With a one-way ticket in hand, 18-year-old Kash Kapadia '99 boarded a plane in Mumbai (Bombay), India enroute to live out his dream of attending college in the U.S. at the University of New Hampshire. When he first walked into Kingsbury Hall, he never imagined he'd one day be honored as one of its most successful alumni.

Three decades later, that notion has become a reality for a second time as Kapadia has been recognized with the 2024 College of Engineering and Physical Sciences Distinguished Alumni Award for his successful career in technology innovation and building businesses. In 2021, Kapadia was also elected to the UNH Entrepreneur Hall of Fame.

“I am simply grateful that amongst all its accomplished alumni, UNH has elected to honor me in this way,” says Kapadia, a graduate of the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering and current President, CEO and Board Chair of Kohler Ventures.

As the President and CEO of Kohler Ventures, Kapadia builds news businesses that empower consumers to lead healthier lives through the integration of leading-edge technology, science, and design. Previously, he held leadership positions at Anchor Health, Stanford Health Care, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, McKinsey & Company, and Sun Microsystems. He also received his MBA from Columbia and advises leading venture capital funds and startups.
When considering where to study in the U.S., Kapadia says UNH stood out for the strength of its academic programs and the opportunities for technology industry connections through UNH’s InterOperability Lab (IOL). Kapadia’s time at the IOL heavily influenced the trajectory of his career.

“My internship at the IOL instilled in me a love for computer networking and, critically, exposed me to the world of technology innovation and startups,” he says. “I couldn’t believe I was working on leading-edge computer networking equipment with a vibrant community of professors, researchers and mentors guiding the way.”

One of Kapadia’s special memories at UNH includes living in Smith Hall, a dormitory on campus that was comprised of international students along with American students interested in multiculturalism. He says UNH was his first home in America, and the university’s investment in him as a student inspired him to remain engaged at UNH.

“I came here with two suitcases, a scholarship, and a desire to make something of myself,” says Kapadia. “UNH invested in me, a kid from Mumbai (Bombay) they had never met before. It is only fitting that I honor that commitment by staying engaged.”

His advice for current graduates as they embark into their profession or graduate school is to always stay open to new possibilities.

“Have the confidence to take on tough challenges and build new entrepreneurial ventures,” he says. “The ride won’t be linear and smooth but know that UNH has prepared you well for the journey ahead and you will have the time of your life.”

WRITTEN BY:
Hayley Barnhard (/unhtoday/contributor/hayley-barnhard) | College of Engineering and Physical Sciences | hayley.barnhard@unh.edu

PHOTOGRAPHER:
Jeremy Gasowski (/unhtoday/contributor/jeremy-gasowski) | UNH Marketing | jeremy.gasowski@unh.edu (mailto:jeremy.gasowski@unh.edu) | 603-862-4465
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