

Reference: Mr Shahrokh Pezeshk

11 May 2005

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam

As a professional educator I am occasionally requested to provide references for ex-students, colleagues, and members of the school community in which I work. Few requests have given me as much pleasure as Mr Shahrokh Pezeshk's (to whom I shall refer as *Shah*).

I first met Shah during my initial teacher-training period (1973-75) at the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education (now Central Queensland University) in Rockhampton. We lived at the Residential College on campus, and despite engaging in different academic studies we became friends.

Shah was very obviously a 'man amongst boys', despite only a few years seniority to his student cohort. The upheavals in his life – political, personal, and familial – were beyond our comprehension, and imbued him with a vastly superior maturity. Despite the disturbing and violent events in his native country (Iran), and the separation from family and culture, Shah remained buoyant and focused. He was operating in a distinctly alien culture, speaking and studying in a 'foreign' language, yet he functioned socially and academically at an impressive level.

He was universally respected and liked amongst the general academic and Residential College staff, but most importantly he achieved popularity amongst the student body. (This should be viewed in the context of the far less multicultural society prevalent in provincial Queensland towns of the era.)

Despite never desiring to be 'one of the boys', Shah was always involved with college life. He was naturally gregarious and enjoyed the social aspect of on-campus sport. He played soccer, basketball and touch football. He was a very competent swimmer and tennis player, and was involved with the college wrestling club, where he proved an extremely competitive and formidable opponent.

Though very obviously 'viceless', Shah was always a welcome guest at the inevitable college late-night poker games, when he would take time off from study to gently tease us about the evils of gambling, tobacco, alcohol, and bad language – and lack of application to our own studies. Only Shah could get away with that!

I never heard Shah utter a profanity or denigrate fellow students or academic staff. Fellow students sought him out often, because of his friendly, honest qualities and natural willingness to counsel and assist fellow

students with difficult assignments or course-work. As a student, he was extremely diligent, neat and organised. I suspect he could have pursued a successful academic career, had he chosen to do so.

I had no hesitation in taking Shah home to Bundaberg during vacations on occasions to enable him to relax and enjoy, vicariously, family life. My parents, who had travelled internationally, enjoyed his stimulating cosmopolitan conversation and anecdotes. My father, who was particularly well informed, was impressed with the breadth and depth of Shah's historical and geo-political knowledge. Shah's gratitude, courtesy and cheerful personality made a lasting impression on my family, which regarded him with great affection.

Despite not seeing each other for many years following Shah's move overseas, we have remained firm friends and have maintained contact, sharing news of family events and professional progress. With Shah, friendship is not a disposable commodity. He repays affection with affection, loyalty with loyalty. It is obvious that he is devoted to family values and the support and encouragement of his children, with whom he has a very positive relationship.

Though not a co-religionist, I am convinced that Shah's spiritual beliefs (founded in his Baha'i faith) provide a moral and ethical compass that informs his every action – in both personal and professional spheres. In the vernacular, 'what you see is what you get', and 'his word is his bond'. From a layman's perspective, the combination of Shah's high ethical standards, his exceptional intellect and capacity for overcoming challenges suggests that he would be an asset to our society, and to the ranks of CPA Australia in particular.

I have no hesitation in unreservedly recommending Mr Shahrokh Pezeshk - as a decent man, as an honest citizen, and as a loyal friend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ross Mills Edwards". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Ross Mills Edwards (Dip Tch, B Ed, B A)

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