

We were shocked and so desperately sorry to hear the news of Nilay's death and we send our most sincere condolences to his parents and family. I had so much time for Nilay - to the extent that he warranted a complete half chapter in my book 'Royal Russell School 1980-1996 - From Court-Martial to Peerage' and I can think of no better way of remembering him than to quote almost verbatim that section. I apologise to those who have already read it but hope they may not mind having their memories refreshed.

Nilay Patel was a day pupil, very bright, very intelligent and very talented. It was not a surprise to learn towards the end of the summer holiday 1990 that he had passed nine 'O'levels all at grade A.

Dr Patel came to see me to let me know that after much consideration the family had decided that Nilay would complete his sixth form education at Dulwich College. He had applied and unsurprisingly had been accepted with alacrity. I attempted, probably very unsuccessfully, to hide my acute disappointment and in the light of the decision taken made little or no effort to dissuade him, merely wishing Nilay luck and saying that if he should change his mind we would be only too delighted to have him back.

The September Term had been under way for about ten days when Dr Patel telephoned for an appointment to come and see me. It turned out that Nilay was not enjoying his new environment and would I be willing to allow him to join our sixth form. It was wonderful news and I felt able to unburden myself with all the reasons why I had felt from the word go that Nilay should stay with us. He was an established figure at Royal Russell, a prominent member of school hockey and cricket teams, certain to be an important member of the sixth form and surrounded by a group of good friends. I also felt confident that we could enable him to achieve first class 'A' level results and gain entrance to university.

It transpired that Nilay had quickly realised in joining such a large and established sixth form - at least twice the size of ours - that he as a newcomer would be very much starting from scratch, getting to know those who would teach him, making new friends and proving that he was worthy of consideration to represent the new school at games. None of this is any criticism whatever of Dulwich but we welcomed him back with open arms.

Nilay made a superb contribution to sixth form life. He captained both 1<sup>st</sup> XI hockey and cricket teams, participated in MUN conferences, read the Prayer for Peace at the Commonwealth Day Observance in Westminster Abbey and was appointed Head Prefect in his final year. At his final assembly he was awarded the Lord Hollenden Prize for service to the school and when the 'A' level results came out we were delighted to find three A grades which earned him the school prize for 'Highest 'A' Levels in Science Subjects' and a place at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. This was the culmination of a highly successful sixth form career.

In the light of the circumstances of Nilay's arrival in the sixth form it was a tremendous relief to feel that Royal Russell had proved the point that it was getting somewhere, and I am quite sure that the episode did our reputation a great deal of good in the local area.

Thank you Nilay and God Bless.

Ron and Shirley Balaam