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*Dr. Waseem Malick in Switzerland.*

## **Remembering A Mensch— Dr. Waseem A. Malick**

*In Memoriam by C. Naseer Ahmad*

Dr. Waseem A. Malick, who spent over 30 years working for Swiss Pharmaceutical giant Hoffman-La Roche, was a mensch. He passed away in December 2022 in New Jersey. On February 5, 2023, about 150 of his friends, colleagues and family members gathered to remember him. Being by the side of Dr. Malick’s wife and his children, his Roche colleagues were a source of comfort for the family.

Mensch is “someone to admire and emulate, someone of noble character,” according to the American humorist Leo Rosten. This is exactly how many of Dr. Malick’s friends and family members remember him not only as a scientist par excellence but a truly generous spirit who inspired his colleagues to excel.

Dr. Malick's older brother, said the following about him: "Waseem had the qualities and demeanor of our parents that included: caring, selflessness, calmness, and decency. I used to see both my parents in him in his everyday life."

Dr. Malick's father was in the government in the Punjab province, first in India and then in Pakistan after the partition of India in 1947. He was a distinguished officer in administering governmental functions in service of the people at all levels, which included besides being an administrator a magistrate too in performing judicial duties.

His mother was a tireless soul in performing voluntary service for the betterment of the poor and deprived. She got actively involved in improving the lives of those who were handicapped in any way and led an effort of establishing a center for rehabilitation of the disabled in Lahore, Pakistan. She approached the President of World Rehabilitation Fund, resulting in obtaining international support for the center in Pakistan.

Dr. Malick's interest in formulation of medicine was from his childhood. He would fill up small bottles with colored water and line them up. When asked that what he was doing, he answered that these were perfumes called "romance" that he would give to others. This funny anecdote is perhaps a pre-cursor of what was to come in the future.

Along with his colleagues, Dr. Malick developed a number of medicines which play a critical role in fighting disease and in some cases extending life. Among such medicines is Zelboraf which received the Prix Galien Award in 2013 for best medicine. According to a Reuters report in June 2011, this medicine improved the survival rate by 63% in patients with advanced melanoma.

In fact, this report mentioned Dr. Paul Chapman of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York as the study's lead investigator who called the results an "unprecedented level of difference" for patients with advanced melanoma, who typically survive just eight months on current treatments.

Listed below is a summary of some of the other medicines that Dr. Malick helped develop along with his team during his illustrious career at Hoffman-La Roche:

- Xeloda<sup>(R)</sup> for oncology indications such as metastatic colorectal carcinoma and breast cancer
- Pegasys<sup>(R)</sup> and Roferon<sup>(R)</sup> for virology indications such as Hepatitis C
- Zenapax<sup>(R)</sup> for the prophylaxis of acute organ rejection in de novo allogenic renal transplantation
- Fortovase<sup>(R)</sup> for the treatment of HIV-1 infected adult patients.
- Fuzeon<sup>(R)</sup> is indicated in combination with other antiretroviral medicinal products for the treatment of HIV-1-infected patients.
- Versed<sup>(R)</sup> for sedation before and during diagnostic or therapeutic procedures with or without local anaesthesia.
- Accutane<sup>(R)</sup> to treat severe forms of acne (such as nodular or conglobate acne or acne at risk of permanent scarring) resistant to adequate courses of standard therapy with systemic antibacterials and topical therapy.
- Klonopin<sup>(R)</sup> to treat acute management of epilepsy and acute treatment of non-convulsive status epilepticus (complex partial seizures or absence seizures)

It is natural for family members to have affection for loved ones and miss dearly someone who is no longer with them. In modern life, professional relationships become an extension of the familial bonds. Not only affectionate bonds are extended but also the loss of someone gets shared—sometimes just as much as with one's own

family. So, in this context, it is relevant to share how Dr. Malick's friends and colleagues remembered him:

“It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of passing of Dr. Waseem Malick. Waseem was a dear friend, a cherished mentor, and an esteemed colleague. Over the dedicated service of 32 years at Hoffmann-La Roche as Senior Vice President of Pharmaceutical and Analytical Research and Development (PARAD), he touched the lives of many people with his kindness, thoughtfulness, and caring nature both directly and indirectly. While leading a major global function for a big pharmaceutical company, he seamlessly bridged the two continents covering Switzerland to California while passing through New York/New Jersey. With his leadership ability he helped create one of the best research groups in the industry that helped develop many complex and innovative technologies to bring the novel drugs to patients in need. The news of his passing was felt all over the globe but more profoundly by his research teams with whom he stayed in touch even after his retirement.”

During his tenure at Roche, he created and led a world-class global R&D teams recognized for innovative drug products. His team successfully developed, registered, and supported launch of several innovative medicines. He and his team led technical development from discovery phase (Clinical Lead Optimization) to late stage (NDA). The success of these products is true testament of Dr. Malick's passion for science and care for the scientists. He was instrumental in not only recruiting the best talent in the industry but also bringing them together to work as a team, providing them the supportive environment and pushing the boundary ever so gently by inspiring them and infusing confidence and optimism while remaining vigilant about the nature of science. His unique mix of science, kindness, and leadership made him an effective leader who was respected across the globe. With over 150 publications, numer-

ous presentations, patents, and a book he helped advance the field of Pharmaceuticals to new heights. In recognition of his professional excellence and sustained contributions to the pharmaceutical science, he was an invited speaker at major scientific meetings. His contributions were recognized by numerous awards that he received including the Fellow by American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientist, American Association of Indian Pharmaceutical Scientists.

Dr. Malick was recognized for his exceptional management and leading scientific personnel in multiple global centers, strategic planning, multimillion dollar investments, operating & capital budgets. During his tenure at Roche, he was leading the global formulation function with teams in Switzerland, America, Germany, China, and Japan. In addition, he served on technical committees with review and oversight responsibilities of all internal as well as licensed-in projects ensuring technical success. Dr. Malick also served on Board of Directors of non-profit organizations, Scientific Advisory Board of universities, non-profit organizations and held academic appointments. Most notably he served on the Research & Development Council of New Jersey, a nonprofit organization which advocates for progress in various research and development sectors in the state of New Jersey. Dr. Malick was also a great advocate for STEM education and served as advisor and speaker to a number of organizations.

He supported the development of science and the scientists across the globe. He treated each colleague with utmost dignity and respect. He was always there to celebrate and cherish the successes and support and encourage when something's don't go right. Several of his colleagues across the globe shared their personal memories during a special Memorial Service held in his honor by his friends and family. Some of the quotes from the Memorial Service transcribed below shows how he touched the lives of many colleagues in his professional life.



*Dr. Waseem Malick in with colleagues in Basel, Switzerland.*

- Dr. Ursula Redekar, Head of Technical Research and Development, Roche Basel, “Waseem was an extraordinary colleague and friend who will be missed dearly. I am grateful though for all the thoughts, ideas and memories Waseem gave and the time I had working with him, learning from him, and smiling together.
- Dr. Navnit Shah, Group Head Formulation Development, Nutley, N.J., working under his leadership for last 32 years was a lot of excitement and fun. He brought all the scientists together in developing complex differentiated products to save many lives. Fond memories of our time at Roche will stay with us forever. He was a pharmaceutical giant and his legacy will stay forever.
- Dr. Rainer Alex, Head of Formulation Development, Roche Basel, Worked with Waseem for over 20 years on many projects, initiatives, and transitions. Waseem was open to new ideas, and valued others’ opinions. Together we experienced and managed numerous challenges but it was through his impressive personality, optimism, and dedication that we found the best solution. He was a true and inspiring leader.

- Dr. Marcel Schmidt, Head of Formulation Development, Roche Basel His contributions to the pharmaceutical industry through his work at Roche in Basel and Nutley will always be remembered and unforgotten. It was my honor to work with such a wonderful person. He will forever be in my heart.”
- Dr. Rob Tudor, Head of Nonclinical Development, Roche Nutley, Waseem was kind, honorable man, who lived his life with positive intent, with never a bad word about anyone. I thank him for his council, unwavering support and for making us all better people. My thoughts are with his family and friends; I hope, like me, shared memories will bring some peace at this sad time and make us smile in the future.”
- Dr. Tom Alfredson, Head of Pharmaceutical R&D, Roche Palo Alto, Waseem was a great human being and a very thoughtful collaborator, mentor and scientist who will always be warmly remembered by the many whose lives he touched. Thank you, Waseem, for your kindness, help and valuable scientific insights over the years we worked together at Roche! You will always be in our prayers.”
- Dr. Hitesh Chokshi, Head of Analytical Research and Development at Roche Nutley, Waseem was my role model, teacher, mentor, best friend, and elder brother. He was a great scientist and an honorable leader exemplifying humility, empathy, and benevolence. His calm and caring aura made everyone valuable and appreciated. Waseem made an enormously positive impact on my life and on the lives of my parents, kids, and wife.

We believe his legacy will continue for many generations in the form of the products that improved the lives of many patients and their families worldwide and the science he developed will lead the way for future scientists.”



Scientists like Dr. Malick study pharmacology to embark on a path to use scientific methods to develop medicines that bring relief from disease for fellow human beings. Chemistry plays an important role and Theodore William Richards, who was the first American scientist to win the Nobel Prize in Chemistry wrote in the Atlantic in 1909: “The particular branch of science called chemistry ... holds the key which alone can unlock the gate to really fundamental knowledge of the hidden causes of health and disease.”

An understanding of chemical bonds is required to advance in scientific research, whether in a laboratory—in Basel, Switzerland or Nutley, New Jersey—or in the library.

Just as chemistry and chemical bonds are important for scientific discovery, the chemistry between scientists as people is just as important for scientific research and development to succeed. So, the words with which his friends remember Dr. Malick are a testament of the chemistry in the work culture at Hoffman-La Roche as a senior executive, great leader, visionary scientist, and mentor. These precious words are exemplars of strong covalent bonds between scientists at the atomic level.

In addition to his professional ties with his Swiss colleagues in Hoffman-La Roche facilities and conference rooms in Basel, Dr. Malick had strong familial connections to Switzerland. His maternal grandfather Chaudhry M. Aslam served as Pakistan’s representative in the International Labor Organization, a United Nations agency based in Geneva Switzerland. “He knew Switzerland like the lines on the palm of his hand. He used to bring Swiss watches and chocolates for us; we as grandchildren used to eagerly wait for his trip back from Switzerland. I always used to tell my dear Waseem that he has taken the place of our *Nana* (Urdu word for maternal grandfather), having links with Switzerland. Our *Nana*’s link to Geneva and Waseem’s to Basel,” remembers Dr. Malick’s older brother.

In summary, Dr. Malick’s professional colleagues, in Switzerland as well as the U.S., will greatly miss him for everything but



*Dr. Waseem Malick Memorial Picture.*

most importantly for his kindness and caring nature. He was a real Mensch.

Our condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.