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Fall 2016, A Very Successful Journey: International Student Alumnus Manwar Hossain

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UNH Global

A Very Successful Journey: International Student Alumnus Manwar Hossain

Tuesday, October 25, 2016

Manwar Hossain, UNH class of 1993, first arrived at UNH as an undergraduate student in the winter of 1990. Despite the freezing temperatures and the blanket of snow covering campus, Manwar remembers feeling as if “America had reached out and given me a warm hug.” Upon his arrival to campus, he moved into Smith



Hall, which was, at the time, Manwar speaking at the SteelMint World Steel Conference in China the international residence hall on campus, known for its welcoming and diverse multicultural environment. As a young international student, Manwar began his courses in the Whittemore School of Business and Economics, now Peter T. Paul College, pursuing a degree in Business Administration that would help him rise to the top of one of the oldest and largest industrial conglomerates in Bangladesh.

Although this was Manwar’s first time living on a college campus in the U.S., his reception at UNH made him feel immediately comfortable. Before UNH, he attended Udaya School in Dhaka, Bangladesh until the 6th grade, then transferred to St. Paul’s boarding school in Darjeeling, India. “Most of my academic experience was spent at small institutions with a small number of students, small class sizes, and an intimate relationship with teachers and fellow students. At UNH, I felt the familiar sense of closeness that I had during my time as a student [in Bangladesh].” Acknowledging

that the transition into life in a new country isn't always an easy one, Manwar notes, "the importance of feeling at home in a foreign country cannot be stressed enough, and I am so lucky to have the same [experiences] at UNH."



Manwar (second from l.) and his family on vacation in Europe

As an international student and a resident of Smith Hall, Manwar was exposed to a breadth of other cultures. More importantly, he notes, "I was privy, first hand, to the American mindset, culture, and families." He found similarities in the family-centric lifestyles of his own homeland with those of his American roommates. Manwar recalls that the mother of his roommate's girlfriend wouldn't allow him to stay on campus alone during Thanksgiving. He describes the parents of his other friends as "equally caring and loving," and that "the warmth of UNH friends and family elevated

[his] U.S. experience further." Unbeknownst to him at the time, Manwar would use these experiences to shape his philanthropic outlook in a thriving industry, actively working to improve the lives of his workers and community.

Manwar is proud to call himself a graduate of the Whittemore School of Business and Economics (WSBE). "Academically, WSBE prepared me for a career in an entrepreneur's role," he explains. His courses at UNH allowed him to grow from a shy young man into a seasoned leader of industry, ready to lead his family's 180 year old business, Anwar Group of Industries. In particular, Manwar says, "the group discussions where creative problem solving was encouraged helped me find the voice with which I lead my organization. Taking a hands-on approach has never let me or my businesses down."

Anwar Group of Industries (AGI) is the oldest and one of the largest conglomerates in Bangladesh, employing 14,000 people. With 18 subsidiaries, AGI is "continually tending to the growth of the local economy through its service and products," Manwar explains. While at the helm of his family's company, he has traveled to 42 countries, with corporate trade relations in over 50 countries worldwide, and has represented Bangladesh as a business leader across the globe. "Although none of these [successes] would have been possible without our 14,000 employees, my father, and my two

younger brothers,” Manwar says, “I strongly believe that my education and my alma mater have certainly had an impact on my ability to use these opportunities for personal and organizational growth.” Manwar is, to date, the youngest Vice-Chairman of any Bangladeshi bank, having served in that capacity at City Bank, an AGI subsidiary, at the age of 28.



Manwar (l.) with the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Shiekh Hasin

Adding to the list of achievements on Manwar’s résumé, he is also the Director of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce, former Chairman of Bangladesh Finance and Investment Company Ltd., Director of Modhumoti Bank Ltd., as well as Governor of International Crysolite Association (ICA). Manwar is humble despite his successes, stating, “in retrospect, these achievements matter less to me compared to what I have been able to build at home – my wife Neela and I have raised two sons and a beautiful daughter.” Following in their father’s footsteps, Manwar’s sons are attending university as international students. Furkaan, his eldest, is enrolled at the University of British Columbia in Canada, and his younger son, Waez, is attending college at Northeastern in Boston. His daughter, Fateema, is enrolled in the third grade in Dhaka.

Manwar is also proud of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives conducted by Anwar Group of Industries, many of which he has personally overseen, including nutrition and medical assistance programs for pre-natal and pregnant women in his home locality of Lalbagh, Dhaka. AGI is also focusing on the value of education by providing meals and clothing to underprivileged school children. “I am a strong believer in education,” Manwar explains, “and a big part of that was instilled in me at UNH. I work hard to ensure education for the children of workers so that they never have to come back to the job market as laborers.” Instead, Manwar is looking to build a workforce of educated employees who will fill the roles of managers, engineers, and doctors. In addition to their social initiatives, AGI maintains a global standard for recycling practices, another important aspect of conservation that was imparted to Manwar during his time at UNH. AGI’s current project is establishing a foundation to create awareness for care of dementia patients.

Twenty-two years since his first arrival on campus, Manwar returned to UNH in 2015. Although Smith Hall is no longer the international dorm, it remains as warm and welcoming as he remembers in its current capacity as the campus visitor center. As he strolled across campus, Manwar reflected upon the many faculty who inspired him, such as Mr. Peter Royce, now a lecturer emeritus. Among the familiar faces Manwar remembered, he sought out Cari Moorhead, his advisor, who is now the Interim Dean of the Graduate School. Dean Moorhead still made time to advise Manwar on the schooling of his children. “The University of New Hampshire gave me some great opportunities to learn from an amazing faculty, placed me in a rich and diverse environment, and introduced me to a group of lifelong friends, all of whom are successful in their own ways,” Manwar reflects. “I am much humbled by the opportunity the university has given me to share my story. I hope future international students will have the same opportunities, and I wish them all the best in their university careers.”

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