

OBITUARY

DR. MIR SUBHAN MULLA
FEBRUARY 15, 1925–JANUARY 29, 2023



Fig. 1. Dr. Mulla in the early days of his career.

Dr. Mir S. Mulla was born on February 15, 1925, in the village of Zangawat, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. He passed away peacefully on January 29, 2023, at the age of 97; he was laid to rest on February 4, 2023, in Riverside, California.

Dr. Mulla came to the United States in 1948 via New York on a scholarship to Cornell University. After obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Entomology/Parasitology in 1952, he moved on to the University of California at Berkeley for his graduate studies. He earned his Ph.D. in Entomology from UC Berkeley in 1956, and he joined the Entomology Department at the University of California at Riverside (UCR) in 1956. He first embarked on tackling the eye gnat problem in the



Fig. 2. Dr. Mulla with conference dedication award plaque with Major Dhillon (R) and Lal Mian (L), 2018.



Fig. 3. Dr. Mulla presents a check to SOVE executive director Michelle Brown for the Dr. Mulla Memorial Lecture Fund in the presence of Dr. Shireen Mulla-Mooers and Lal Mian, February 11, 2023.

Coachella Valley of Riverside County. He then expanded his research to desert mosquitoes at a field station he established in Thermal, where his graduate students carried out their studies on local mosquito species. As a faculty member at UCR, Dr. Mulla moved up the ladder to become a distinguished professor; he also served as the division head of



Fig. 4. Dr. Mulla in Fall 2007 at Taylor’s Falls, St. Croix, MN.



Fig. 5. Dr. Mulla with a group of students at the conference in 2018.

Economic Entomology. During his 50 years of service at UCR (1956–2006), he authored over 500 scientific publications; he also advised 30 graduates, including 25 Ph.D. students. His research lab not only provided research opportunities for students, but it also attracted post-doctoral fellows and other visiting scientists from abroad for training.

Dr. Mulla was not only a leading medical entomologist nationally, but also an acclaimed international scholar recognized for his expertise in vector-borne disease control. He headed collaborative research projects on mosquitoes in Thailand and house dust mites in Columbia. Moreover, he acted as a consultant and science advisor to the United States Agency for International Development, United Na-



Fig. 6. Dr. Mulla on his 93rd birthday at Northwest Mosquito and Vector Control District, February 15, 2018.

tions Development Program, and World Health Organization. Serving on expert committees on pesticides and disease vector control, he led symposia and other training sessions on different topics in medical entomology in many countries, including Brazil, China, Columbia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Taiwan, and Thailand.

Dr. Mulla received many awards and significant peer recognition for his professional work including election as Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Fellow of the Entomological Society of America. He received the American Mosquito Control Association Presidential Medal of Honor and Memorial Lecturer Award. The Society for Vector Ecology awarded him the Distinguished Achievement Award and first-ever Lifetime Achievement Award. Mir served as Editor of the SOVE Newsletter and Journal of Vector Ecology Editorial Board Chair. The SOVE Annual Conference (2018) was dedicated to Dr. Mulla and the 8th International Congress of SOVE (2022) featured the first Dr. Mir S. Mulla Memorial Lecture with an honorary keynote address.

Dr. Mulla's love and affection for students went way beyond the classroom. He not only established the "Dr. Mir S. Mulla and Leila L. Mulla Endowed Scholarship Fund" supporting undergraduate and graduate students in the College of Natural and

Agricultural Sciences (UC Riverside Foundation), but he also graciously contributed to SOVE to establish the Dr. Mir S. Mulla Memorial Lecture Fund. Donations in Mir's memory can be made to the "Dr. Mir S. Mulla and Leila L. Mulla Endowed Scholarship Fund" (UC Riverside Foundation <https://myadv.ucr.edu/> and search for "Mulla") or to SOVE for the "Dr. Mir S. Mulla Memorial Lecture Fund".

Besides his professional engagements, Dr. Mulla also contributed time and resources to the development of the Islamic Society of Riverside and the building of the Islamic Center of Riverside. The mosque serves hundreds of students, faculty, community members and their families near the UC Riverside campus.

On a family level, Dr. Mulla was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Lelia in 2019. He is survived by their children, David, Shireen, Dean, Janet, and five grandchildren. While he is not physically with us, his legacy will continue to be felt from UC Riverside to the community and beyond!

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