

Mir S. Mulla, PhD

February 15, 1925 – January 29, 2023

Dr. Mir Subhan Mulla passed away peacefully at home January 29, 2023 at age 97. Born February 15, 1925 (his chosen birthday) in Zangawat, Afghanistan to a family of 12 brothers and 4 sisters, Mir came on scholarship to Cornell University for his undergraduate degree in Entomology and Parasitology. During graduate studies at UC Berkeley, he met Lelia (Lee) Patterson at the International House. They married in August 1954 and moved to Riverside two years later when Mir accepted a position establishing a medical entomology department at University of California Riverside. Their children (David, Shireen, Dean and Janet) fondly remember summer vacations collecting insects, learning to play tennis, chess, hearts, gardening and many other activities with their father. Mir and Lee also helped Mir's brothers and sisters immigrate to the U.S. and settle into their own homes in California.

In his 50 year career as a medical entomologist, Dr. Mulla pioneered insect control methods throughout Southern California and the world. Mir's techniques for eye gnat and mosquito control improved people's health worldwide. He was a prolific scientist who authored more than 500 scientific publications. He loved field work and was a demanding editor, guiding over 30 graduate students. Mir led World Health Organization efforts to help developing countries control vector-borne diseases, including malaria. He traveled to many countries in this endeavor. Dr. Mulla's honors include election as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a Fellow of the Entomologic Society of America.

Mir served as a leader in the Riverside Muslim community. He and Lelia founded the Islamic Society of Riverside and Orange Counties and played a key role in building the Islamic Center of Riverside, the first mosque in the Inland Empire. His philanthropic work included supporting the local Muslim community, donating land to Riverside County Parks to preserve public access to Sugarloaf Mountain for generations and establishing scholarships with the University of California Riverside in the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences.

Mir is preceded in death by Lelia Mulla, his wife of 64 years. Together they raised their children David (Nahid), Shireen Mooers (Bruce), Dean (Marta) and Janet. He is also survived by grandchildren David, Brian and Kevin Mooers, Adriana and Sumaya Mulla-Carrillo, grandchildren Penelope, Henry and Amelia and his many brothers and sisters. The family is grateful for all the visits and care from many of his relatives and the excellent care Mir received at home in his final years from his team of caregivers where he was able to enjoy his fruit trees and mountain views until his last days.

He will be greatly missed by his loving and devoted family, friends and colleagues.

A Muslim funeral prayer (Janazah) will be held Friday February 3rd after the 1:00pm Jum'a prayer at Islamic Center of Riverside (1038 W Linden St, Riverside). The public memorial service will be held Saturday, February 4th at 11:00am at the Norco Family Funeral Home (2645 Hammer Ave, Norco) followed by burial at 1:20pm Saturday at Pierce Brothers Crestlawn Mortuary (11500 Arlington Ave, Riverside).

Donations in Mir's memory can be made to the "Dr. Mir S. Mulla and Lelia L. Mulla Endowed Scholarship Fund" (UC Riverside Foundation, <https://myadv.ucr.edu/> and search for "Mulla") or the Islamic Center of Riverside (<https://www.islamiccenterofriverside.net/donate>).

Funeral home contact: Norco Family Funeral Home, 2645 Hammer Ave, Norco (951) 898-1013