



Waleed Shaalan

Waleed Shaalan, age 32, came to Virginia Tech in August 2006 as an international doctoral student in engineering. Originally from Zagazig, Egypt, he had no family members in the United States, yet he quickly became an essential member of the Blacksburg Muslim community.

Among those mourning his death are his two roommates, Fahad Pasha and Irfan Waseem, who saw him as a loving older brother, cook, and academic and spiritual mentor.

Waleed began his Ph.D. program in Egypt, but when Virginia Tech offered him an assistantship, he decided to continue his studies in Blacksburg. Following in the footsteps of his father, Waleed was a dedicated and passionate student of civil engineering.

Though he had a hectic schedule from juggling classes, research, and teaching-assistantship responsibilities, he always made time for the people around

him. He was known for his broad smile and the friendly wave with which he greeted everyone.

“Waleed was the simplest and nicest guy I ever knew. We would be studying for our exams and he would go buy a cake and make tea for us,” says Pasha.

Pasha was the last person to have spoken to Waleed. “He was studying for an exam the morning of the incident. It was about 4 a.m. when I last saw and spoke to him. We were talking about how amazing it would be when he brought his wife and son to Tech at the end of the summer. I could never have imagined that in six hours he’d be gone forever.”

Waleed Shaalan left behind Amira, his wife of 3 years, and his one-year-old son, Khaled.



Leslie Geraldine Sherman

Leslie Geraldine Sherman, a junior in the Virginia Tech Honors Program majoring in history and international relations, was an inspiring young woman who could “do it all” and excel.

Leslie loved photography, visiting historical sites and museums—particularly those relating to early American History—reading, running, and traveling throughout the United States (especially to Seattle) and around the world. She made trips to Argentina and Ecuador that she funded herself and had recently made trips with her mother to Jamaica and London. Her next area of study was to be Russia, where she was scheduled to spend the first summer semester in a six-week program.

In addition to superior academic achievements, Leslie felt a driving need to help those who were less fortunate, often volunteering her personal time and giving of herself. Since childhood, she had donated half of what she had to people in need. She was a student volunteer at a retirement home, a Special Olympics coach at West Potomac High School, a tutor, cherished daughter, devoted older sister, beloved granddaughter, admired cousin, loyal friend, and trusted master of her dog, Winnie.

Last fall, Leslie ran the Marine Corps Marathon in four hours and two minutes and was looking forward to running future marathons. She worked as a student supervisor in Virginia Tech’s West End Market.

Leslie wanted to continue serving the less fortunate by joining the Peace Corps upon graduation. She had then hoped to pursue a career with the U.S. Department of State.

She had immeasurable integrity, courage, and strength, and she was a gift to all who knew her.

