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My Best Friend Aatik Patel

by Katie M. Wesson-Sides, Program Coordinator II, UAB Neuroinflammation, Pain & Fatigue Lab

Aatik D. Patel and his family moved to the United States when he was a teenager. After graduating from Homewood High School and serving in the United States Marine Corps, he enrolled at UAB. He was a senior at UAB with a major in history and a minor in computer science when he died tragically in a car accident near his Moody home. Aatik was typically quiet, but over time, we all got to know the funny, well-spoken young man he was. He was always interested in a good discussion about any type of history. He would, however, make it clear that nothing was more enjoyable than German or military history. He dreamed of traveling and teaching at the high school and, one day, the college level as well. He enjoyed trying new things, especially foods. He was a beloved son, brother and friend. The shockwaves of losing such a promising, talented man so young continue to devastate those who knew him, but none feel the loss as sharply as his family.

His parents, Suri and Divyesh Patel, wrote this letter to their beloved son:

Beloved Aatik,

On April 5, 1991, you came into our life with lots of love, happiness and pride. Since childhood, you were very protective of those you loved. You grew not only as our son, but as our best friend. You cared for your younger brother as a father, explaining he deserved the best. You loved without condition. You gave without reason. You cared without expectation.

On August 31, we experienced the devastating heartache of losing you. We are still learning to deal with the overwhelming pain. The happiness that you brought into our life has ended, but our pride will always remain. We will forever be your proud parents.

Aatik's Paper, *Rudolf Höss: Villain, Scapegoat or Victim of Circumstance*, is included in this issue of the *Vulcan Historical Review*.