilities and on the other, he was a panellist for IIT, MIT and many such other colleges. I was constantly on my toes scheduling his meetings. Most of the time, he used to be travelling on work. Most of us are already aware of his penchant of giving nicknames to others and he had one for me too - ‘Thake’. So, while scheduling his calls, he would say to me ‘Thake, don’t try to make time for me by upsetting someone. Schedule my meetings in such a way that I can give my time to everyone. I don’t know how you are going to manage it’. He would call me a day prior to wish me happy birthday. He would wish me and say, ‘If I don’t get time to call you tomorrow, I don’t want you to get angriy with me. Which is why I am calling you today itself.’ I reciprocated this with heartfelt sentiment on his birthday every 5th July. This year, I really missed him on both his birthday and mine. His absence has left us with an immense sense of loss.

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then, in 2001, he was working on Artificial Intelligence. He also ensured that people selected in the department, would have a high level of thinking, just like him. One of them was Swaraj Sir, from Delhi. Then there was a girl he had selected, who is now in a big company in the US. There were a lot of people he selected who were of that high intellect and education. Even the ones he had hired for junior levels are now working at higher designations in big organisations. He simply knew the calibre of a person; see a spark in them and hire them. He always guided students in their careers. He would tell them how they could take it further, where they could apply based on their field and which specializations to achieve. They have all progressed in their individual lives because of him. All these students were always in touch with him, all of them! In my discussions with Sahasrabudhe Sir, he would tell me, ‘This one had called me the other day, she is here. That one had called me; he is doing this.’ Two of his students are also in touch with me today. It was his nature that he would always think about everyone, inquire about them and guide them to help them grow. He would always wish well for everyone. No matter when you called him for help, he would always be there for you. Be it a driver or canteen boys, he would be nice to them all. Many people are too conscious about their designation, but he was friendly to everyone. He was different; he would wish them on Diwali and inquire about how they were doing. He was genuinely that attentive and caring. You can be sure that he was well liked by all those he came into contact with. I don’t really remember seeing him angry, but he could never tolerate lies. He would like people to be upfront and straightforward.

When people got to know that Sir was going to leave GTL, they all had tears in their eyes. We even requested him to visit us at least once or twice in a month - which he did, every now and then. I can’t find the right words to express my feelings but I feel lucky that I got an opportunity to talk about Sir. He was a great combination of an educator and compassionate human being. That’s what makes him special. Merely teaching students was not everything: he felt that guiding them, telling them how to use their knowledge and directing them was important too. Because teaching theory is not enough. It should be useful in life too. He would see to it that students benefited from their education. He wouldn’t just stop at their degree and education; he would want to know what they were doing about it and how they were using that knowledge. He had this one objective in his life – to share the immense wealth of knowledge he possessed, to dedicate his life towards education. Honestly, until the last day of his life, he never stopped working towards it. He had gone to Pune that fateful day for this very purpose.

One rarely comes across such a dedicated person in one’s life. I was lucky to have met two in my life – Sir and Madam. Even if Sir is no more, I believe that his blessings will always be there in my life. He always guided students in their careers. He would tell them how they could take it further, where they could apply based on their field and which specializations to achieve. They have all progressed in their individual lives because of him.
An architect of modern education

Chapter III: DA-IICT
The main reason I applied to DA-IICT was because my brother-in-law had recommended it because his ex-teacher at IIT Bombay, Prof. Sahasrabudhe, was the director.

While at DA-IICT, I worked closely with Prof. Sahasrabudhe when I was the convener of the admissions committee. He usually gave people a free hand but when things required his intervention, he would step right in. On one occasion, a prospective candidate had sent an email to the Director, threatening to take legal action against the institute for violating a particular government directive. Prof. Sahasrabudhe intervened and began by reading up on the government directive thoroughly. He called me to his office late in the evening to discuss the same. I was amazed that with just one quick reading of the government directive, he understood its nuances and had a very strong grasp of the issue. He instructed me to be ready to meet with the institute’s lawyer the next day. He had a very sharp intellect and was decisive when he wanted to be.

I recall an incident when I was the faculty mentor of the annual cultural festival and an accidental fire resulted in a big hue and cry. As Prof. Sahasrabudhe was away, he called me over the phone to discuss the incident. When I told him that there was no malicious intention and the fire was simply accidental, he immediately told me not to worry and never brought up the matter again. He trusted his faculty members both academically and in administrative capacities.

Prof. Sahasrabudhe was a very good teacher and was keen to teach subjects to students even while performing his duties as the Director. I observed him teach Probability Theory and it was a wonderful experience. Many generations of students have greatly benefited from his passion for teaching.

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Prof. SCS joined DA-IICT as Director in 2005, when the institute was still very young. During his tenure, the institute made a huge stride towards enhancing its academic and research reputation. In a first-of-its-kind achievement for a private institute, DA-IICT was offered the mentorship of IIIT Vadodara. The institute also became a consortium partner in several national-level R&D projects.

I had the good fortune to serve as Dean Research, while Prof. SCS was the institute’s director. As an administrator, he showed a firm attitude towards scholarship and excellence, and emphasized the importance of quality of teaching and research. He was a strong believer in faculty autonomy and responsibility.

My professional association with Prof. SCS later turned into a personal friendship. After retiring from DA-IICT, he kept in touch with me despite his busy travel schedule. Every time I spoke to him, I found him to be as witty and jovial as ever. His colleagues and students will fondly remember him as a passionate teacher and mentor. I will dearly miss my friend and mentor.

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Generations of students have benefited from his passion for teaching.

PROF. JAIDEEP MULHERKAR
DA-IICT, Gandhinagar

His presence was the cornerstone that raised the caliber and reputation of DA-IICT.

PROF. ANISH MATHURIA
DA-IICT, Gandhinagar
Prof. Sahasrabudhe receiving 'Dewang Mehta Award' for outstanding contribution towards education
I joined DA-IICT, Gandhinagar, on 14th Feb. 2007 and after just a week I got a call from the Dean declaring that I was to be a co-teacher on subject called Telecommunication Networks. Now, I had not even heard of this field prior to his pronouncement. To make matters interesting, my co-teacher happened to be IEEE Fellow, Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe. I was a bit puzzled as to what would happen if I was bracketed as the course instructor with such a senior authority in the field; one who also happened to be a director. My mind was put at rest when I did meet Prof. SCS. Within the first meeting itself, he gave me a good background on the topics I would teach and his insights. Yet, I can tell you that I took the first few classes with a degree of anxiety. I also happened to be doing the In-sem evaluation for the same course, and when a student had reservations about the marks I had awarded, I took him to meet with Prof. SCS, as he was the course instructor. When I began justifying the evaluation, Prof. SCS stopped me right then and immediately berated the student on his impudence. You can imagine that this created a deep impression on me. Here he was clearly indicating his confidence and trust in the professional integrity of the faculty body, including even teachers like me who had only been with the institute for a few weeks. Prof. SCS always held to higher standards in academics and research by encouraging the publishing of articles, student guidance and writing proposals for sponsored projects. He would constantly encourage me saying that he would congratulate me if I got my articles published in reputed journals of IEEE or ACM. In addition, he immediately approved my leave during summer vacation to work under Prof. B. V. Veenanarayana (IEEE Fellow, ISCA Fellow) with a fellowship from Indian Academy of Sciences, Bengaluru during summer 2008, and also with Prof. Keshab K. Parhi (IEEE Fellow) as a short term scholar at Department of ECE, University of Minnesota, Twin City Campus, Minneapolis, USA during Summer 2009.

He appreciated my co-edited book on Forensic Speaker Recognition. He even recommended me as a speaker for the reputed international conference on Global Maritime Security, 2012, and as a visiting professor at YCCE, Nagpur, based on my teaching feedback of Signals and Systems.

When I went to Surat as an Observer, to conduct the first online MSc (IT) entrance exams, I had to deal with a student who was facing issues with exam logistics. Prof. SCS calmly told me, “I have spoken to the Dean and you need not worry about it”. He was equally supportive during the organisation of O2 CEP Workshops and Winter School on Speech and Audio Processing (WiSSAP-2015) – the first time it had come to a Private University, as earlier editions were organised by IISc and IITs. I met one of his colleagues during a conference who punned on his name saying, “Prof. SCS is a real Sahasrabudhe (brave man)!” He used to trust faculty to such a level that in meetings he sometimes used to say, “During admissions, I ask candidates to think twice before taking admission to DA-IICT. Otherwise why struggle with a personality like Prof. Hemant Patil?”

Being in the Director’s position, Prof. SCS had the self-assurance to introduce technically solid and new elective courses, such as Telecommunication Networks and Statistically Communication Theory – which were highly appreciated by the student community. Furthermore, Prof. SCS had a very pleasant personality, full of energy and was highly sociable. Every year, around March, he used to organise a faculty get-together with a wonderful and homely dinner. This event really bonded us and made us consider DA-IICT as part of a larger family. In light of all this, I am privileged to say that Prof. SCS played a significant part in shaping my professional career. His impact on me will last forever and mere words are insufficient in expressing my real gratitude to him; rather I would always like to remain in his debt!

He stood as solid as a rock for his faculty and colleagues.

- PROF. HEMANT PATIL

Prof. SCS always held to higher standards in academics and research by encouraging the publishing of articles, student guidance and writing proposals for sponsored projects.

- PROF. HEMANT PATIL
When I joined DA-IICT in May 2005 and met our Director for the first time, I was in the somewhat awkward situation where I was recruited by his predecessor, Prof. Kudchadker - who thought highly of me, but whose term ended soon after I had joined. So, in a way, I started out as a complete stranger to Prof. Sahasrabudhe who seemed to have left me to my own devices. A whole year went by without us ever meeting or talking. Then in the spring of 2006, something changed. At a faculty dinner, which he hosted at his bungalow every March, he suddenly walked up to me and Vishvajit Pandya and started talking about the erratic winters of Ahmedabad. Within minutes, our conversation took us to his student days and to the bitter winters of Leningrad where he did his PhD, following his Masters at IIT Bombay; to the rhythmic patterns of Russian and Slavic languages and, of course, to the warming delights of Vodka on wintry evenings. It was as if I was discovering an entirely new person, warm, friendly and charming, in an odd sort of way. Prof. Sahasrabudhe’s unease with social critiques of science and technology never left him and, we seemed to have different viewpoints on many occasions. It took several years for him to appreciate our presence at the institute, when he conceded that the Humanities and Social Sciences were integral to the education of Engineers. I am sure many students and faculty will be aware that Prof. Sahasrabudhe served as Professor and Head of Department of Electrical Engineering at IIT Bombay, and was its Deputy Director too, before he joined DA-IICT. His track record as a teacher and institution builder was impressive. I spoke to him last year during a visit to Mumbai and told him how much we missed our faculty dinners every spring - we never had one after he left. When I told him rather ruefully, “DA-IICT has changed”. He laughed and replied, “I’m sure it has changed for the better. It’s a place close to my heart”.

When things needed to be done, he had a way of making it happen.

I first met Prof. Sahasrabudhe at the time of my joining interview for DA-IICT. His astuteness and quick wit was immediately evident. During the interview I mentioned that between when I received the interview call and appearing for it, I had received a one year post-doctoral fellowship position. His immediate reaction was to tell me to join, go on leave as early as necessary and rejoin after my post-doctoral stint. He was very knowledgeable, alert and always had an incisive retort ready to keep people on their toes. I believe this quality helped him greatly as an administrator and was visible in faculty engagements, convocations, parent or prospective student meetings and general interactions. I remember an occasion where there were deliberations with local and external resources regarding the setting up of a proposed Computational Science programme. Professor Sahasrabudhe quickly called the C-DAC member and requested a favour in return for what he had done in the past for the organisation. I also had good interactions with him during a workshop we had organised - he had a way of livening up the atmosphere.

Once you got to really know him, he was warm, friendly and charming.

PROF. MADHUMITA MAZUMDAR
DA-IICT, Gandhinagar

When things needed to be done, he had a way of making it happen.

PROF. RAHUL MUTHU
DA-IICT, Gandhinagar
A series of unlikely coincidences played a major role in evolving my friendship with Prof. Sudhakar Sahasrabudhe. Had it not been so, the friendship between a distinguished mathematician that he was and a somewhat wayward cultural activist that I am, would have hardly been possible. I started my career as an academic by becoming a Professor of English at the M.S. University of Baroda. Soon after, I had an epiphany of sorts and felt disconnected from academia. At the M. S. University of Baroda, I was given the freedom from being attached to the campus and could visit and lecture at will. A visit to the DA-IICT; a new born institute for ICT in eastern border of Gujarat and work with adivasis. For me, it was a source of great delight to be away from him, trying my best not to be noticed and teach English. She introduced me to a new language learning tool. She introduced me to a new language learning tool. She introduced me to a new language learning tool.

When my wife, Surekha, who is a scientist, and I travelled to the DA-IICT, we exchanged books and presented him with a copy of each of my new books as I completed them. During one of our conversations, Dr. Sahasrabudhe told me that he and his wife Madhuri Sahasrabudhe were amongst our most distinguished invitees. They rarely disappointed us. Even after Mrs. Sahasrabudhe completed her research and the visits to the Adivasi Academy came to a close, they were always amenable to visiting us in Baroda and other cities in India. I recall that there was a time when I had to receive a cultural award in Bombay, with a lot of glitz and glamorous celebrities in the audience. The Sahasrabudhes were there to join me for the function. When I organised a pan Indian language conference in Baroda, Dr. Sahasrabudhe participated in it, and I therefore had a couple to visit our home in Baroda. Among this interesting friend circle was the couple. May they be blessed forever.
My days at DA-IICT were formative in many ways. I consider myself fortunate to be at the right place at the right time. Real academic interactions with SCS started during a course jointly taught by him and Prof. Chatterji on probability and random processes. Prof. Chatterji covered the Measure Theory and SCS covered the random process part. I remember his neat board work and the clarity of thought while explaining basic concepts like ensemble average, time average, random walk, etc. SCS had this habit of inviting students to solve tutorial problems on the board. Even if you did not know the solution, he would prompt you till you eventually reached the solution on your own. What a learning experience. Following the course, I became a teaching assistant for a course on Electromagnetics. What I learnt through these interactions was that it is easy to expand and extrapolate but very difficult to summarise concisely; it requires a lot of internalisation of the knowledge. His cryptic and less than a line emails are also part of my fond memories of him. It used to take almost two hours for me to write an email to him.

Being a director and a teacher simultaneously is not an easy task. I am an admirer of his time management. As a faculty when I look back at his way of working, it is all the more inspiring and motivating. He managed his time very well, occasionally he used to prompt me on that front. Once, I confessed to him that when I sense that a problem is solvable, I leave it there. He used to call that lazy. He said that teachers can afford to be lazy. It is only because of him that I worked on my attitude block and eventually managed to be a little less laid back.

One day at 9:30 am, a knock on the door announces a message from the warden that there is a call from the director’s office. I had an appointment with SCS at 9:30 am and somehow managed to reach the office on time. Entering the office, SCS gave me a piece of paper (literally a very tiny 2x3 sq. in. of paper). He asked me to get the function plotted, with some modifications, to improve upon a cost function. I was clueless, and went back to my seat where I played with the function for a while. I prepared a small routine to plot the function explaining the effect of various parameters on its behaviour. At around 4:00 pm, I had to report back with the plots. To my surprise, when I went to his office, he asked me to present the details to some five individuals. He introduced me to the committee and said, “Pratik, not everyone gets a chance to teach grey hairs”. It was a committee trying to set up guidelines for accreditations and an evaluation metric for benchmarking an institute. It was at this point that I came to understand that I was essentially analysing the impact of various parameters like number of students, faculty members, collaborative projects, publications, programs, alumni, and more, on the metric! I finished in about 5 minutes. The people present there were part of an NBA core team setting up processes and guidelines. In the end, it took me a week to understand and appreciate what was going on with the function! A great learning experience.

DA-IICT had been very active and aggressive in terms of faculty induction. Almost every alternate week there used to be seminars by candidates, visitors, guests and experts on diverse topics. SCS insisted that all Ph.D. students must attend such talks. I was a regular attendee and never missed any talk. In a few of the talks, he used to take a back seat and join us in the audience. Just at the time when the experts would start discussions with the candidates, he would say, “Hey, pay attention and listen carefully to the questions posed by the experts. The maturity of an expert is reflected in the quality of question asked and the maturity of the candidate is in understanding the question”. On several occasions, he said that, “…understanding a question, developing a strategy to approach it and eventually arriving at a solution is commendable, but the art of posing an interesting question is what makes you a better teacher and a scholar…”

Before he left IIIT Vadodara, all of us (four faculty members, two staff members) invited him for lunch at the institute. He accepted the invitation. Each of us cooked a dish and brought it to the table as a potluck lunch. If you are curious as to the reason behind this potluck lunch? Well, SCS used to say that to build an institute; we need people who can cook their own food. We had a wonderful time together and I still remember that smile on his face. In one or two interactions, he could identify the abilities of an individual. His ability to channelise these abilities towards constructive activity is what I have witnessed as a faculty and a student also. It looked as if he always had a plan and there were sub-plans and sub-sub-plans! He knew how to convince. It is difficult to quantify his influence on my life. I met him during the maiden convocation of IIIT Vadodara in November 2018. We had a casual chat, cheerful as usual, he asked about my family and friends. I walked with him a few steps towards his car after the convocation and here is what he asked me, “How far have you reached on action at distance (Quantum Entanglement) front?” He made me look at quantum physics, in the first place, when I used to be a teaching assistant for a course on Electromagnetics. This was his way of saying keep learning. His pursuit of learning was contagious. I believe there is no better way to remember my last meeting with him.
Professor Sudhakar Sahasrabudhe has been one of my very good friends over the past three decades. He was a fellow IITian, member of several National Committees, member of the Board of Governors of Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology, fellow Resource Person of several Faculty Development Workshops in different institutions and active participant in many other academic activities. I know the foundational role he has played in the design of our National Accreditation systems, processes and in NBA becoming a Permanent Member of the Washington Accord. I have always known him to have sported a pleasant disposition, a balanced temperament and a helpful attitude. His lectures were very interesting, informative and popular. I consider myself fortunate in having had the benefit of his company and association for over three decades. In his loss, the academic fraternity has lost a beloved human being.

He always had a pleasant disposition, a balanced temperament and a helpful attitude.

DR. R. NATARAJAN
Director IIT Madras, 1995-2001,
Chairman AICTE, 2001-2004
I will always remember Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe as being quite methodical, down to earth, committed to quality and honest to a fault.

PROF ANIL SAHASRABUDEH
Chairman, AICTE

Academically, my discipline is quite different from that of his, so I would not be able to comment much on his area of research. However, it might be said that first and foremost, we are Sahasrabudhe brothers (Sahasrabudhe bandhu). Our family name being the same, I am certain that somewhere in the family tree, perhaps going back 10 or 15 generations, we are somehow connected genetically. Jokes aside, I first got to know of him through my paternal aunt, who happened to meet his wife, Madhuri, when they were working closely together to put the accreditation systems in place by India’s entry as a signatory of the Washington Accord. The team worked relentlessly towards it and became an expert in accreditation processes. One of those instances happened to be at the Shiv Nadar Institute in Chennai. The institute had asked Professor Natarajan, who was the former Director of IIT Madras and Chairman of the AICTE, to visit the college and recommend modifications that could improve the standard of education and excel. Professor Natarajan called in Professor Sonde from IISc Bangalore, Professor S. C. Sahasrabudhe, a former Director of IMB and me as members of the team. Although Professor Natarajan himself was from the field of Mechanical Engineering, and I was the youngest of those selected, he asked me to join him. Over the course of three days, we made observations on how every aspect of the institute functioned. Professor S. C. Sahasrabudhe made some key recommendations, which were implemented by the institute later. During this time, we got a close-up view of how he strove towards its eventual achievement. We used to meet during these activities, even in Delhi, where we were a member of the executive committee. There we developed new formats of accreditation of educational institutes after a lot of discussions. He kept doing this kind of work. When he moved to Nagpur after retirement, he kept going to institutes wherever they called him.

It was during one such visit to the Dhole-Patil College in Pune that he had a sudden heart attack in his hotel, right after he had completed his work on that day. We still struggle to understand how an active and healthy person like him could pass away so unexpectedly. When I look back to that day, I feel a sense of heavy loss even today. I remember that none of those present at the hotel had any contact details. We tried to get his home contact details through the NBA. Eventually we were able to get in touch with one of his close friends, Arvichal Kapur, who was also from Nagpur, and who was able to share Prof. Sahasrabudhe’s home contact details. This is how we were able to inform his family. Our long journey which had started with us being merely acquaintances and graduated to us being friends, came to an abrupt end. I will always remember Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe as being quite methodical, down to earth, committed to quality and honest to a fault. My tributes to Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe’s refreshing memories for over two decades.
A priceless asset to technical education foundations, he played a pivotal role in gaining Washington Accord membership for India.

DR. ANIL NASSA
Member Secretary, NBA

The first time I met Prof. Sahasrabudhe was somewhere in 2003 or 2004. At that time, we had not developed much of a relationship or association of any kind but my impression of him was that he was a very honest, decent and straightforward person. I joined the National Board of Accreditation in October 2013 and it was happily a chance to see that he was also present on one of the committees. So I should say that our friendship grew during the one and a half months of working with him closely, I developed a really good rapport to the extent that we could poke fun at each other in a good-natured way. To my eyes, he seemed a strong personality or a priceless asset to the cause of spreading Outcome-based Accreditation. In fact, while the recent NPE has placed emphasis on Outcome-based Education, this is an area we were working on together since 2013. During the first Washington Accord meeting in New Zealand, we faced a tough challenge, as India was really striving hard for a permanent membership. To defend our application, we spent close to 36 sleepless hours, endlessly discussing and strategising. There were instances when we were so involved in document preparation that we lost all sense of time. We would begin at 10 am in the morning and work up to 2 am and then again start the next day at 10 am. How we attained credibility for India’s membership was that we would discuss everything in detail to iron out even the slightest differences before a final decision was taken. There was no voting on a subject, as most of our decisions were unanimous and if they were not, we could convince each other on the right course of action for the benefit of the country. Prof. Sahasrabudhe was a true mentor, guide, philosopher and friend, so we had a good meeting every time. We could talk to each other as friends, share experiences and discuss personal issues as all friends do. Being junior to Prof. Sahasrabudhe, I would be the one sharing a wide range of personal things with him and he would treat me as a younger brother while giving me advice. When it came to how he interacted with faculty and teachers, he was a very good communicator and liberally peppered his presentations with unique examples, so that everyone who attended would find it interesting. Usually the role of the teacher is to teach, and not to listen, but with him it was very different. He had a very unique appeal and could easily get all the faculty members to listen avidly to his talks for up to two hours a day. His IIT experience, his NBA visits and knowledge of the technical education system in the country was a unique blend that helped further the foundation of technical education in India.

For me, his passing is great personal loss, though I still feel his presence in everyday life. There are things about him that I will always remember, like his fondness for thin-crust pizza and coffee or tea breaks almost every 2-3 hours. He will always remain a bigger influence for me as well as the education system of the country.

I can say that the NBA Chairman, and I, truly appreciated his foundational contributions in helping the NBA attain a credible system globally while raising awareness across the country. In terms of the technical education system, India has lost a great personality and a priceless asset to the cause of spreading Outcome-based Accreditation.
Briefing meeting of NBA International Review Team held on 10th September, 2019 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
An attitude that put students’ interests before his personal comfort, and education before everything else. This was his commitment.

PROF. ANIL TAVILDAR
Professor Emeritus, VIIIT, Pune

Sometimes one’s orbit takes longer than others to revisit the path it once crossed. You could say that this is how I regard my association with Prof. Sahasrabudhe. I first got to know him one particular instance in the 1970s and early 1980s when I was a postgraduate student, initially at IIT Bombay, and subsequently at IIT Delhi. However, it was much later, in the years between 2006 and 2012 that I reconnected and forged a friendly association with him. This latter association began when I was the principal at Vishwakarma Institute of Information Technology (VIIIT), Kondhwa, Pune. It is from this period that I would like to recount some treasured memories I have of Professor Sahasrabudhe. From what I knew of him, he was an eminent scholar and educationist; a fellow of the largest international technical society – the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, USA. This is a highly regarded achievement as even today, as there are still very few fellows from India in this field. Perhaps, Professor Sahasrabudhe was one of the distinguished few who received this premier recognition at such a young age because of his keen knowledge and sought-after expertise. Far from hoarding the gains of his achievement for himself, Professor Sahasrabudhe unhesitatingly took the path of sharing his technical prowess and knowledge with experts, friends, students and all those who could benefit. I can imagine there must be hundred or even thousands of students from professional institutes and experts who have gained invaluably because of his choice to guide them. His path was teaching and he used whatever means he had at his disposal to enhance his ability to teach. As a distinguished member and professor of various technical bodies like the National Board of Accreditation, he contributed immensely to the overall development of different academic institutions in India. His contributions were of most impact in the domain of engineering education. Through his prominent position on the governing body of the Vishwakarma Institute of Information Technology, he played a pivotal role in shaping its academic excellence and created a permanent research orientation amongst the faculty and students of the institute. His passion for research was such that he never chose to delineate between research in Science and research in Engineering. We used to have a specific rule that those who researched for PhD would get specific concessions like leaves or adjustment of their teaching duties and benefits like that. I remember Mrs. Bhalerao, who at that time was a Physics lecturer, was conducting research on nano-materials in NCL. You could say she had a thesis background and was delving into the field of science. If I remember the details correctly, she had been given a two-week leave to pursue her research activities. At the end of those two years, she had made a great deal of progress in her research and also earned her PhD. As she was from the science stream, in an engineering institute, you can understand that there was considerable internal opposition to her request. Most did not approve of the idea of giving another year as extension. When I asked Professor Sahasrabudhe for his opinion, he suggested that I bring up this researcher’s request in one of the governing body meetings and he would support it in such a way that everybody would understand its critical value. Little did I know that he would go the extra mile to ensure that this researcher’s request receive the importance it was due. Now, the governing body meeting was to be held one afternoon but Professor Sahasrabudhe tactfully arranged a tour of one of our institute’s Physics research lab that very morning. Here Professor Garde was in charge and used to work on Material Physics Research, in a laboratory specially set up in collaboration with Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. Professor Sahasrabudhe smoothly conducted the governing body members around the laboratory and showed them the kind of research projects and studies being conducted. So when the governing body meeting was held later that afternoon, everybody unanimously agreed that one could not distinguish between science research and engineering research and the researcher should be allowed to continue her studies to their logical conclusion. This was the way that Professor Sahasrabudhe managed the issue and the contentious one year extension was passed without a hitch. It was a remarkable way to create a research mindset and bring about change in quality standards.

He held this very attitude and desire to pass on knowledge and expertise to his students even when he came for just governing body meetings. There is one instance that I would like to recount. One day, as there were waiting for him. He did not want to up, Professor Sahasrabudhe insisted that he was not extend till 1 pm. As soon as the meeting wound up, Professor Sahasrabudhe insisted that he was not interested in lunch, and that we should just have a quick snack and hurry over to Cummins College where students were waiting for him. He did not want to inconvenience the students, especially the girl students, waiting for him in the heat of the afternoon. He always put teaching and students before his own comfort and to much so that he would forgo lunch and rest to ensure that his students would always get the best of him. I will always hold this steadfast determination of his in high admiration. To my mind, this will truly be his most precious legacy to education. I pray to almighty God to give his noble soul eternal and everlasting peace.

Far from hoarding the gains of his achievement for himself, Professor Sahasrabudhe unhesitatingly took the path of sharing his technical prowess and knowledge with experts, friends, students and all those who could benefit.
One could get to learn so much from people like him, that it is difficult to explain in plain words, as how much I have learned from him.

PROF. M. J. KHUJEKAR
Coordinator for Affordable Agriculture Projects,
IEEE Pune Section

Though I had previously attended a lecture on telecommunications, at IIT Bombay, given by Dr. Sahasrabudhe, it was only in 2001 that I finally got to meet him in person.

I had gone to Surat, for a week-long training course, where several lecturers had come from various universities. Dr. Sahasrabudhe and another professor from IIT had come too. Every lecturer was given a different time slot to announce that Dr. Sahasrabudhe’s session was going to be held over almost of entire day. As he had to leave at 4 pm, he started his session at 10.30 am and continued until 3.30 pm with just half-an-hour break in between for lunch. Once the lunch break was over, he immediately started his lecture again. This was how he paid attention to his lecture and why he stood out in one’s memory. He had a very simplified style of explanation.

Sahasrabudhe’s session was going to be held over a full day session on the emerging technology of 4G. Nobody wanted to miss these sessions, especially that of Dr. R. David Kolpilli, who was an amazing experience and Dr. Sahasrabudhe was the one who really made it happen.

Every time Dr. Sahasrabudhe used to visit VIIT for meetings, we would request him, for an hour and a half, of his time. As he would often tell us in the morning when he wanted to take a lecture, I would make an announcement to that effect and request people to attend. Many who didn’t have lectures during that time slot used to attend and we would also hold a lecture for the students. Dr. Sahasrabudhe would generously give us his time whenever he could. If he had a prior appointment at 11 am, he would still come at 9.45 am and tell us he was ready to take a lecture at 10 am. This was an example of how easy-going he was. He would approach me directly whenever he was visiting and ask, “Let’s go, Khujekar, where do we sit?” He wouldn’t even have a Principals cup of tea. He would say, “If I feel like I need a tea, I’ll have it before my meeting”. Even the students were quite impressed with him over the course of the three years we studied at the library. I have always been in awe of his wonderful personality, and it remains to me so today.

In 2008, Professor Tavildar and I thought of conducting the Short-Term Training Programme (STTP) that was essential for colleges. Many distinguished people delivered lectures, in that programme including Prof. Dr. Avinash Joshi, Professor Dr. Mukul Sutaone and others from Pune. We desired to have a lecture by Professor Sahasrabudhe, which he was willing to accommodate. If a mutually convenient time could be worked out. Luckily, this was possible and he was able to come and deliver this lecture. You could say he was ‘zabardast’ in teaching and could easily talk for one and a half hour with utmost ease. All of us would prepare so much before every lecture but he would just go in, say unprepared, without any stress or tension. He would always be prepared for a lecture, at any time, anywhere. While visiting down a corridor, he would ask for a report on whether or not students were doing anything about the topic taught in the class that day. It was important to give him an open view as he was on the governing council. We had initiated some experiments because of him and successfully completed them. I have always been in awe of his wonderful personality, and it remains to me so today.

I have recollections about NPTEL, when we needed some Compact Discs on the subject. The CDs we required, were not available in Chennai, so Dr. Sahasrabudhe recommended we get them from Mumbai. Together with another professor, who knew IIT Bombay better, we travelled to Mumbai IIT to get the CDs. I sent a message through an email to Professor Dr. R. K. Shevgaonkar about the same and he told us that Dr. Sahasrabudhe had already spoken to him about this. We got these National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) CDs and placed them in the VIIT library. However, Dr. Sahasrabudhe told us that we should not just place CDs in the library; we also needed to motivate students and staff to use them. I agreed and decided to make more people aware about NPTEL. I wanted to call all college heads for a session with Dr. Sahasrabudhe. However, Dr. R. K. Sahasrabudhe, Dr. Shevgaonkar’s field of work was more closely aligned to NPTEL, and he had even spoken with Professor Shevgaonkar regarding a lecture. We invited Professor
Shevgaonkar, who was very skilled at explaining the NPTEL concept to many college heads who attended his session. Coincidentally, Dr. Sahasrabudhe also had a meeting in VIIT at the same time and so he also attended this session to estimate people's reactions towards it. For him education was everything.

Another memory I have, is when I asked Dr. Sahasrabudhe why he had done his PhD from University at Leningrad, in Russia. He answered that IIT had a collaboration with them back then, so young people like him used to get the opportunity for scholarships. After studying in Leningrad, he came back to keep teaching at IIT.

Another time, I informed Dr. Sahasrabudhe that I was visiting Ahmedabad for a 3-4 day conference, and my wife and I would like to meet him. He gave me a location, which I was not able to understand. He told me not to worry and that he would explain it to the taxi driver who would get us there. When we arrived, Dr. Sahasrabudhe was glad to meet us both. He told us, ‘My wife has just stepped out for some work, I’ll introduce you once she is back’. Then he called his assistant and asked him to give us a tour of the institute, while he in meanwhile finished a lecture. When we met up again, we discussed what we could do at VIIT. We knew some of the things were a challenge as it was a private institute. He made some suggestions to improve our library, which improved after his suggestions. He was very interested in elevating the standards at the college and would occasionally visit the library and spend at least five minutes just getting a pulse of what was happening there.

We would also reserve a few IEEE lectures for him. I recall that, one of these was at Cummins College of Engineering for Women, Pune. We invited faculty from various colleges and Dr. Sahasrabudhe would explain why an IEEE membership was beneficial and how it opened the doors to so many possibilities. I remember his sister lived somewhere nearby and he stayed with her. While we wanted to send a car to get him, he declined and came walking to the seminar. He was that humble and simple a person. He had fluency in Marathi and English, and we loved being part of his conversations. I would also say that he carried himself well and exuded a vibrant personality, not at all like the stereotypical imagery of a professor. I have so many fond memories of him. One final thing I want to share is, that every year on Diwali and New Year, I would send message him a personal greeting and he would immediately reply. He always kept in touch with us like that.

You get to learn so much from people like him. It’s difficult to explain in plain words just how much I have learned from him.

When you heard him, you could feel how easy the subject was. But later when you think about it, you would realise that it was easy only because of the dedication and effort that went into it.
I have been a teacher for a very long time. I would say that in all my forty-five years of experience as a professor in the field of Electronics and Telecommunication, I have rarely come across a more dedicated and driven educator than Professor Sahasrabudhe. I first got to know him when we were both on the governing body of Vishwakarma Institute of Technology (VIIT), Pune. Ever since, I have been associated with him for almost seven years. We used to frequently meet as part of our governing membership duties. During this period, I noticed how he always batted from the front foot for education with strategic suggestions to elevate the academic standards of the institution. He had a soft yet commanding tone that he used to good effect in persuading even the most recalcitrant of us into doing what was right. It always worked no matter how much the managing leadership may have diverged from his viewpoint at the start. His conviction was powerful and people found themselves drawn up to do more in the aura of his confidence. Even if he had only come for a governing body meeting, he always made it a point to interact and engage with the students and the staff of the college. Before the meeting, it would be normal to see him spend at least two hours with the students and teachers understanding their points of view. I was intrigued by his personality and attended a few of his lectures myself. He was undoubtedly an excellent teacher, in Marathi we would term it as ‘haadacha shikshak’. He was a fount of wisdom and guidance with suggestions that always created a better way forward, for teaching methodologies as well as presentations. When I look back on the way he went about his art of mentorship and guidance, I realise that he was constantly nudging people in the right direction; creating opportunities for academic excellence. His compelling wisdom played a pivotal role in improving standards to such a degree that we were privileged to receive permanent affiliation to the University of Kondhwa in the short period of just six years - a rare feat.

While Professor Sahasrabudhe always held positions of great leadership, he never forgot the art of teaching. For him, this was his touchstone, the one thing he wished to be remembered as – a great teacher. I will give you an example of just how highly he valued the necessity of teaching students. One day we had made a 12 noon appointment to meet him at DA-IICT. So, we arrived fully expecting to be ushered into his presence at the appointed time. Imagine our surprise when his registrar profusely conveyed Professor Sahasrabudhe’s apologies as he had gone to take a lecture and would be slightly delayed in meeting us. This is how education was always a priority, and even though he was the director, he would never miss his lectures. Such was his high commitment to teaching.

Perhaps I will pay homage to him in this way: to always regard him as a good person who had dedicated his life to the cause of education. May destiny gift us more of his kind.
leadership as a Principal when I was not quite familiar with a PhD, and suddenly thrust into this position of me, it was quite a step up, as I was a typical professor from Dhirubhai Ambani Institute, Gandhinagar. For academic member. At that time, he had just retired into the Governing Council as an academic. After I became the Principal of SPIT, we inducted Department of Sardar Patel College of Engineering. Department at that time and I was in the Electrical ground as Dr. Sahasrabudhe was in the Electrical meet the IIT Bombay professors. We had common Destiny has a way of bringing people together. In the beginning, because we were based in colleges college, its sister college SPCE was a government because it was crucial to dovetail academia and faculty mindset challenges. SPIT's growth prospects as changes required would never be incorporated. He went so far as to give this autonomy a definitive one year goal. Understanding his position, we all committed to this goal, and by 2017 were on the path to autonomy. It took us about 2 years, which is a normal transition period, where we really had to work hard to sort out administrative, curriculum and faculty mindset challenges.

Dr. Sahasrabudhe was generous in volunteering his time to take sessions with faculty. Actually, it would be a misnomer to term them as teaching sessions, as they were more like friendly conversations with the faculty. So he would come for two or three days and every day he would have an in-depth conversation with each department faculty member on goal setting and forward planning for the next four years. He did not just suggest a roadmap for every department; and forward planning for the next four years. He did not just suggest a roadmap for every department; he was there on the ground helping us implement this golden path. I found his contribution as pivotal to project ownership and responsibility to request for all new experiments that had to be conducted. We gave these new faculty participants sweeping project ownership and responsibility for research for training or call in experts; whatever it took to achieve success. It definitely saved us a great deal of heartburn over people management challenges. We did not want faculty to self-isolate by saying that "This is not my subject". So it was a tactically superior move that enabled the highly-paid senior-most and mid-level faculty to continue being valued teachers in a position they were best suited for, while we could have the resources to conduct more experiments, introduce new teaching methodologies, induct new courses and explore inter-disciplinary programmes. Dr. Sahasrabudhe's idea of creating a new malleable layer while bypassing the old, paid rich dividends in a short time. Within just a year of autonomy, we had experimented all we could and the results were fabulous. We also got our first placement post autonomy. To be sure, SPIT was always getting very good placements in the past but it was even more remarkable after autonomy because of our across-the-board experiments in introducing new courses, inter-disciplinary teaching, multiple lab-based courses or simply because of changing the way things were done Science in the past. It was a roller-coaster ride for both students and faculty. We would often have students raising flags in my office exasperated by the changes but at the time of leaving, these very same students thanked us ten times over. This sublime change was appreciated even more at the meetings because there was growing realisation that no other college had reoriented to offer it so. The new courses like music appreciation, art appreciation and similar small courses, which encouraged students to develop a multi-faceted personality. To make all these changes, I was thankful I had the unstinted support of the faculty.
Having people like him around to guide me was a great advantage. If you had the good fortune to talk to Prof. Sahasrabudhe, you would know him to be a first-rate conversationalist. He could chat about virtually anything and everything as he was multilingual and had a great network from AICTE and NBA. Now, NBA was a frequent topic because we also had Mr. Mhatre, an Ex-TCS person who was also on the Governing Council, join our discussions. Usually, academicians get engrossed in our subjects or doing research, but he was not like that. He would teach his subject and do his research but he had a multi-faceted life besides that, which used to make him really good company. As a member of our Governing Council, he was very particular that he would not conduct NBA workshops in our institute because he thought that it might create a conflict of interest. However, he would always be helpful in suggesting what we should approach or the training required. So, I would always verify details with him. However, he would always maintain integrity of the highest degree. Once when we visited NBA, there were minutes that had to be passed in the core meetings, he immediately walked out of the meeting saying that as he was only Governing Council member for the college he would not participate in the decision making. Later he told me that he had no idea what was discussed at the meeting as he had walked out before it began and that since it was my college, I had presumably done well.

Now there is an incident which happened and which I will never forget because normally such conversations seem surreal. It was the farewell meeting of the Governing Council because my appointment was terminated. We never felt that he went along with us just because he was a management member or opposed because he was not like that. He would teach his subject and do his research but he had a multi-faceted life besides that, which used to make him really good company. As a member of our Governing Council, he was very particular that he would not conduct NBA workshops in our institute because he thought that it might create a conflict of interest. However, he would always be helpful in suggesting what we should approach or the training required. So, I would always verify details with him. However, he would always maintain integrity of the highest degree. Once when we visited NBA, there were minutes that had to be passed in the core meetings, he immediately walked out of the meeting saying that as he was only Governing Council member for the college he would not participate in the decision making. Later he told me that he had no idea what was discussed at the meeting as he had walked out before it began and that since it was my college, I had presumably done well.

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A great administrator, an accomplished academician and above all, a venerable teacher!

DR. SWATI MUJUMDAR
Pro Chancellor Symbiosis University of Applied Sciences Indore & Symbiosis Skills & Professional Universities, Pune

Symbiosis Skills and Professional University, Pune and Symbiosis University of Applied Sciences, Indore are India’s first skill development universities. And it was in the context of establishing these two that I first came in touch with Dr. Sahasrabudhe. While working together, I got to know him quite closely and personally. His multifaceted capabilities played an essential role in the process of building both the universities.

We met him at Symbiosis about 8-9 years ago. At that time, he was still with Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology. However, as a governing body member of many colleges and institutes, he used to frequently visit Pune. During those trips, we would converse about what the university model should be, which engineering initiatives and academic programmes we could offer and so on. He not only helped us develop curricula for many of our engineering programmes, but also put us in touch with other professionals who could contribute toward the development of various other curricula and syllabi for both the universities. In the world of skill training, laboratories are almost indispensable, which were also designed and set up with his guidance.

As he was actively working in the field of academia at national as well as international levels, his broad perspective and insightful inputs helped the universities during their inception. It was exactly the kind of experience and exposure needed for both. As a matter of course, his expertise benefitted us every step of the way, but knowingly or unknowingly, we also got to learn many other things through our interactions – especially about administration of universities, academic excellence and quality standards. For many years after that, Dr. Sahasrabudhe was on the governing bodies of both the universities. During which, he significantly contributed towards their development, strategic decision making, policy matters and more.

Another notable thing about him was his amiable nature. He could interact with people of all age groups with utmost ease and enthusiasm. He could sincerely guide a young faculty member and also spend hours discussing a technical topic with senior experts. Students never hesitated to approach him with their questions or doubts. He always connected with them whenever he visited the university.

Last time I met him was for the first convocation ceremony at Indore University on the 1st of December. Since he was a member of the governing body, he was also part of the milestone event. He was there for two days, indulging in endless conversations and jokes, even on the stage. Amidst all of that, he continued guiding us about the future roadmap of the universities. We never thought those two days would be our last with him. All of us at Symbiosis will always miss him.

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Prof. Sahasrabudhe has been my role model, guide, mentor and guru, in the truest sense throughout my professional career. I can say that he has enlightened and enriched my life. It is rare to come across such an outstanding and extraordinary personality imbued with unique qualities. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have associated with this great individual within my professional circle.

Though his is an irreplaceable loss, I will forever keep his memory alive in my heart. May his soul rest in peace.

A guiding light that was extraordinary in every way.

S. P. DIXIT
Director, CDAC, Pune, 2006-2010

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S. P. DIXIT
Director, CDAC, Pune, 2006-2010
He was a role model for many and a teacher to teachers.

PROF. B. N. CHAUDHARI
Director, SPIT Mumbai

My interactions with Prof. Sahasrabudhe were few. We both were advisory board members of Yashwantrao Chavan Group of Institutions. It is a group of four engineering colleges in Vidarbha region and the advisory board is common for all. We had had 2-3 meetings related to it. Another point of interaction, as I recollect, was a couple of years later in 2017, at Cummins College of Engineering workshop on NBA. I was also a speaker scheduled after Prof. Sahasrabudhe. When my turn came, I started my speech with the following Sanskrit subhashita:

खड़ीतों दौड़ते ताब्द्यावच्योत्दयते शाशी।
उदिते स दस्तोत्त न खड़ीतों न चन्द्रमा॥

(Meaning: A firefly glows in darkness until the moon rises in the sky. But when the Sun rises neither the glowing firefly nor the moon exhibit their brightness).

Usually, he leaves after his session. On that day, he stayed at the venue. When my lecture was over, he appreciated and told me that he would tell Dr. Anil Nassa (NBA secretary) to invite me for the national seminars. The last interaction was etched in my mind permanently as it was a very unusual one! Prof. Sahasrabudhe was on Sardar Patel Institute of Technology (SPIT), Mumbai’s governing board since 2017. Though I hadn’t officially joined SPIT, I was invited for a board meeting on 26th December 2019. When our Chairman introduced me, Prof. Sahasrabudhe told him that he knew me and I would be useful for them. After the board meeting, during lunch, we talked on various topics. Somewhere in the midst, strangely the discussion turned to life. He said I still drive a car. Someone told him that at this age, he should not do it and take any risk. His prompt response was “I am prepared”. I continued the conversation saying that in India we have less wisdom in education sector and people like him should keep mentoring institutes. Foremost, our society needs such people. He was somehow not convinced. He responded “I don’t think so. I am done, ready to exit anytime.” Call it a coincidence or anything, but he did exit this world in the next 48 hours! It was a strange conversation, and I was shocked to hear that he was no more! He was a role model for many and a teacher to teachers. May his soul rest in peace.

Here was a man who understood the value of ideas and technology.

PROF. DHADESUGOOR R. VAMAN
Texas A&M University System Regents Professor and Texas Instruments Endowed Chair Professor (Retired)

Dr. Sahasrabudhe was a close friend, mentor and a great source of inspiration to me for many years. I connected with him when I was the CEO of Megaxess. He visited our organisation and gave a stirring tribute on our technology innovation and as the first producer of Quality of Service Products from 1997 - 2002.

At some point, Dr. Sahasrabudhe also invited me to consider taking over his position at DA-IICT, as he was retiring. I felt quite honoured that he had considered me to take over the baton from his illustrious hands. Every opportunity I got to visit Mumbai, I would meet up with him in the EE Department and exchange ideas and notes on the incredible pace of trends, inventions and innovations occurring around the world. More recently, in 2019, he was invited to the Diamond Jubilee celebration at NIT Warangal as a Chief Guest, which unfortunately turned out to be our last meeting.

Dr. Sahasrabudhe was a truly magnificent person with unusual qualities. Our friendship was at a very high level, considering the fact that I was not even a student of IIT Bombay. I really miss him and hope that his family finds peace through this moment in life. I pray to God to give eternal peace to this great soul.
Prof. Sahasrabudhe's last visit to Dhole Patil College of Engineering, Pune
Chapter V

Awards & Accolades

- Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar was given at 2nd National Teachers Congress, 2018
- IEEE Fellow, 2007 for academic leadership in creating and managing an electrical engineering education system
- Lifetime Achievement Award, IIT Bombay, 2005
- Best Teacher Award, IIT Bombay, 2002
- Silver Jubilee Medallion IEEE Bombay Section, 2001
- Fourth IETE Prof. SVC Aiya Memorial Award for outstanding contributions in motivating research work in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering, September, 1998
- Gold Medal – The Metallurgy and Material Science Division, Institute of Engineers (India), 1986-87
- S. K. Mitra Memorial Award from IETE, 1981
IIT Bombay Lifetime Achievement Award

The IIT Bombay Lifetime Achievement Award recognises outstanding individuals whose pioneering spirit and demonstrated inventiveness throughout their careers have improved our society and inspired others. This is considered the most prestigious award of IIT Bombay.

IIT Bombay has recently (February 2021) renamed the Lifetime Achievement Award as “Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe Lifetime Achievement Award.” The award comprises of a cash prize of ₹2,50,000 and a citation. The cash award will be given from the money collected from donation contributed by students, friends and colleagues of Prof. Sahasrabudhe.

The Institute conferred ‘Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe Lifetime Achievement Award 2021’ on Prof. Krithi Ramamritham, professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, who recently superannuated. This award ceremony took place on IIT Bombay’s 62nd Foundation Day on March 10, 2021 at the Convocation Hall in hybrid mode. Mr. Rajesh Gopinathan, CEO and Managing Director, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

The first recipient of Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe award, Prof. Krithi wrote a special note on this occasion for the memoir.

It is with great humility that I accepted the Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe Lifetime Achievement Award on the Foundation Day of IITB - 10th March, 2021.

I myself was informed about it only a couple of days earlier and it made me ecstatic and extremely happy. I had gotten an award named after my good friend Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe, someone I immensely admired for his sharp practical mindset and mentorship.

We were campus neighbours and that gave the two of us and our families many opportunities to come together. Mrs. Sahasrabuddhe, Madhuriji as my wife Saraswathi calls her, was the source of strength and a perfect companion to Prof. SCS. Often we used to run into them during their after-dinner walks. We have had very pleasant memories of enjoying the festivities during their daughter Meghana’s wedding next door, visiting them at Gandhinagar and meeting them by chance at IIT Mandi three years ago.

From all that I had heard from his students, here at IITB and elsewhere, he was a captivating teacher. He was keen on replicating the experience IIT students received by way of education, of the abstract as well as practical kind, at other colleges. I felt fortunate to get calls from him to serve on interview panels and to deliver talks, which I, of course, gladly accepted. In hindsight, the experience I got from these interactions was enormous, I looked forward to more.

My thanks to his family and students for instituting this award and to the IIT Bombay committee which selected me as its first recipient.

Best wishes to everyone touched by Prof. SCS.

Prof. Krithi Ramamritham
Recipients of Prof. S. C. Sahasrabudhe Lifetime Achievement Award
Heartfelt memories for all to treasure. Of a guiding light, that gave beyond measure.

Is it possible to really know someone without having met them even once? Working on this memoir was quite an intimate experience. For weeks, we went through the material we received, to read and listen to what people had to share about Professor Sahasrabudhe. All of them spoke fondly of him. Some of them would linger a little longer in classrooms and corridors, while some would recall an incident from his workshops. Some would laugh while sharing an anecdote, while some would even have a lump in their throat while talking. We often found ourselves shadowing Professor Sahasrabudhe through vivid experiences shared by all these individuals who have contributed towards this book. Their loving words and nostalgic memories conjured up an image in our mind – a youthful person with a wide smile on his face. Later, when we saw his pictures for the first time while working on this memoir, he was exactly the way we imagined him to be.

The name – Professor Sudhakar Sahasrabudhe, evokes a sense of respect. Even today, it reverberates through each and every life he has touched with his gentle yet dynamic presence. His dedication towards education and balanced approach toward challenges have inspired us on a deeper level too. It has made us realise our passion and dedication towards work. And at the same time, we felt encouraged to make a difference in the world around us through our ideas. As they say – everything happens for a reason. Probably, this memoir happened so Professor Sahasrabudhe could help us and many others discover the true meaning of ikigai.

Lakshmi & Shruti
Fawn Design team