

**In memory of Bibhuti (Don) Ranjan DasGupta
May 3, 1934–June 1, 2015**



Bibhuti (Don) Ranjan DasGupta died peacefully at home in Madison on June 1, 2015. Don was born May 3, 1934 in Kolkata, India. He attended Banaras Hindu University, India where he earned a BSc in Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics in 1954 and a second BSc in Agriculture in 1957. Don then went to Oklahoma State University and earned a MS degree in Biochemistry in 1960. He received his PhD in Microbiology and Biochemistry from Bryn Mawr College in 1970. Don married his wife Vijoya in 1963 and they shared a lifelong love of travel, nature, and music.

After his MS degree, Don took a Research Chemist position at the R.T. French Company in Rochester, NY for two years. He then worked as a Research Associate at the Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, PA for seven years. Following completion of his PhD in 1970, Don joined the Food Research Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a Project Research Associate. He was promoted to Associate Scientist in 1978 and Senior Scientist in 1984. Don established a highly productive and successful research program studying the mechanism of action and structure-function relationship of the botulinum neurotoxin until his retirement in 1998. He made pivotal and pioneering discoveries and was recognised internationally as an authority in the field. Botulinum neurotoxin is the most toxic naturally occurring substance. However, its paralytic property has led to its use as a valuable tool in treating various neuromuscular disorders and in understanding the mechanism of release of neurotransmitters. Don's research therefore has significant impact on multiple fronts that can touch the lives of many people.

[Editor's Note: Among the seminal contributions of Dr. B.R. DasGupta was the first separation of pure botulinum neurotoxin from the crystalline material consisting of the toxin and its associated hemagglutinin and other proteins (DasGupta et al., 1966; DasGupta and Boroff, 1967), first report of zinc motif and zinc-endopeptidase activities of botulinum and tetanus neurotoxins (Schiavo et al., 1992a, 1992b), and first crystal structure of a botulinum neurotoxin (Lacy et al., 1998). He had extensive research collaborations throughout the world, and thus facilitated many important discoveries in the field].

During Don's distinguished career, he published over 120 research manuscripts in highly respected peer-reviewed journals and 10 review articles and book chapters. He had an enviable research funding record. From 1982 until he retired, he was able to secure uninterrupted research funding from the National Institutes of Health. At one point, Don had three concurrent NIH grants, one of which was a highly prestigious Javits Neuroscience Investigator award that provided funding for seven years. In addition, he secured research contracts from the US Army Medical Research and Development Command as well as grants from the DOD-University Instrumentation Program.

Don loved nature, especially mountains. He was an avid traveler and enjoyed traveling by train, ship, in his van and in his camper. In 1983, he fulfilled a life-long dream by hiking the classic 200 mile trek to Mount Everest Base Camp in Nepal. He drove to Alaska twice, went on safari in Africa, travelled to Churchill, Ontario by train to view the polar bears, visited Australia, South America and Antarctica, and took annual summer trips to the western USA and Canadian National Parks with family and friends to enjoy his beloved mountains.

Don was an accomplished still photographer and studied movie making, especially appreciating films by Stanley Kubrick, Satyajit Ray, and Akira Kurosawa. He had a passion for spicy food, dark chocolate, western classical and Bengali classical vocal music as well as the game of cricket. He loved to play badminton and spent many lunch hours at the Natatorium challenging fellow players in this fast-paced game.

Don was meticulous by nature, loved a good laugh, and had a deep love for and empathy with animals. One way he demonstrated this was by establishing an endowment at the International Crane Foundation in his parents' names. Don was a compassionate and caring person and was very generous with his time and counsel. He was the first to step forward to help someone in need.

Don is survived by his wife of 51 years, Vijoya; his sister, Subhra Chowdhury; his brother, Dipankar DasGupta (Krishna); his nephew, Debashis (Laurie) and grandnephew, Ethan; his niece, Nandini (Unmil); as well as many loving friends. He was preceded in death by his parents; his brother, Ashok; and his brother-in-law, K.C. Chowdhury. Don and his research touched many lives professionally and personally. Behind his serious and sometime intense facade was a warm and caring person full of wisdom, curiosity, wit, and humor. He will be missed.

Mary Evenson, Physician Assistant, friend and former colleague

Barbara Cochrane, Publications Assistant Emerita

Amy Wong, Professor Emerita, Food Research Institute, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706

Jeffrey Abresch, family friend, Madison, WI

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