

1

Emailed to Mrs. S. Balakrishnan: Expressions of Condolence  
To be read at the Memorial Service on Tuesday, March 31, 2:00 p.m.

GIORGIO KOCH  
ROME, ITALY

... it is with deep sorrow that I learnt of the departure of Bal. He was the first who opened my mind to the deep achievements of Functional Analysis and of Stochastic Processes, the first who welcomed me as I arrived at UCLA in December 1969, the first who offered me his friendship during my staying and working there with my wife Mariapia. Later his, and your, friendship was opened to the whole of my family so that, when a few years ago I had the chance of getting in touch with him, he was still remembering your staying in Rome and the names of my four children.

Please let me know if any event will be set up in his name, so that hopefully I may take part of it.

ALFREDO GERMANI  
ROME, ITALY

I learned from Alberto De Santis the sad news of the death of Prof. Balakrishnan.

Bal has been for me one of the most important stages of my life and certainly the Most important in my profession.

For me he always remains as Professor model to imitate. His mathematical ability was legendary, his unsurpassed genius, his cheerfulness and availability will never be forgotten.

VINOD SHARMA  
INDIA

... I had worked with Bal for two years from 1985 to 1987. I have very fond memories of those days. We had several discussions, walks in the campus. He was a very generous man. I learnt about life and matured as a researcher in those years. These have been helpful to me till today. I again met him in UCLA about ten years ago.

FIRDAUS UDWADIA  
USC

FARIDA UDWADIA

... It is with a very heavy heart that we learned yesterday of the passing away of a very special, special friend of ours -- Bal. ...

Bal was an exceptional person. Every time after we would meet for lunch, or dinner, or whatever, Farida would always comment on his charming personality, and I would whole-heartedly agree. Getting to know you and Bal has been one of the highlights of our lives.

I recall so many, many scintillating conversations with Bal over the last 35 years; they ranged from super stability of linear systems to music, structural dynamics to cinema, control theory to literature, and Bezout's Theorem to the Bhagwad Gita. He was interested in everything. I believe that he was a philosopher at heart -- a lover of wisdom and knowledge. He was indeed one of the most brilliant persons I have ever come across. He was always caring and kind to people like myself who are, what I would call, naïve engineers/mathematicians, and he was always willing to carefully listen to them. He had an unequalled grasp of whatever he worked on, be it Structural Dynamics, Functional Analysis, Wave Mechanics, Aeroelasticity, or Optimization Theory. I know he did seminal work in all these fields, and I am sure there are many more areas in which he excelled, like Communications, in which I have little experience. His scientific and technical legacy will live on for years and years to come.

His enthusiasm and love for life, his quick wit and humor, his easy style of conversation, his direct and fearless remarks, and his genuine interest in anything and everything, is what will live forever with those of us who knew him well. He was, and will continue to be, a source of tremendous inspiration as long as I live. ...

EARL DOWELL  
DUKE UNIVERSITY

... It was a special privilege to know and work with Bal. He was such a vital life force for so many years that it is hard to imagine he is no longer with us. But of course his legacy as an outstanding scholar will be with us forever. His impact has and will continue to be enormous not only on me, but on many others as well. ...

DEWEY HODGES  
GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

... I am sad that I won't get to attend the Service and see you. I trust that many of Bal's friends and admirers will be there to give tribute to his life and work. His work had a strong impact on many colleagues and students, and I have no doubt that this impact will continue for a long time to come. ...

MICHAEL ZAK  
LOS ANGELES

... I was so sorry to hear about Bal's death. I had the highest respect for him as an outstanding mathematician who did not give up his profession to the very end of his life. This is the most attractive quality of a mathematician. ...

RON MOHLER  
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

... I was greatly saddened when I heard of Bal's departure. ... Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the Service, but I will be there in spirit. As you know, Bal was very active in IFIP, as the principal organizer of TC7 and the COMCON Conferences on Communication and Control, as well as many others. In his early days he was especially active with Lucien Neustadt (USC and STL), a pioneer in Optimal Control and Editor of SIAM J. Control. They were very close friends until Neustadt's death. His international collaborations with Lyons in France, Marchuk in Russia, Ruberti in Italy, Malanowski in Poland, and Sakawa in Japan are noteworthy. Still, his recent contributions to Aeroelasticity and Aerodynamic Parameter Estimation is quite a breakthrough involving complicated multidisciplinary analysis.

You have my best wishes for the great memories of a great man. We share them.

GANGARAM LADDE  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

... With this note, we share the pain and suffering due to the passage of Professor Balakrishnan. Although he has left the material World, our thoughts and his guidance and knowledge will be with us. ... His contributions to the mathematical and engineering sciences would remain immortal and would play a significant role for the benefit of living species.

PETER POLYAKOV  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

... The acquaintance with Bal became an important event in my mathematical career. He was an example of a mathematician who combined deep knowledge of Mathematics with keen interest in applications, especially in Aerospace Engineering. From him I became aware of beautiful mathematical work, including his own, motivated by practical applications. I enjoyed participation in his workshops, to which he invited people with various scientific and engineering backgrounds. It was a unique learning experience for me. I will always remember and value my collaboration with Bal on interesting problems in his favorite field -- Aeroelasticity.

... In his long life Bal learned a lot, and he was always glad to share his knowledge with anybody he had contact with, especially with his students. I am sure that Bal will be fondly remembered by his students and colleagues, and there are very many of those.

STANISLAV VASIL'EV  
MOSCOW, RUSSIA

... We are very saddened by the passage away of Professor A.V. Balakrishnan. His deep and wide science will be with all of us. We share the pain of that event and will keep in our hearts the light memory of this great man and scientist.

JANIE WARDLE  
CAMBRIDGE SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHERS

... I met Professor Balakrishnan many times over the years and published chapters of his work in several books. It was a pleasure and a privilege to have had the opportunity to know and work with him and his memory will endure through his studies and achievements. ...

A. A. MARTYNYUK, ACADEMICIAN  
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, KIEV, UKRAINE

... It is a great loss for the world science. His books Aeroelasticity, The Continuum Theory published by Springer in 2012, and his Introduction to Random Processes in Engineering by Wiley in 1995, are very well known in our country and in the world. ...

SEENITH SIVA  
DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA

... Today is our final chance to say good-bye to you for the way you brightened our lives like a friend, a father, and a teacher, and a Mentor. We had many memorable moments with you ... you will be in our memory always. Only now when you are gone do we truly appreciate what we are now without and we want you to know that life without you will be different.

You guided us and your guidance will be in our memory always. You will be remembered through our conference series always. You were and will be always with us.

We think all scientific world will miss you as a prominent scientist and the outstanding personality. ...

ALBERTO DE SANTIS  
UNIVERSITY OF ROME

... I met Bal in Rome on December 1989 and then joined him at UCLA the very next year on a NATO grant. Since then a very deep friendship developed between me, Bal and his wife Sonya, Nhan Levan, and all the other close friends forming a very special "Ring of Faith". I will not talk about the greatness of the Scientist: people more eligible than me will -- I would like to talk about the Man. Bal was a very gentle person, with some inclination to teasing that sometimes would make somebody feel uneasy, yet always in a very nice and delicate manner. Bal loved tenderly the people he was fond of, but he would never tell as he was quite discreet; he deeply loved his wife, I wonder if he ever told her as men usually do not do it, yet I can tell he could not live without her. Bal really loved his children and grandchildren; his eyes lighted up when talking about them, their achievements in life.

On leaving U.S. and going back to Italy at the end of my grant he told me that they would miss me since I had brought joy into their life. Those words meant a lot to me since then; indeed I dare to say that my friendship with Bal and Sonya has become the friendship between them and my family. We often traveled together, often exchanged Birthday or Christmas cards, and called each other. Bal and Sonya were always there when I need it.

The friendship, love and care that we have shared for so many years gave me self-esteem and strength. I will treasure these in my heart forever.

IRENA LASIECKA  
UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

REMEMBERING A.V. BALAKRISHNAN: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

Throughout his distinguished career and remarkable life, A.V. Balakrishnan had the magic virtue to touch, influence, impact many a life, always for the better, of colleagues, friends, junior researchers.

Mine was one. I shall always be eternally grateful to him for that. He served as a constant inspiration for me. It all started in the late 70's when Bal graciously invited me to visit UCLA from Poland for a few years as a PostDoc. It changed my life.

Only a few years before I had received my PhD in Warsaw. Once at UCLA, I soon got involved in pursuing a research track that Bal had pioneered in his Functional Analysis book just published. Since then my professional life became entangled with Bal in many ways. It is difficult to overstate its influence as a researcher, educator, founder of both scientific journals [Applied Mathematics and Optimization, Springer] and scientific organizations [IFIP]. In exercising all of these activities Bal served also as International Ambassador bridging the US with Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Over the years, while keeping in close touch both personally and scientifically with Bal, I did not miss any of the several conferences, in various parts of the world, that were dedicated to, or inspired, by Bal's work. Even my present work -- and that of some of my recent PhD students -- is all embedded and motivated by Bal's solo work over many years in Continuum Mechanics. Here he was, once more, a pioneer.

Everyone who has been privileged to know Bal knows how gentle, generous, most cooperative and most helpful he always was; even when -- out of his genuine and sharp critical sense -- he was not in agreement with some events. Certainly for me, he was a bright lighthouse, both personally and scientifically. I shall always cherish and nurture my friendship and my admiration for him.

7

ROBERTO TRIGGIANI  
UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

BAL: A PERSONAL VOYAGE

Ciao Bal: I am looking at your picture posted in the UCLA Math website. It is a gorgeous picture, radiating human warmth through a content smile of gentle satisfaction, while holding a plaque of recognition, showing the Bal I have known, and I have been tied with, for over 40 years: always the same. The same class, the same demeanor, the same touch of grace, the same charisma that one cannot miss, in defiance of time, in defiance of aging ... What grieves me in the picture, is the inscription on top. It says: In Memoriam ...

No, Bal, you have not gone, for those like me, whose professional and private life you have so dearly and deeply touched, you are not gone ...

We have had too many years of shared memories, too many talks together, too many encounters under different skies ...

When I first met you at an informal workshop at Bruce Lee's cabin by a Minnesota lake, in the late 70's, with several big 'shots' like you. I was -- at first -- a bit circumspect, as a fresh PhD ... I had of course known of you and was fully taken by the resounding wave that was accompanying your name ..., yet I felt immediately well at ease in chatting with you about your favorite semi-groups.

You kindly invited me to visit UCLA for one semester and teach a course -- on semi-groups, of course, based on your Functional Analysis book just fresh of print. I of course accepted. That visit, a few months later, was going to have far lasting implications on my professional life, and my personal life. As time passed by, I became more and more involved with your lasting contributions, from your revolutionary PhD thesis on Fractional Powers of Operators all the way to your solo, mega treatise on Continuum Mechanics of a few years ago ...

By the way, I almost forgot: what I also very much appreciated in you all along these years, is your independence: of mind, of spirit, and of action, away from circles ... in stark contrast with the dominant modus Vivendi ...

Ciao Bal, we will continue our chats, I shall cherish your memory, and most gratefully continue to thank you for all that I owe you.

Have strength, Sonya, in this saddest moment you are not alone.

SONYA'S BRIEF NOTE IN RESPONSE  
TO PROFESSOR EARL DOWELL'S CONDOLENCE EMAIL

Dear Earl:

Thank you for your very special words about Bal -- indeed, he was a very special kind of man who was never banal, never ordinary, who looked at things from a different angle than many other people, and they heard him, and learnt, and moved forward.

Yes, it is the greatest sorrow of my life -- I love Bal so much, we were much more than husband and wife, we worked together preparing conferences and publishing books -- I was helping in his work in many different ways. That is why I want to take care of his "archive" -- I brought back all the books, manuscripts, publications, etc. from UCLA -- they are in our house now and I intend to put them in good order.

This will be my best gift to my dearest Bal -- to honor his legacy, as you mentioned in your letter to me.

GALWAY KINNELL

simple love poem, "Promissory Note"

If I die before you  
which is all but certain  
then in the moment  
before you will see me  
become someone dead  
in a transformation  
as quick as a shooting star's  
I will cross over into you  
and ask you to carry  
not only your own memories  
but mine too until you  
too lie down and erase us  
both together into oblivion.

Thank you very much for sharing this saddest day of my life with me.