



Avtar S. Oberai

January 19, 1933 - January 23, 2025

Avtar Singh Oberai was born January 19, 1933 in Chakwal, India, present day Pakistan. As a child, he taught himself to repair the family radio, an experience which inspired a lifelong love of electronics. In 1947 he lived through the Partition of India and Pakistan, migrating from the Punjab to northern India.

He received his undergraduate degree in engineering in Pune, before migrating to England to pursue a doctorate in Electrical Engineering at Imperial College, London. Upon his arrival, he was bestowed the nickname "Obi" by a roommate. This is the name he was known by throughout his life by his friends, colleagues, wife, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

As a student, while standing on the train platform in Victoria Station, London, he met the love of his life, Joan Mason. Both were headed to a student conference in Berlin. In his words, "it was the trip of a lifetime which turned into a life". The two were married in May of 1962 and celebrated at Kew Gardens. They went on to have three daughters, Corina, Veneeta and Surinda, and build a beautiful life.

He began his career at Pye in Cambridge, England, moving on to RCA in Montreal, Canada, before a storied career at IBM in East Fishkill, NY, Essex, VT, Austin, TX and Somers, NY. In 1967 in an IBM lab, Obi and a technician

laid a circuit on a one micron wafer and when it worked he said "Great! Now let's try half that size." That was the foundation of the semiconductor technology he and his team developed for IBM. When his daughter asked him why he was doing this work he told her that one day she would be able to hold a computer in the palm of her hand. Obi's hard work and vision led to many patents and defined him as a key contributor to the semiconductor industry. As a founding director of SEMATECH in Austin, TX, he created a strategy to rejuvenate the US semiconductor industry by encouraging collaboration between all the consortium's partner companies. His life and his work took him around the world; he lived in four countries, worked in countless more, and traveled whenever he could.

He valued family and education beyond all else. He lived his values so fully in his life that he left an indelible imprint on his descendants, 9 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. Obi left this life peacefully at the age of 92, on January 23rd, 2025, in Austin, Texas surrounded by his Lovely Wife and his three daughters. We have no doubt about the values that he wanted us to inherit; invest wisely, invest in learning, invest in life experiences, invest in yourself, and invest in love.

Tribute Wall

HA

“ Age may have changed him a bit but his loving and kind expression never changed !He was an amazing husband ,father, grandfather and the love of family was his guiding force.He was also the most loving son to our parents and brother to all of us ...we cherished our visits and conversations and will miss him greatly .
We were all so proud of his achievements and inventions that took him sometimes to faraway places. Today we celebrate the life and times of OBI
Our beloved brother and uncle to our children with a brilliant mind and so much love in his heart. We will all miss this exceptional human being !

Harender Surinder Arora - February 01, 2025 at 07:14 PM

EC

Some people one would have liked to meet. E.C.

Edith Curry - February 05, 2025 at 11:43 AM

JK

“ Avatar Singh Oberai, known as "Obi" amongst his friends and colleagues, was a special human being. We in the family lovingly called him "Tariji". He was my SIL Surinder's brother, and so a brother to me...and more as a mentor and inspiration. His obituary written by his grandchildren is in the attached. He is the one that inspired me to join IBM, where I spent and grew as a professional for 32 years. So as they say...we will always have IBM! I still remember his mentoring words to me when I became a first line manager there...he said, "you are ready to be a manager when you can give credit and take the blame". Those words have been, and will continue to inspire me, even now in my leadership roles at the non-profits I serve pro bono. Tariji, I want to be like you when I grow up! 😊 May you RIP 🙏 and keep guiding us as our guardian angel. Thank you for BEING YOU. You will live on in our hearts and minds
❤️ 👤 😇

J. Nami Kaur - February 01, 2025 at 12:52 PM